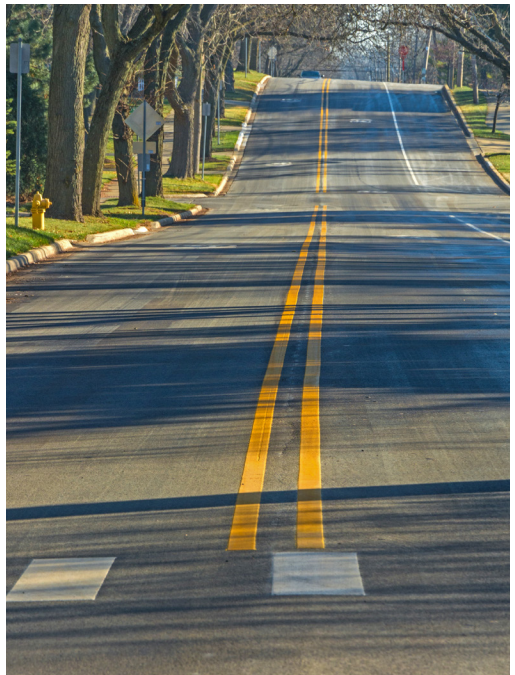




GUIDING DG
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



EXISTING CONDITIONS MEMORANDUM

Village of Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan

August 2, 2024



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Note: Environmental Sustainability Plan Section is forthcoming.



With assistance from:



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

In December 2023, the Village of Downers Grove started the 20-month process of updating its Comprehensive Plan as part of the Guiding DG process. The new Comprehensive Plan will establish a Village-wide vision, guide future policy and land use decisions, and inform future development and investment within the Village for the next 20 years. The Existing Conditions Memorandum (ECM) provides a baseline for developing the new Comprehensive Plan. The Existing Conditions Memorandum is not the plan. Instead, it is a snapshot of the existing conditions in the Village.

Guiding DG

Guiding DG is a series of projects with the goal of preparing the Village for change and development over the coming decades, while improving its livability, mobility, design, and sustainability. This collection of initiatives offers a unique opportunity for community members to engage with the plans and share their thoughts and perspectives on relevant areas. The elements of Guiding DG include the Comprehensive Plan, a Bike and Pedestrian Plan, an Environmental Sustainability Plan, and a Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan. The projects are all interrelated, working together to create a future that the entire Downers Grove community can enjoy.



As part of the interactive Guiding DG process, findings from the existing conditions analyses of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan, and the Environmental Sustainability Plan inform this ECM and will help shape and be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan’s findings and recommendations. Similarly, the findings in the Comprehensive Plan will help shape and be incorporated into the respective findings of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan, and the Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Bike and Pedestrian Plan

The Bike and Pedestrian Plan will serve as a comprehensive vision and blueprint to transform the Village into a “pedestrian first” community, focusing on improving non-motorized transportation. It will include recommendations for infrastructure improvements, connections to adjacent communities, and an action plan to enhance the overall bikeability and walkability of the Village. The plan will assess current conditions, gather resident feedback, and guide future decisions to systematically implement these enhancements.



The Bike and Pedestrian Plan ECM is completed and available for review.

Environmental Sustainability Plan

The Environmental Sustainability Plan will present a comprehensive strategy designed to identify and manage environmental sustainability issues, often setting goals and strategies to reduce a community’s greenhouse gas emissions and foster a culture of environmental stewardship. The Environment Sustainability Plan will utilize resident engagement, collaboration with the Environmental Concerns Commission, the Chicagoland’s Greenest Region Compact and sustainability planning practices to provide an actionable, pragmatic environmental framework that includes key policies, strategies, and recommendations.



The Environmental Sustainability Plan ECM will be completed and available for review summer 2024.

Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan

The Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan aims to enhance the public areas’ appearance in these corridors through landscape and hardscape improvements. It will identify key locations for connecting Downtown and Fairview and provide preliminary design plans detailing the type, organization, and scale of proposed enhancements. The plan will assess current conditions and usage patterns, incorporating stakeholder input to guide its recommendations.



The Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan ECM is completed and available for review.

Purpose and Use of the Existing Conditions Memorandum (ECM)

The ECM answers the question “Where is Downers Grove today?” It is a summary of relevant data points, an interim deliverable rather than an adopted document. The memo is directed toward Village staff and the Village Council but should also be made available to elected and appointed advisory board and commission members, residents, and stakeholders of Downers Grove. It is the result of research and analysis, field reconnaissance, and a review of data provided by the Village and its partners and obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources. Specifically, this memorandum includes:

- o An examination of Downers Grove’s recent plans, studies and reports acknowledging that these contain relevant recommendations and policies that may be carried forward;
- o A review of community outreach completed to date and the key outcomes from the outreach;
- o A demographic and economic trends snapshot, providing an overview of influencing factors, trends, and potentials that will inform the plan;
- o An overview of existing land uses and current zoning;
- o An overview of the transportation network and mobility options;
- o An overview of community facilities and infrastructure, including government buildings; emergency services, infrastructure and utility services;
- o An overview of Downers Grove’s environmental and sustainable assets forthcoming.

As an overview, the ECM focuses on pertinent information that will make the Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan accurate and relevant. Undertaking this process allows for a complete understanding of adopted Village policies, changes in the community since past plans, as well as any deficiencies within existing plans. Additionally, the memorandum will identify issues and opportunities within the Village that can be built upon during the planning process to develop focused, data-driven goals, key policies, and land use recommendations for the Village.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the key decision-making policy guide for Downers Grove’s built and natural environments. The Comprehensive Plan text and associated maps contain detailed recommendations for future development and will serve as a roadmap for the Village Council, Plan Commission, and other boards and commissions as they assess the location, character, and extent of proposed public and private development in Downers Grove. The Plan’s policies and recommendations will be implemented over time through rezonings and subdivisions of land, the review and approval of development proposals and the location and construction of public improvements.

Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan, along with the entire Guiding DG project, will be completed within approximately 20 months. The development of the Plan will be based on direction and input from the Village Council, the Plan Commission, stakeholder workshops and interviews, public meetings, and data collection. The input gathered from the Environmental Concerns Commission, Historic Preservation and Design Review Board, and Transportation and Parking Commission that were engaged as part of the other Guiding DG plans' processes will inform the Comprehensive Plan as well. The Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan, and the Environmental Sustainability Plan have their own processes that are detailed in their respective ECMs.

Task 1: Project Initiation and Project Management (Completed)

To begin the planning process, meetings were conducted with the Village staff, the Plan Commission, and the Village Council before undertaking other community outreach activities. Additionally, frequent meetings were held with Village staff to go over scheduling, data collection, and general project management.

Task 2: Public Engagement and Communication (Ongoing)

Community engagement officially began with the Community Kick-Off Celebration event on April 4, 2024 that welcomed community members to Lincoln Center where they learned about the Comprehensive Plan and the other Guiding DG plans and participated in engagement activities. Other public engagement activities have included workshops with Downers Grove North High School, Downers Grove South High School, the Immanuel Residences, Greener Grove, and Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance. Digital outreach began with the launch of the project website, an online community questionnaire, and map.social, an interactive platform that allows residents to share opportunities and improvements in the community based on precise locations. Key stakeholder interviews were also conducted to gain detailed input from a variety of community residents and leaders.

Task 3: Existing Conditions Analysis (Completed)

This step included the preparation of the ECM that inventoried and provided a concise analysis of existing conditions, documented existing land uses, identified key thoroughfares and community facilities, and provided an economic and demographic profile. The ECM is based on issues and opportunities identified in outreach, past plans and studies, information provided by the Village and partner agencies, feedback from community service providers, and reconnaissance.

Task 4: Vision and Land Use Framework (Upcoming)

This step will establish an overall "vision statement" for the future of Downers Grove along with goals based on analysis and themes identified during community outreach. Building on the vision and goals, the Project Team will prepare and evaluate alternative land use scenarios for the Village. This step will include the development of up to three land use scenarios, testing the scenarios, discussing, and evaluating the scenarios with Village staff and the Village Council, and identifying a preferred scenario. The vision, goals and the preliminary land use framework will direct place-based recommendations for future growth and change, serve as the "cornerstone" of the consensus-building process, and provide focus and direction for subsequent planning activities.

Task 5: Focus Area Framework Plans (Upcoming)

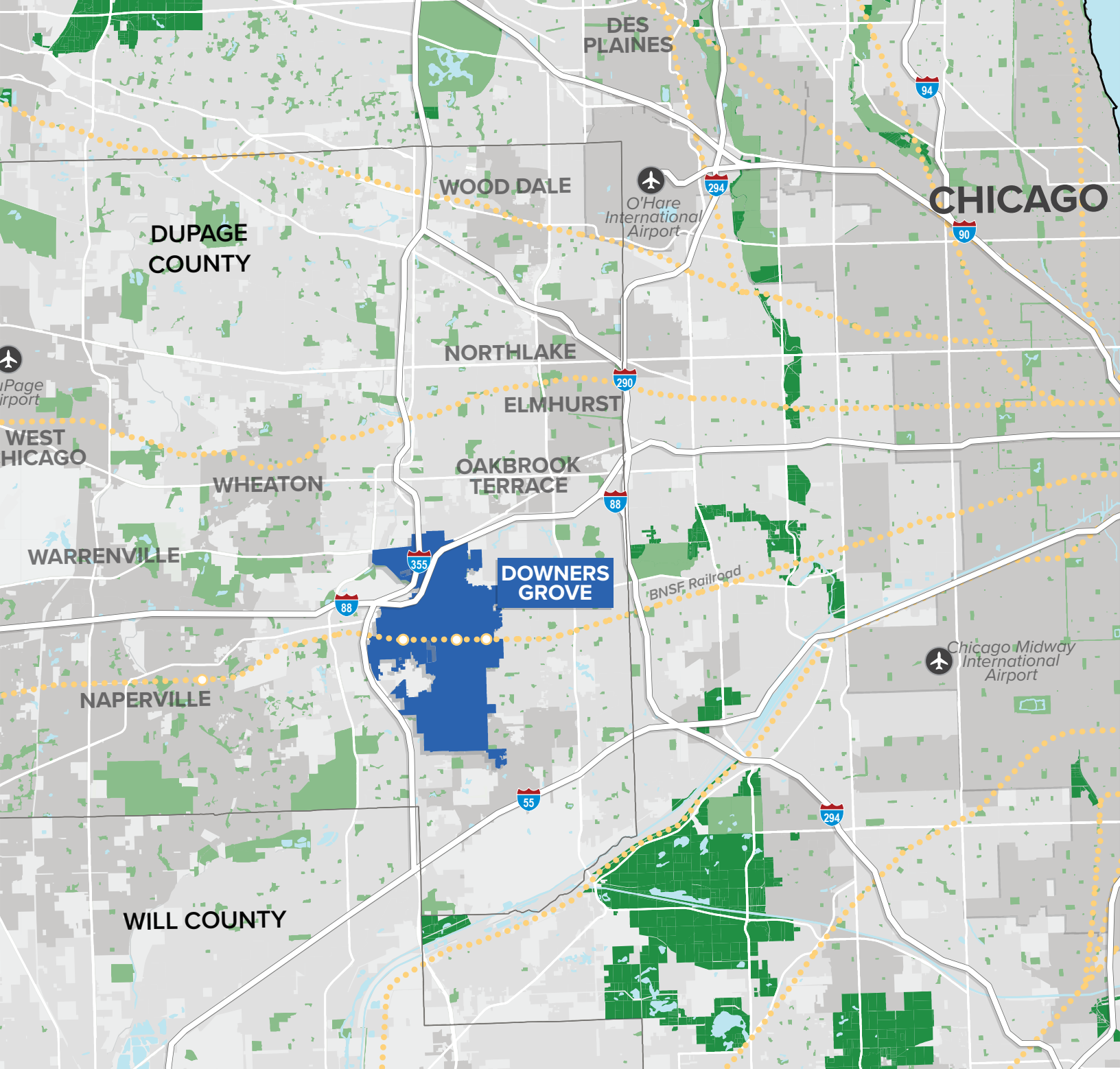
In this step, the Village and the Project Team will identify two to three key areas of the Downers Grove community in need of additional analysis or more detailed planning efforts and develop focus area framework plans around these areas.

Task 6: Preliminary Village-Wide Plans and Policies (Upcoming)

This step will include the preparation of initial Village-wide frameworks, policies, and recommendations for core plan elements. The preliminary plans and policies prepared in this step will reflect the Preliminary Land Use Framework, Vision, and Goals developed in previous steps of the process. Based on feedback received in the previous steps, the Draft Comprehensive Plan document will be prepared for review.

Task 7: Comprehensive Plan Document and Adoption (Upcoming)

Based on the previous steps in the planning process, the final version of the Comprehensive Plan document will be prepared for review, consideration, and adoption.



Regional Context

Downers Grove is located in DuPage County in northeastern Illinois, about 20 miles west of Chicago. Downers Grove is a part of the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin Combined Statistical Area, which has a population of over nine million people. The Village sits in a desirable location within the region, with direct access to Chicago and other destinations via the regional Metra BNSF train line, regional Pace bus routes, regional connector highway Ogden Avenue, and Interstate 88, Interstate 355, Interstate 294, and nearby Interstate 55. The Village is 14.80 square miles and had a population of 50,247 people, as of 2022. It serves as headquarters for multiple businesses, including Advocate Aurora Health. The retail economy is largely supported by the local sections of Ogden Avenue and Butterfield Road and the Village's attractive Downtown, which features many popular boutiques, restaurants, and historical buildings.

SECTION 2

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As part of the initial phase of the planning process, community outreach was conducted to gain input from residents, local businesses, the development community, Village staff, and key stakeholders on issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Downers Grove.

To date, the planning process has included **over 1000 points of engagement** through a combination of in-person and online community outreach tools and exercises. Completed and ongoing outreach efforts include:

- o Kick-off workshops with:
 - Village Council
 - Transportation and Parking Commission
 - Plan Commission and Historic Preservation and Design Review Board
 - Business Community
 - Environmental Concerns Commission
 - Department Heads
- o Key Stakeholder Interviews
- o Community Kick-off Event
- o Online Questionnaire
- o map.social
- o Do-It Yourself workshop kits
- o Staff led workshops with students and seniors

Note: The following thematic summaries reflect the thoughts, comments, and opinions received during the outreach phase of the planning process. The items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant or Village, but rather represent feedback and comments received from those who participated in the outreach efforts. The feedback will be vetted together with the existing conditions data analysis, Village Council direction, and review of best practices to develop the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals, and recommendations.

In-Person Outreach

The Project Team has conducted many in-person engagement occasions with various groups to identify issues, opportunities, strengths, and assets of the Village as part of the kick-off outreach for the creation of the Comprehensive Plan, and, as appropriate based on the relevant guiding board or commission, for the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, Environmental Sustainability Plan, and Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan.

Kick-off Workshops

Each workshop was structured around four prompts. First, participants were asked to individually identify the issues and concerns facing the community, listing them on the worksheet that was provided. Participants then shared issues and concerns from their list with the group to create a cumulative list. The second prompt asked participants to rank the three most important issues discussed from the cumulative list. Participants were then asked to name specific projects or actions that would provide solutions to those issues. For the final part of the exercise, participants were asked to list the strengths and advantages of Downers Grove that should be preserved. Each of the workshops are briefly summarized with key takeaways added at the end.

Village Council

February 6, 2024 – 6 Participants

The kickoff meeting with the Village Council was intended to introduce the Village's elected officials to all four projects – the Comprehensive Plan, the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the Environmental Sustainability Plan, and the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan. The top issues and concerns identified at the Village Council Kickoff Workshop were economic development issues in relation to retaining and attracting business. Additional concerns raised were related to housing diversity, lack of pedestrian connections, and balancing tradition with progress. When asked to identify the assets and strengths of Downers Grove, meeting participants listed the Downtown, general location of the community, community involvement, schools, and neighborhoods.

Transportation and Parking Commission

February 21, 2024 – 7 Participants

This workshop looked for additional feedback regarding the Bike and Pedestrian Plan. The top issues and concerns identified at the Transportation and Parking Commission Kickoff Workshop were mobility issues in relation to the bicycle and pedestrian network, infrastructure, and safety. Additional concerns raised were related to community attitudes and identity, health and society, the environment, recreation, and governance.

When asked to identify the assets and strengths of Downers Grove, meeting participants listed access to the Metra, Downtown, access to interstates, community involvement, and population diversity. Several others were related to community facilities and Village governance.

Plan Commission and Historic Preservation and Design Review Board

February 28, 2024 – 11 Participants

This workshop looked for additional input regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan. The top issues and concerns identified at the Plan Commission and Historic Preservation and Design Review Board Kickoff Workshop were lack of pedestrian infrastructure particularly around the Downtown, traffic safety, housing diversity, and renovating the Fairview area. Additional concerns raised were related to community attitudes and identity, diversity of commercial uses, and general sustainability practices.

Meeting participants identified several key assets and strengths of Downers Grove, including its unique identity, diverse community, varied architectural styles, cultural events, and the preservation of historical structures.

Business Community Workshop

February 28, 2024 – 9 Participants

This kickoff meeting was intended to introduce the Village's business community to all four Guiding DG projects – the Comprehensive Plan, the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the Environmental Sustainability Plan, and the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan. The top issues and concerns identified at the Business Community Workshop were growing economic viability Downtown, improving Downtown mobility, creating a regional entertainment venue, and less stringent sign regulation. Additional concerns raised were related to mobility, the mismatch of land uses, and affordability.

When asked to identify the assets and strengths of the Downers Grove business community, participants listed sense of community, Downtown, and the Village's location. Other comments correlated to community involvement, growth, and Downers Grove's unique sense of place.

Environmental Concerns Commission Workshop

March 6, 2024 – 6 Participants

This workshop looked for additional feedback regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the Environmental Sustainability Plan. The top issue and concern identified at the Environmental Concerns Commission Workshop were the lack of non-vehicular transportation options, particularly the hurdles to biking and walking. Additional concerns raised was related to recycling, floodplains, and reducing the Village's carbon footprint. When asked to identify the assets and strengths of Downers Grove, meeting participants listed low taxes, an educated population, and the amount of community spaces.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

As a part of the community engagement phase of the planning process, confidential interviews were conducted with individuals and small focus groups to discuss existing conditions and opportunities within the Downers Grove community. The Village and the Project Team initially invited representatives across the community for stakeholder interviews. Amenable residents, business owners, and other stakeholders from the Village were selected and invited to provide unique and direct insight to the community.

Houseal Lavigne conducted a series of 15 interviews with a total of 26 participants on February 28, April 4, and April 11, 2024, with some being conducted in person and others virtually. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Interviews were framed around a sequence of questions regarding the community and conducted in a conversational style. The items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant or Village, but rather represent feedback and comments received from those who participated in the outreach efforts. The feedback will be vetted together with the existing conditions data analysis, Village Council direction, and review of best practices to develop the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals, and recommendations.

Housing

Stakeholders believe that finding a place to call home in Downers Grove is becoming increasingly difficult, particularly for those on a budget. They noted that seniors and young families struggle with the lack of affordable options, while those with disabilities face limited accessible housing. Stakeholders identified a need for a more diverse range of housing choices, including apartments, townhomes, and starter homes, alongside the existing single-family dwellings.

Transportation

Stakeholders emphasized car dependence as a major concern. They identified that residents, particularly seniors, people with disabilities, and young people, may have difficulty getting around the Village without a car. Stakeholders called the current public transportation system (Pace) limited and inconvenient. Additionally, they recognized that a lack of connected bike lanes further discourages alternative transportation options. One stakeholder's idea for a Village bus or trolley system – like the Village of Niles Free Bus that stops at all major shopping centers, public facilities, and within a short distance of every residence - reflects a desire for a more walkable and bikeable community.

Economic Development

Although stakeholders appreciate the fact that the Village is well-located, they noted that Downers Grove faces challenges in attracting and retaining businesses. Stakeholders pointed out that local businesses are struggling to compete with national chains, raising concerns about the future of the Village's unique character. Stakeholders expressed that the Village could explore ways to improve the permit and approval process to attract more diverse businesses while maintaining a sense of design continuity.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces

Stakeholders discussed the need for more park amenities and trails within the Village. It should be a priority to connect existing parks and trails. Stakeholders have identified the absence of a public pool, and a park district-owned dog park as needs within the community. Additionally, stakeholders appreciate the amount of greenery in the community, so preserving existing natural areas should be a priority.

Facilities and Services

Stakeholders noted that seniors with disabilities and low-income residents often lack access to essential services such as transit. The need for a comprehensive senior services center highlights this gap. The rising cost of water is another concern identified by stakeholders.

Image and Identity

Stakeholders identified a desire for a Village that embraces progress while honoring its traditions. Maintaining the historic character of the Downtown area is crucial. A north side/south side divide and the fear of losing the small-town feel with too much development are anxieties that stakeholders want to address as part of the Guiding DG planning process.

Other Opportunities

Stakeholders identified a desire for more public art and less restrictive mural ordinances to reflect the community's vibrant cultural scene. The growing political and cultural divides within the community highlight the need for better communication and collaboration between different organizations. While the Village is prosperous and well-regarded, raising awareness

about the needs of those in the community who are under-resourced and underrepresented was identified as an issue. Stakeholders identified the importance of building on the community and improving communication between the Village and residents as crucial steps towards a more inclusive and informed future.

Community Kick-Off Event

The Village hosted the first official public event of the Guiding DG planning process on April 4th, 2024. The kick-off event allowed residents, business owners and operators, and other key stakeholders to discuss the community and provide visioning input. The input received will help guide the planning process and inform the Comprehensive Plan, the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the Environmental Sustainability Plan, and the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan.

The engagement activities asked participants to complete a variety of exercises that were designed to gather high-level input on how participants feel about Downers Grove and encourage them to think critically about the Village. A summary of exercises and responses related to the Comprehensive Plan can be seen below. A complete summary of the events and feedback for all four plans was reviewed by Village staff and posted to the project website for public review.



Future of the Village Exercise

This exercise prompted participants to write their ideas on post-it notes to respond to the prompt “The future of the Village would be better if we...” Participants wrote down their ideas and placed post-it notes on a large board. Key themes are identified below:

- **Make the Village a more diverse, welcoming place.** Attendees expressed a desire to see a future Downers Grove that is a safe place for all, no matter their identity. Responses mentioned fostering resident diversity, encouraging affordable housing, improving senior services, and accommodating people experiencing homelessness.
- **Foster a more unique, vibrant Downtown.** Attendees noted that they would like to create a more vibrant Downtown. Proposed actions included beautification, integrating a mix of uses, diversifying retail, developing the areas surrounding train stations, and providing more parking.
- **Invest in the Village’s natural resources and sustainability efforts.** Attendees cited several directions that they would like to see the Village take in terms of the environment. Responses included native planting, bioswales, streetscapes, stormwater management, tree preservation and planting, and electric vehicle charging.

Importance of the Comprehensive Plan Exercise

This exercise prompted participants to write the most important thing they think that the Comprehensive Plan should address on a post-it note. Then, participants were asked to place their post-it note in the most closely related category. The categories were Housing; Economic Commercial Development; Transportation, including Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mobility; Community Facilities and Infrastructure; and Parks and Recreation. Key themes in the top issues are identified below:

- **Housing.** Almost all of participants’ ideas related to creating more affordable housing, including for specific groups such as essential workers, seniors, and people with disabilities. Some attendees also expressed desires for infill development standards, more starter homes, expanding types of housing, and historic preservation.
- **Economic/Commercial Development.** Attendees showed an interest in additional entertainment options, including theaters, art centers, and activity venues. Attendees noted that attention needs to be paid to retail areas beyond Downtown, such as revitalizing the Fairview Avenue corridor. There were mixed opinions on outdoor dining – participants either wanted to eliminate it and free up the parking spaces or close portions of more public spaces, such as Main Street, to create more space for dining.
- **Transportation, including Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mobility.** Attendees underscored the community’s desire for a more accessible, safe, and sustainable transportation network. Responses mentioned improving bike infrastructure, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, parking, and electric vehicle infrastructure.

Do-It Yourself Workshops

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) workshop kits were provided to engage residents at the local or neighborhood level. Community groups used these kits to facilitate their own workshops, gathering input outside of formal planning activities, resulting in one kit with 8 completed surveys. The opportunities for these meetings are ongoing and will continue to be offered.

Staff-led Workshops

In May 2024, staff held in-person workshops with students and seniors, including sessions at Downers Grove North and Downers Grove South High School with 102 participants and Immanuel Residences with 14 participants. These workshops aimed to engage different age groups thoughtfully, ensuring diverse community input. Reaching out to both young and senior residents made the outreach process more inclusive and representative of the community.

Online Outreach

Project Website

A dedicated interactive project website was created to support the planning process and inform the public. The website contains information, updates, workshop details, meeting notices, and will offer project documents such as public review drafts and memorandums. The website also hosts outreach tools, including the online questionnaire and map.social. The website will remain active until the completion of the Guiding DG plans. The website is available [here](#).

Community Survey

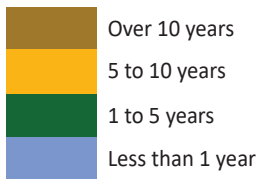
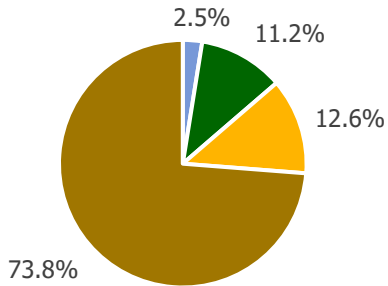
Participants to date: 1087

Through an online community survey on the project website, Downers Grove residents and stakeholders were invited to share their thoughts on the community's existing conditions and future opportunities. The survey covered various aspects of Downers Grove, including housing and residential areas, commercial and industrial areas, community facilities and services, transportation, sustainability initiatives, character and perception, and strengths and weaknesses. Each section assessed strengths and weaknesses alongside specific questions related to the topic. As an optional addition to the Community Survey, residents could take the Bike and Pedestrian Survey. The survey will be used to inform the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, which will serve as an important guide for future decision making, policies and initiatives related to mobility in Downers Grove.

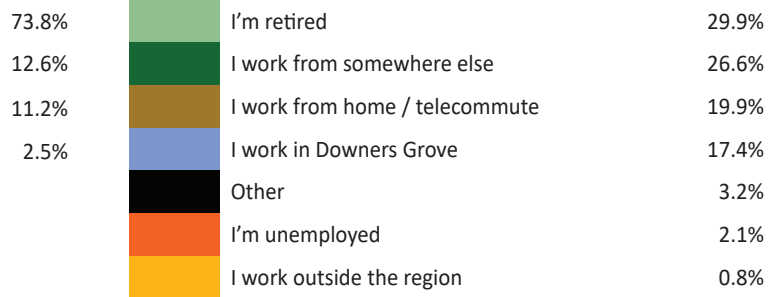
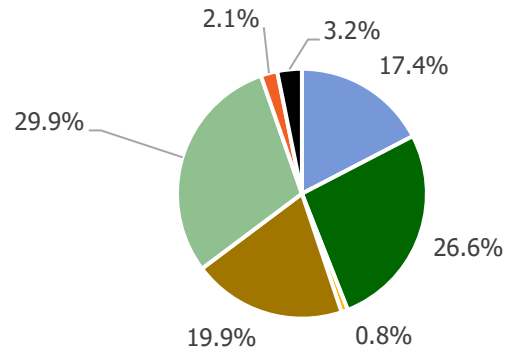
The surveys will remain open through Visioning and Key Recommendations. The following section highlights the feedback received from the Community Survey to date.

The online survey can be found [here](#).

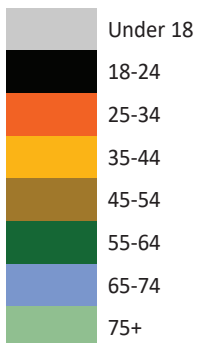
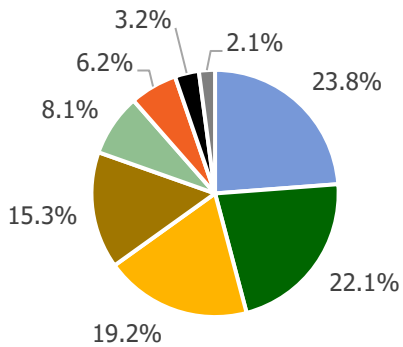
How long have you lived in Downers Grove?



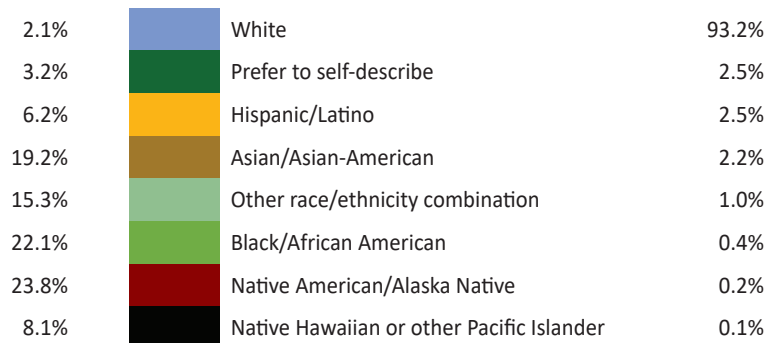
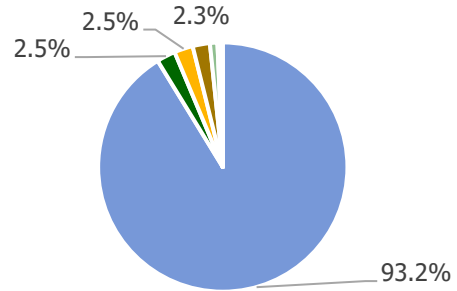
Where do you work?



How old are you?



How do you identify your race and/or ethnicity?

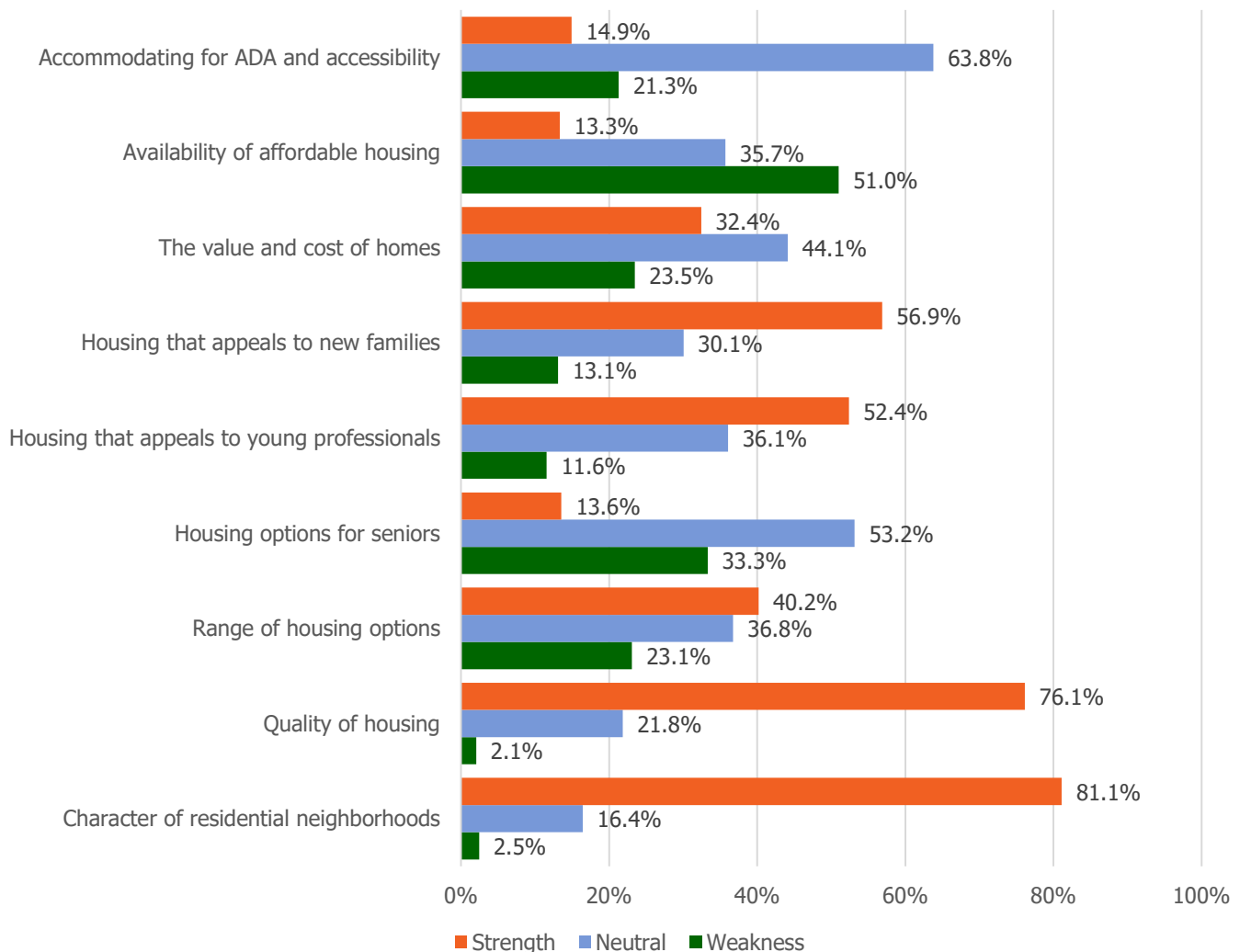


Housing and Residential Areas

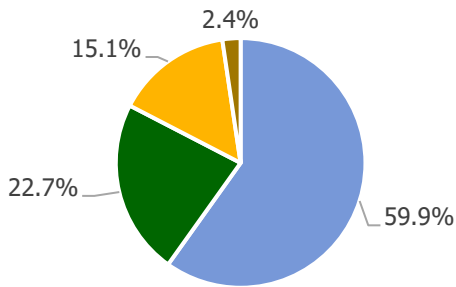
The majority of survey respondents were generally satisfied with the quality of Downers Grove’s housing, with 83% indicating “excellent” or “good.” Specifically, most respondents viewed the character of residential neighborhoods (81%), quality of housing (76%), and housing that appeals to new families (52%) as strengths. However, the survey also found that slightly over half of respondents (51%) felt that the availability of affordable housing was a weakness, while 36% of respondents were neutral. The distribution of responses was varied on housing options for seniors and accommodations for ADA and accessibility. When asked about housing options for seniors, about a third (33%) of respondents perceived it as a weakness and a little over half (53%) responded as neutral. Most respondents (64%) were neutral on accommodations for ADA and accessibility, as 21% felt that this was a weakness.

The survey revealed a preference for single-family homes; 78% of respondents believed that single-family homes would have a positive impact on Downers Grove. Half (50%) were in favor of townhomes. Only 12% saw them negatively, with the rest neutral (38%). Apartments received the least favorable response. About 43% felt they would negatively impact the community, while 22% saw them positively. Condominiums fared slightly better, with 36% viewing them positively. Senior housing was well-regarded, with 57% positive and 37% neutral.

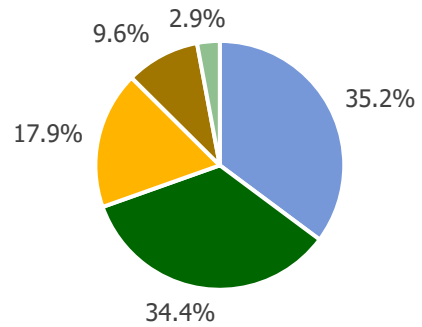
When considering existing housing and residential areas, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the Village












What is the overall quality of housing stock (i.e., appearance, cost, property maintenance)?

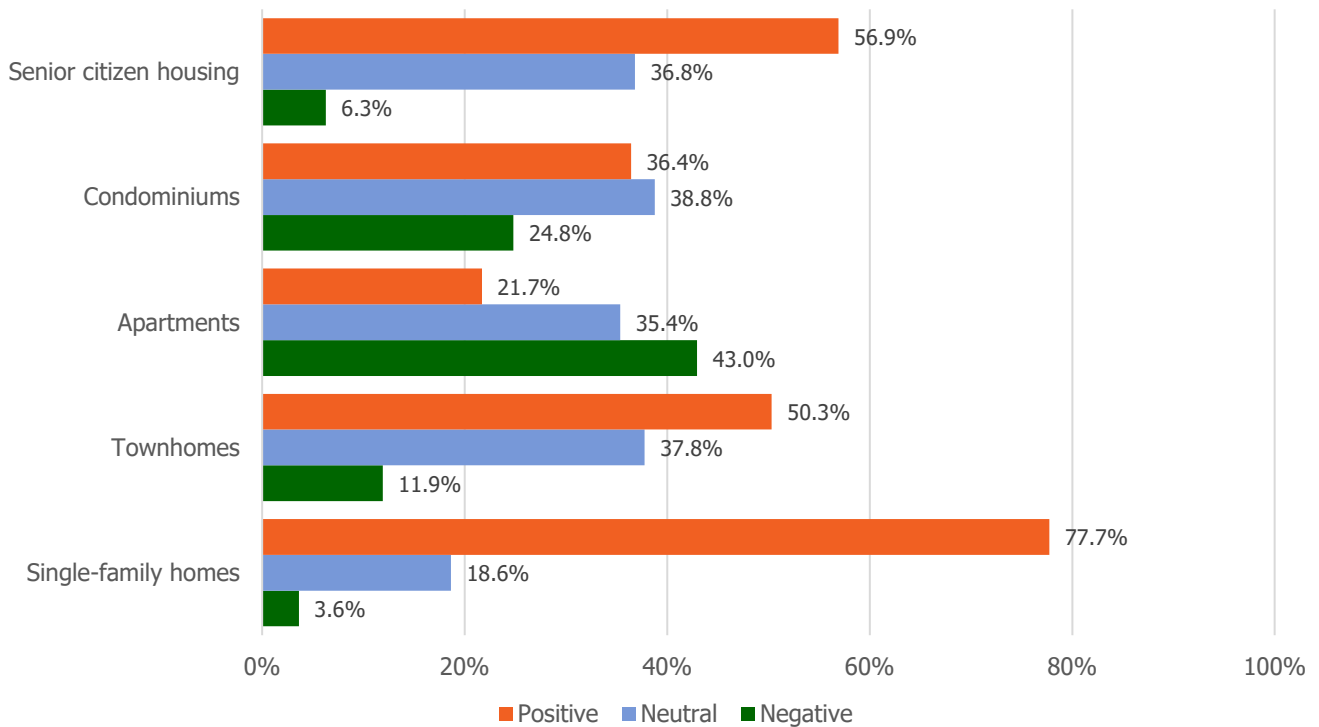


How is the quality of housing changing?



 Good	59.9%	 Getting much better	9.6%
 Excellent	22.7%	 Getting somewhat better	35.2%
 Fair	15.1%	 Staying about the same	34.4%
 Poor	2.4%	 Getting somewhat worse	17.9%
		 Getting much worse	2.9%

What kind of impact would each of the following types of new residential housing have on the community?

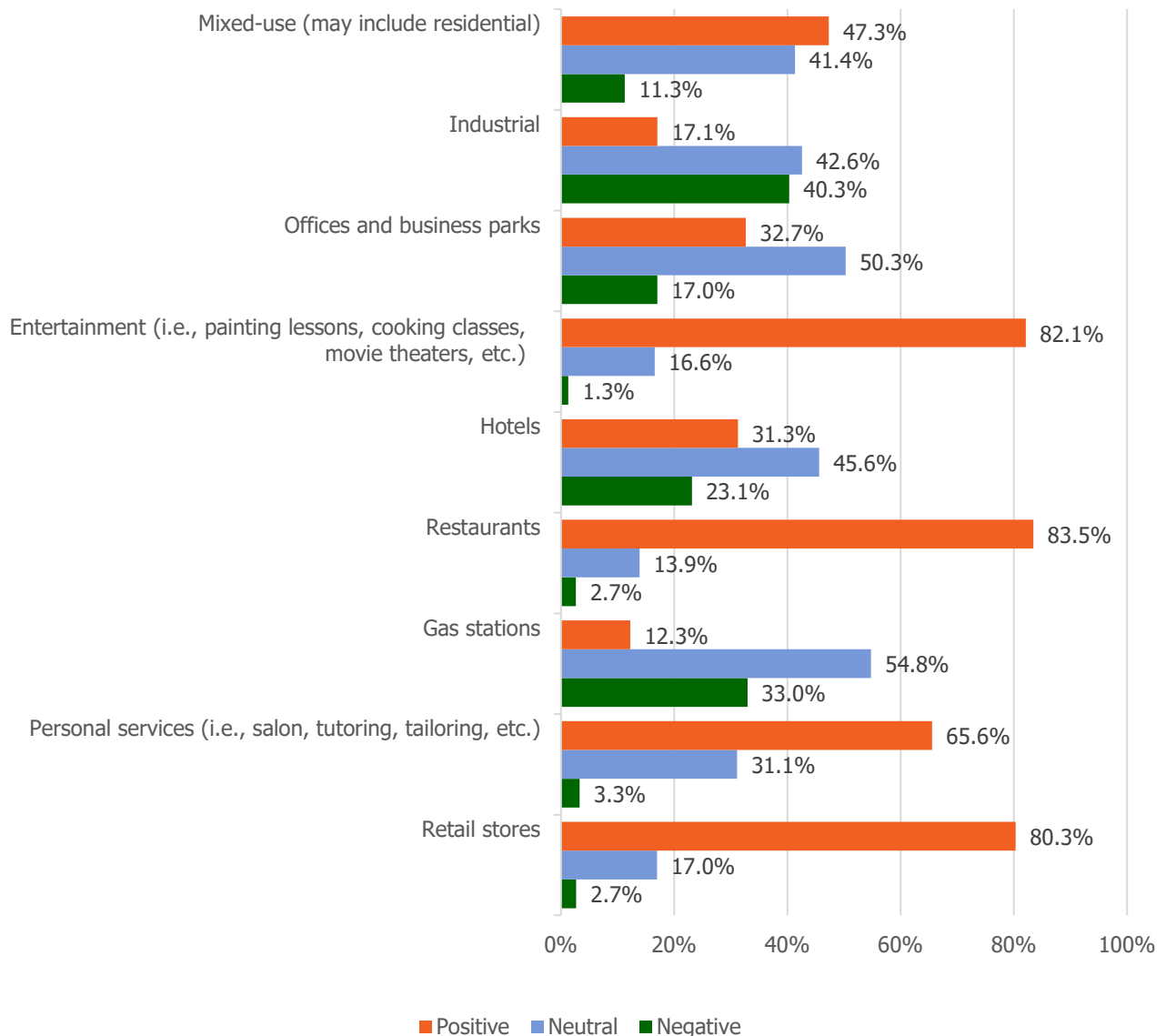


Commercial and Industrial Areas

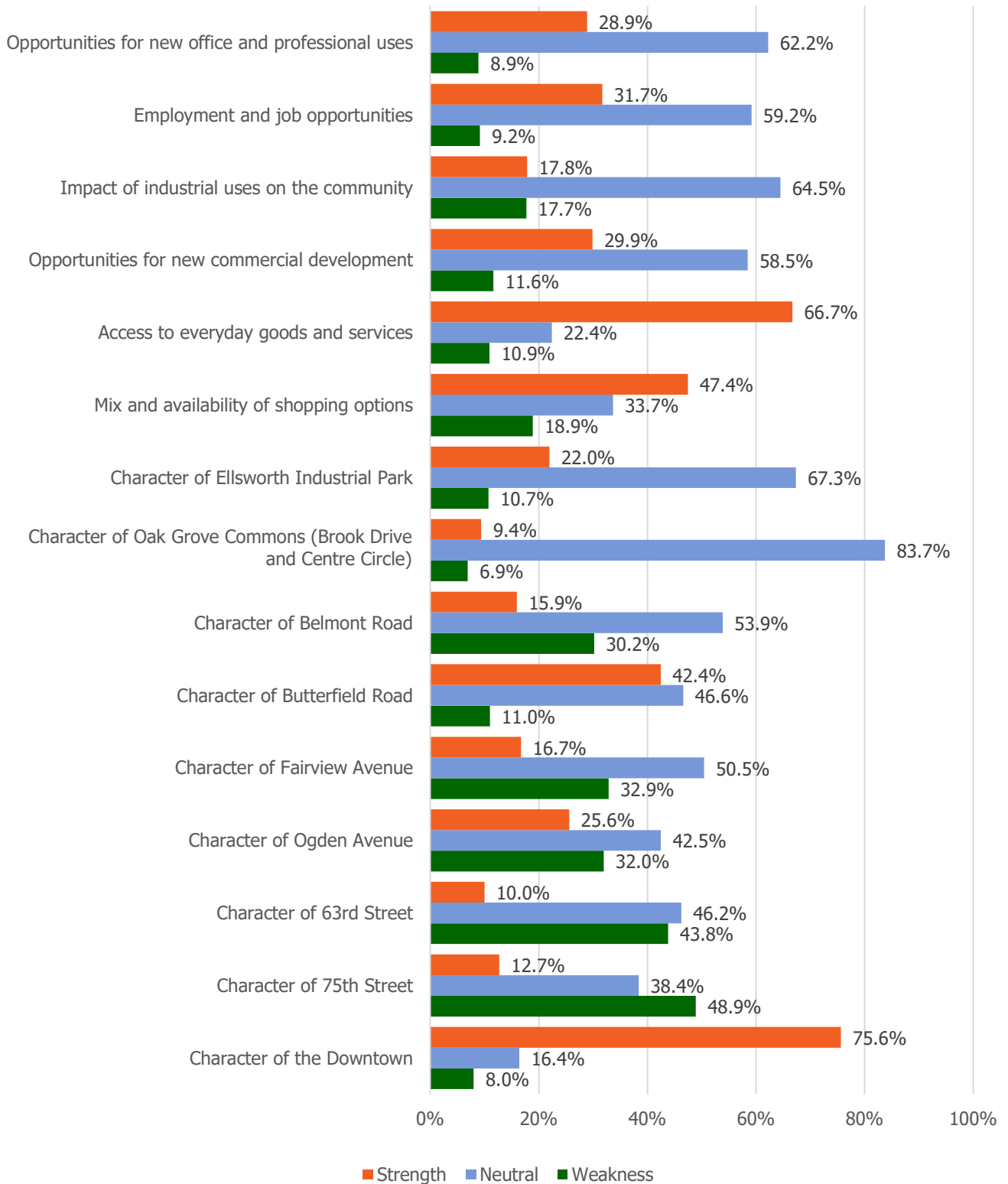
Survey respondents identified the character of the Downtown (76%), access to everyday goods and services (67%), and the mix and availability of shopping options (47%) as the top strengths. There were concerns about the character of 75th Street (49% negative), character of 63rd Street (44% negative), and character of Fairview Avenue (33% negative), suggesting a demand for improvements.

When it came to specific commercial uses, respondents were most excited about restaurants (83% positive), entertainment (82%), retail stores (80% positive), and personal services (66% positive). The survey yielded more neutral responses for gas stations, offices and business parks, hotels, and industrial uses. This might indicate respondents were unsure about the impact of these options or may need more information before forming an opinion.

What kind of impact would each of the following types of development have on the community?



When considering existing commercial and industrial areas, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness

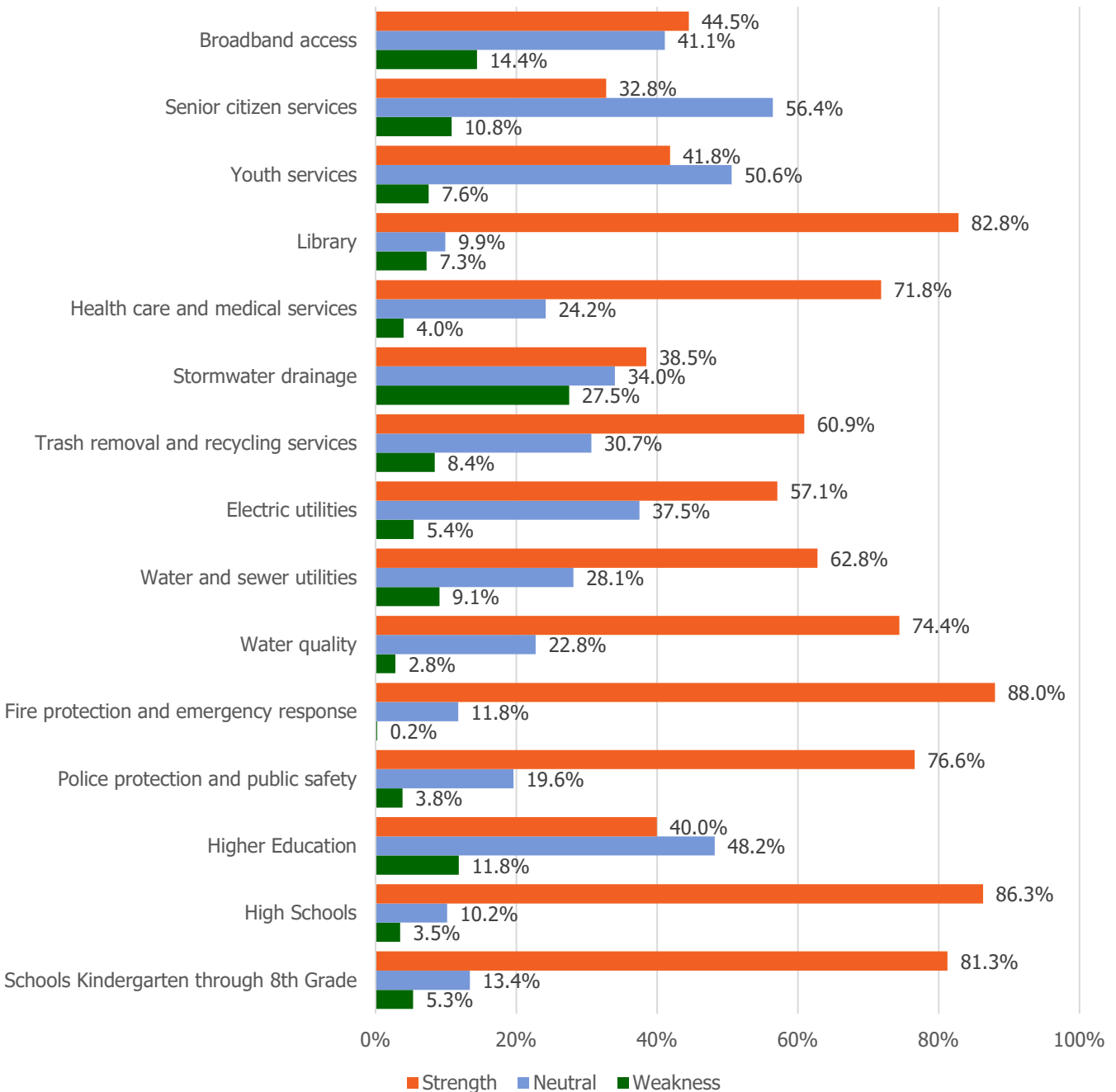


Community Facilities and Services

The survey demonstrated overall satisfaction for multiple facilities and services in Downers Grove. A strong majority of respondents view the community’s school districts as a major asset to the community. Around 86% felt positively about local high schools and 81% responded positively to kindergarten through 8th grade schools. Respondents expressed confidence in fire and police services, with positive responses reaching 88% and 76%, respectively.

Feedback on services for youth and senior citizens was less clear. Around 41% viewed youth services positively, while 7.5% considered them negatively. Similarly, opinions on senior services were divided, with 33% perceiving them as a strength and 57% neutral. Respondents also expressed challenges with stormwater drainage, considering 30% saw it as a weakness.

When considering existing community facilities and services, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the community today

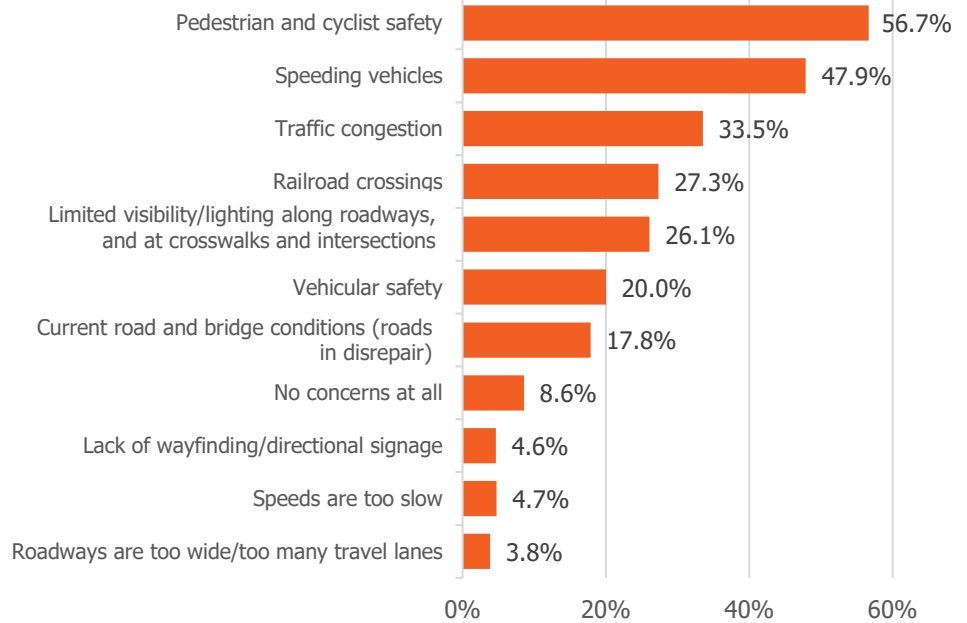


Transportation

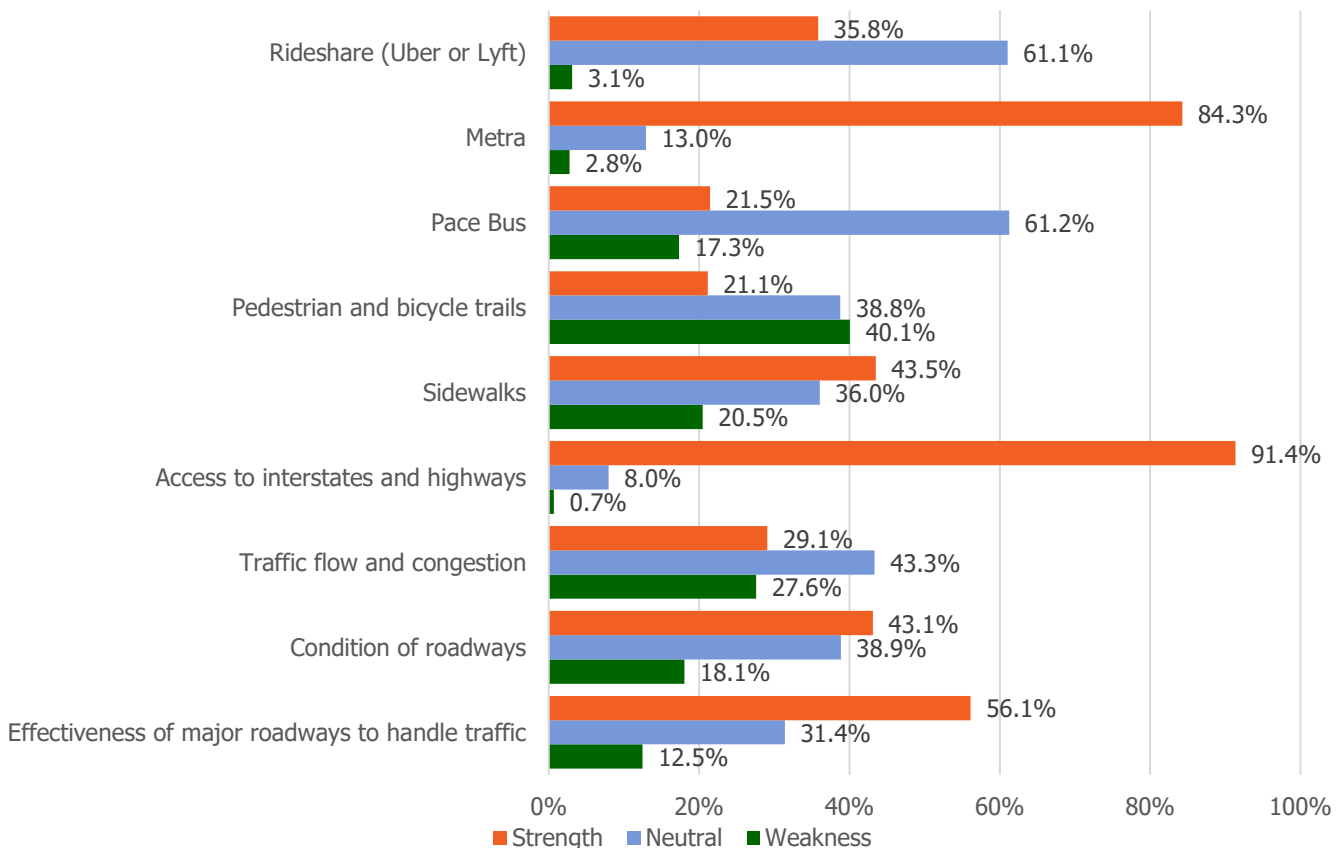
Many respondents were pleased with Downers Grove's connectivity to the surrounding regions. A resounding 91% felt that access to interstates and highways was a strength. Public transportation options received mixed reviews, with Metra being the most favorable option (84% strength) and Pace Bus receiving fewer positive responses (21% strength).

Speeding vehicles and pedestrian and cyclist safety were the greatest concerns among respondents. About 43% of respondents viewed sidewalks as a strength. But 40% felt that pedestrian and bicycle trails were a weakness, suggesting that improvements for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are needed. It is important to note that percentages will not add up to 100 as respondents could select up to three options.

What concerns you most about traveling within and around Downers Grove? (Select 3)



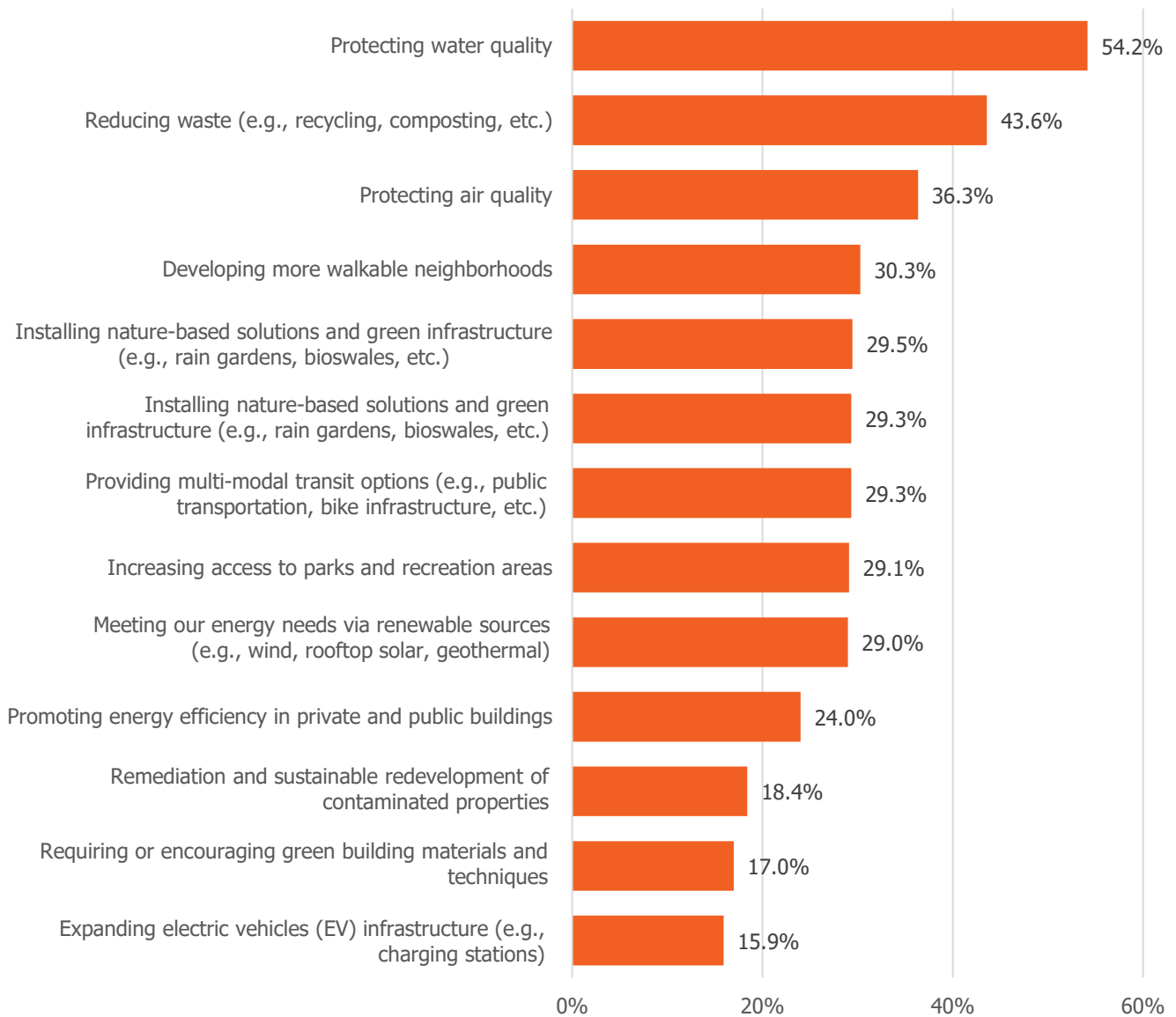
When considering existing transportation networks, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness today



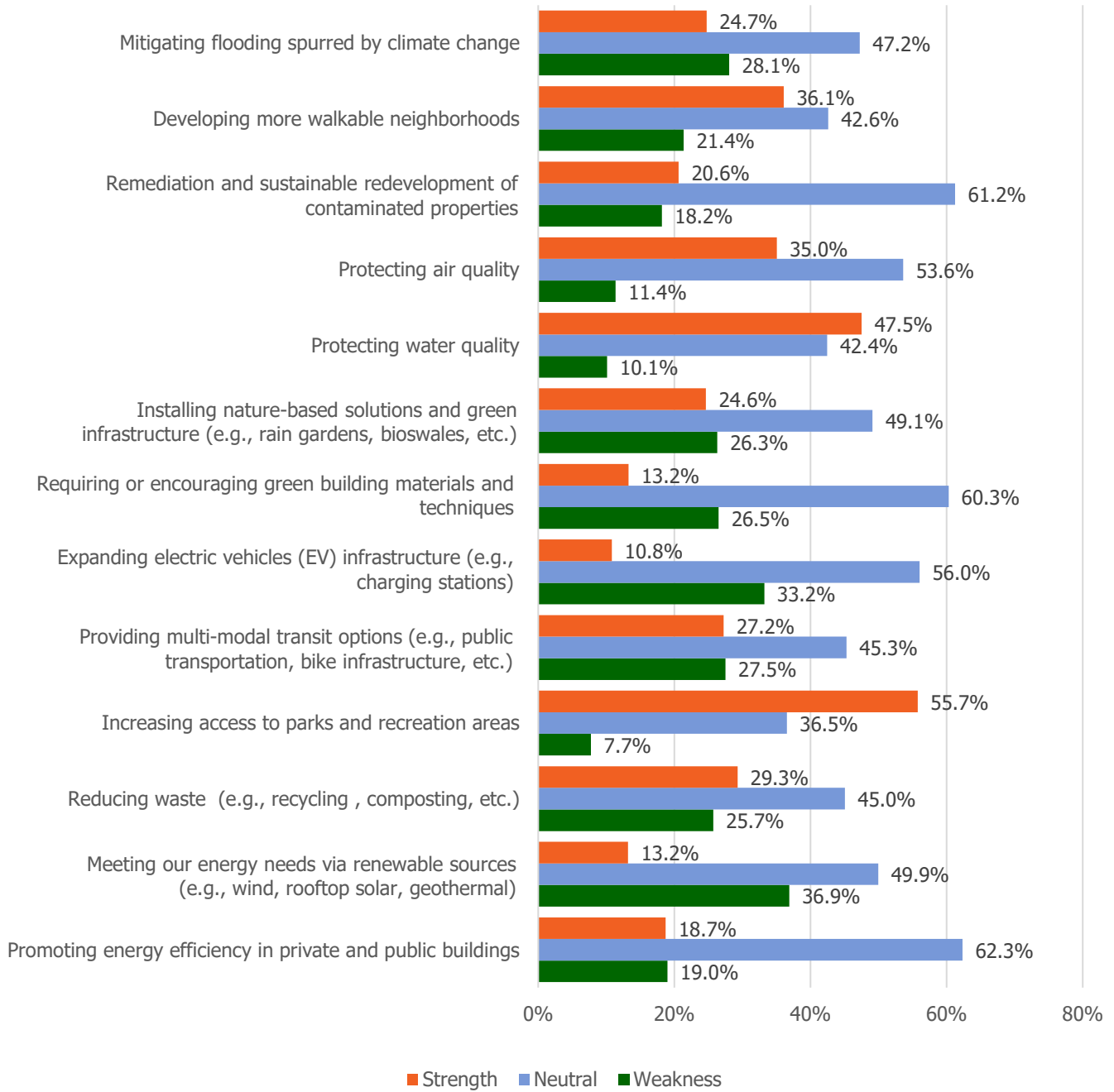
Sustainability Initiatives

When asked about the most important actions to create a more sustainable Downers Grove, respondents felt that protecting water quality (54%), reducing waste (44%), and protecting air quality (36%) should be prioritized. Respondents commended the community’s existing efforts to increase access to parks and recreation areas (56% strength) and protect water quality (47% strength). The survey also revealed gaps in existing initiatives to meet energy needs via renewable sources (37% weakness), expand electric vehicles infrastructure (33% weakness), and provide multi-modal transit options (27% weakness). It is important to note that percentages will not add up to 100 as respondents could select up to three options.

What are the most important actions in creating a more sustainable community? (Select 3)



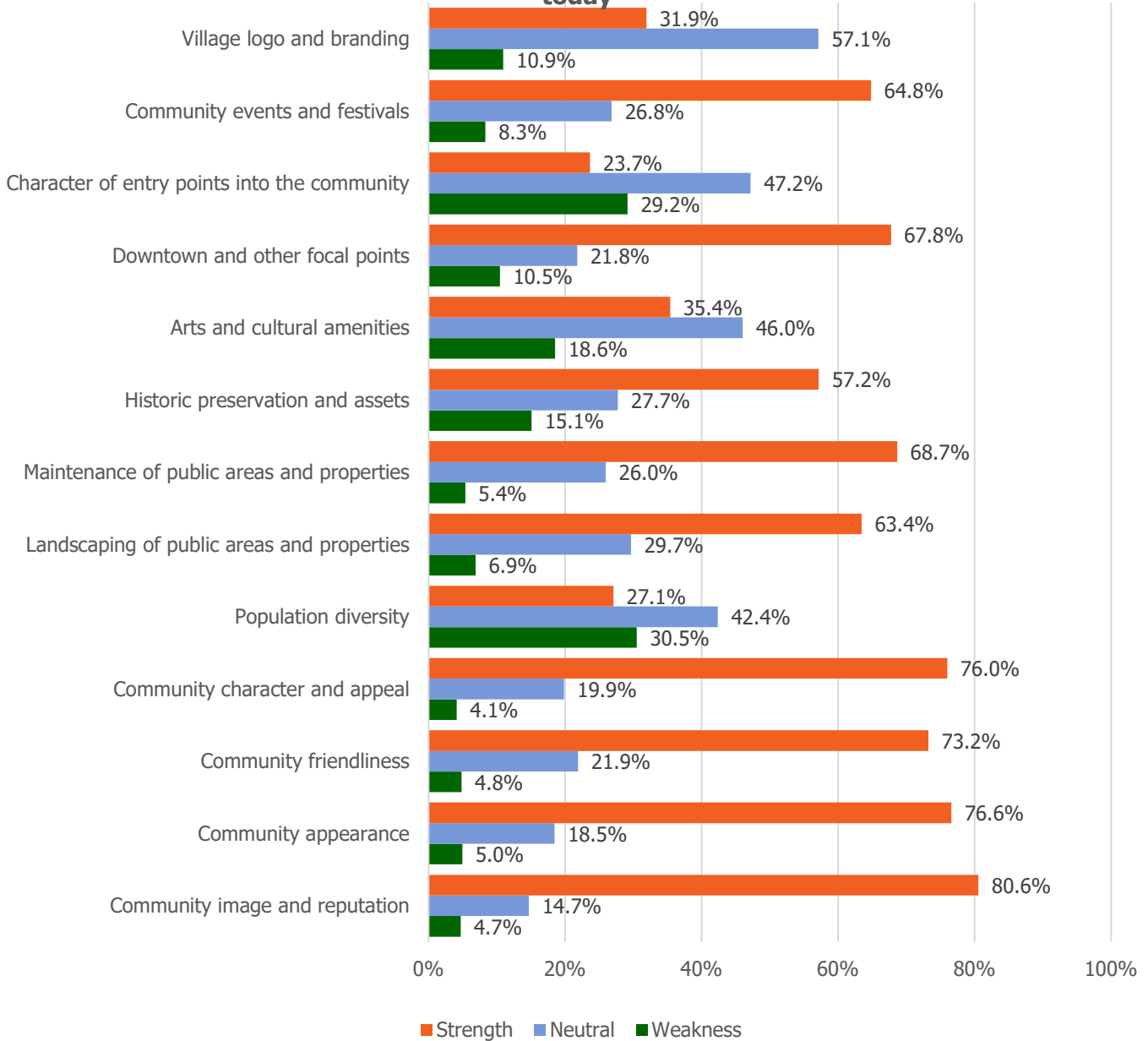
When considering existing sustainability efforts, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the community today



Character and Perception

The survey highlighted a strong sense of community pride in Downers Grove. Over 73% of respondents expressed positive views on the community's image, appearance, character, and friendliness. Respondents were also generally satisfied with the maintenance of public areas and the overall look of the Downtown and other focal points. The most significant concern was population diversity, with nearly a third of respondents (31%) identifying it as a weakness. The character of entry points into the Village also garnered a notable number of negative responses (29%).

When considering the community's existing image and identity, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the community today



Top Strengths and Weaknesses

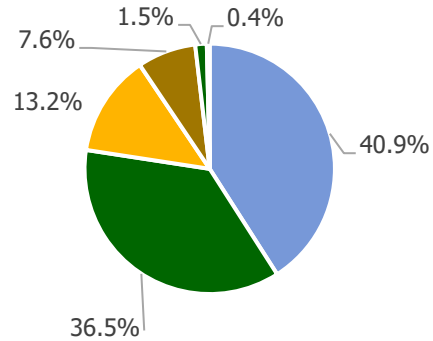
The Top Strengths and Weaknesses section of the online survey asked which topics respondents would consider the top strength and weakness of Downers Grove. The choices include:

- o Housing and Residential Areas
- o Commercial and Industrial Areas
- o Community Facilities and Services
- o Transportation
- o Sustainability Initiatives
- o Character and Perception

Survey respondents gave high marks to Downers Grove’s character and perception, with over 40% ranking it as the top strength. Housing and residential areas came in a close second at 37%. However, sustainability initiatives were seen as the greatest weakness, comprising 32% of responses. Commercial and industrial areas (18%) followed as areas for improvement.

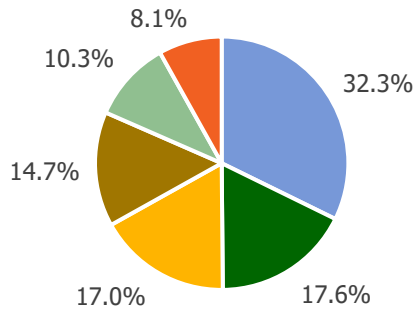
Despite these concerns, the survey showed high overall satisfaction with Downers Grove. A combined 94% of respondents reported feeling very satisfied or satisfied with their quality of life in the community.

Of the topics discussed, which is the community's greatest strength?



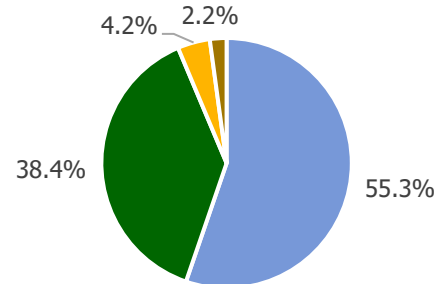
Character and Perception	40.1%
Housing and Residential	36.5%
Community Facilities and Services	13.2%
Transportation	7.6%
Commercial and Industrial	1.5%
Sustainability Initiatives	0.4%

Of the topics discussed, which is the community's greatest weakness?



Sustainability Initiatives	32.3%
Commercial and Industrial	17.6%
Housing and Residential	17.0%
Transportation	14.7%
Community Facilities and Services	10.3%
Character and Perception	8.1%

Are you satisfied with the overall quality of life in the community?



Very satisfied	38.4%
Satisfied	55.3%
Dissatisfied	4.2%
Very dissatisfied	2.2%

Business Community Survey

Participants to date: 195

A separate Business Community Survey was developed for the business community in Downers Grove. This survey explored the challenges and opportunities businesses face throughout the community, along with the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current business environment. Business owners were asked to weigh in on the impact of potential commercial, industrial, and residential developments on their operations.

Of the 195 respondents, 76 individuals (39%) identified as a member of the local business community. Among these individuals, more than half reported that their business has been in Downers Grove for more than 10 years (62%) or in operation for more than 10 years (67%). When asked about the impact of various improvements on operating a local business, respondents favored increased support for local businesses (63%) as the most beneficial, followed by improved appearances along major roadways (36%) and financial incentives or funding mechanisms (36%). Residential development and stricter code enforcement received the lowest percentage of responses, 10% and 19%, respectively. Regarding specific development types, respondents expressed that apartments (35% negative), hotels (22% negative), and gas stations (36% negative) would have a negative impact on the community. On the other hand, restaurants (77% positive), retail stores (82% positive) and single-family homes (68% positive) were well received.

Respondents of the business community survey felt that the greatest strengths of the community were its character (83%), proximity to public transportation (64%), and access to higher education (60%). The top weaknesses were parking availability (40%), taxes/tax rates (30%), and municipal permitting and approval (28%). Overall, more than half (54%) believed that the business community has improved in the past 10 years. While there were mixed opinions on business relocation from Downers Grove, about 44% of respondents planned on remaining in the community. A small share (14%) expressed that they would move their business, while 43% stated that they didn't know.

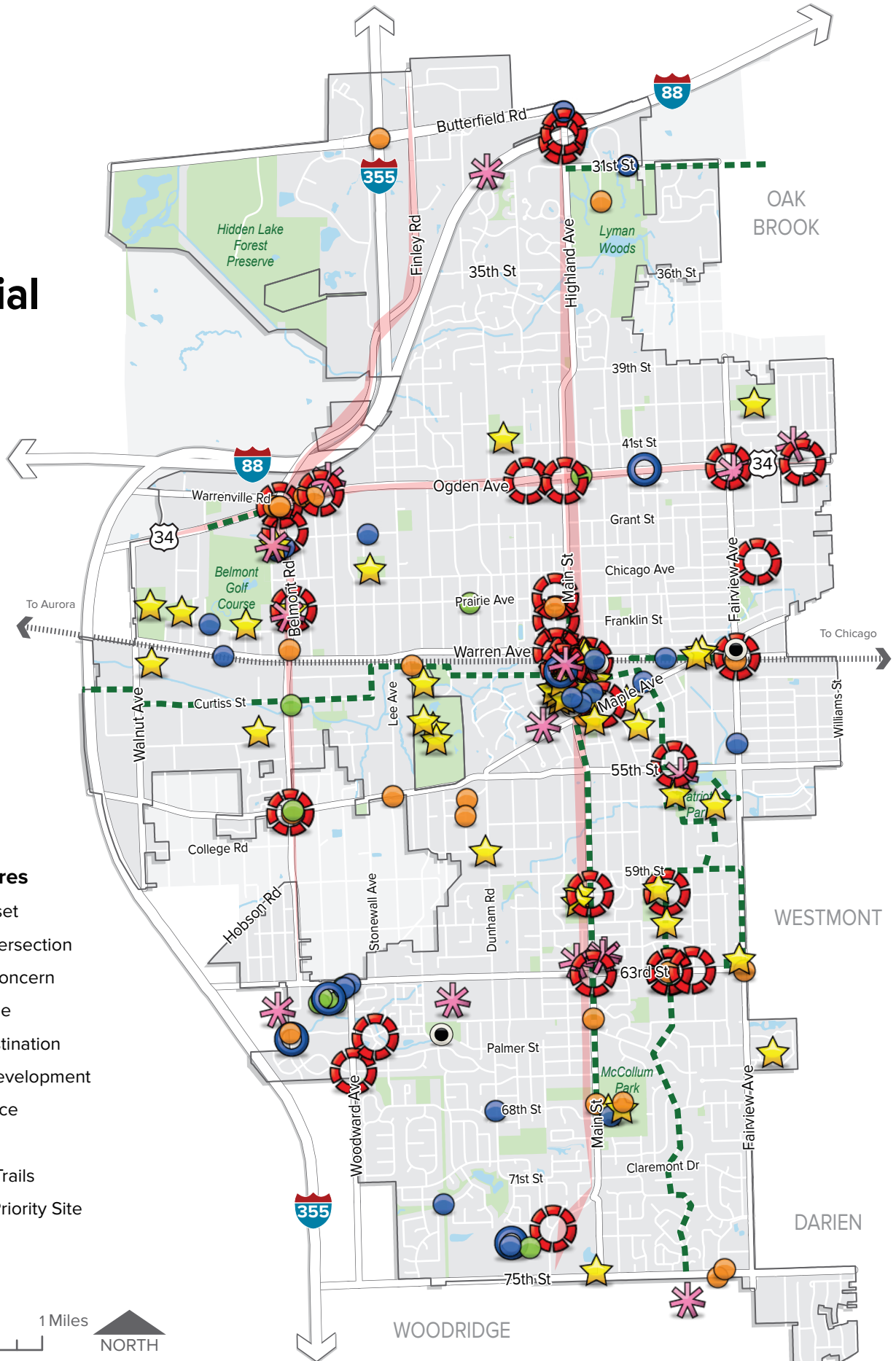
map.social

Data points added to date: 235

map.social is an online mapping tool that allows participants to pinpoint issues and opportunities in Downers Grove on their own personalized map. Points can be used to identify the Village's assets and opportunities, such as public services, priority development sites, new bike routes and paths, and desired uses and developments. Site users can also place points on the map to identify issues such as problematic intersections, poor building appearance, and public safety concerns. The map on the next page utilizes the actual data from map.social participants. By identifying issues and highlights within the community, residents are offering firsthand information in regard to the Village. These data points will be incorporated into recommendations further on into the planning process.

map.social

As of 06/11/2024



map.social Features

- Community Asset
- Problematic Intersection
- Public Safety Concern
- Undesirable Use
- Key Transit Destination
- Desired Use/Development
- Poor Appearance
- Other
- Bikeways and Trails
- Development Priority Site



Key Takeaways

The Guiding DG planning process will continue to explore the topics shown below to improve the quality of life, enhance sustainability, and maintain a healthy mix of residential and commercial districts. The key takeaways presented below are based on feedback received during stakeholder workshops and responses from the community survey. Community input is an element of the existing conditions and part of several data points to be used moving forward. The input will be vetted together with the existing conditions data analysis, Village Council direction, and review of best practices to develop the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals, and recommendations.

- **Housing.** Participant feedback up to this time has included concerns about the amount of diverse housing available, particularly affordable housing available for low-income residents, senior citizens, and young professionals. The Comprehensive Plan process can explore allowing housing options beyond single-family detached housing, such as duplexes, townhomes, and multifamily development, that can help bring in more housing units and options that are attainable for the community.
- **Trails.** Outreach participants expressed the need for additional trails and bike lanes to be incorporated into the design of new residential neighborhoods so that residents have the option to walk or bike to their destinations. Trails and bike lanes can promote a healthy lifestyle for residents, giving them the option to walk or bike rather than driving to their destinations.
- **Village Zoning.** Several Village stakeholders mentioned the complicated zoning processes, particularly when it comes to businesses. The planning process can continue to delve into this topic to understand the identified challenges and determine if they are related to the zoning process and/or other aspects of the entitlement process, including building codes, life safety codes and Health Department requirements.
- **Recreational Facilities.** Both the Downers Grove Park District and the DuPage County Forest Preserve District provide existing trails for community members to recreate and actively engage with nature. However, it was noted during stakeholder outreach that there is limited opportunity for recreational trail development. Additionally, stakeholders expressed the need to improve connectivity between existing parks and County trails to support seamless access to recreational opportunities.
- **Recreational Facilities.** The Downers Grove Park District oversees and maintains a substantial amount of open space and various recreational amenities. Through stakeholder outreach efforts, a clear consensus emerged regarding the community's desire for increased green space and gathering areas. Notably, stakeholders brought attention to the significant potential of underutilized Park District blacktop sites, advocating for their conversion into vibrant green spaces such as pocket parks.
- **Public Infrastructure.** The Village's stormwater is directed through a system of pipes, ditches, and detention ponds before it enters one of the three primary creeks in town - Lacey Creek, St. Joseph Creek and Prentiss Creek. The Village is also responsible for setting standards to manage the stormwater effects of new construction and new/existing structures within Floodplains and Localized Poor Drainage Areas (LPDA). A Stormwater Utility Fee was established in 2012 to provide dedicated funding for some of these stormwater management improvement projects and yearly maintenance activities. Approximately every five years, the Village provides a summary of all major capital projects planned for the consecutive five years as part of its Community Investment Program (CIP). During community outreach, participants expressed apprehensions regarding the Village's sustainability initiatives. Specifically, there is a perception that stormwater management is lacking, and sustainability efforts overall are seen as the Village's primary weakness.
- **Community Character.** In response to the Community Survey, residents viewed all community services and facilities positively by mostly significant margins. Additionally, a combined 94% of respondents reported feeling very satisfied with their quality of life in the community.
- **Community Character.** Many outreach participants noted that the character of the Village is something they value tremendously. Community character can mean different things to different people; using visioning exercises the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan can help uncover a vision for the community that describes the community character.

SECTION 3

PAST PLANS, STUDIES, AND REPORTS SUMMARY

A thorough review of the Village’s existing and past plans, studies, and reports was conducted to gain a better understanding of prior Village initiatives, assessments, and objectives. Understanding the purpose and results of these documents provides important insight into what has already been studied and recommended for the Village. As conditions change over time, the relevance of some documents is lessened while some components of other documents continue to provide community direction and remain representative of community aspirations. As part of inventorying and understanding existing conditions, a review of these documents is essential. A summary of reviewed documents follows.

Past Plan Applicability to the Comprehensive Plan

The matrix below illustrates how the past plans, studies, and reports discussed in this section are related to the Comprehensive Plan. **Primary Topic** indicates that the plan will directly relate to the topic that will be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan and that will provide guidance for future recommendations. **Secondary Topic** indicates that the plan may indirectly relate to a Comprehensive Plan topic and should be reviewed to provide additional context and direction.

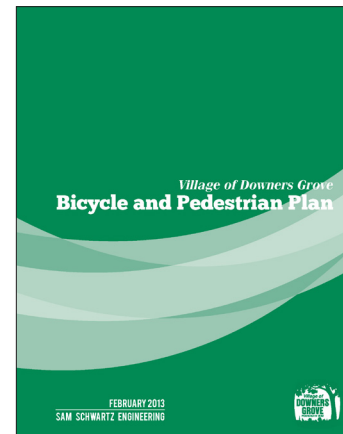
Plans, Studies, and Reports	Land Use	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Mobility	Community Facilities and Infrastructure
Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2013)	Secondary Topic		Secondary Topic	Primary Topic	
Comprehensive Plan (2017)	Primary Topic	Primary Topic	Primary Topic	Primary Topic	Primary Topic
Downtown Design Guidelines (2021)		Secondary Topic	Secondary Topic	Secondary Topic	
DGEDC Economic Development Strategic Plan (2022-2026)	Primary Topic		Primary Topic		
Greenest Region Compact Report (2023)	Secondary Topic		Secondary Topic	Secondary Topic	Primary Topic
CMAQ Butterfield Road Corridor Plan (2024)	Primary Topic	Primary Topic	Primary Topic	Primary Topic	Primary Topic

- Primary Topic
- Secondary Topic

Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2013)

In 2013, the Village was awarded a Community Planning Program grant by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to update the previous bicycle plan from 2000. The purpose of this update was to ensure the Village would be using best practices to plan and manage its transportation system, specifically for non-motorized trips. The major elements of the plan update included creating goals, identifying key findings, and developing achievable recommendations. The Plan's goals included:

- o Improving mobility and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians
- o Improving the pedestrian experience in Downtown
- o Encouraging reduction in car trips by using non-motorized means of transportation
- o Improving connections to regional bike routes
- o Completing the sidewalk network
- o Being recognized as a "Bicycle Friendly Community"



The Plan can be found [here](#).

Relevance to the New Comprehensive Plan

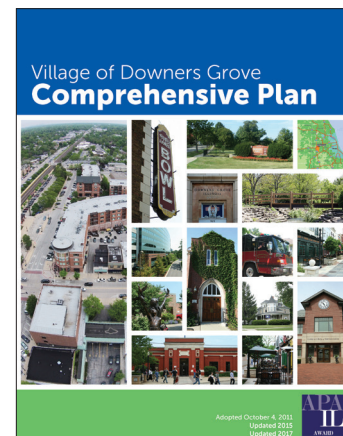
The recommendations from the 2013 Bike and Pedestrian Plan will guide the development of the new Bike and Pedestrian Plan, shaping its content and direction. Subsequently, these updates will be integrated into the Transportation and Mobility chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan (2017)

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan set forth guidance for the development of the Village until 2031, offering various policy recommendations for land use, residential development, commercial areas, transportation, parks and open space, and community facilities. The Plan's overarching goals included fostering vibrant neighborhoods through diverse housing options, promoting a thriving Downtown via mixed-use development, ensuring sustainability through low-impact design practices, stimulating commercial growth along key corridors, and preserving parks through a range of policy measures.

Relevance to the New Comprehensive Plan

The Project Team will review the 2017 update and determine the relevancy of recommendations and observations to inform the upcoming Comprehensive Plan. It will consider both the suggestions made in 2017 and the results of the current planning process to create a clear vision for the Village.

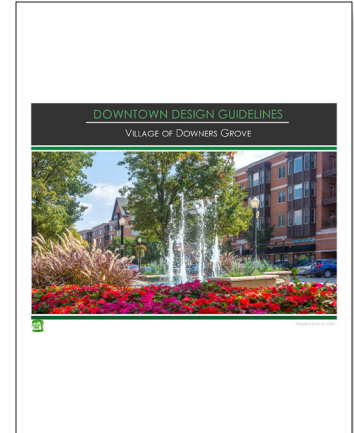


The Plan can be found [here](#).

Downtown Design Guidelines (2021)

Downers Grove adopted the Village's Downtown Design Guidelines in 2021 to shape the design of new construction, renovations, and expansions in the Downtown area. These guidelines aimed to foster a vibrant and diverse Downtown while providing direction for development for the three zoning districts located in the Downtown:

- o **Downtown Core**, which prioritizes a lively and compact hub for shopping, dining, and entertainment with residential spaces above, emphasizing a walkable environment.
- o **Downtown Business**, which focuses on a mix of uses and high-quality development adjacent to the Downtown Core, with denser commercial activity and residential neighborhoods.
- o **Downtown Transition**, which is aimed at facilitating a smooth transition between the Downtown Core or Downtown Business districts and nearby residential areas to prevent excessive downtown development from encroaching on residential spaces.



The Plan can be found [here](#).

Relevance to the New Comprehensive Plan

The Downtown Design Guidelines should provide guidance for strategies related to Downtown development.

DGEDC Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (2021)

Downers Grove boasts a substantial commercial sector spanning from Butterfield Road to the north, I-355 to the west, 75th Street to the south, and the Westmont border to the east. The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan aims to fortify the economic vitality of the Village and embrace the economic landscape by retaining, expanding, and attracting businesses that enhance the community's quality of life. The Plan's core objectives were:

- o Promote and facilitate business attraction to Downers Grove.
- o Promote and facilitate the retention and expansion of businesses in Downers Grove.
- o Promote and facilitate development tools and programs, including those identified in the Village's Comprehensive Plan and Long-Range Plan.
- o Promote and facilitate travel, dining, and entertainment spending in Downers Grove with an emphasis on overnight stays.
- o Facilitate the dissemination of information on workforce development programs to existing and prospective businesses.
- o Cultivate a diverse local economy.



The Plan can be found [here](#).

Relevance to the New Comprehensive Plan

The DGEDC Economic Development Strategic Plan should provide guidance for strategies related to economic development in the Village.

Greenest Region Compact Report (2023)

In March 2023, the Village of Downers Grove issued the Greenest Region Compact Report, a comprehensive assessment of its sustainability initiatives in comparison to the goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the Greenest Region Compact (GRC) Framework. The GRC Framework comprised 49 high-level goals across ten sustainability categories including climate, economic development, energy, land, leadership, mobility, municipal operations, sustainable communities, water, and waste and recycling. The report highlighted strong alignment in categories such as land, water, waste and recycling, and mobility, but identifies areas needing improvement in climate, energy, sustainable communities, and leadership. At the time, the Village’s actions and efforts supported:

- o 94 percent of the GRC Goals (46 of 49 Goals Supported)
- o 57 percent of GRC Objectives (180 of 315 Objectives Supported)
- o 51 percent of GRC Strategies (53 of 104 Strategies Supported)

Relevance to the New Comprehensive Plan

The Greenest Region Compact Report should provide guidance for strategies related to sustainable development and the Environmental Sustainability Plan in the Village.

Butterfield Road Corridor Plan (2024)

The Butterfield Road Corridor Plan, developed in collaboration with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), Lombard, Oak Brook, and the DuPage County Department of Transportation, addressed the evolution of the vital east-west arterial route linking Chicago to the western suburbs. Serving as a regional retail and employment hub, the corridor has undergone changes due to shifts in retail and office dynamics and recent residential growth. The plan aimed to create a shared vision for the corridor’s future resilience by focusing on four key goals:

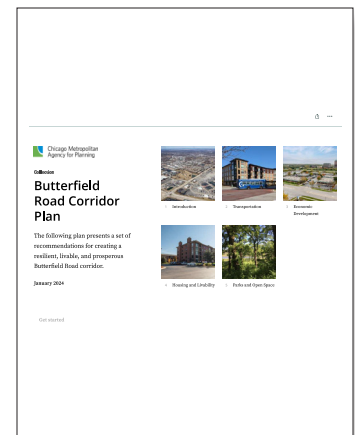
- o Support multi-modal transportation options to accommodate safe regional vehicular, public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle movement.
- o Ensure that the Butterfield Road corridor is resilient to changing commercial and office market conditions.
- o Ensure that residents and employees of the corridor have access to parks and open space.
- o Maintain quality of life for the corridor’s residents and ensure access to businesses and jobs.

Relevance to the New Comprehensive Plan

The Butterfield Corridor Plan should provide guidance for strategies related to transportation, economic development, housing and livability, and parks and open space.



The Plan can be found [here](#).



The Plan can be found [here](#).

Key Takeaways

Past plans, studies, and reports provide an overview of the Village’s aspirations and needs over time. The key takeaways based on the summary are listed below.

- The review of the Village’s past plans and reports provides crucial insights into previous initiatives and objectives, helping to identify which components remain relevant and continue to guide community aspirations.
- The Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2013) focused on improving mobility, safety, and connectivity for non-motorized transportation and will inform the new Comprehensive Plan’s Transportation and Mobility chapter.
- The Comprehensive Plan (2017) intended to shape Village development until 2031 and has recommendations on land use, housing, commercial growth, and sustainability that will be evaluated for their relevance to the new Comprehensive Plan.
- The Downtown Design Guidelines (2021) shaped development in the Downtown area, promoting a vibrant, walkable environment, and will guide strategies related to Downtown development in the new Comprehensive Plan.
- The DGEDC Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (2021) focused on business attraction, retention, and economic diversification, providing a foundation for the new Comprehensive Plan’s economic development strategies.
- The Greenest Region Compact Report (2023) assessed the Village’s sustainability efforts, highlighting strong alignment with the GRC goals, and will guide sustainable development strategies in the new Comprehensive Plan.
- The Butterfield Road Corridor Plan (2024) emphasized multi-modal transportation, market resilience, and quality of life along the Butterfield Road corridor and will inform strategies related to transportation, economic development, and housing in the new Comprehensive Plan.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND MARKET

Demographic Profile

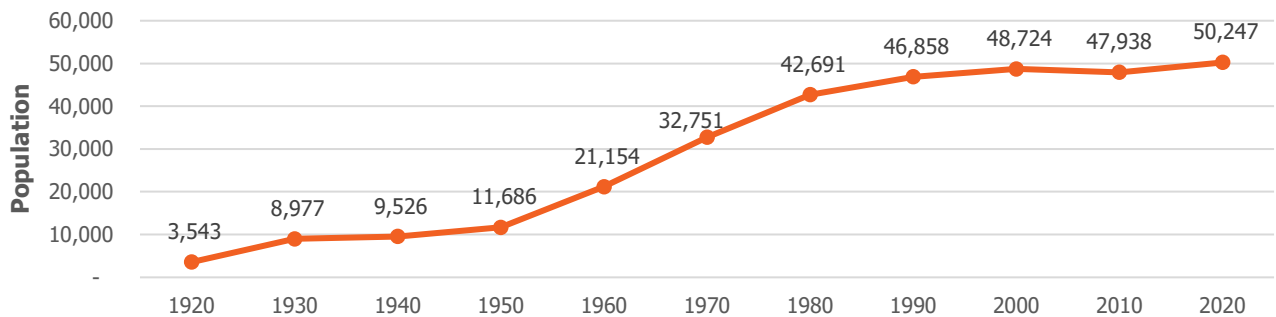
The Demographic Profile examines current characteristics of the Village of Downers Grove population. U.S. Census data was retrieved from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates as well as the Decennial Survey. Observing and analyzing these characteristics allows Village leaders to look at trends and patterns within the community, enabling Downers Grove to better respond to the community’s needs, provide necessary services, and predict future demands. The collected demographic information will inform the Comprehensive Plan to ensure it addresses existing trends, issues, and opportunities.

To understand these trends better, comparison data from DuPage County was used to give context to how Downers Grove compares in the region.

Population

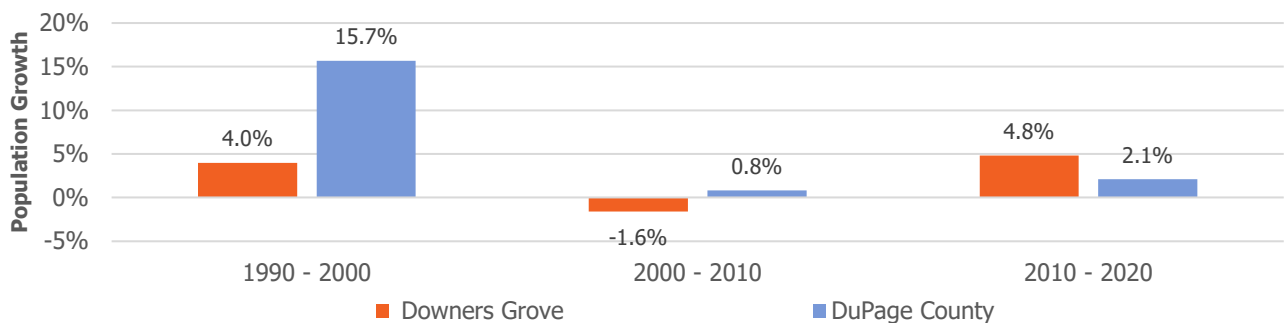
The demographic analysis starts with an examination of Downers Grove’s current population and some of the trends that have brought Downers Grove to where it is today. Since 1950, the population of Downers Grove has more than quadrupled from over 11,000 to 50,247 in 2020 according to the U.S. Decennial Census. The population has changed significantly over time with the largest increases happening in the periods from 1920 to 1930 and 1950 to 1960. However, population growth has slowed over the past 20 years. Between 2000 and 2010 the population shrank at a rate of -1.6% and the growth from 2010 to 2022 was only 4.3%. DuPage County has seen similar population trends to Downers Grove, having grown steadily since 1960 but slowing in recent years.

**Population Over Time
Downers Grove (1920 - 2022)**



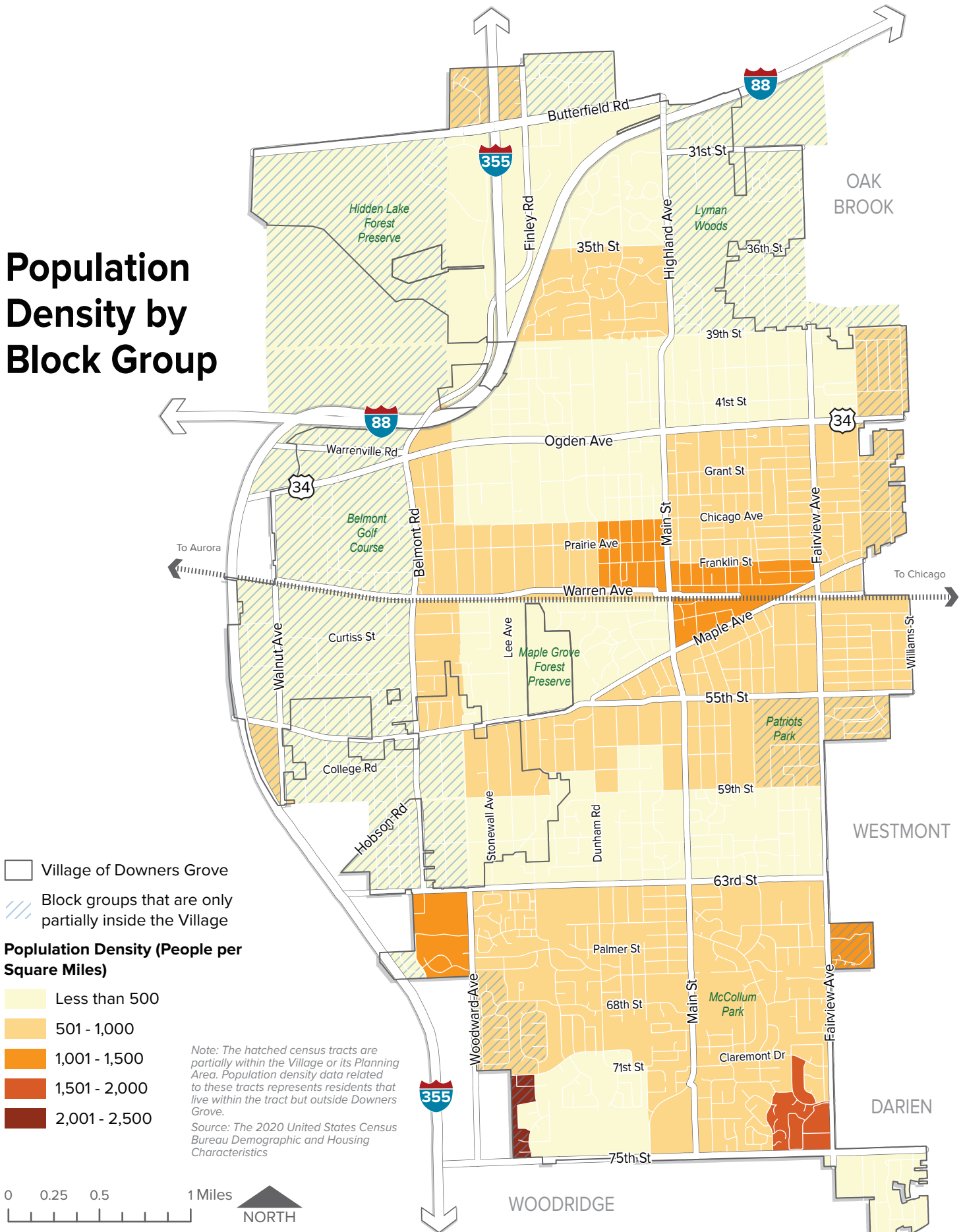
Source: U.S. Decennial Census

**10-Year Population Growth Rates
(1990 - 2022)**



Source: U.S. Decennial Census and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Population Density by Block Group



Age

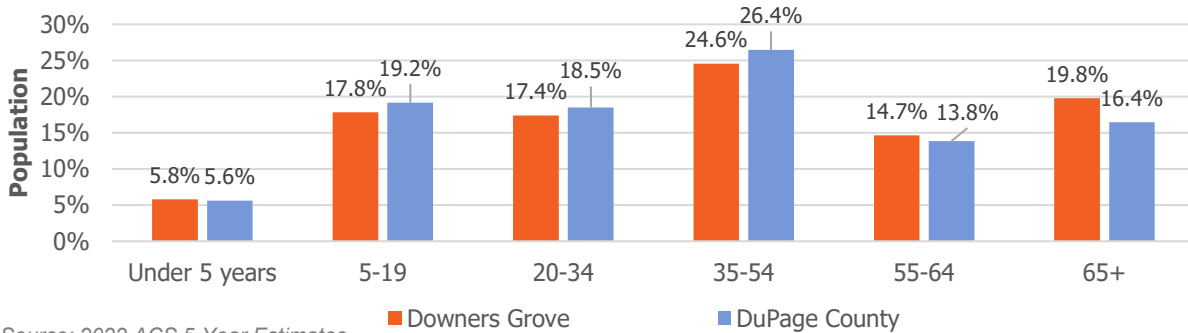
Age is an important factor that needs to be considered when evaluating a community’s population trends. Age influences how people interact with their community and can determine a person’s educational attainment, employment, and needs and preferences related to services, housing, transportation, and amenities.

As of 2022, Downers Grove’s median age was 42.6 years, slightly older than DuPage County which had a median age of 39.9 years. Compared to the 2010 median ages of 41.9 and 37.4 years, respectively, the average age is rising for both the Village and the County.

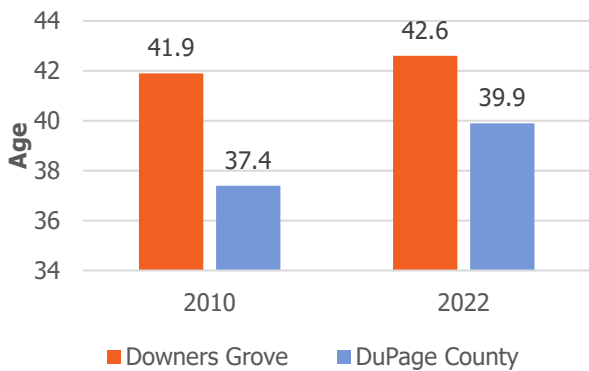
The age distributions for Downers Grove and DuPage County are similar. The most populous age group is the 35- to 54-year-olds followed by those aged 65+ and the 5- to 19-year-olds group. In the Village, residents aged 35-54 comprise almost 25% of the population, the 65+ age group comprises almost 20%, and the 5-19 age group makes up almost 18% of the population. About 35% of Downers Grove’s population would qualify for a typical 55+ age-restricted community, which is about 5% higher than that of the county.

Between 2010 and 2022, the Downers Grove population grew by 4.3%. The age groups that grew the most were those aged 65+ (increase of 38.2%), followed by those under 5 (increase of 17.4%) and those aged 55-64 (increase of 17.2%). The growing 65+ population has contributed to rising median age. DuPage County experienced more growth in its older population between 2010 and 2022, with those 65+ growing by 52.0% and those 55-64 growing by over 22%. The population of all groups younger than 55 years either shrank or stayed the same. The 35- to 54-year old age group experienced the largest decrease, shrinking by 17.3%. These trends mirror conditions seen nationally as the Baby Boomer generation ages.

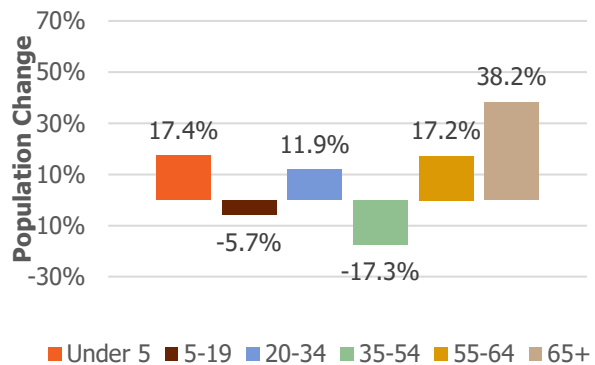
Age Distribution (2022)



Median Age Over Time (2010 - 2022)



Population Change by Age Group (2010-2022)

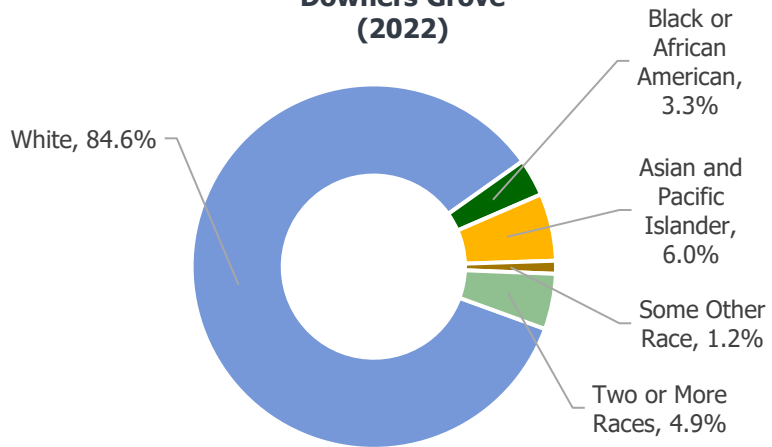


Race and Ethnicity

Looking at Downers Grove's racial and ethnic composition provides important insights for planning. The population of Downers Grove is predominantly white (almost 85%). The next most predominant groups are Asian and Pacific Islander (6.0%) and Black or African American (3.3%). Only 5.5% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino an ethnicity that includes individuals of all races as defined by the U.S. Census. Downers Grove is less diverse than DuPage County. While the population is still majority white (70.0%), the Asian and Pacific Islander population is higher at 12.6%, as is the Black or African American population at 4.9%. Additionally, those identifying as Some Other Race or Two or More Races represent over 11% of the population. Almost 15% of the DuPage population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

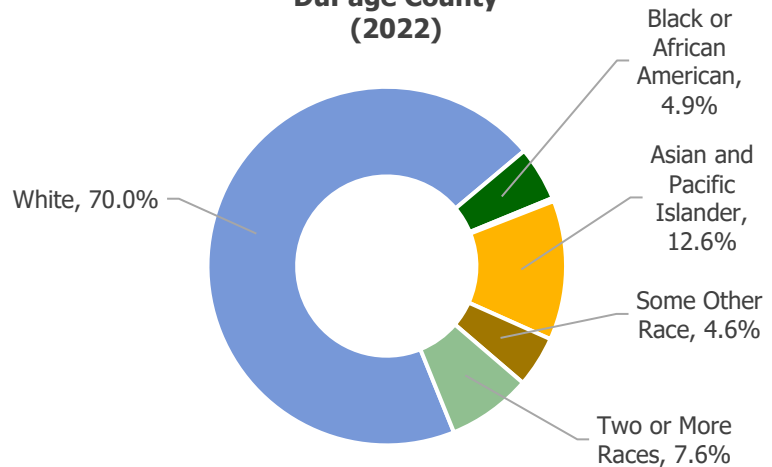
Compared to Downers Grove's racial and ethnic composition in 2010, the Village has become more diverse over the past 12 years. Between 2010 and 2022, the share of the population that is white shrunk by 1.3%, the Asian and Pacific Islander share grew by 1.2%, the Black or African American share grew by 0.5%, the share of those identifying as some other race shrunk by 0.6%, and the share of those identifying as two or more races grew by 4.6%. The Hispanic and Latino share of the population grew by 5.7%. These population changes reflect similar trends to that of DuPage County overall.

**Racial and Ethnic Composition
Downers Grove
(2022)**



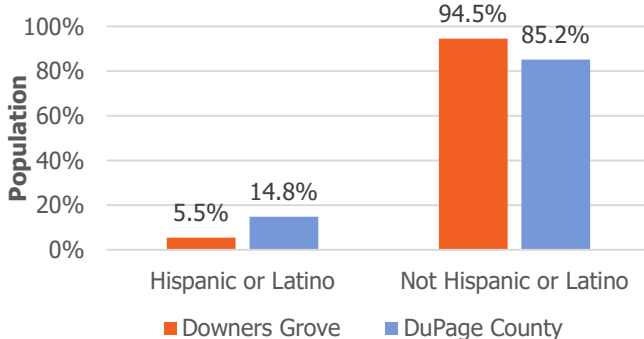
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Racial and Ethnic Composition
DuPage County
(2022)**



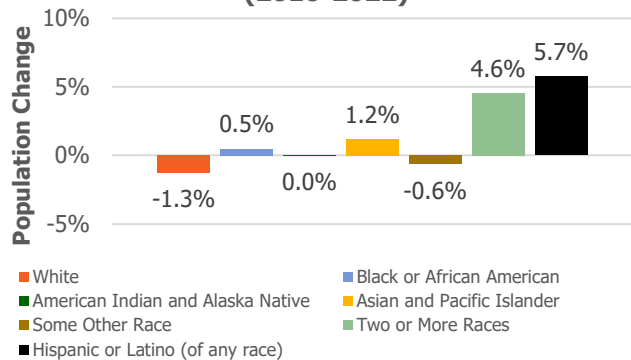
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Ethnicity Makeup
(2022)**



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Change in Racial and Ethnic
Composition Over Time
(2010-2022)**

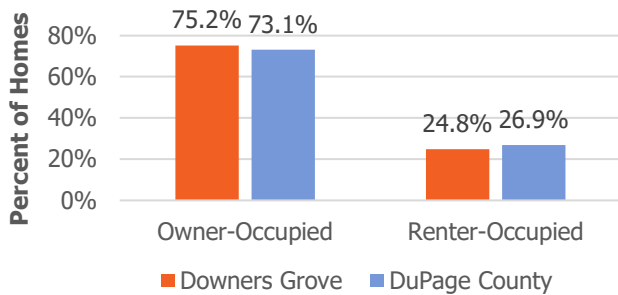


Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing

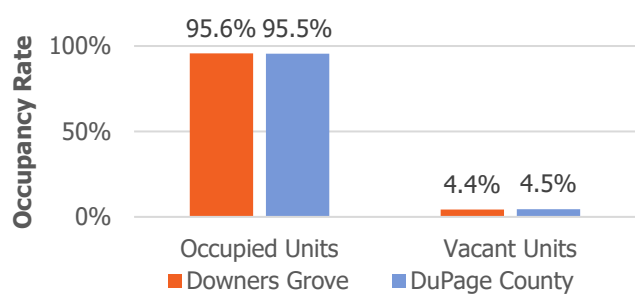
Examining housing trends reveals important issues and informs recommendations and decisions for meeting housing needs and encouraging different housing options. Downers Grove has over 20,000 housing units which are nearly all occupied (95.6%). Of the occupied housing units, 75.2% are owner-occupied and 24.8% are renter-occupied. This is mostly consistent with DuPage County: 73.1% and 26.9% for owner-occupied and renter-occupied tenure, respectively. Most of the Village's housing stock is made up of single-family detached homes (62.7%), slightly higher than DuPage County (58.7%). The second most popular housing type within both Downers Grove and DuPage County is multifamily, with most multifamily buildings comprised of ten dwelling units or more. At 86.8%, the bulk of the Village's housing stock was built in the 20th century or earlier. The most common construction decade for Downers Grove homes is the 1970s at 23.7%. This is largely on par with housing ages in DuPage County overall. However, more of the Village's housing stock has been built in the years since 2010 than that of DuPage County, indicating that the home construction industry has been more active in Downers Grove in recent years than the County average.

Housing Tenure (2022)



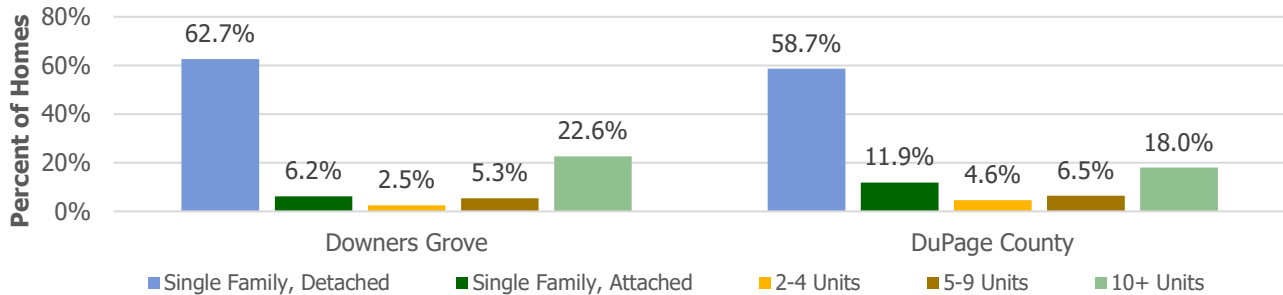
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Occupied and Vacant Housing Units (2022)



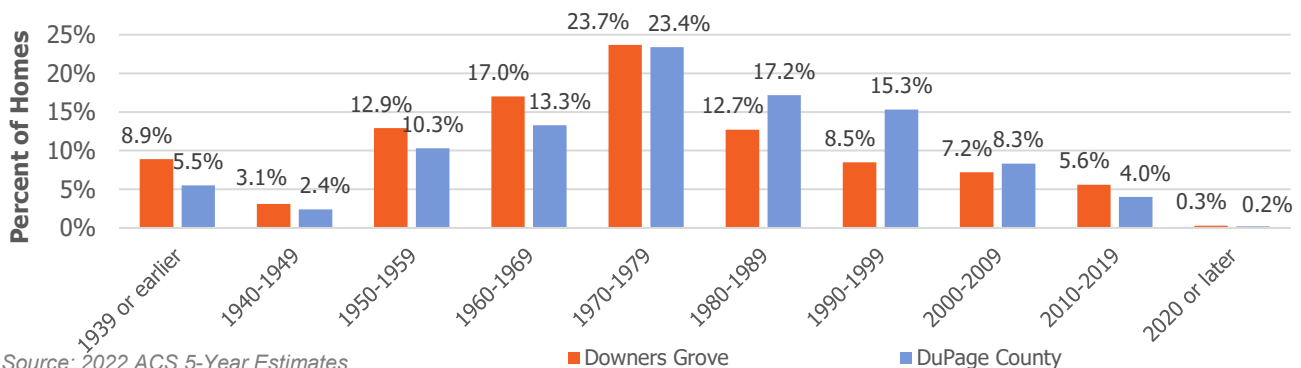
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing by Building Type (2022)



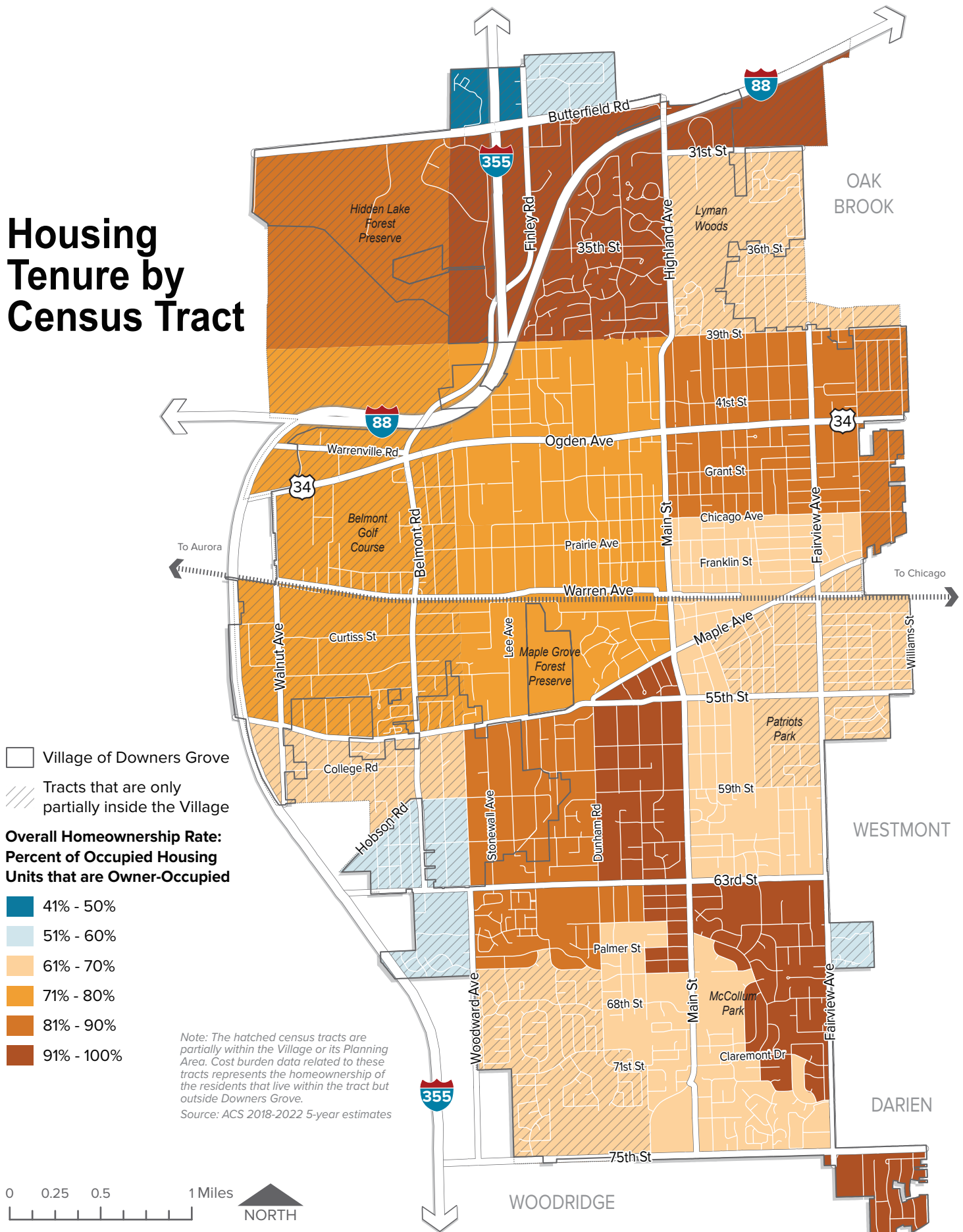
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing by Year Built (2022)



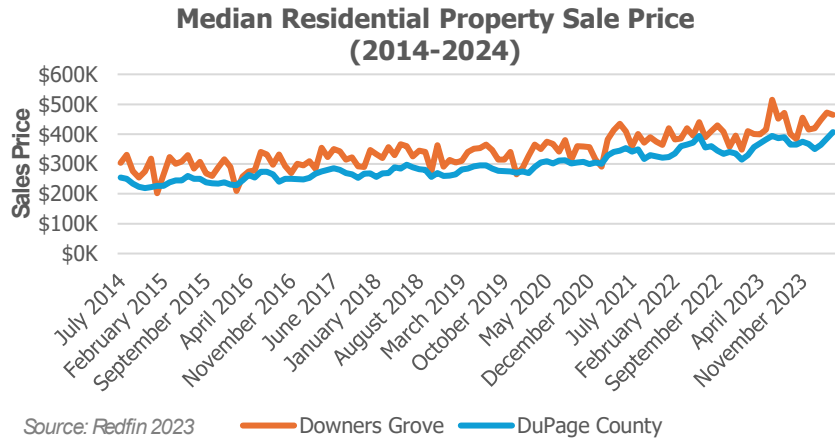
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Tenure by Census Tract



Median Housing Price

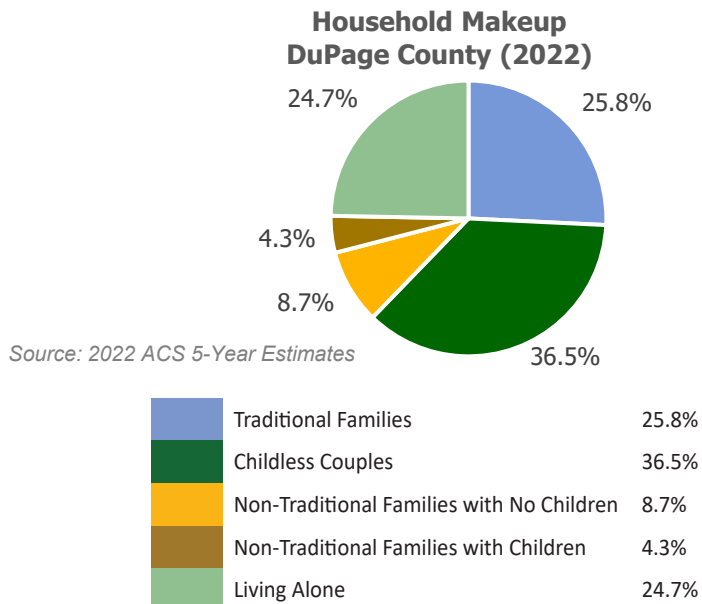
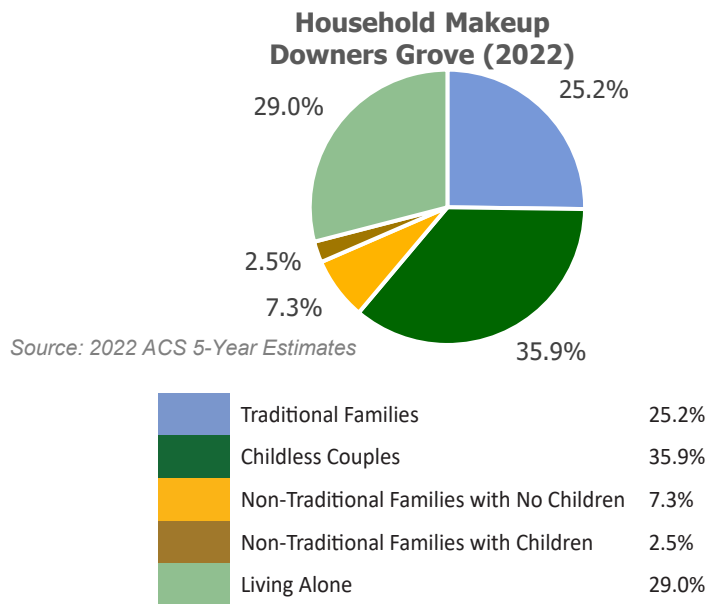
Over the past 10 years, the median sale price for homes in Downers Grove has fluctuated but consistently stayed above the median sales price for DuPage County. As of April 2024, homes in Downers Grove sold for a median price of \$464,500, which is 13.3% higher than the median price in DuPage County. Since the adoption of the previous comprehensive plan update in 2017, the median sales price in Downers Grove has risen significantly, marking a 28.9% increase. This trend underscores the growing value and desirability of homes in Downers Grove.



Household Makeup

In 2022, the most common type of household in the Village is couples living without children at 35.9%, around 700 households. At 29.0%, the second most common type of household is living alone group, with nearly 15% being households of individuals 65 years or older living alone. About 28% of households in Downers Grove are family households consisting of married couples or single parents with children. The makeup of the Village's household types is largely similar to that of DuPage County.

Collectively, data reflect a broader national trend of a growing share of childless households. This trend is likely to put pressure on the housing market to adapt to residents' changing desires, in which a greater number of smaller households will create a larger demand for smaller units.

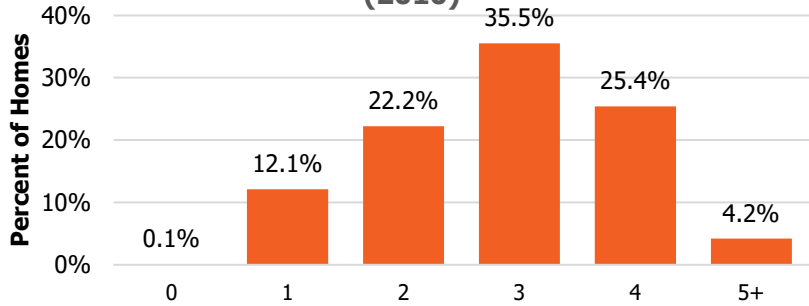


Unit Size

Currently, the Village has few smaller housing units that could accommodate the growing number of one- and two-person households. While only 35.0% of the population are considered families, almost two-thirds (63.4%) of the Village’s dwelling units are three bedroom-units or larger. Less than 3,000 of the Village’s 21,125 housing units are one-bedroom units. Only 1.9% of housing in Downers Grove are studios.

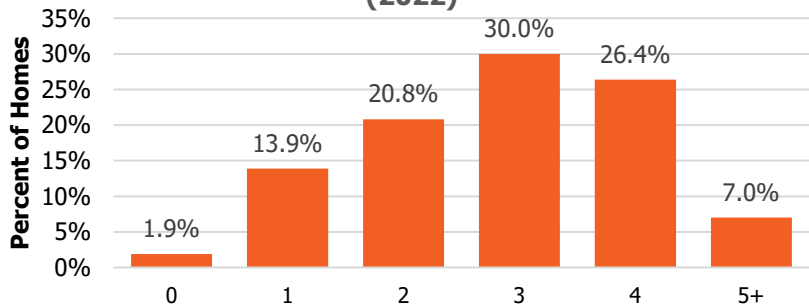
Compared to the housing stock in 2010, new construction appears to be somewhat shifting Downers Grove’s housing stock more into alignment with household needs. The share of studios (1.6%) and one-bedroom units (2.6%) in the housing stock grew while the proportion of two-bedroom units stayed about the same (-0.3%) and the share of three-bedroom (-3.9%) units decreased. However, the development of four- (2.4%) and five-bedroom (3.1%) units continues to push the Downers Grove housing stock out of alignment with household needs.

Housing by Number of Bedrooms (2010)



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing by Number of Bedrooms (2022)



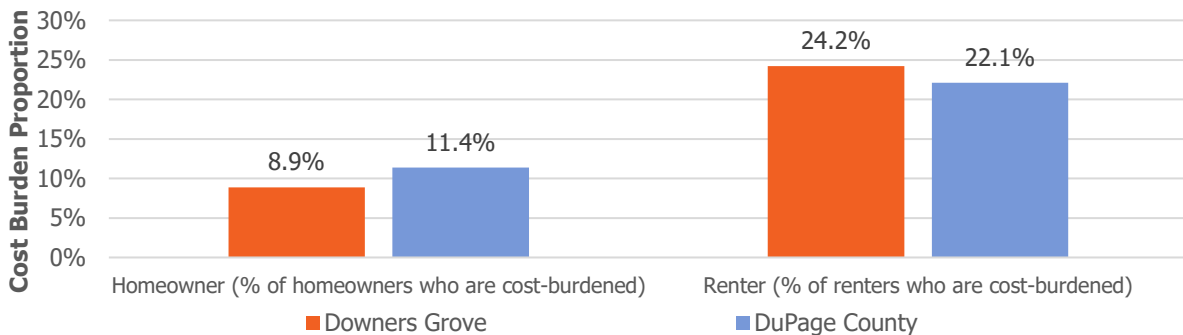
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Affordability

Housing cost burden is defined as a household paying more than 30% of its income towards housing. Greater than 35% indicates a severe burden. Where Downers Grove’s homeowners are less cost-burdened than DuPage County homeowners (at 8.9% compared to 11.4%), the Village’s renters are more cost-burdened than the County’s (24.2% compared to 22.1%).

Gaps in the Village’s housing stock likely contribute to the high renter cost-burden of Downers Grove. There is a mismatch between population trends that indicate a growing number of older individuals living alone or as couples without children and a historic housing stock that is geared largely to families. This mismatch is likely to grow in the coming years, putting greater pressure on the Village’s housing stock.



Household Cost Burden (2022)













Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Owner Housing Cost Burden by Census Tract

The map showcases the latest available data from the 2020 Decennial Census. The 2020 Decennial Census occurred during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw large numbers of unemployment and emergency housing cost support programs. The unusual conditions that surrounded the 2020 Decennial Census data may therefore explain the stark difference between the 2020 and 2022 cost-burdened rates.

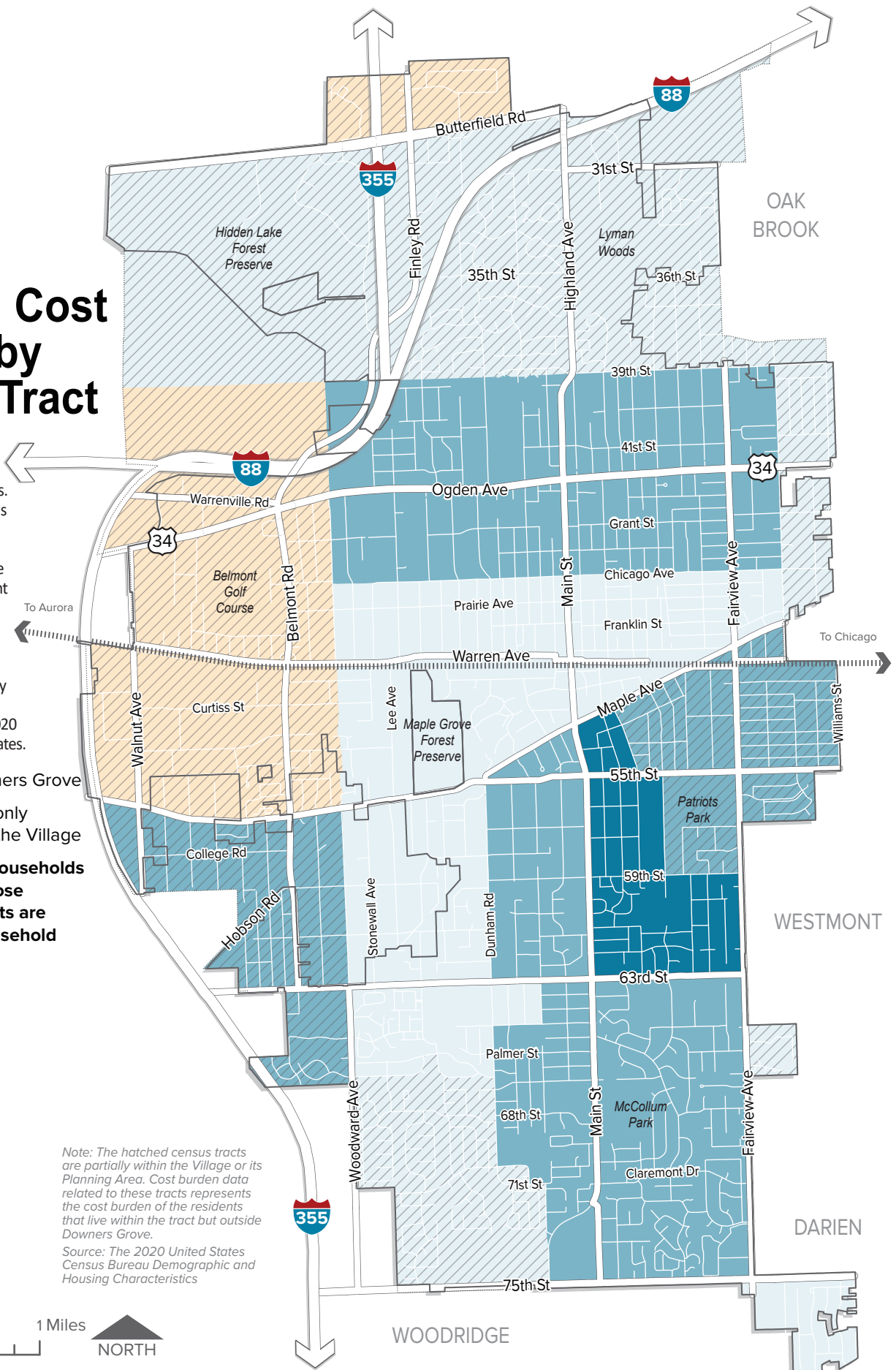
-  Village of Downers Grove
-  Tracts that are only partially inside the Village

Percent of Owner Households with Mortgages whose Monthly Owner Costs are 30% or More of Household Income

-  0% - 10%
-  11% - 20%
-  21% - 30%
-  31% - 40%
-  41% - 50%
-  51% - 60%
-  61% - 70%
-  71% - 80%
-  81% - 90%
-  91% - 100%



Note: The hatched census tracts are partially within the Village or its Planning Area. Cost burden data related to these tracts represents the cost burden of the residents that live within the tract but outside Downers Grove.

Source: The 2020 United States Census Bureau Demographic and Housing Characteristics













Renter Housing Cost Burden by Census Tract

The map showcases the latest available data from the 2020 Decennial Census. The 2020 Decennial Census occurred during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw large numbers of unemployment and emergency housing cost support programs. The unusual conditions that surrounded the 2020 Decennial Census data may therefore explain the stark difference between the 2020 and 2022 cost-burdened rates.

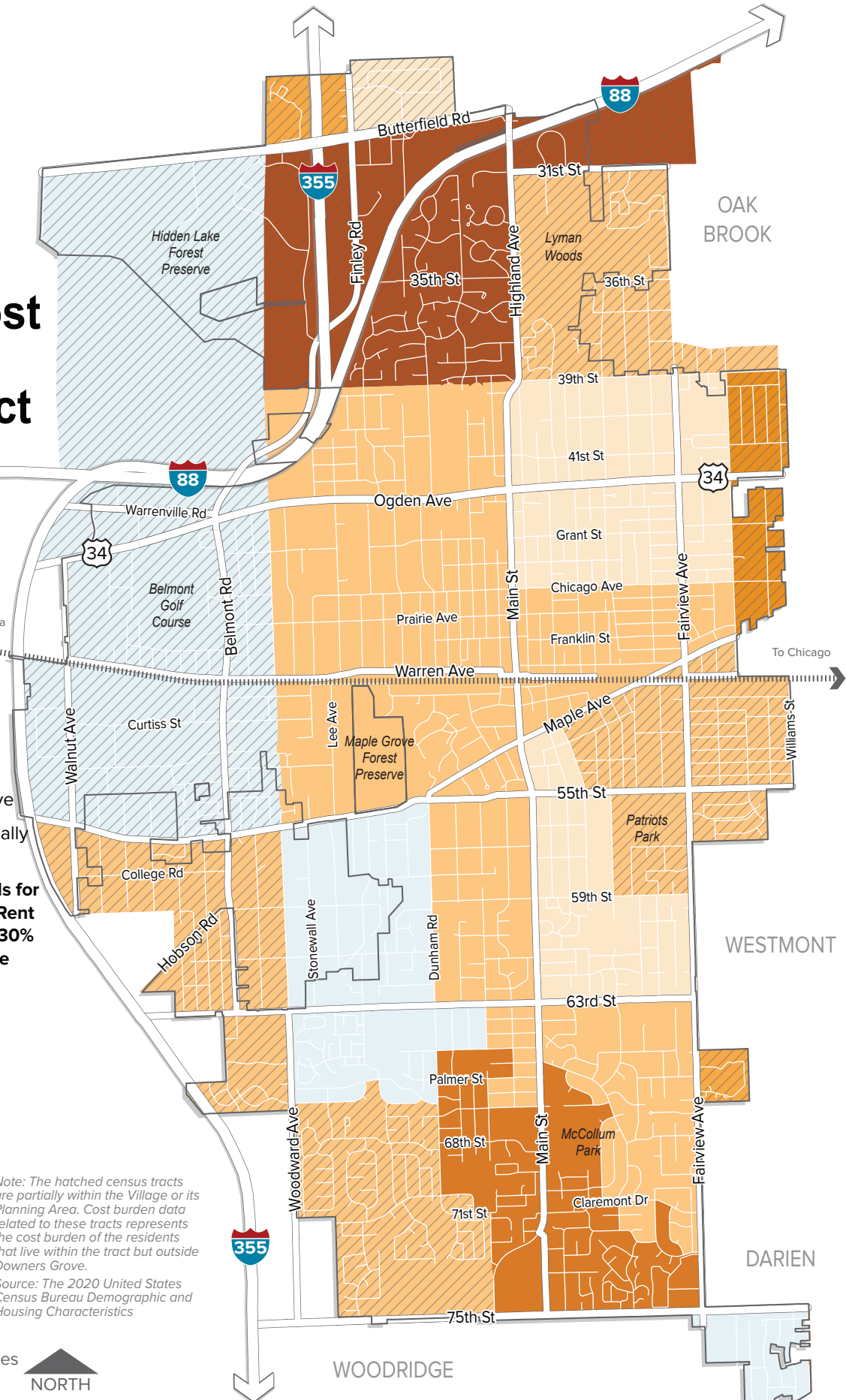
-  Village of Downers Grove
-  Tracts that are only partially inside the Village

Percent of Renter Households for whom Gross Rent (Contract Rent Plus Tenant-Paid Utilities) is 30% or More of Household Income

-  0% - 10%
-  11% - 20%
-  21% - 30%
-  31% - 40%
-  41% - 50%
-  51% - 60%
-  61% - 70%
-  71% - 80%
-  81% - 90%
-  91% - 100%

Note: The hatched census tracts are partially within the Village or its Planning Area. Cost burden data related to these tracts represents the cost burden of the residents that live within the tract but outside Downers Grove.

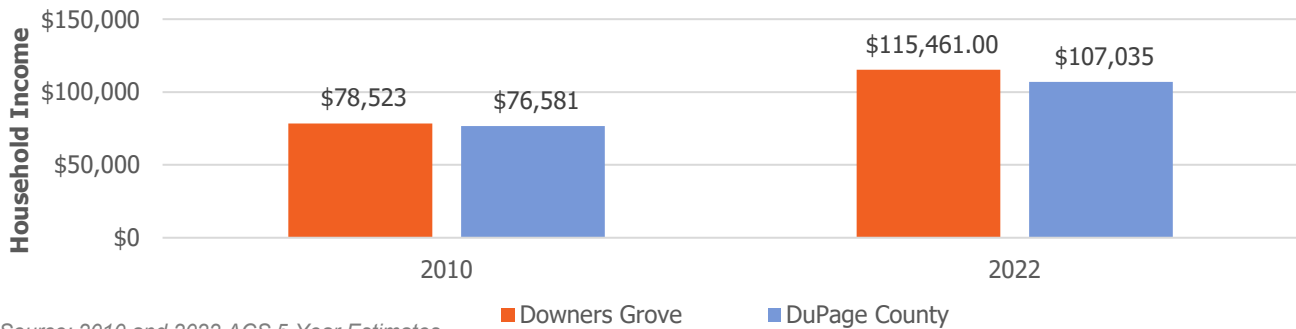
Source: The 2020 United States Census Bureau Demographic and Housing Characteristics



Income

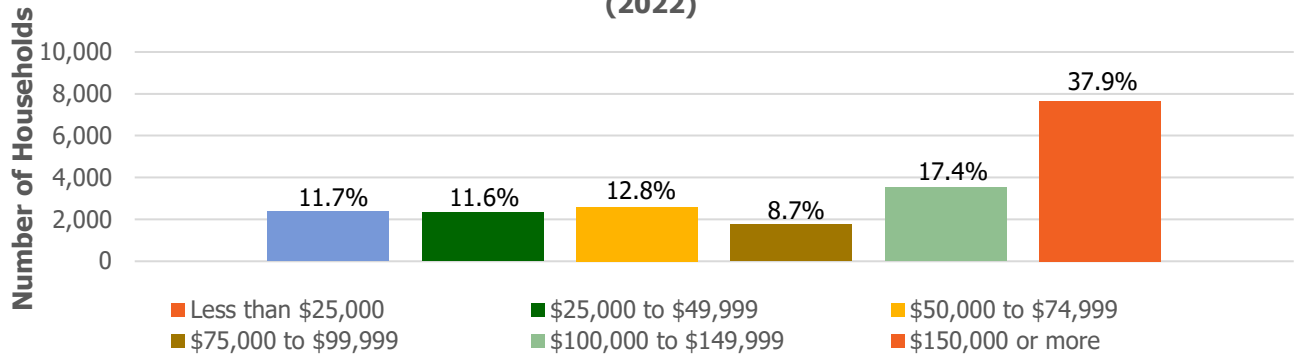
In 2022, Downers Grove’s median household income was around \$115,000. This has dramatically risen in recent years (compared to \$78,523 in 2010) resulting from the nearly 117% increase in households earning \$150,000 or more since 2010. The group of residents making \$150,000 or more is by far the largest income group in the Village at 37.6% of the income-generating population. Households earning \$25,000 or less were the only other income group that grew in size, indicating a shrinking middle class and growing economic polarization. While the household incomes of Downers Grove residents and DuPage County residents have been historically similar, in 2022 Downers Grove’s household income was more than \$8,000 greater than that of DuPage County.

**Median Household Incomes
(2010 - 2022)**



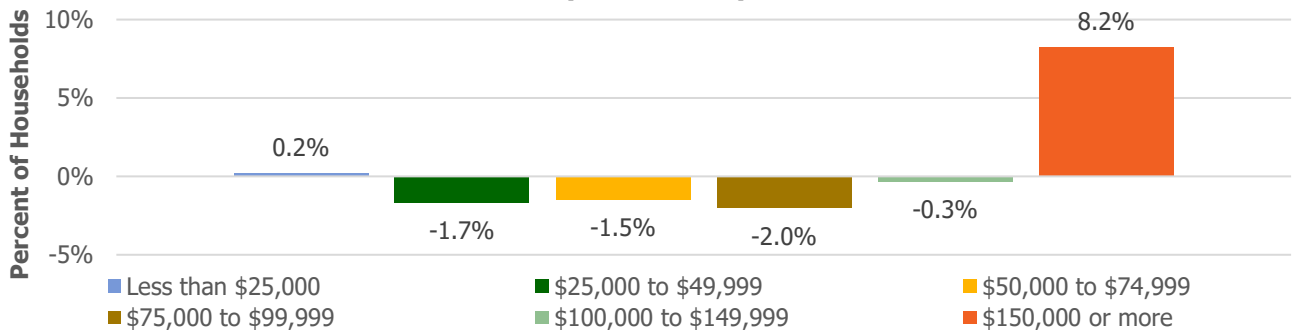
Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Households by Income
(2022)**



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Change in Share of Population of Households by Income
(2010 - 2022)**

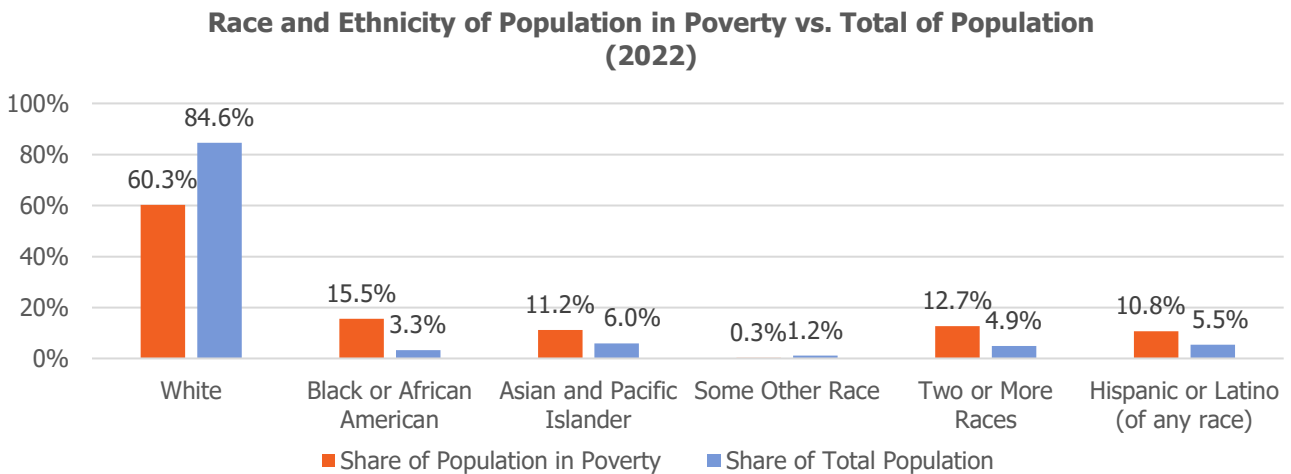
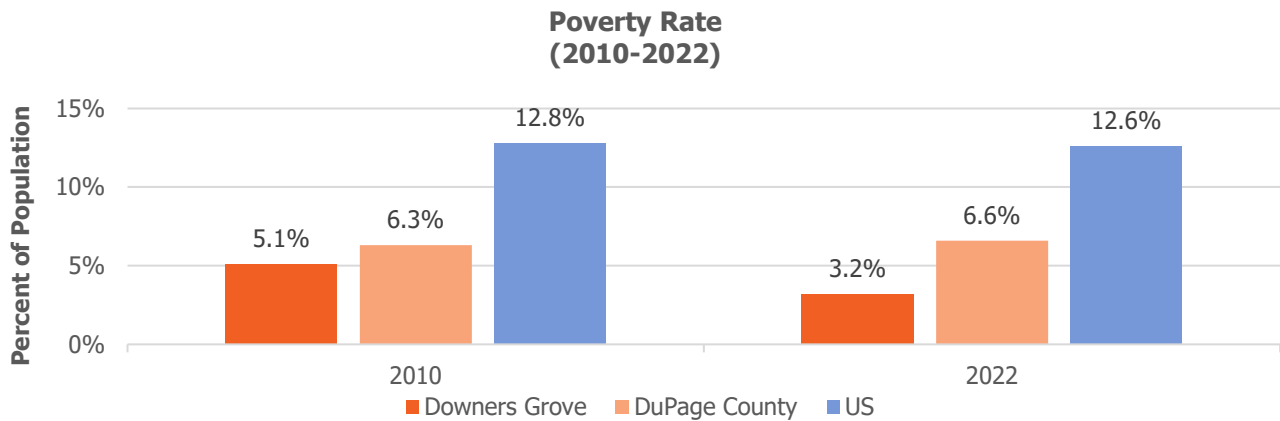


Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

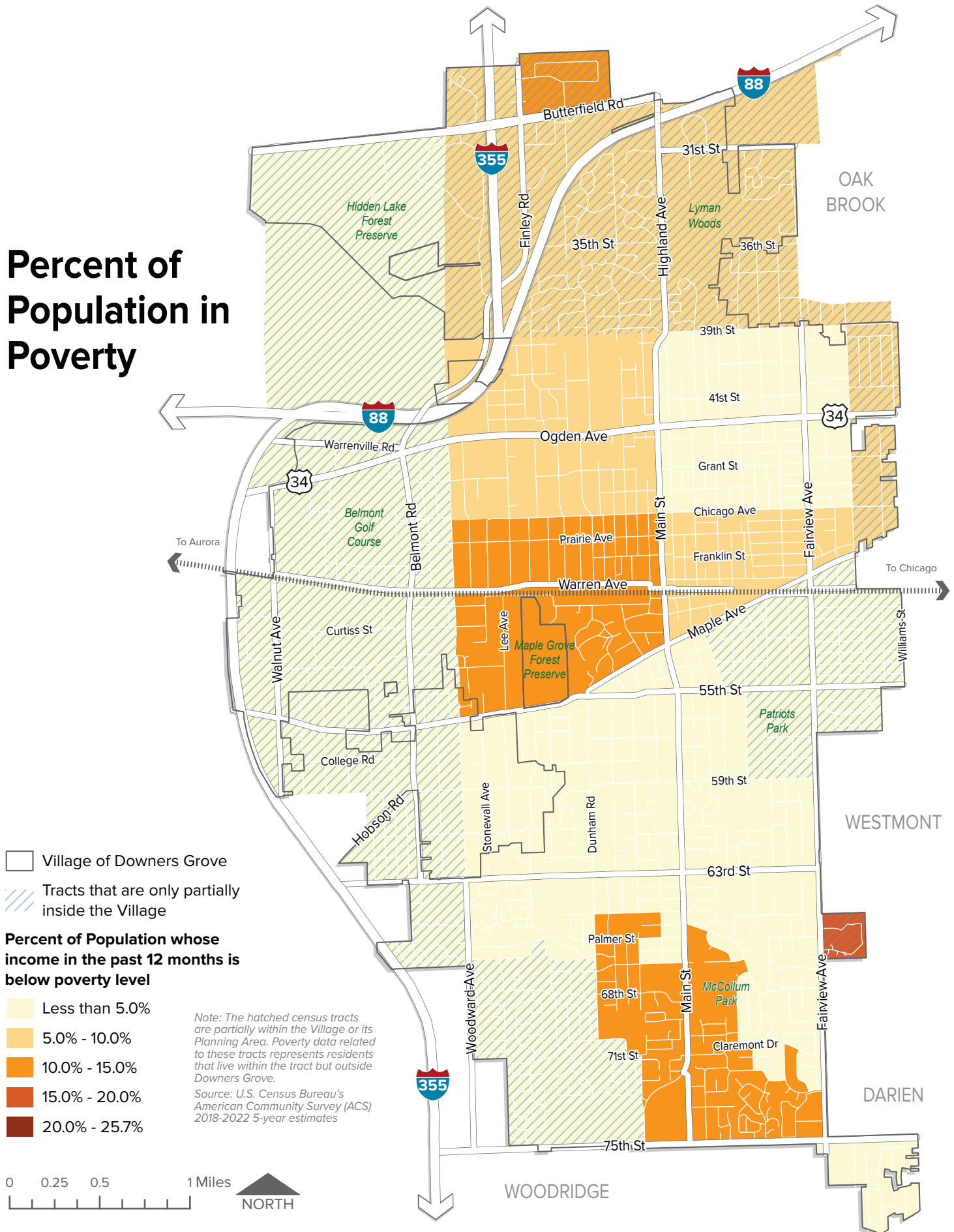
Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau defines households in poverty as those households earning less than the cost-of-living threshold. The threshold is calculated every year to consider changes in the cost of necessities like housing and food. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 2,548 residents in Downers Grove live in poverty. Of those individuals in poverty, 9.0% are under 18 years old, 1.5% are under five years old, and 24.3% are 65 years old or older. The population in poverty is 60.3% white, 15.5% Black or African American, 11.2% Asian and Pacific Islander, 12.7% two or more races, and 10.8% Hispanic or Latino. Compared to the overall population's race and ethnicity makeup, Downers Grove's Black or African American population (3.3%), Asian and Pacific Islander population (6.0%), population of those identifying as two or more races (4.9%), and Hispanic and Latino population (5.5%) are overrepresented in the population of individuals living in poverty. This is similar to the race and ethnicity characteristics of the population in poverty in DuPage County, in which the County's Black or African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, those identifying as some other race, and Hispanic and Latino populations are overrepresented.

Fewer individuals in Downers Grove (5.1%) face poverty compared to DuPage County (6.3%) and the national average (12.8%). This is similar to poverty levels in 2010, although where between 2010 and 2022, the poverty rate in DuPage County fell by 0.3%, the poverty rate in Downers Grove rose by 1.9%. This corresponds to the 0.2% increase between 2010 and 2022 in the share of households making less than \$25,000.

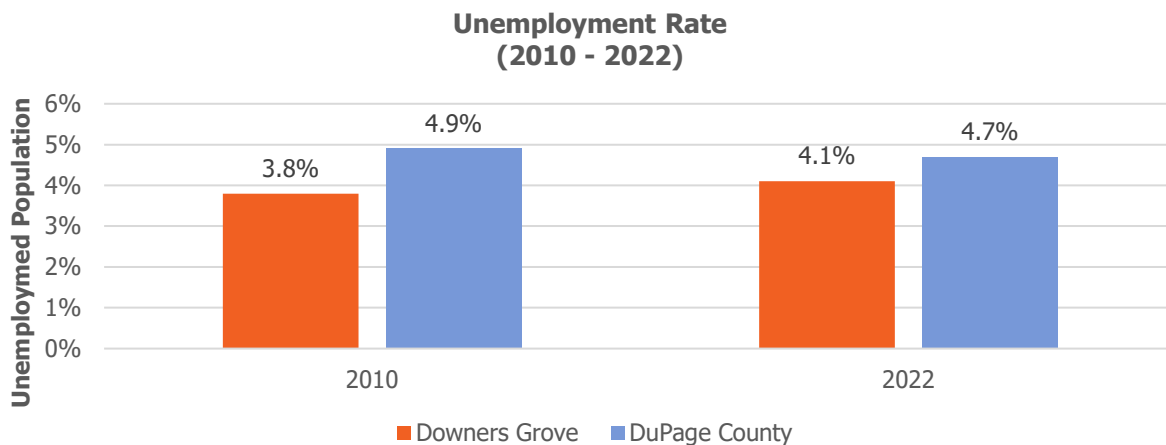


Percent of Population in Poverty



Labor Force and Unemployment

Using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2010 to 2022, the unemployment rate of Downers Grove’s labor force over time can be measured to understand the Village’s performance compared to the county as a whole. The labor force is the total number of people within the Village who are currently employed plus the number of people who are unemployed and actively seeking work. At 4.1%, Downers Grove’s current unemployment rate is lower than DuPage County’s 4.7%. This is a smaller gap compared to 2010, when 3.8% of Downers Grove’s labor force and 4.9% of DuPage County’s labor force were unemployed. Downers Grove and DuPage County have similar levels of population in the labor force at 67.0% and 68.7% in 2022, respectively.



Employment

According to the most recent employment data available from the U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies, in 2021 there were 50,627 jobs located within Downers Grove. Health Care and Social Assistance make up the largest employment sector within Downers Grove at 16.5% of the share of jobs, followed by the Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation sector at 12.1%.

The Village serves as the corporate headquarters for Advocate Aurora Health and includes Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, the Village’s top employer with 2,500 employees. Other large Health Care and Social Assistance employers in the Village include Coventry Health Care with 800 employees and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois at 420.

Between 2010 and 2021, the total number of jobs in Downers Grove increased by 4,977, a growth of 10.9%. The sectors that experienced the highest growth in jobs within the Village were the Construction and the Finance and Insurance sectors, which gained 95.8% and 59.8%, respectively. The majority of jobs lost were in the Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation sector (-1,476 jobs).

Jobs Located in Downers Grove: 10 Employment Sectors (2021)			
	Total Jobs in 2021	Share of Job Market in 2021	Change in Jobs since 2010
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,371	16.5%	55.8%
Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	6,143	12.1%	-19.4%
Finance and Insurance	4,637	9.2%	59.8%
Retail Trade	4,461	8.8%	-0.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,102	8.1%	30.5%
Manufacturing	3,903	7.7%	1.6%
Educational Services	3,524	7.0%	-4.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,465	6.8%	11.6%
Wholesale Trade	2,598	5.1%	-8.0%
Construction	2,355	4.7%	95.8%
Totals	50,627	86.0%	10.9%

Top Industries

The top industry for Downers Grove residents (either working in the Village or elsewhere) is also the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, which employs 12.9% of Village residents.

The other industry sectors that employ the most Downers Grove residents include the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (11.4%), Educational Services (9.2%), Retail Trade (8.8%), and Finance and Insurance (8.1%) sectors.

Between 2010 and 2021, the total number of working residents dropped from 24,197 to 23,668, which coincides with an aging population. Nearly all sectors experienced a loss in employed residents, with the Retail Trade (-393), Educational Services (-323), and Accommodation and Food Services (-265) sectors experiencing the largest number of job losses.

The industry sectors that experienced the greatest growth in employed residents were Transportation and Warehousing (47.2% increase); Construction (23.6% increase); and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (12.5% increase). These three industry sectors gained 539 employees in total.

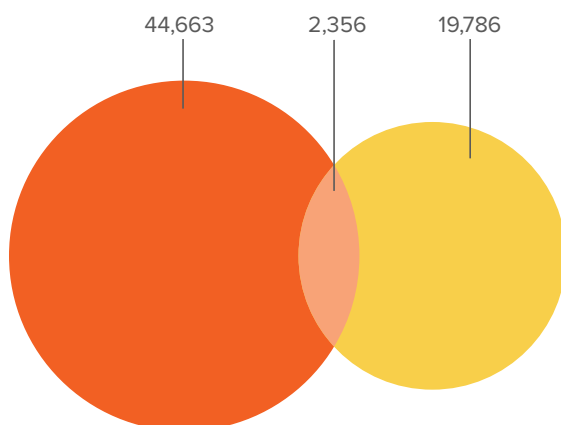
Top Employers for Downers Grove Residents: 10 Employment Sectors (2021)			
	Total Jobs in 2021	Share of Job Market in 2021	Change in Jobs since 2010
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,054	12.9%	6.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,699	11.4%	16.6%
Educational Services	4,637	9.2%	-11.4%
Retail Trade	4,461	8.8%	-15.0%
Finance and Insurance	4,102	8.1%	5.7%
Manufacturing	3,903	7.7%	-12.9%
Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	3,524	7.0%	5.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,465	6.8%	-16.2%
Wholesale Trade	2,598	5.1%	-2.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	2,355	4.7%	47.2%
Totals	23,668	81.7%	-2.2%

Source: 2021 US Census On the Map

Where Residents Work

The most common places for Downers Grove residents to work are Chicago (11.3%), Downers Grove (5.0%), and Naperville (4.2%). Based on 2021 data, 2,356 individuals both live and work in Downers Grove. In other words, 4.7% of Downers Grove residents work in the Village. The number of individuals who live within Downers Grove but are employed elsewhere or work from home is 19,786. In addition, over 20% of Village residents reported working from home in 2022, which is not included as a separate category in the census source.

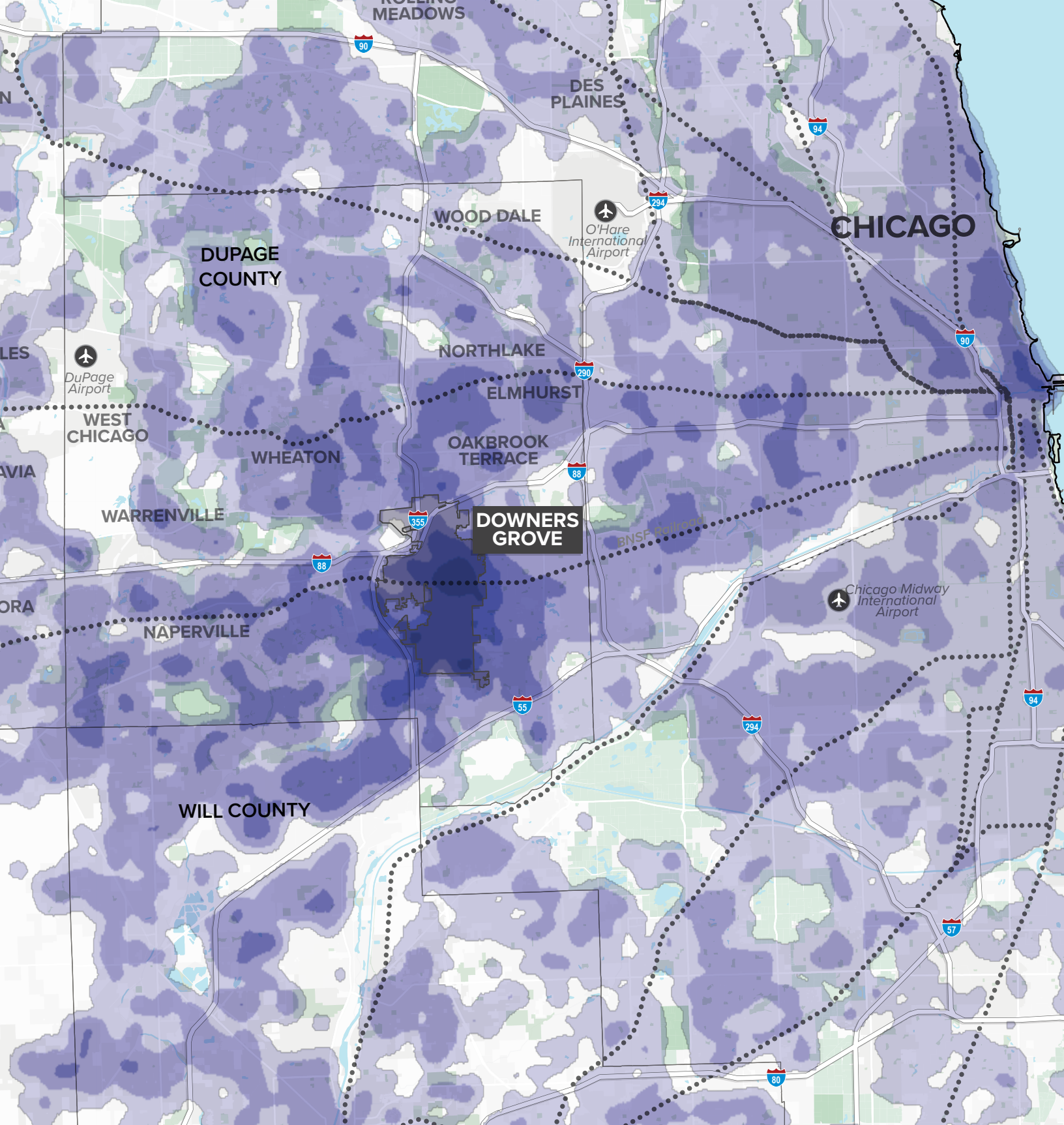
Inflow/Outflow Job Counts Downers Grove (2021)



Source: US Census On the Map

Inflow/Outflow	2021	2011
Employed in Downers Grove, Living Outside	44,663	41,571
Live in Downers Grove, Employed Outside	19,786	20,065
Employed and Live in Downers Grove	2,356	2,812

- 44,663 People live outside of Downers Grove and are employed in Downers Grove
- 2,356 People live in Downers Grove and are employed in Downers Grove
- 19,786 People live in and are employed outside of Downers Grove



Inflow / Outflow

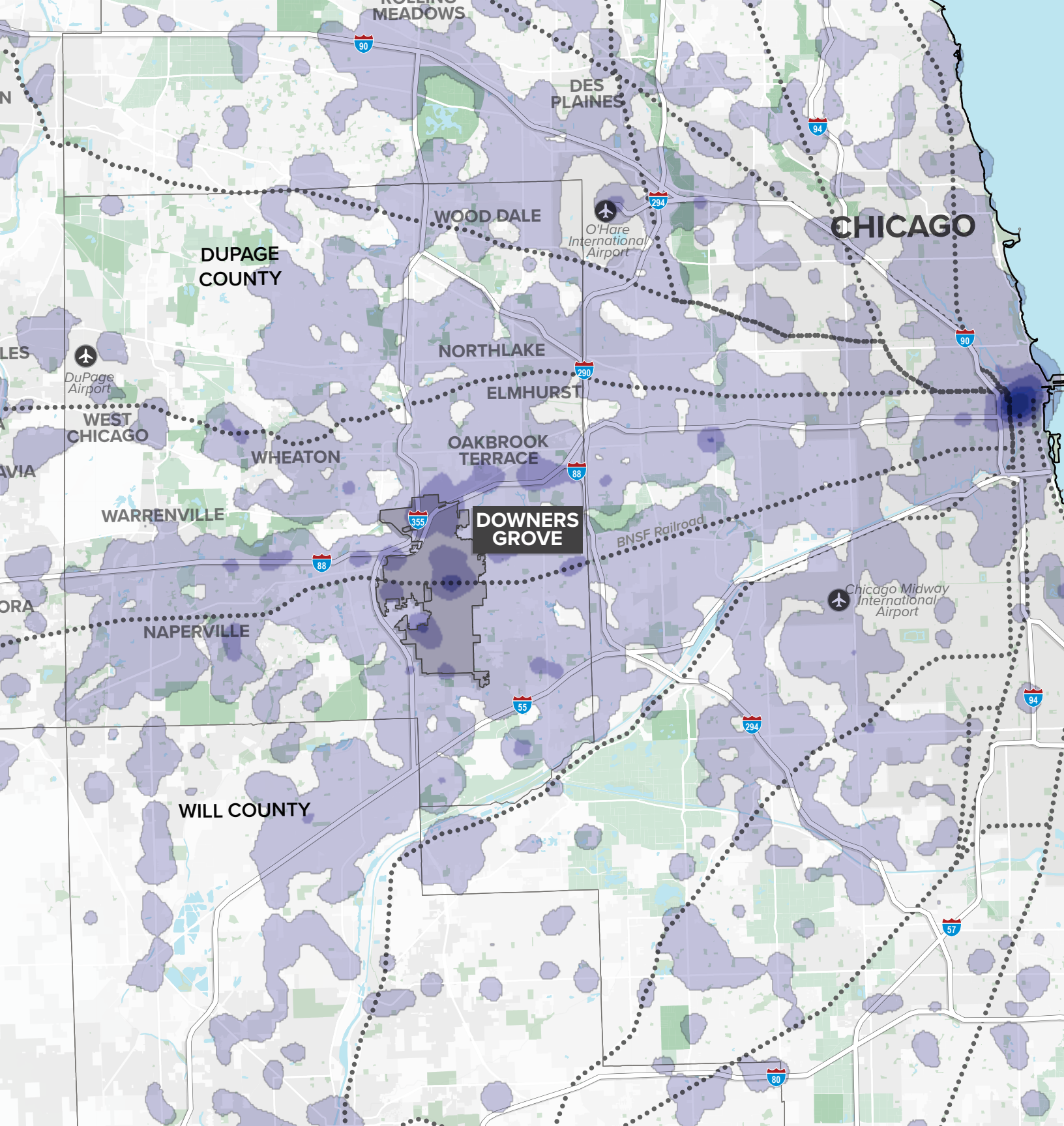
Where people employed in Downers Grove live

More Employees Less Employees

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2021

EXISTING CONDITIONS MEMORANDUM | Demographics and Market
 Village of Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan

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Inflow / Outflow

Where people living in Downers Grove work

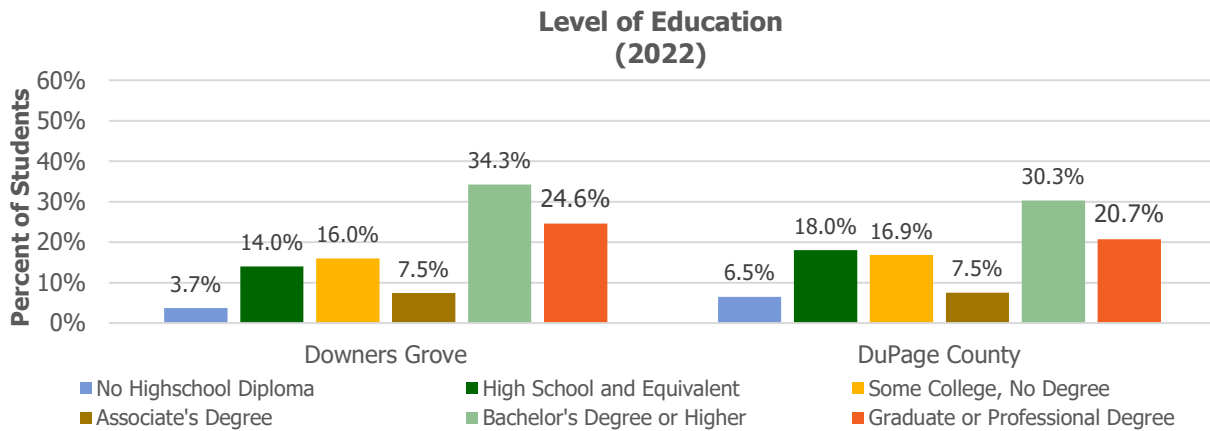
More Residents Less Residents

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2021
50

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Education

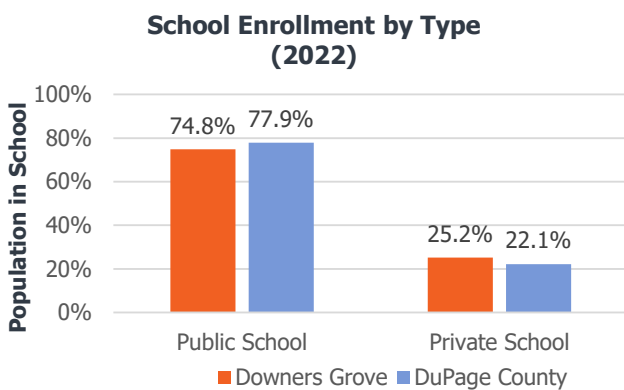
The educational achievement of the residents of a community can have a significant impact on the physical, social, and economic development of a community. It also has a direct impact on the labor force. In examining the latest data on educational attainment from the U.S. Census Bureau, Downers Grove has education attainment levels that are generally on par with DuPage County, with a higher share of residents having a bachelors degree or higher. Over 34% of Downers Grove and around 30% of DuPage County's populations have completed a bachelor's degree. About 4% more of Downers Grove's population has a Graduate or professional degree compared to DuPage County.



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

K-12 School Enrollment

Most students in Downers Grove are enrolled in the Village's public school system at 74.8%, although somewhat less than DuPage County's 77.9%.



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Downers Grove Grade School District #58: Total District Enrollment

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
PK	165	173	165	182	171	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170
K	476	478	455	472	475	475	476	476	484	478	471	464	458	451	440
1	479	532	520	498	548	541	529	528	528	521	514	506	499	493	485
2	509	500	526	521	515	538	549	538	545	545	538	531	522	515	509
3	563	564	523	549	528	520	563	555	551	558	558	552	545	536	520
4	572	591	535	510	555	524	515	559	559	555	562	563	557	549	540
5	554	582	585	537	518	557	526	517	569	569	564	571	572	567	559
6	514	552	597	594	531	514	552	522	521	522	523	568	573	576	571
Billiracy	-	-	20	36	47	58	69	80	83	82	82	82	82	82	82
Special	22	24	27	30	41	47	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
Total K-6	3,904	3,998	3,983	3,929	3,929	3,967	4,001	3,997	4,062	4,102	4,084	4,059	4,012	3,991	3,957
7	572	539	554	598	595	535	503	544	524	516	520	572	567	571	571
8	556	570	544	549	598	595	536	504	548	528	520	574	576	571	571
Total 7-8	1,128	1,109	1,098	1,147	1,193	1,130	1,039	1,048	1,072	1,044	1,090	1,146	1,143	1,144	1,150
Total PK-8	5,032	5,107	5,081	5,076	5,122	5,097	5,040	5,045	5,134	5,146	5,174	5,205	5,175	5,135	5,107
Change	75	-26	-5	46	-25	57	5	89	12	28	31	-30	-40	-28	
%-Change	1.5%	-0.5%	-0.1%	0.9%	-0.5%	1.1%	0.1%	1.8%	0.2%	0.5%	0.6%	-0.6%	-0.8%	-0.5%	
Total PK-8	3,904	3,998	3,983	3,929	3,929	3,967	4,001	3,997	4,062	4,102	4,084	4,059	4,012	3,991	3,957
Change	94	-15	-54	0	38	34	-4	65	40	-18	-23	-27	-41	-34	
%-Change	2.4%	-0.4%	-1.4%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	-0.1%	1.6%	1.0%	-0.4%	-0.6%	-0.7%	-1.0%	-0.9%	
Total 7-8	1,128	1,109	1,098	1,147	1,193	1,130	1,039	1,048	1,072	1,044	1,090	1,146	1,143	1,144	1,150
Change	-19	-11	49	46	-63	-91	9	24	-28	46	56	-3	1	6	
%-Change	-1.7%	-1.0%	4.5%	4.0%	-5.3%	-8.1%	0.9%	2.3%	-2.6%	4.4%	5.1%	-0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	

Forecasts Developed October 2016
Green Cells (2016-17 and earlier) are historical data
Blue Cells (2017-18 and later) are forecasted years

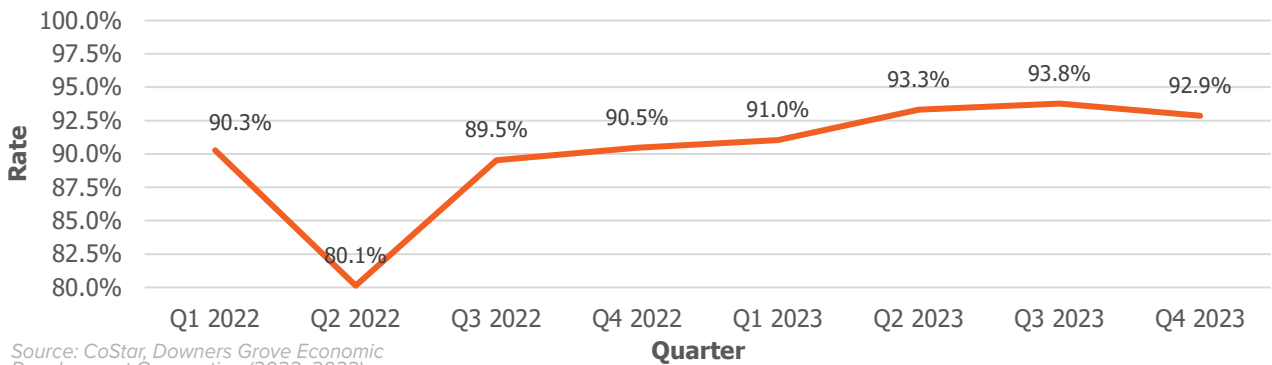
Source: Downers Grove School District #58 Population and Enrollment Forecasts 2017-18 through 2026-27

Market Analysis

Vacancy rates are primary identifiers for a healthy real estate market. In 2022 and 2023, Vacancy rates for commercial properties in Downers Grove are significantly lower than the national average (around 20% during the same time period). This suggests that there is strong demand for commercial space in Downers Grove. The vacancy rate for industrial space is the lowest of the three market categories, followed by commercial space, and then office space. This suggests that of the three categories, demand for industrial space is strongest in Downers Grove. It is important to note that the data is for a specific period in time and will continue to fluctuate based on current market conditions. The graphs below are based on data gathered from CoStar and prepared by the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC) in the quarterly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports. The KPI reports were obtained in May 2024 to ensure that the most up-to-date trends for commercial, office, and industrial occupancy are reviewed.

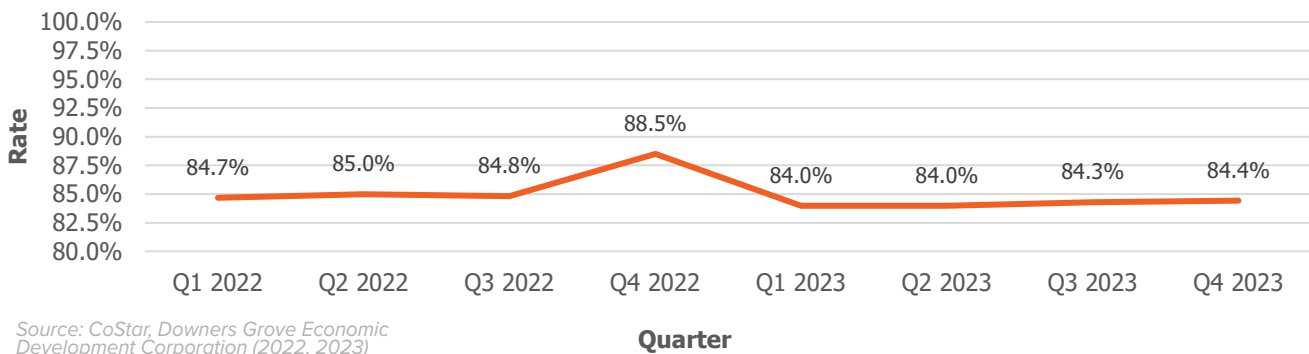
Commercial

Downers Grove Commercial Occupancy



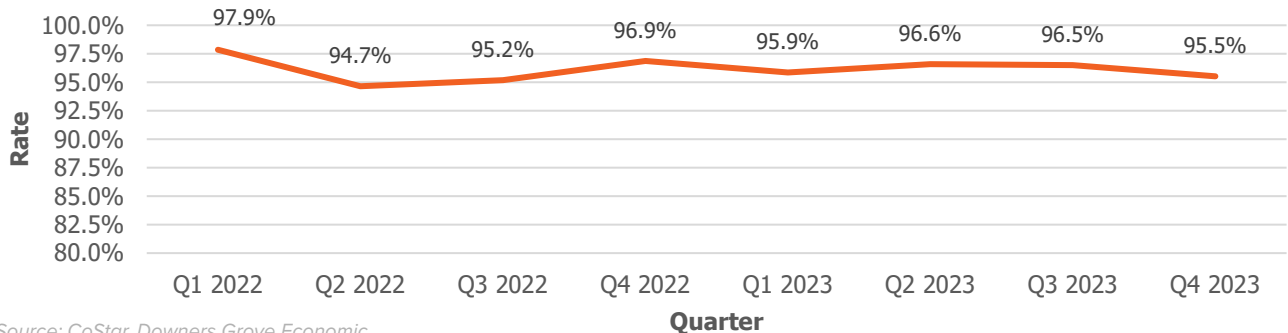
Office

Downers Grove Office Occupancy



Industrial

Downers Grove Industrial Occupancy



Findings

Downers Grove has witnessed a shift in occupancy rates across its commercial, office, and industrial sectors, showcasing the evolving landscape of workplace dynamics throughout 2022-2023. Notably, the commercial sector experienced the largest dip in occupancy in 2022, yet rebounded swiftly in the subsequent quarter, and maintained stability throughout 2023.

Key Takeaways

Downers Grove's demographic trends provide valuable insights into the community's overall health and future needs. The key takeaways based on the current conditions are listed below.

- **Population Growth and Aging.** From 1960 to 2000, Downers Grove experienced steady population growth. Despite a slight dip in 2010, the population has been slowly increasing in recent years, with a notable rise in the average age of residents.
- **Senior Demographics.** Senior population is the Village's fastest growing age group, increasing in number by 38.2% between 2010 and 2022.
- **Income Demographics.** From 2010 to 2022, the median household income in Downers Grove increased by approximately 47%, and the number of residents earning \$150,000 or more doubled, growing by almost 117%. This indicates a strong economic foundation but also highlights a potential issue of growing economic polarization.
- **Education Levels.** Downers Grove residents are generally well-educated, with education levels surpassing those of DuPage County overall.
- **Housing Supply and Market Gap.** Housing supply is a significant issue for Downers Grove. There is a mismatch between the types of housing available and the needs of households, which is expected to widen as the median family size continues to decline. Homeowners in the Village are less cost-burdened than those in DuPage County, but renters face greater financial pressure, indicating a risk of renters being priced out of the area.
- **Housing Market Trends.** Over the past decade, the median sale price for homes in Downers Grove has generally remained higher than the median sales price in DuPage County, despite fluctuations.
- **Median Household Income vs. Median Housing Price.** Housing is considered to not be a burden on a household's expenses if all housing related costs equal 30% or less of the household's income. Based on Downers Grove's median household income of \$115,000 per year or \$9,583 per month, the median household should be spending no more than \$2,875 per month on housing. Given the Village's single-family median housing price of \$464,500, a 20% down payment (\$92,900) and a 30-year fixed mortgage at current average interest rates (7.45%), a homebuyer in Downers Grove could expect to pay \$3,341 per month, \$466 more than the median household can afford. It is important to note that the 30% guideline is not one-size-fits-all approach and other factors such as transportation can also weigh heavily on the overall household cost burden. This scenario should be considered alongside the Owner Housing Cost Burden by Census Tract data, presented in the map on page 42, which is prepared based on real mortgage data available through the 2020 United States Census Bureau Demographic and Housing Characteristics tables.
- **Employment Growth and Sector Diversity.** From 2010 to 2021, the total number of jobs in Downers Grove increased by 4,977, a growth rate of 10.9%. Downers Grove has a large daytime population, drawing in 44,663 workers who live outside the Village in addition to the 2,356 individuals who both live and work in the Village. The employment of residents across various sectors suggests a lower susceptibility to large-scale unemployment.
- **Commercial Sector Resilience.** The commercial sector in Downers Grove experienced a significant drop in occupancy in 2022 but rebounded quickly in the following quarter, maintaining stability throughout 2023. This resilience highlights the robustness of the Village's commercial market.
- **Market.** Commercial vacancy rates in Downers Grove are much lower than the national average, indicating strong demand for commercial space. Among market categories, industrial space has the lowest vacancy rate, showing the highest demand for industrial properties in Downers Grove.

SECTION 5

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

This section examines Downers Grove's existing land use composition and development patterns. The information presented in this section sets the stage for future land use planning in the Comprehensive Plan that will help guide the Village's built form and character moving forward. The existing land use inventory is based on field reconnaissance conducted on April 30th and May 1st, 2024; the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Land Use Inventory; and digital aerial review. The zoning regulations were reviewed and taken from the Village's municipal code.

Existing Land Use Designations

All parcels within Downers Grove and its planning area are categorized into one of the following land uses.

Single-Family Detached

Single-family detached uses consist of single-family homes occupying individual lots in a range of sizes. The single-family detached use includes both planned subdivisions and older established neighborhoods with traditional neighborhood patterns. Single-family detached is the predominant residential type within the Village.

Single-Family Attached

Single-family attached uses include structures where dwelling units share an exterior wall with at least one adjacent unit while still maintaining a separate dedicated entrance for each unit. This land use includes townhomes and duplexes. Single-family attached uses can also be seen integrated into large single-family residential developments to provide a mix of housing types. Single-family attached housing is scattered sparsely throughout the Village. It can be seen within residential developments off of Springside Avenue and 63rd Street, Highland Avenue and Braemoor Drive, and Fairmount Avenue and 75th Street.

Multifamily

Multifamily uses include residential structures with multiple dwelling units stacked vertically with shared entrances and corridors. Multifamily uses can include assisted living facilities, apartments, and condominiums. These can take various forms, from a development complex with multiple buildings to a single building on an individual lot. While single-family detached housing is the predominant residential type, multifamily uses can be seen throughout the Village, especially in and around Downtown.

Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial functions to provide residents with convenient, day-to-day goods and services within a short walk or drive from their homes. Neighborhood Commercial is comprised of a mix of retail, service, and office uses that cater to nearby residents.

These areas may be anchored by a grocery store accompanied by a variety of other smaller retailers such as gas stations, dry cleaners, convenience stores, banks, and restaurants. Neighborhood commercial uses can be found along corridors such as 63rd Street and Main Street.

Corridor Commercial

Corridor Commercial is typically organized in a linear fashion and includes a blend of neighborhood-oriented commercial retail, offices, smaller regional commercial retail (such as auto dealers), service uses, and multifamily uses. This is best exemplified along Ogden Avenue.

Regional Commercial

Regional Commercial comprises commercial uses that provide goods and services that draw patrons from within and beyond the Village. Appropriate regional commercial uses include large shopping centers, “big box” retail, auto dealerships, restaurants, and hotels. Regional commercial uses can be found along Butterfield Road.

Mixed-use

Mixed-use includes development that integrates more than one land use into a single development. Mixed-use buildings will typically include a stacked combination of residential, commercial, or office uses. The land use can also be configured horizontally in a development consisting of attached or detached buildings of differing use categories (residential, commercial, and/or office) within the same area. This can most often be seen within the Village’s Downtown.

Office

Office uses include buildings or developments dedicated to professional, service, and administrative activities. Office land uses typically include large-scale office buildings, complexes, or planned business parks used for professional services or medical uses. Office uses may also include small-scale individual office buildings. An example of an office land use in the Village is the Highland Landmark Office Park.

Industrial

Industrial uses include facilities involved in the manufacturing, storage, and distribution of goods and materials. The category also includes larger uses that typically involve resource production, processing, and/or extraction. These traditional larger industrial uses typically have environmental, noise, and visual impacts on adjacent areas. Recently, the Village has seen a growth in artisanal industrial uses that are smaller in scale and have fewer negative exterior impacts. Industrial uses are primarily located near arterial routes, such as along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway tracks. These uses can be found in the Ellsworth Industrial Park, located on the western edge of the Village near Interstate 355 and the Belmont Metra station.

Public/Semi-Public

Public/Semi-Public uses encompass those lands owned and operated by federal, state, or local governments as well as public and private educational facilities, cemeteries, churches, hospitals, nursing homes, or other non-profit facilities. Public/Semi-Public uses are distributed throughout the Village and are integrated into both residential areas including many of Downers Grove’s schools, and Downtown, including the post office.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space uses include outdoor active and passive recreational areas as well as undeveloped or minimally-developed land that provides natural landscapes or conservation areas. The Downers Grove Park District, a separate governmental body, maintains almost 600 acres of parks and facilities. A few notable parks include Doerhoefer Park, Memorial Park, McCollum Park, Lyman Woods, and private open spaces included in the Village’s subdivisions. Parks and open space uses may also include private parks not maintained by the Park District.















Utilities and Transportation

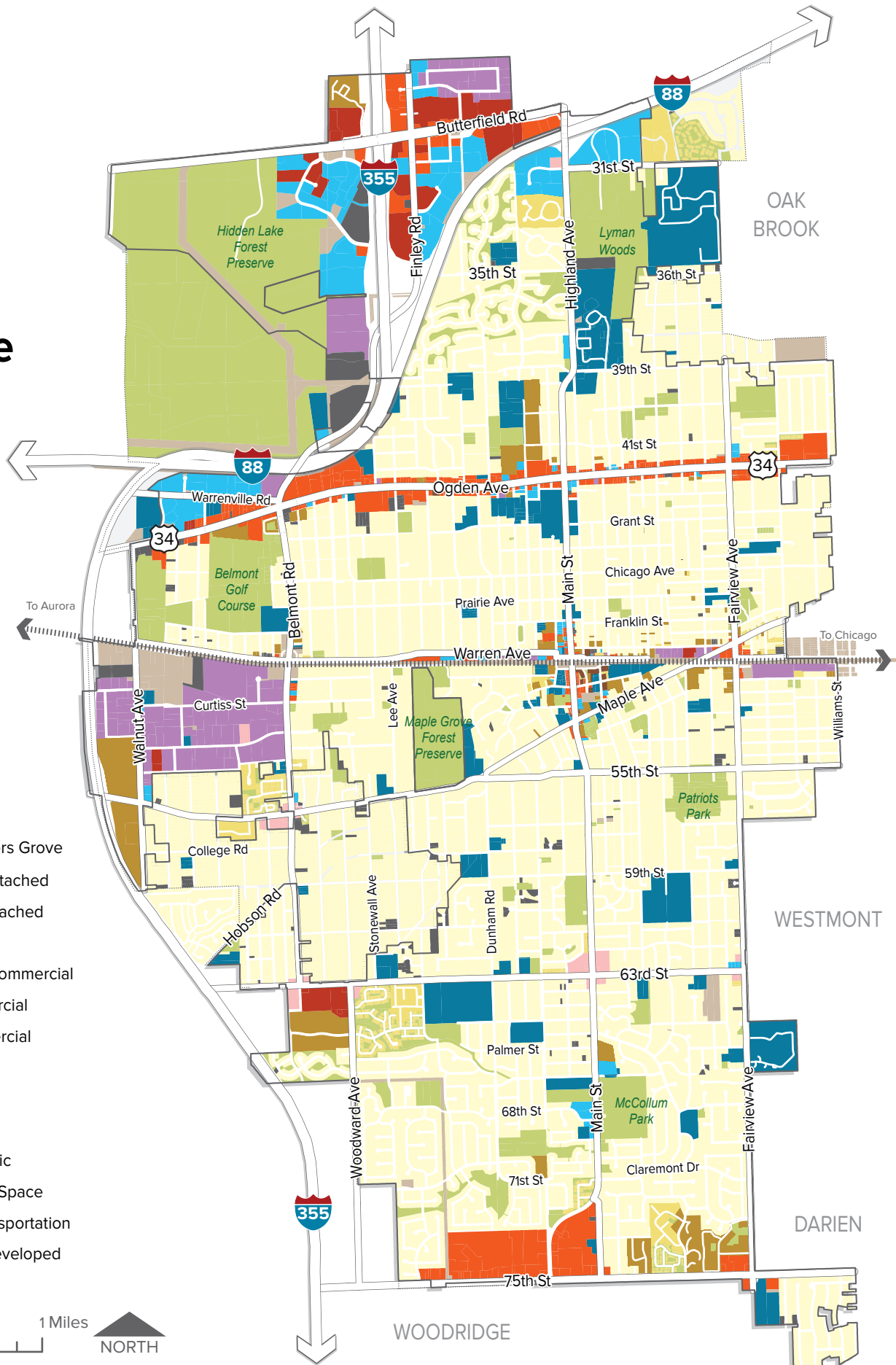
Utilities and transportation uses support local infrastructure and provide rights-of-way or easements for the transmission of gas, electric, water, and sewer.

Vacant and Undeveloped

Vacant and Undeveloped uses include natural areas such as fields, former farmland, or wooded areas that have neither been prepared for development nor reserved for conservation purposes. Some areas include vacant sites within planned subdivisions, property adjacent to large businesses, as well as space set aside for future development but with no active site work. There are few vacant and undeveloped parcels remaining in the Village. The few vacant and undeveloped parcels that exist are flood prone, undevelopable properties that the Village has purchased to convert to stormwater management facilities.

Existing Land Use

-  Village of Downers Grove
-  Single-Family Detached
-  Single-Family Attached
-  Multifamily
-  Neighborhood Commercial
-  Corridor Commercial
-  Regional Commercial
-  Mixed-use
-  Office
-  Industrial
-  Public/Semi-Public
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Utilities and Transportation
-  Vacant and Undeveloped



Zoning Designations

Zoning and development regulations are critical to shaping the community and implementing land use and development goals. They establish what specific land uses are permitted; the density, intensity, scale, and orientation of those uses; requirements for parking and signs; and other standards. Understanding regulations within the Downers Grove Zoning Ordinance will assist in directing growth in a visually-attractive and suitable manner, and serve as one of the primary tools for implementing the Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan. The Village's existing zoning districts are outlined as follows.

Residential Districts

Residential zoning districts provide diverse housing options for individual households and maintain the desired character of both existing and developing neighborhoods. Although these districts are primarily residential, certain nonresidential uses are also permitted. There are several residential zoning districts, which differ primarily in their building types, as well as in their lot and building regulations.

Residential Detached House 1 (R-1): R-1 is designed for single-family detached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet.

Residential Detached House 2 (R-2): R-2 is designed for single-family detached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 15,000 square feet.

Residential Detached House 3 (R-3): R-3 is designed for single-family detached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 10,500 square feet.

Residential Detached House 4 (R-4): R-4 is designed for single-family detached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet.

Residential Attached House 5 (R-5): R-5 is designed for single-family detached and attached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet and 8,000 respectively.

Residential Attached House 5A (R-5A): R-5A is designed for single-family detached and attached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet and 8,000 respectively.

Residential Apartment/Condo 6 (R-6): R-6 is designed for multifamily dwellings with a minimum lot area of 10,500 square feet.

Business and Employment Districts

The purpose of business and employment zoning districts is to provide space for various commercial activities that cater to the needs of neighborhoods, communities, and the region, including industrial and employment-related uses.

Limited Retail Business District (B-1): B-1 is primarily intended to accommodate small-scale retail and service businesses that serve residents of abutting neighborhoods. It is generally intended to be applied to sites with frontage on a collector or higher-level street and in locations that can be safely accessed via motorized and non-motorized transportation.

General Retail Business District (B-2): B-2 is primarily intended to accommodate retail and service businesses that serve a Village-wide or larger trade area. It is generally intended to be applied to sites with frontage on at least one arterial street.

General Services and Highway Business District (B-3): B-3 is primarily intended to accommodate very large retail and service establishments, business establishments that generate large volumes of automobile traffic, high-impact commercial uses, and limited manufacturing activities.

Office-Research District (O-R): O-R is primarily intended to accommodate office and research and development activities in office-like settings.

Office Research and Manufacturing District (O-R-M): O-R-M is primarily intended to accommodate office, research and development, and limited manufacturing, processing and assembly activities.

Light Manufacturing District (M-1): M-1 is primarily intended to accommodate office, research, and employment uses, including very low-impact industrial activities.

Restricted Manufacturing District (M-2): M-2 is primarily intended to accommodate office, research, and employment uses, including low-impact industrial activities.

Special Purpose Districts

The Village's special purpose districts provide space for various uses that may warrant individual consideration not covered within other districts.

D, Downtown Districts

Downtown Core (DC): DC regulations are intended to maintain and promote a vibrant and compact core within the downtown area for shopping, dining and entertainment with residential uses above. The district regulations are further intended to encourage a broad range of uses and high-quality development.

Downtown Business (DB): DB regulations are intended to maintain and promote a vibrant and compact downtown area for living, shopping, dining and entertainment. The district regulations are further intended to encourage a broad range of uses and high-quality development.

Downtown Transition (DT): DT regulations are intended to accommodate and promote transitional land uses and development patterns between the DB or DC zoning district and nearby low-density residential areas. The regulations are intended to help prevent intensive downtown development from encroaching into stable residential areas and to prevent low-density residential development from encroaching into the downtown area. The DT district is intended to be mapped only abutting the DB or DC district.

INP, Institutional and Public Districts

Neighborhood-scale Institutional and Public District (INP-1): INP-1 is intended to accommodate small-scale, low-intensity public, civic, and institutional uses that are commonly found in or near residential neighborhoods.

Campus-scale Institutional and Public District (INP-2): INP-2 is intended to accommodate development and expansion of large public, civic and institutional uses, while minimizing the potential for adverse impacts on surrounding areas.

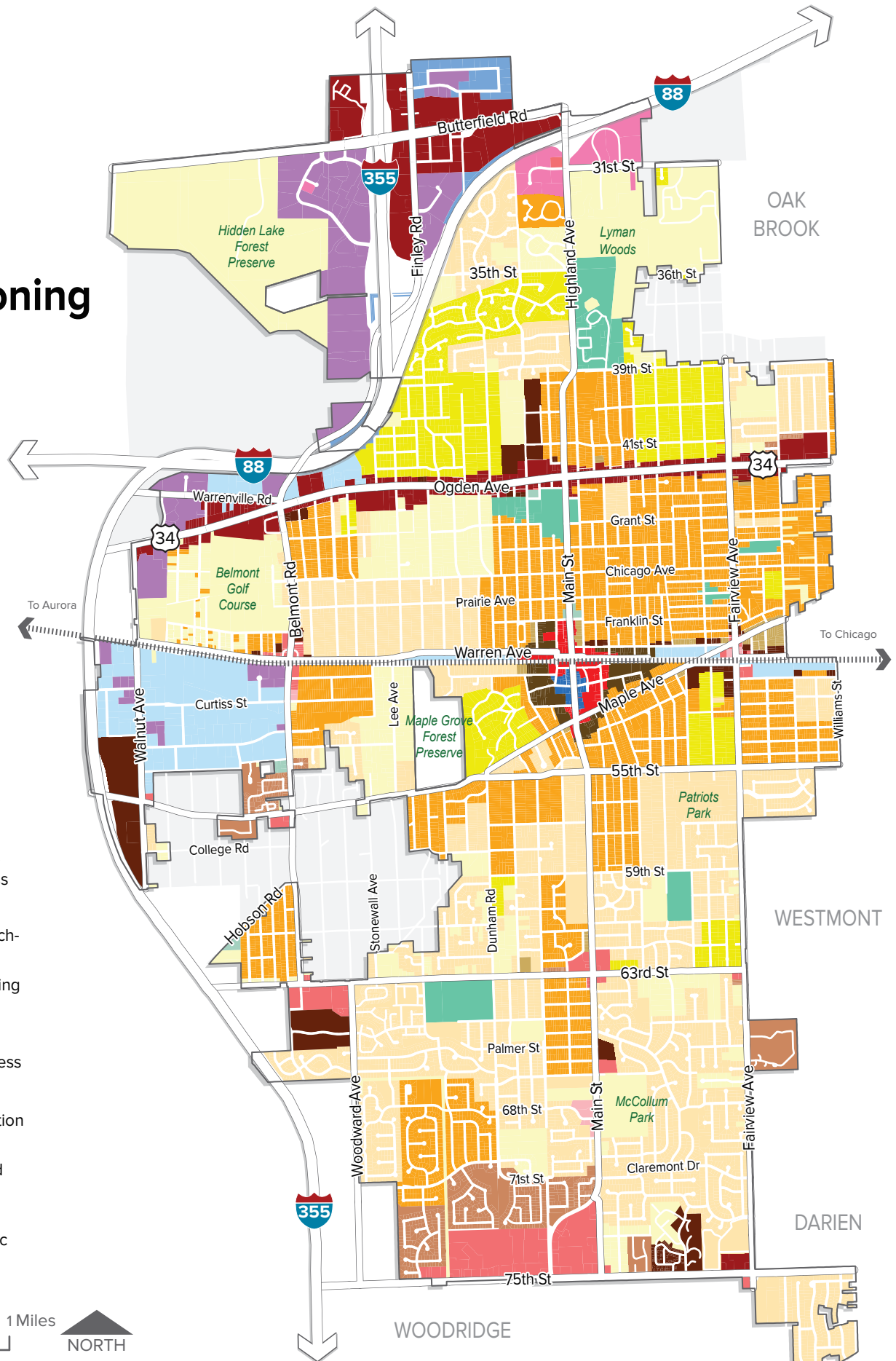
Planned Unit Development Overlay Districts

PUD, Planned Unit Development Overlay District: The PUD Overlay district is intended to accommodate development that may be difficult, if not impossible, to carry out under otherwise applicable zoning district standards and that result in public benefits that are at least commensurate with the degree of development flexibility provided. Examples of the types of development that may be appropriate for PUD approval include the following:

- o Developments that offer enhanced protection of natural resources and sensitive environmental features, including streams, floodplains, wetlands and woodlands.
- o Developments that achieve extremely high levels of energy conservation and developments that achieve extremely high levels of sustainability, as evidenced by commitment to attain at least LEED Gold or equivalent ratings by recognized green building organizations.
- o Developments that offer a range of housing options that offer a variety of lifestyle choices to meet the needs of different age groups and household types.
- o Developments that contain a complementary mix of residential and nonresidential uses or that provide for a range of land use types.
- o Developments that are consistent with and help advance the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

Current Zoning

- R-1, Residential Detached House 1
- R-2, Residential Detached House 2
- R-3, Residential Detached House 3
- R-4, Residential Detached House 4
- R-5, Residential Detached House 5
- R-5A, Residential Detached House 5A
- R-6, Residential Detached House 6
- B1 Limited Retail Business
- B2 General Retail Business
- B-3, General Services and Highway Business
- O-R, Office Research
- O-R-M, Office-Research-Manufacturing
- M-1, Light Manufacturing
- M-2, Restricted Manufacturing
- DB, Downtown Business
- DC, Downtown Core
- DT, Downtown Transition
- INP-1, Neighborhood-Scale Institutional and Public District
- INP-2, Campus-Scale Institutional and Public District



Key Takeaways

The Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan will address changes that need to be made within the Village's current Zoning Ordinance to continue to foster a better quality of life and sustainability recommendations. Key Takeaways for Downers Grove's Zoning Ordinance and other land use development regulations presented below are based on the existing conditions laid out above.

- o **Housing.** Downers Grove has a diverse range of land use categories, but single-family detached homes comprise most of the Village.
- o **Commercial.** Commercial centers in Downers Grove each provide a unique identity and create a regional draw for the community. The most popular is corridor commercial, which encompasses the Village's downtown.
- o **Landlocked.** Downers Grove is relatively built-out and landlocked, preventing sprawling development. There are also very few vacant parcels throughout the Village.
- o **Industrial.** While industrial uses are scattered throughout the Village, there is a concentration on the western end near Walnut Ave and Curtiss Street.
- o **Special Purpose Districts.** Downers Grove has special purpose districts like Downtown Districts (DC, DB, DT) aimed at promoting a vibrant downtown, Institutional and Public Districts (INP-1, INP-2) catering to different scales of public and institutional uses, and Planned Unit Development Overlay Districts (PUD) allowing for flexible development standards to achieve certain benefits.
- o **Zoning.** There are several zoning designations within the Village, but R-3 and R-4 make up most of the Village.
- o **Zoning.** A majority of uses that include the promotion of culture, community events, and other programming are generally clustered around the downtown of Downers Grove.

SECTION 6

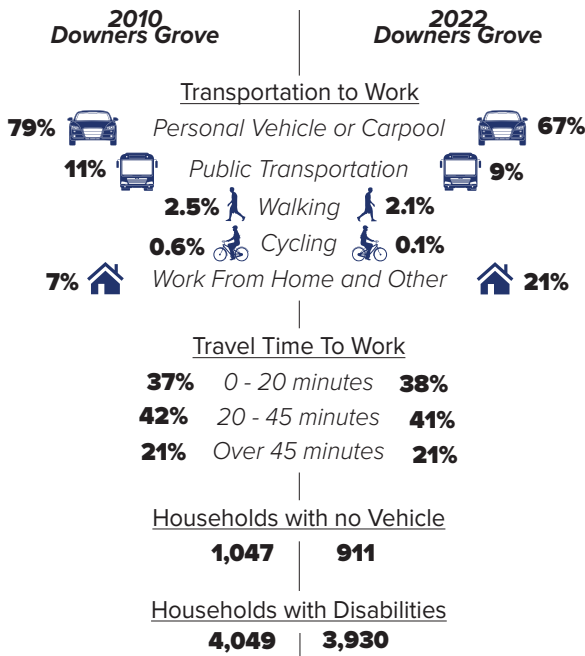
TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Downers Grove is connected to the Chicago region through several controlled access interstates, state roads, and county highways. Notably, Interstate 88 (tollway) and Interstate 355 (tollway) form approximate northern and western boundaries for the Village. In addition, the Village is serviced by the regional bus transit network, Pace, and regional rail transport, Metra. Pace connects Downtown Downers Grove to neighboring communities and shopping centers, while the Metra train line connects the Village directly to Aurora, Lisle, Westmont, and Chicago. Several other major arterial thoroughfares serve as the backbone for the community, connecting residents to work, school, shopping, and recreational opportunities.

Transportation Demographics

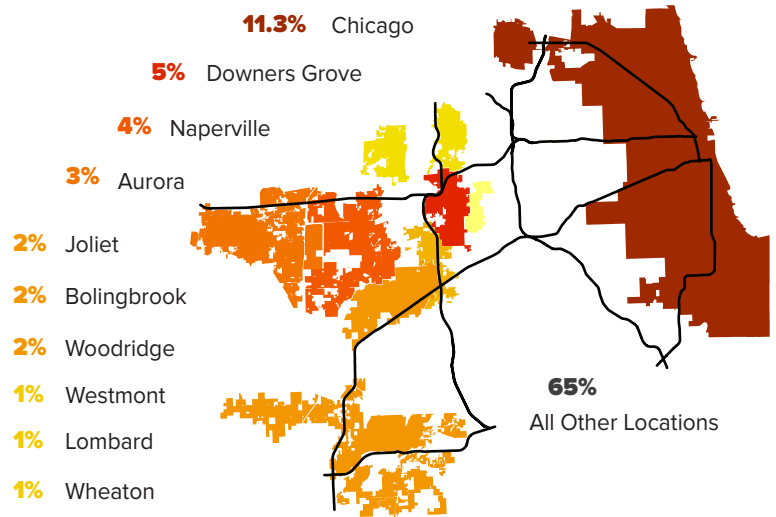
Comparing U.S. Census data from 2010 to 2022, residents of Downers Grove were more likely to work from home and less likely to drive a personal vehicle to work in 2022. Notably, public transportation, cycling, and walking as modes to work have declined slightly, potentially due to workers opting to work from home. Travel times to work have remained unchanged over the past decade. The number of households with no vehicle and households with disabilities have declined slightly, but still account for around two-percent of households and eight percent of residents.

Transportation Statistics



Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Resident Location of Work



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Resident Location of Work does not include those who “work from home”

Between 2010 and 2022, there was a 200% increase change in people who said they “work from home”

Thoroughfares

As a historic railroad suburb, Downers Grove is well-connected to nearby villages and cities by way of east-west railroad links and historic state routes which predate the interstate highway system. The villages of Westmont, Clarendon Hills, and Hinsdale are all connected to central Downers Grove with a system of gridded streets, creating a network of easily walkable urban downtowns and centers. The major Chicago region suburbs of Naperville and Aurora, with a population of over 150,000, are located west of Downers Grove along 75th Street, Maple Avenue, Ogden Avenue, and I-88. Municipalities north of Downers Grove (Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, and Lombard) are somewhat distant from Downers Grove’s population centers and are separated by major interstates and state routes. Municipalities south of Downers Grove, including Darien and Woodridge, are interwoven with residential developments in south Downers Grove, and share the 75th Street commercial shopping corridor. Downers Grove has the most thoroughfare connections with Lisle, Westmont, and Oakbrook to the east and west.

Regional Connectors

Numerous east-west thoroughfares and a limited number of north-south thoroughfares link Downers Grove to neighboring municipalities and the wider region. Due to Downers Grove’s orientation, there are limited north-to-south thoroughfares through the Village. Detailed in the tables below, the majority of major corridors running through Downers Grove are the responsibility of the County and State. The additional coordination required between entities can make it challenging to plan for thoroughfare and intersection improvements as both entities must approve the proposed projects.



Maple Avenue / 55th Street at Belmont Road
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Principal North-South Connectors

Thoroughfare Name	Authority
Interstate 355 (Tollway)	Illinois Tollway
Finley Rd. / Belmont Rd. / Woodward Ave.	DuPage Co. / D.G.
Highland Ave. / Main St. / Lemont Rd.	DuPage Co. / D.G.
Fairview Ave. / DuPage Co. Road 25	DuPage Co. / D.G.

Principal East-West Connectors

Thoroughfare Name	Authority
Interstate 88 (Tollway)	Illinois Tollway
State Route 56 / Butterfield Rd.	IDOT
U.S. 34 / Ogden Ave.	DuPage Co. / IDOT
Maple Ave. / 55th St.	DuPage Co.
63rd St.	DuPage Co.
75th St.	DuPage Co.

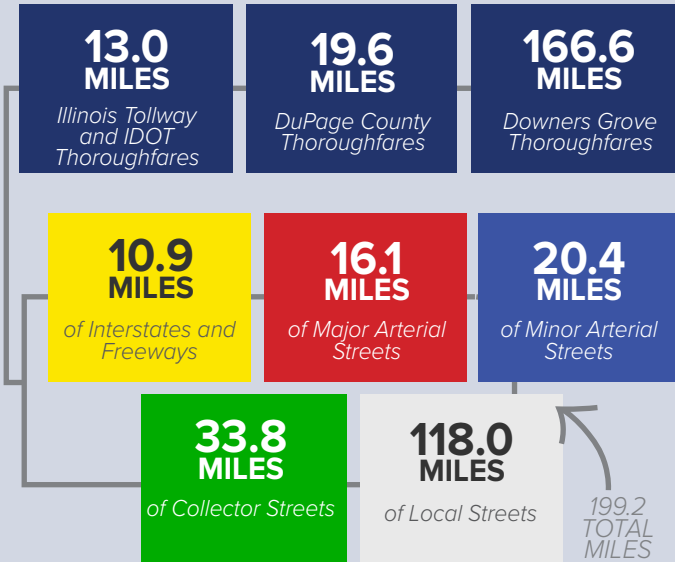
Boundary Agreement

A significant portion of Downers Grove is adjacent to unincorporated residential lands in DuPage County. Boundary agreements between Downers Grove and neighboring municipalities have dictated where Downers Grove has the legal right to plan thoroughfares, utilities infrastructure, sidewalks, and trails. The vast majority of land within the boundary agreement consists of single-family detached homes built in the 1970s through 2000s.

Functional Classifications

Thoroughfare functional classifications are a means of standardizing thoroughfare designs and facility types by categorizing thoroughfares based on their capacity, pavement width, and intended use, or function. Downers Grove has five classifications and standards outlined in the Village Municipal Code. The following section is a summary of each thoroughfare classification as prescribed by Downers Grove, DuDOT, and IDOT.

199.2 TOTAL ROADWAY MILES



Note: Box colors correspond with the Thoroughfare Characteristics Map

Interstates and Freeways Right of Way: No set standard
Pavement Widths: No set standard

Major and Minor Arterial Streets Right of Way: 100-foot minimum
Pavement Widths: 60-foot minimum

Collector Streets Right of Way: 80-foot minimum
Pavement Widths: 36-foot minimum

Local Streets Right of Way: 66-foot minimum
Pavement Widths: 28-foot minimum

Interstates and Freeways

The interstates and freeways within Downers Grove are operated by Illinois Tollway. I-88 and I-355 are “controlled access thoroughfares” which means there are no intersections and access is only granted by the use of access ramps. Downers Grove is served by seven principal interstate interchanges, which are typically bounded by retail, commercial, and office/business land uses.



I-88 at I-355 near Morton Arboretum
Source: GribbleNation

Arterial Streets

The Village Municipal Code states that for an arterial street, the minimum right-of-way width is one hundred feet and the minimum edge-to-edge pavement width is 60 feet. Arterial streets are operated by the State, County, and Village. Arterial streets located within or adjacent to Downtown are typically operated by the Village. Due to the higher capacity and connectivity provided by arterial streets, they serve as the main corridors connecting Downers Grove. Highland Avenue, 75th Street, and Fairview Avenue are all classified as arterial streets.



63rd Street at Dunham Road
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Collector Streets

The Village Municipal Code states that a collector street's minimum right-of-way width is 80 feet and the minimum edge-to-edge pavement width is 36 feet. Collector streets in Downers Grove are typically streets bounded by residential land uses which connect local residents to commercial land uses and the wider thoroughfare grid network. Warren Avenue, Saratoga Avenue, and Dunham Road are classified as collector streets.

Local Streets

The Village Municipal Code states a local street's minimum right-of-way width is 66 feet and the minimum edge-to-edge pavement width is 28 feet. Local streets are low-capacity, low-speed thoroughfares which connect mostly residential and public land uses. These streets are not intended to provide ease of travel over long distances, but intended to serve as access drives for local traffic. Grant Street, Brookbank Road, and Bolson Drive are classified as local streets.



Saratoga Avenue
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Concord Drive at Bunker Hill Circle
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Intersections

Downers Grove has multiple signalized and non-signalized intersections, bridges and overpasses, and rail line crossings. The Intersections and Crossings map, on the facing page, is intended to provide an overview of intersection density, distance between formal crossings, and choke-points caused by bridges and overpasses.

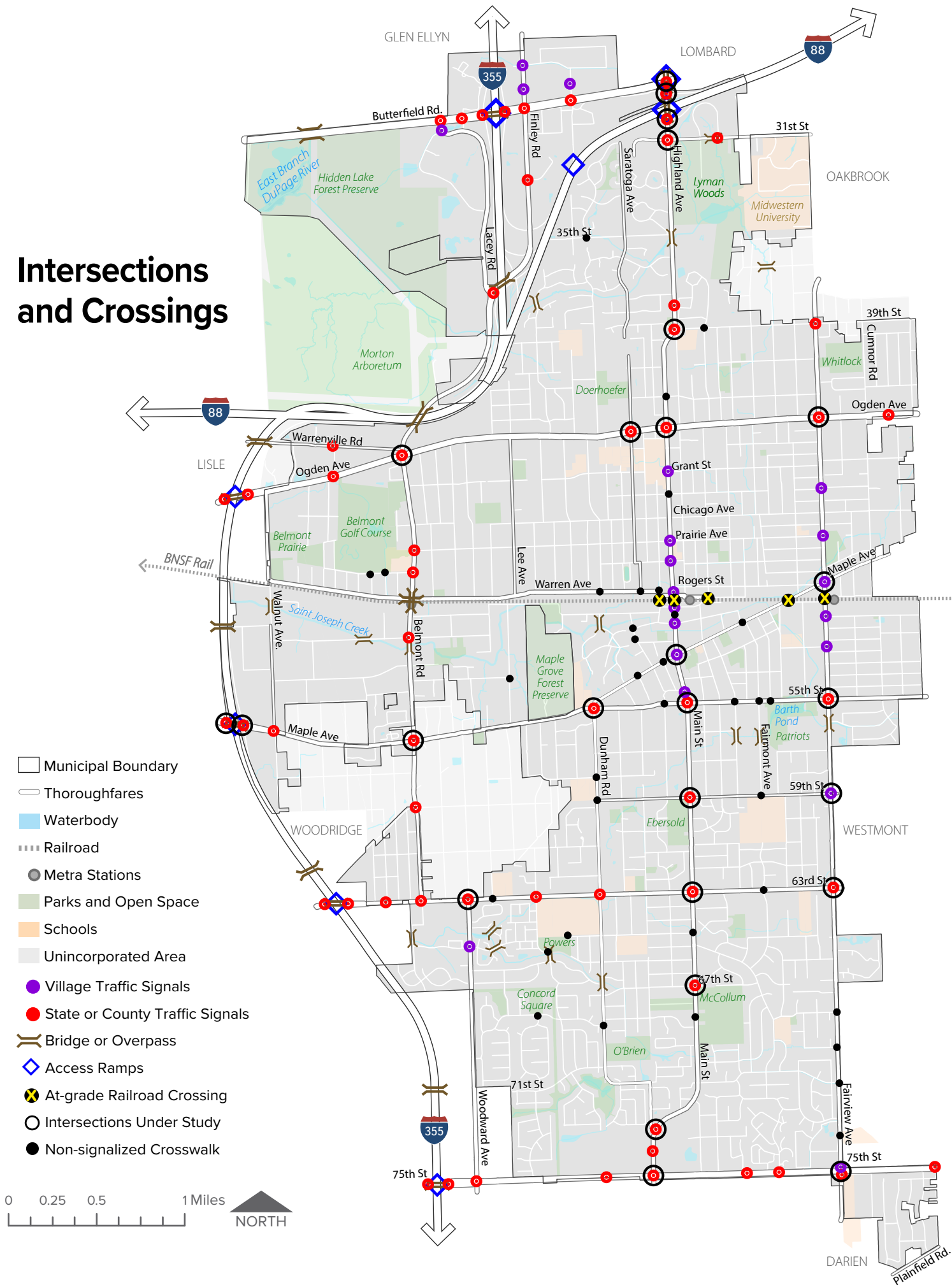
Intersection signalization in Downers Grove is typically located where two arterial thoroughfare intersect or where a collector thoroughfare intersects an arterial thoroughfare at a public facility (school, retail, or park). Signalized intersections typically include a dedicated left-turn lane, at least two street-post lamps, and at least one crosswalk, plus associated pedestrian push-button crossing signals.

For residents heading north of the Village, there are only two I-88 crossing opportunities at Finley Road and Highland Avenue. Residents heading south of the Village can use several right-turn-only drives out of residential areas or utilize several traffic signals along 75th Street. Residents heading in the western direction have nine opportunities to cross I-355, although the majority of these intersections do not include pedestrian facilities. Residents heading east into Oak Brook, Darien, or Westmont have many intersection-crossing opportunities and points of entry.

Minor exceptions where pedestrian push-buttons are not provided include where sidewalks do not currently exist, such as at I-88 and I-355 crossings, and at the intersection of 63rd Street and Fairmont Avenue. A large distance between crossing points may lead to informal pedestrian crossings in unsafe locations. Several non-signalized crosswalks (mid-block crossings) exist within the Village, meaning that a crosswalk is placed crossing a thoroughfare which does not require cross-traffic to stop. Such instances typically occur adjacent to parklands and schools.

There are six opportunities to cross the BNSF railroad tracks, only one of which - Belmont Road - is not at-grade, meaning an underpass is provided to prevent back-ups when a train is present. The other five crossings are near Downtown at two-lane undivided thoroughfares. The limited number of lanes at these crossing points, along with the close distance to other intersections, may cause a congestion/blockage of intersections during peak travel times when a train is present. Other causes of congestion at intersection during peak times include a large number of scheduled trains, trains long in length, trains going east and west at the same time, and passenger drop-off locations at both the Main Street and Fairview Avenue train stations.

Intersections and Crossings



Daily Traffic

The map on the following page depicts the annual average daily traffic (AADT) of thoroughfares in Downers Grove. Each number represents the daily number of vehicles traveling on the thoroughfare segment as counted by the Village and IDOT. Data depicted on the map represents multiple traffic counts taken between 2017 and 2022 to provide a base understanding regarding where the busiest thoroughfare segments and intersections are located.

Thoroughfares which experienced the largest amount of daily traffic are those operated by IDOT, Illinois Tollway, and DuDOT, such as I-88, I-355, 75th Street, and Ogden Avenue. The busiest thoroughfares often run in an east to west direction, which can pose safety and mobility barriers for those crossing north to south, particularly across Ogden Avenue, Butterfield Road, 63rd Street, and 75th Street. Notably, portions of Main Street and Fairview Avenue experience daily traffic between 5,000 and 10,000 vehicles. These segments of thoroughfares are bounded by historic homes, narrow thoroughfare pavement widths, and local retail, where a high number of vehicles could create safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians in this central or Downtown region of the Village.

Lastly, many public facilities, such as schools and parks, are located along high-traffic corridors which could limit the potential to walk or cycle to these sites and could be a safety issue for school students and their guardians.

Thoroughfares operated by Downers Grove with the highest AADT:

- #1 Woodward Avenue
- #2 Main Street (between Ogden Avenue and 55th Street)
- #3 Fairview Avenue
- #4 Maple Avenue (between 55th Street and Cumnor Road)
- #5 Dunham Road

Public-oriented facilities and places located along thoroughfares with the highest AADT:

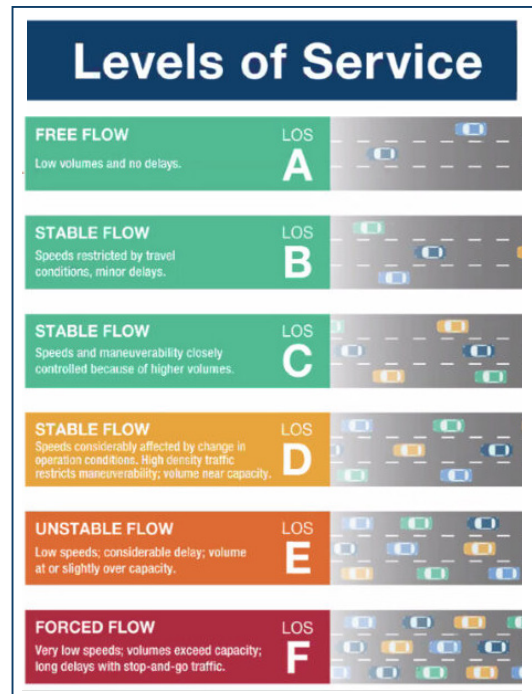
- #1 Downers Grove South High School (63rd Street)
- #2 Indian Trail Elementary School (63rd Street)
- #3 Herrick Middle School (Ogden Avenue)
- #4 Downers Grove North High School (Main Street)
- #5 Morton Arboretum (Finley Road / Butterfield Road)
- #6 McCollum Park (Main Street)
- #7 Maple Grove Park / Patriots Park (55th Street)
- #8 Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital (Highland Avenue)

Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) is a measurement of a thoroughfare’s functionality accounting for its’ design, traffic volume, traffic flow, and designed speed. Level of Service evaluates whether a section of road is functioning as it was intended. A section of thoroughfare with an LOS score of ‘A’ indicates proper traffic flow, while an LOS score of ‘F’ indicates that the section of road does not meet the intended function.

DuDOT has developed a Level of Service matrix and survey which scores County operated thoroughfares. The latest surveys were conducted in 2023; the results of which are shown on the facing page. Each section of thoroughfare is assessed from existing traffic signal to existing traffic signal, accounting for northbound, southbound, eastbound, or westbound travel lanes. As depicted, the sections of thoroughfare in Downers Grove with the lowest LOS (scoring D, E, or F) are typically at major intersections where traffic is entering the intersection.

The intersection of Main Street and Ogden Avenue has a low LOS on the north leg and west leg of the intersection. Notably the section of Ogden Avenue which scored an F is adjacent to Herrick Middle School and Downers Grove North High School. Finley Road has a low LOS in both directions north of Butterfield Road, potentially caused by the short distance between traffic signals, drivers wanting to access residential subdivisions to the north, or drivers entering and exiting adjacent retail. Lastly, a significant portion of Finley Road, between Lacey Road and Ogden Avenue scored an F, potentially due to increased travel demand from semi-trucks entering and exiting recent warehousing developments.



Source: Smart Growth America

Level of Service



Parking and Right of Way Restrictions

Downers Grove regulates on-street parking depending on the thoroughfare classification and adjacent land uses. Streets lined with primarily residential land uses usually allow for on-street parallel parking, but not overnight parking. Streets within the Downtown, a location with higher parking demand when compared to local residential streets, only allows for two-hour or fifteen-minute on-street parking, unless otherwise stated. A parking garage is also available Downtown for all-day paid parking. All-day parking, for commuters only, is allowed within parking lots at Metra stations. A majority of thoroughfares classified as major and minor arterial routes do not allow for on-street parking as these are typically curb-edged, high-speed, and heavily-traveled corridors. The right-of-way of most thoroughfares includes existing above-ground and below-ground services like on-street parking, thoroughfare pavement, curbs, drainage channels, utility poles, telecommunication lines, sidewalks, and street trees.

Challenges

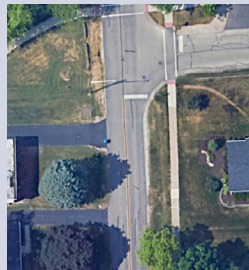
Due to central Downers Grove's historic street grid, historic highways, and modified grid / curvilinear street network prevalent in north and south Downers Grove, rights-of-way are typically narrow (when compared to neighboring communities with newer streets). Generally, rights-of-way are observed to be near or at complete build-out / maximum width with limited space for thoroughfare, sidewalk, or utility expansion. For example, Fairview Avenue has a full right-of-way of 66 feet, with 45 feet used for driving lanes and curb and gutter, 6 to 10 feet of utility and buffer strips, and 10 feet of sidewalks. This leaves little to no room for altering or expanding the existing sidewalks, curbs, and thoroughfare design to accommodate bicycle facilities.

In addition, the allowance of on-street parking can affect visibility and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Lastly, topographic changes, such as hills and curved streets, create blind spots heading over the crests of hills or around a parked car. Topography and limited opportunities for expansion of facilities within the existing right-of-way can make cycling or walking difficult or even dangerous, particularly for youth and those with mobility challenges. This can also reduce options for traffic alleviation and management.

Street with on-street parking



Elm Street
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Street without on-street parking

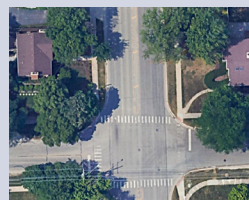


Fairview Avenue
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Major Arterial Corridor



Main Street / Highland Avenue at 41st Street
Source: Baxter & Woodman

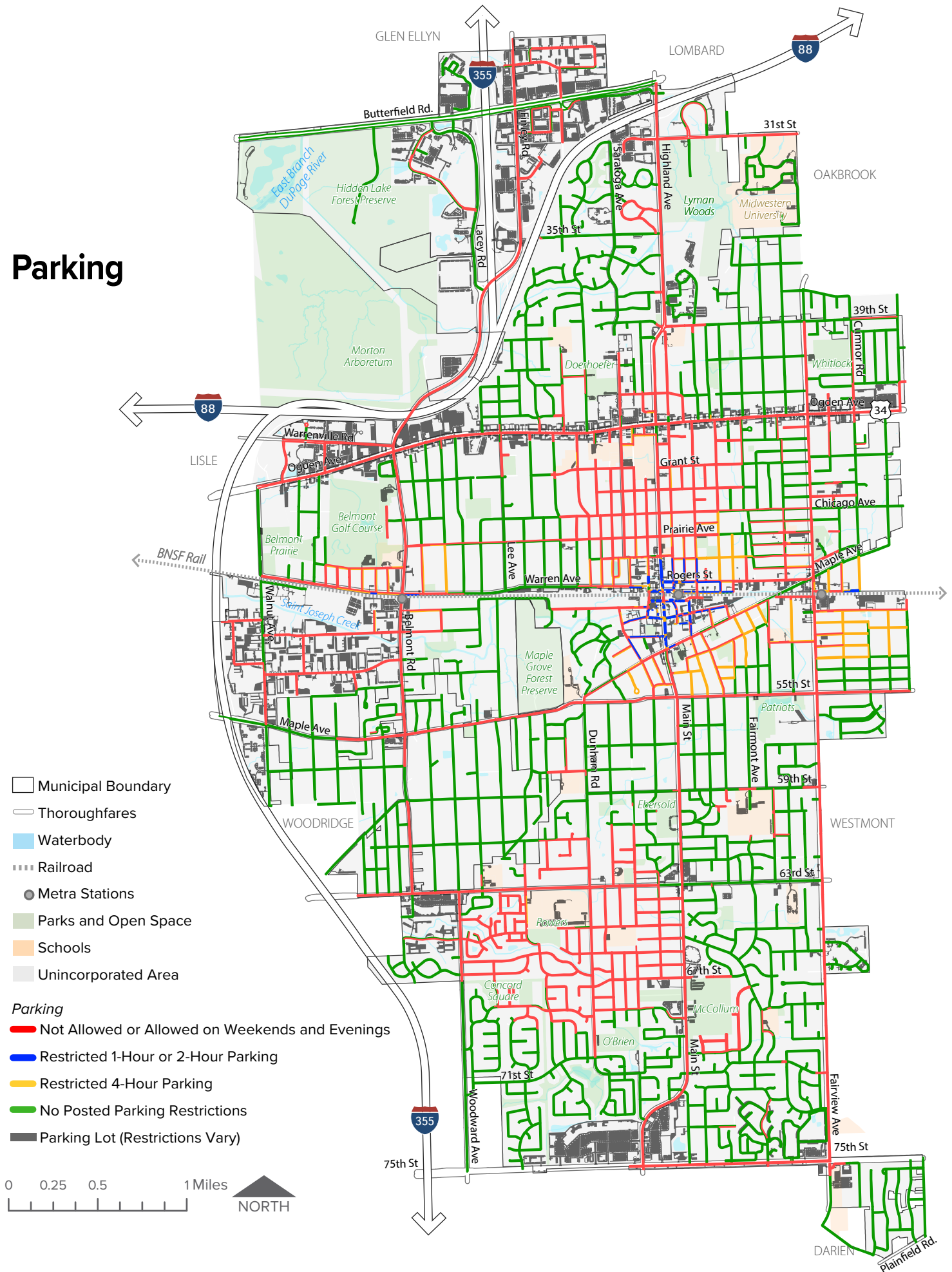


Butterfield Road / IL 56 Corridor



Butterfield Road / Illinois Route 56
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Parking



- Municipal Boundary
- Thoroughfares
- Waterbody
- Railroad
- Metra Stations
- Parks and Open Space
- Schools
- Unincorporated Area

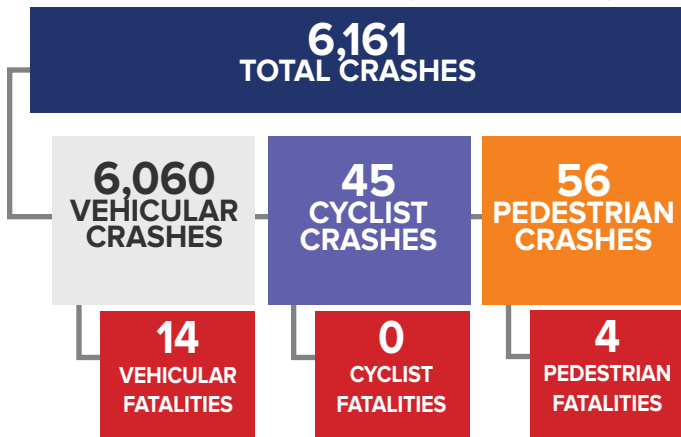
- Parking**
- Not Allowed or Allowed on Weekends and Evenings
 - Restricted 1-Hour or 2-Hour Parking
 - Restricted 4-Hour Parking
 - No Posted Parking Restrictions
 - Parking Lot (Restrictions Vary)



Crashes (2017-2022)

The map on the following page depicts all crash occurrences in Downers Grove from 2017 to 2022 (the most recent year of released crash data). Data was collected from the Village, DuDOT, and IDOT for years 2017 to 2022. Crashes depicted include all vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclists-related crashes including occurrences of a fatality. Of the 6,161 recorded incidents, 98 percent were vehicle-related while cyclist- and pedestrian-related accidents each accounted for 1 percent of the remaining incidents. Since 2017, crashes have mainly occurred at intersections along thoroughfares with the highest annual average daily traffic, including Ogden Avenue, Butterfield Road, and Highland Avenue. Pedestrian-related crashes have occurred most often along Butterfield Road, Ogden Avenue near Saratoga Avenue, and Main Street near Prairie Avenue.

Crash Breakdown (2017-2022)



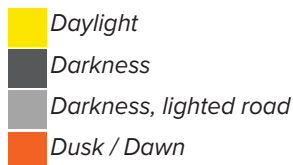
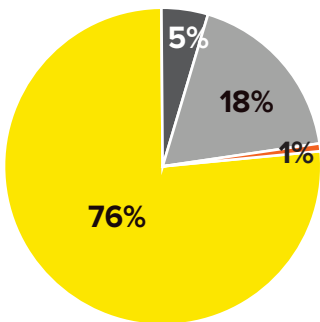
Thoroughfares with the Most Crashes:

- #1 Ogden Avenue
- #2 Highland Avenue / Main Street
- #3 Butterfield Road
- #4 63rd Street
- #5 75th Street

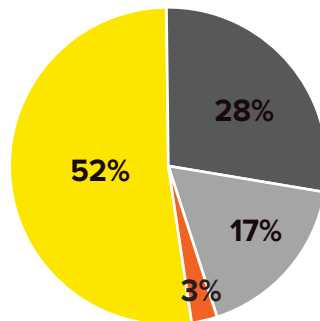
Intersections with the Most Crashes:

- #1 Finley Road / Butterfield Road
- #2 Ogden Avenue / Belmont Road
- #3 Ogden Avenue / Main Street
- #4 Downers Drive / Butterfield Road
- #5 63rd Street / Main Street

Time of Day of Vehicular Crashes:



Time of Day of Pedestrian- and Cyclist-Related Crashes:



Almost 50-percent of cyclist and pedestrian crashes have occurred in dark conditions, compared to only 25-percent of vehicular accidents having occurred in dark conditions. In addition, over a quarter of all bicycle or pedestrian accidents occurred on a thoroughfare with no streetlights.

Primary Cause of All Crashes (First Cause)*:

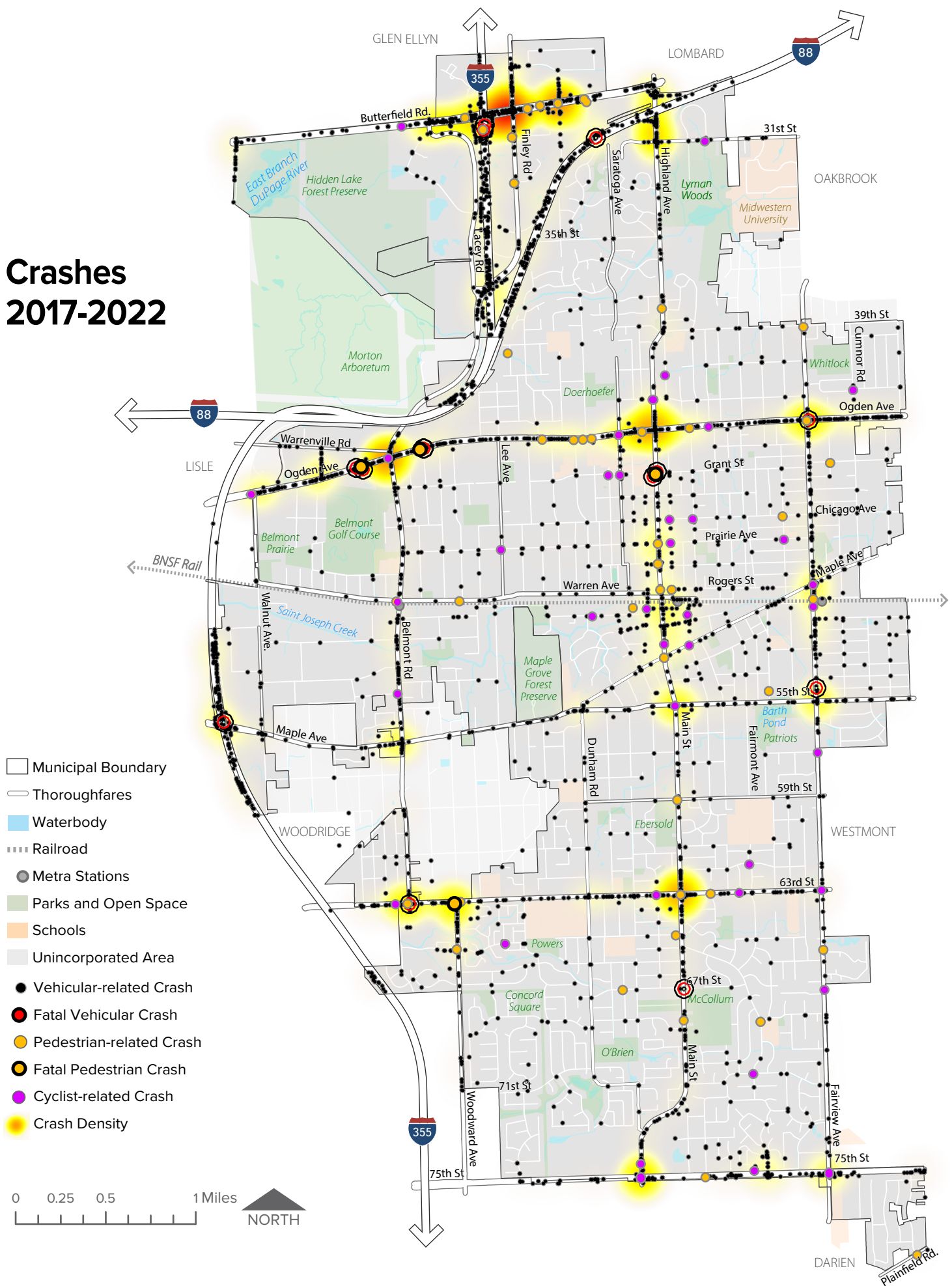
- 46% Failing to reduce speed to avoid crash
- 28% Failing to yield right-of-way
- 17% Improper lane usage
- 9% Following too closely
- 7% Unable to determine
- 6% Disregarding traffic signals
- 5% Disregarding stop sign
- 4% Distraction - from inside vehicle

Primary Cause of Pedestrian- and Cyclist-Related Crashes (First Cause)*:

- 54% Failing to yield right-of-way
- 10% Failing to reduce speed to avoid crash
- 8% Disregarding stop sign
- 7% Disregarding traffic signals
- 7% Vision obscured (signs, tree limbs, buildings, etc.)

*Percents depicted are the percent of accidents that mention each primary cause

Crashes 2017-2022



Active Transportation

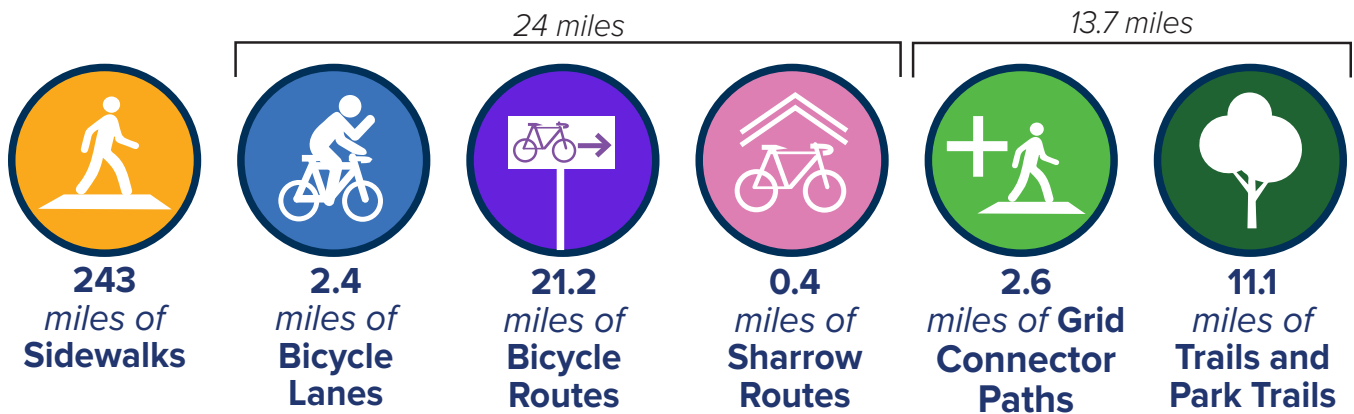
Existing Network

Downers Grove’s existing network of trails, bicycle, and sidewalk facilities covers nearly every corner of the Village, with sidewalks along both sides of almost every thoroughfare and bicycle routes connecting most neighborhoods.

Notably, Downers Grove has a bicycle network comprised primarily of bicycle routes with limited segments of dedicated bicycle lanes. Downers Grove does not currently have protected bicycle lanes (bollards, curb, or other barriers) or designated off-street shared-use paths.

Bicycle routes and bicycle lanes are mainly located on collector thoroughfares, avoiding busier arterial thoroughfares. This system creates a loosely-gridded pattern of bicycle routes which are secondary to the main grid of sidewalks and vehicular thoroughfares.

There are limited existing off-street recreational trails within Downers Grove which connect multiple areas of the Village. A portion of the Southern DuPage County Regional Trail runs along Jefferson Avenue and 75th Street connecting to Woodridge. The 75th Street portion of the trail operates more as a shared-use path running parallel to the thoroughfare. Most trails and grid-connector paths in Downers Grove are short segments of trail that connect residential areas to parks or provide internal circulation within a park. Even with the limited amount of linear off-street recreational trails, for a Village the size of Downers Grove, they are exceeding the median linear miles of trails recommended by The National Recreation and Parks Associations (NRPA). Based on the NRPA’s 2024 Performance Review recommendation, an entity with a population 20,000 to 49,999 should have a median of 10 trail miles, and an entity with a population 50,000 to 99,999 should have a median of 18.1 trail miles, of which Downers Grove is at 11.1-miles of trails (including DuPage County-owned and maintained trails).



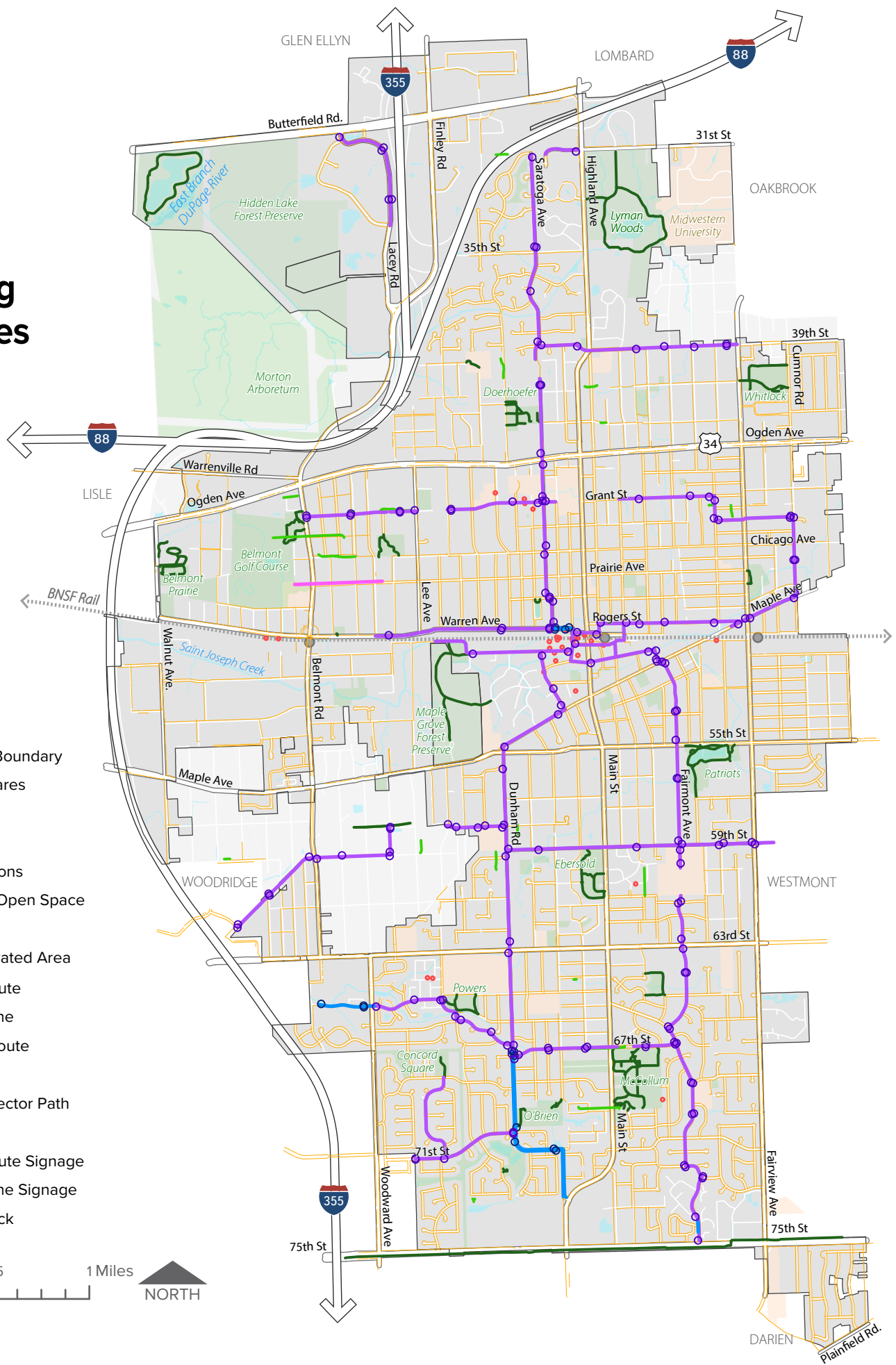
Dunham Road bicycle lane at O'Brien Park
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Bicycle route at Bolson Drive and Springside Avenue
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Existing Facilities

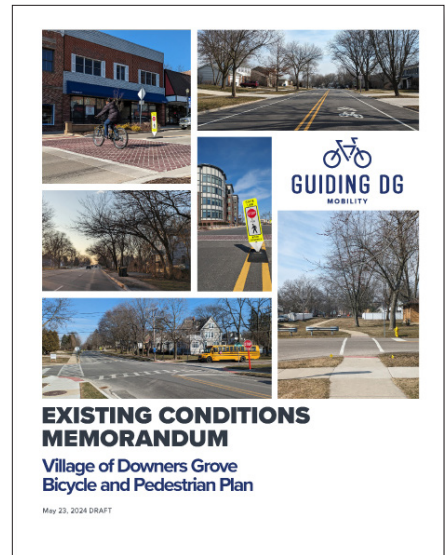
- Municipal Boundary
- Thoroughfares
- Waterbody
- Railroad
- Metra Stations
- Parks and Open Space
- Schools
- Unincorporated Area
- Bicycle Route
- Bicycle Lane
- Sharrow Route
- Trail
- Grid Connector Path
- Sidewalks
- Bicycle Route Signage
- Bicycle Lane Signage
- Bicycle Rack



Bike and Pedestrian Update Summary

The purpose of the Downers Grove Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update is to continue the development and improvement of non-vehicular transportation infrastructure, to ensure safety, access, connectivity, and longevity. The previous two bicycle- and pedestrian-related master plans, conducted in 2000 and 2013, have helped the Village establish a provisional network of existing bicycle routes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalk facilities infrastructure. This plan update builds off the Village's past achievements through the strategic development of additional active transportation infrastructure. The document will serve as the guiding framework through which Village leaders make future decisions, policy changes, infrastructure improvements, and strategic investments.

The following section summarizes existing Village, DuPage County, and regional transportation plans, including the 2013 Bike-Ped Plan, with an overview of existing facilities, and summaries of Village programs and infrastructure design requirements. A more detailed analysis is available in the Bike and Pedestrian Plan Existing Conditions Memorandum.



Demographics and Transportation Trends

Overall, Downers Grove residents experience a higher quality of life when compared to Illinois State metrics and DuPage County metrics. Downers Grove is a community of mostly service industry workers making an average household income between \$50,000 and \$150,000. Notable community metrics that may impact or influence the planning of active transportation facilities are as follows:

- o Many workers travel to neighboring communities along I-88, I-355, and the Metra BNSF Line for their jobs. However, there are major employment centers located in Downers Grove, including Downtown, Butterfield Road, Finley Road, and business / office parks along the I-88 corridor.
- o There has been a decline in active transportation modes to work, potentially due to the increase in people working from home. Alternatively, this could indicate an increased future demand for local bicycle and sidewalk facilities connecting residents to commercial areas as more people work out of their homes.

Past Plans, Studies, Policies, and Programs

Safety

State, county, and local roadway and transportation planning initiatives revolve around one topic: Safety. Specifically, entities involved in roadway planning, such as Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage County, and the Village have implemented safety policies or plans, such as Safe Streets For All, Complete Streets, or ADA Transition Plans, aimed at improving safety, accessibility, and the overall pedestrian and cyclist experience.

Planning Efforts

DuPage County trail and sidewalk network plans propose improvements to the 59th Street trail designation (mainly trail crossings) and updates to curb ramp and crosswalk facilities at signalized County-operated intersections. CMAP provides multiple funding programs for regional entities which aim to reduce roadway injuries and promote non-vehicular forms of transportation. Downers Grove currently has multiple neighborhood level and Village-wide neighborhood traffic studies which primarily aim to reduce speeding, improve user safety, and provide/encourage non-vehicular modes of transportation.

Policies

Downers Grove has several policies, including Snow Removal, Safe Routes to Schools, and a proposed Pedestrian First Policy, all of which aim to create a safer cycling and walking environment. The Village does not have a Complete Streets ordinance, Vision Zero Policy, or Smart Growth policy.

Regulations

Downers Grove lacks stated regulations regarding electric scooters and electric bicycles, and defaults to the County and State regulations. Regulations are also lacking regarding blocking or impeding movement along bicycle facilities and trails.

Designations

Downers Grove is a designated Tree City USA municipality but is not a designated Bicycle Friendly Community or Walk Friendly Community, like some of its neighboring municipalities.

Public Transportation

Pace Bus Service

Pace is a regional Chicago bus service operated by Pace Suburban Bus, a private transportation operator. The bus network services locations as far away as Calumet City, Joliet, Elburn, Cicero, Woodstock, and Waukegan. Downers Grove is serviced by three routes, one of which, Route 834, stops at the Main Street Metra Station. Route 834 connects the entirety of northern and southern Downers Grove from Yorktown Center Mall to Woodgrove Festival Shopping Center. In addition, Route 715 connects Midwestern University to nearby Westmont Station and Route 732 connects Yorktown Center Mall to Naperville. Notably, there is no service directly linking Downtown Downers Grove to Downtown Lisle or Westmont.

In 2021, Pace revised service offerings with discontinued bus routes and new accommodations. Several Pace bus routes were discontinued in Downers Grove, such as route 465, which limits access to Belmont Station and office / business land uses along Lacey Road. In March 2024, Pace introduced paratransit services, through their Rideshare Access Program, which operates an on-call bus service for people with disabilities. Front loading bicycle racks (two bike maximum) are also now offered on fixed Pace bus routes. This allows for riders to use their bike to arrive and depart bus stop locations, thus providing first and last mile accommodations.

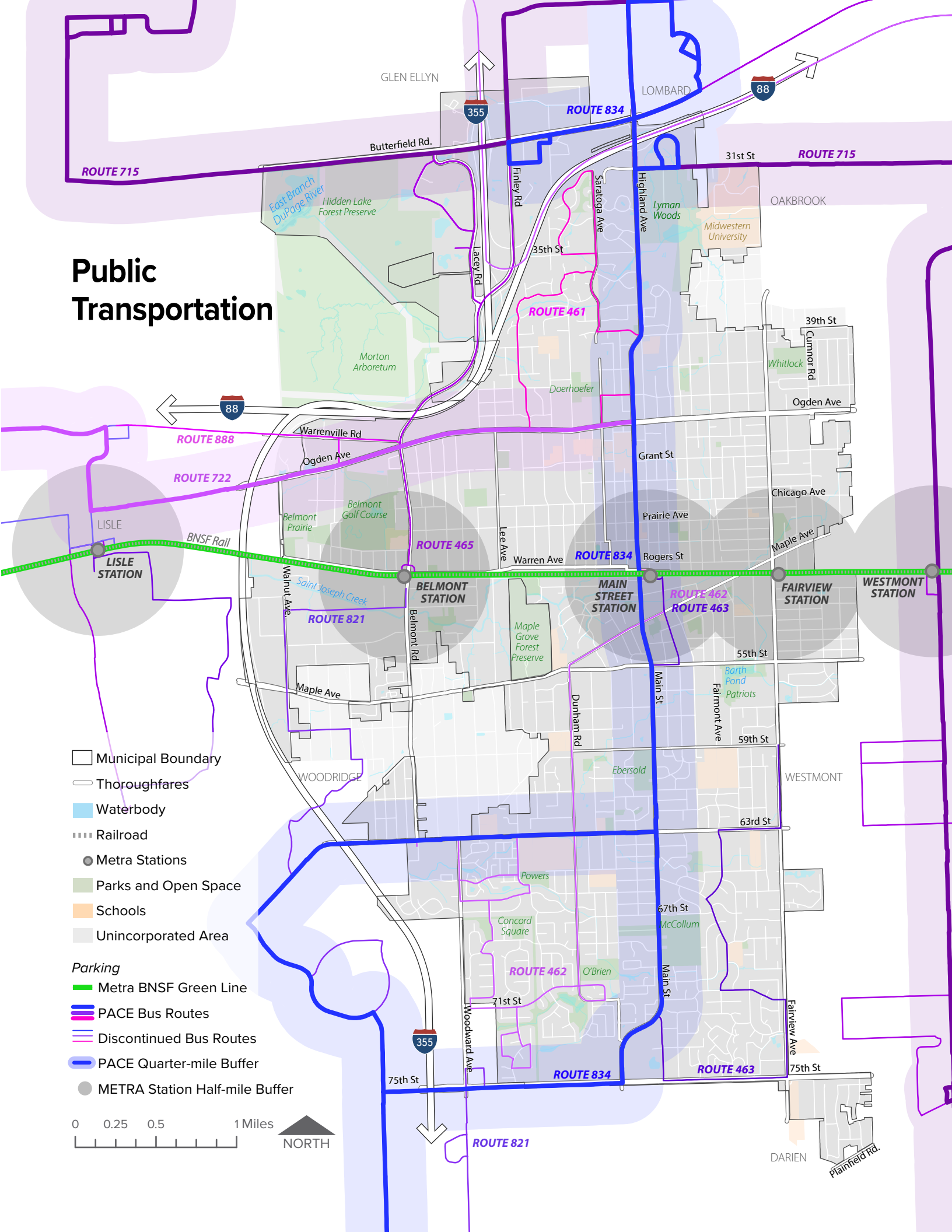
Metra Rail Service

Downers Grove is serviced by three Metra rail stations along Warren Avenue and Burlington Avenue. The service runs from Chicago Union Station to Downtown Aurora, and connects Downers Grove to Naperville, Lisle, Westmont, and other communities along Ogden Avenue. Metra releases monthly reports detailing ridership counts for each of their lines in operation. Station specific ridership counts are not included in these monthly reports. According to Metra, the BNSF Line (connecting Aurora and Chicago) has the highest ridership of all 11 Metra service lines with 15 to 16 million rides annually between 2015 and 2024. The BNSF Line experienced over 15 million passenger trips in 2018 and 2019, compared to only 3.6 and 2.5 million passenger trips in 2020 and 2021. Monthly ridership of the BNSF line has decreased on average since monthly reports became available in 2016. The BNSF Line Passenger Trips table below depicts ridership data released by Metra for all available months since January 2018. The table highlights that starting in March of 2020 ridership dramatically decreased due to the 2020 Pandemic and has not since recovered to ridership levels experienced in 2018 and 2019. Starting in the Spring of 2021, ridership began to increase again year-over-year. As of 2024, ridership is still less than half of what it was in 2019. The table also demonstrates that the months of June, July, and August experience a small spike in ridership.

BNSF Line Passenger Trips (thousands)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	1386	1223	1258	79	181	440	498
February	1182	1208	1213	76	230	402	515
March	1284	1258	499	107	355	499	527
April	1290	1300	25	113	354	459	584
May	1352	1312	29	158	370	547	603
June	1383	1341	88	225	432	560	
July	1379	1357	104	300	430	528	
August	1400	1356	95	284	468	610	
September	1322	1306	101	281	456	550	
October	1378	1359	101	303	454	594	
November	1291	1256	72	300	428	528	
December	1171	1186	76	248	350	449	
TOTAL BY YEAR	15818	15462	3661	2474	4508	6166	

Public Transportation



- Municipal Boundary
- Thoroughfares
- Waterbody
- Railroad
- Metra Stations
- Parks and Open Space
- Schools
- Unincorporated Area

- Parking**
- Metra BNSF Green Line
 - PACE Bus Routes
 - Discontinued Bus Routes
 - PACE Quarter-mile Buffer
 - METRA Station Half-mile Buffer



Key Takeaways

The Comprehensive Plan will address changes that need to be made within the Village's current transportation infrastructure to foster a better quality of life, sustainability recommendations, and a healthy mix of ways to traverse the Village. The key takeaways presented below are based on existing conditions related to transportation and mobility.

- **Major Connections.** Downers Grove has several major four to eight lane thoroughfares which run in an east west direction, with numerous two to four lane thoroughfares running north to south. The primary "spines" connecting the community include Belmont Road, Lemont Road / Main Street / Highland Avenue, and Fairview Avenue.
- **High Traffic Corridors.** Corridors with the highest amount of daily traffic include Butterfield Road, Ogden Avenue, 63rd Street, and 75th Street. Shopping and employment hubs center around the Downtown, 75th Street, Ogden Avenue, and north of I-88.
- **Public Transit.** The Village is served by three Metra stations. Main Street station is also serviced by Pace bus route 834. The BNSF rail corridor only provides six crossing opportunities, only one of which is not at-grade.
- **Jurisdiction.** DuPage County Division of Transportation or the Illinois Department of Transportation maintains and operates most major thoroughfares in the Village. The Village maintains portions of Main Street (in Downtown), Woodward Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Fairmont Avenue.
- **Parking.** The majority of collector and local classified thoroughfares allow for on-street parallel parking, particularly along residential streets.
- **Interstates.** I-88 and I-355 provide a rough northern and western boundary for the Village's population centers. Sidewalks and safe crossings are provided only at a few interstate overpasses or underpasses.
- **Bicycle Routes and Trail Network.** Very limited disconnected segments of dedicated bicycle lanes exist and are unprotected and unbuffered. Major off-street trails are confined to parklands or pedestrian grid connector paths. The existing network of bicycle routes all meet in Downtown, and connect northern and southern Downers Grove. Signage, maps, bicycle racks, directional arrow signs are limited or incomplete along bicycle routes and trails, which could lead to user confusion.
- **Sidewalks.** The sidewalk network is typically in fair condition but has many gaps along major corridors such as Ogden. Pavement buckling and slopes may also be a mobility barrier.

DOWNTOWN AND FAIRVIEW FOCUS AREA STREETSAPES SUMMARY



Introduction

Streetscape is generally defined as the pedestrian environment within the public right-of-way, and typically relates to mixed-use areas with significant pedestrian activity. The character of the streetscape is influenced by the type of streets along with the adjacent properties and land uses. The identified streetscapes in Downers Grove include the Downtown and Fairview Focus areas. The area between the two is a Connection, and is included in the existing conditions analysis.

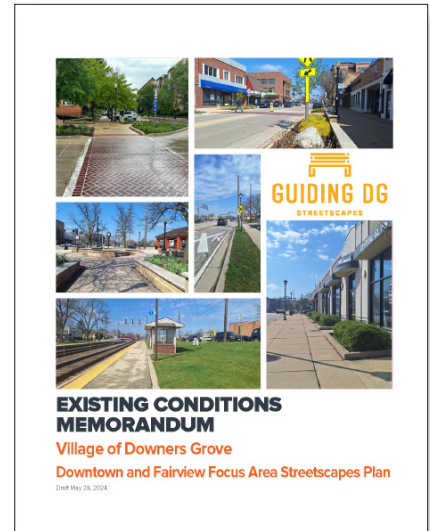
Issues and Opportunities

Existing Streetscape Conditions and Geographic Limits

The Downtown streetscape was constructed in the late 1990's and early 2000's as a cohesive design. The Village and Downtown Management Corporation work together to evaluate, maintain, and improve the Downtown streetscape regularly. The Village requires new developments to construct streetscape improvements consistent with the initial vision and the 2021 Downtown Design Guidelines. Based on community outreach, there is a perception that more attention is given to the area south of the tracks versus north of the tracks. This will be considered as design concepts are developed. The Village is in the process of completing the implementation of the zoning recommendations for the Fairview Focus Area from the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, which could influence property redevelopment and the timing of new streetscape improvements.

Streetscape Character

While it is important for the Village to keep a well-maintained public streetscape, there is also an opportunity for the streetscapes to contribute more to the overall character of the community. For both focus areas, the streetscape is functional but lacks a distinctive image and identity representing the community. Stakeholders raised the question of whether the Downtown and Fairview Avenue areas should have the same character for consistency within the community, or if the Fairview Avenue area could have its own unique neighborhood style.



Balance of Outdoor Dining, Pedestrian, and Vehicular Uses

Streetscapes need to provide a balance between pedestrian and vehicular uses, which are not always clear and obvious. Several situations exist where pedestrian and vehicular uses compete for the same space. Modifications can be considered to provide a more equitable use of the limited space, such as outdoor dining vs. on-street parking, crosswalk locations and materials, and the addition of traffic calming devices are possibilities.

Public Gathering Spaces and Programmed Events

The streetscape areas, primarily within the Downtown, are frequently used as public gathering spaces for programmed events. These events contribute to the success of the community and the streetscape environment should be designed to accommodate their needs. Locations, temporary conditions, timing of events, infrastructure, and management expectations all impact the streetscape design.

Culture and Public Art

Currently there are limited cultural or public art components within the streetscape. There is an opportunity to better represent the character of the community by including cultural references and public art within the streetscape environment. Numerous stakeholders expressed the desire to incorporate public art, seasonal installations, and historical and cultural references, not only as a sense of pride for the community, but also as an attraction to help local businesses.

Streetscape Elements

Specific streetscape elements are the building blocks that create a successful streetscape environment. The Existing Conditions Memorandum includes an evaluation of the existing streetscape elements for the Downtown, Connection, and Fairview Focus Area streetscapes. This evaluation of the existing conditions helps to identify the elements that are lacking and forms the basis of new improvement recommendations. Incorporating trees and landscape will help soften the hard streetscape environment, well-placed street furnishings will improve pedestrian hospitality, and quality lighting will increase safety and nighttime atmosphere. Finally, attractive gateways and appropriate wayfinding signage will be positive additions.

SECTION 8

COMMUNITY SERVICES, PARKS, AND RECREATION

Community services, parks, and recreation play a pivotal role in ensuring a high quality of life in Downers Grove. While the Village of Downers Grove provides some services, parks and recreation are managed by the Downers Grove Park District, with other services being offered by public, semi-private, or other governmental entities. To support the Comprehensive Plan, a comprehensive inventory was conducted, with a specific focus on local government, public safety, healthcare, education, parks, trails, open space, stormwater, wastewater, and other utility services.

Village Government

The Downers Grove Village Council is composed of seven elected officials: six commissioners and one mayor. The members of the Village Council are elected for four-year terms during Consolidated General Elections held in odd years. The Village Council retains the authority to make, ordain, and establish rules, bylaws, regulations, and ordinances related to the buildings, roads, streets, markets, police, health, safety, and order of the Village or any subject deemed necessary and proper for the security, welfare, and convenience of the Village. In addition to the Village Council, the Village is served by many citizen boards, committees, and commissions that meet on a regular basis to provide critical and valuable citizen input on various activities. The Village's boards and commissions include:

- **Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.** The Board of Fire and Police Commissioners comprises three members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Village Council, each serving staggered three-year terms. Governed by ordinance or State law, the Board's responsibilities include appointing firefighters and police officers, certifying candidates for promotion, conducting disciplinary hearings, and establishing and enforcing rules and regulations for the respective departments.
- **Building Board of Appeals.** The Building Board of Appeals (BBA) comprises seven members, including an architect, structural engineer, and an engineer/contractor with fire protection, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, or general contracting experience. Appointed by the Village Manager and confirmed by the Village Council, the BBA is mandated by building codes to adjudicate matters concerning building construction. They serve as the primary decision-making body for appeals concerning the application of building codes.
- **Community Events Commission.** The Community Events Commission advises the Village Council on public property use for community events, and reviewing special event applications. With seven members, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Village Council for staggered three-year terms, they must reside within the Village or have business ties to the community. The Commission recommends event-related issues to the Council, evaluates event proposals, coordinates public celebrations, and establishes regulations. They also perform additional duties as directed by the Council.
- **Environmental Concerns Commission.** The Environmental Concerns Commission (ECC) comprises seven members appointed by the Mayor for three-year terms, with a designated chairperson, subject to Council confirmation. The ECC's responsibilities include developing pollution prevention plans, promoting energy and resource conservation, fostering cooperation between the Village and environmental groups, recommending policies and ordinances for conservation and environmental control, conducting educational programs, and investigating environmental programs and services. The Commission also seeks voluntary compliance with environmental regulations and conducts studies as directed by the Council or Village Manager.

- **Historic Preservation and Design Review Board.** The Historic Preservation and Design Review Board (HPDRB) oversees the historic preservation and Certificate of Design Appropriateness provisions of the Downers Grove Municipal Code. It comprises seven members, including two architects, one attorney, one member of the Downers Grove Historical Society, and three residents. Members serve staggered three-year terms and may perform additional duties as directed by the Village Council.
- **Human Service Commission.** The Human Service Commission (HSC) is composed of seven members serving staggered three-year terms, along with an ex-officio member representing a local government unit in Downers Grove. Responsibilities include reviewing social concerns in the community, such as those affecting youth, seniors, families, and minorities. Additionally, the HSC evaluates policies and ordinances referred by the Village Council and considers their impact on individuals and the public, while also investigating matters related to fair housing as directed by court procedures outlined in the Downers Grove Municipal Code.
- **Plan Commission.** The Plan Commission, mandated by state law, comprises nine voting members and three non-voting, ex-officio members representing the Park District, Sanitary District, and local school districts. The Mayor serves as an ex-officio member without voting rights. Duties include recommending a comprehensive plan for current and future Village development, initiating planning studies, and proposing changes to the comprehensive plan as needed. Additionally, the Commission reviews and recommends preliminary and final plans for developments and recommends amendments to zoning ordinances and the granting of special uses.
- **Stormwater and Floodplain Oversight Committee.** The Stormwater and Floodplain Oversight Committee, mandated by DuPage County ordinance, comprises seven members and is vested with several powers. These include hearing appeals on enforcement decisions, conducting public hearings, and making decisions or recommendations on appeals and proposed variations to the ordinance. Additionally, the Committee reviews and recommends amendments to the ordinance and performs other duties as directed by the Village Council.
- **Transportation and Parking Commission.** The Transportation and Parking Commission (TaP) comprises seven members appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms. Powers include receiving, investigating, and reporting on transportation-related requests to the Council, Manager, or through petitions. TaP conducts public meetings on proposed policies and plans, submits findings and recommendations to the Council, and investigates inquiries referred by the Council or Manager. Responsibilities encompass transportation activities, parking, traffic control, pedestrians, signage, and conducting necessary public meetings and investigations as mandated by ordinance or law.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals.** The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) comprises seven members appointed by the Mayor with confirmation by the Village Council, as mandated by state law. Powers include hearing and deciding on applications for variations or exceptions from the Downers Grove Zoning Ordinance, appeals, and modifications to orders or determinations made by the Community Development Director. Additionally, the ZBA addresses all matters referred to it under the Zoning Ordinance and exercises other relevant powers authorized by the Village Council.

Public Safety

Downers Grove’s public safety services include law enforcement and fire protection. Within the Village, there is one police station and four fire stations.

Police

The Downers Grove Police Department, a nationally-accredited agency, is responsible for maintaining civil order and public safety, enforcing the laws, and investigating crime. The police department is divided into various divisions to efficiently deliver service. These divisions include Police Services Management, Patrol/Parking Enforcement, Investigations/Community Response Team (CRT), Training, Community Support/Property Control, and Police Records. Of the various divisions, the Patrol Division is the largest unit, comprised of two lieutenants, eight sergeants, and 38 patrol officers.

Fire Department

The Downers Grove Fire Department offers comprehensive emergency services, including 24-hour fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services, along with Village-wide emergency management coordination. Additionally, the department provides specialized services including hazardous materials and domestic terrorism response, as well as specialized rescue operations for high-angle, trench, structural collapse, and confined space rescues.

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducts regular inspections of commercial and institutional properties, collaborates with the Community Development Department for fire plan reviews and occupancy approvals, and oversees fire pump and sprinkler system testing. The Public Education Division delivers nationally-recognized fire and life safety education programs to schools, businesses, civic groups, and senior citizens, including school and high-rise evacuation drills, with many programs receiving prestigious national awards and recognition.

Health and Medical Facilities

Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, located in the northern section of the Village, is a Level 1 trauma center and nationally-recognized hospital. Throughout the Village, there are a number of smaller medical offices and clinics including Edward-Elmhurst Healthcare Center.

Infrastructure

The Downers Grove Public Works Department maintains the essential infrastructure that supports the community’s daily activities. From managing the water system to overseeing traffic signals and signage, streetlights, and roads, the department ensures the smooth functioning of transportation and utilities. Additionally, Public Works maintains parking facilities, stormwater and drainage systems, and parkway trees, contributing to the overall safety and aesthetic appeal of the Village.

Stormwater

The Village currently manages stormwater by owning and operating a large, complex stormwater infrastructure system consisting of approximately:

- o 7,000 drainage structures
- o 315 detention facilities
- o 140 miles of roadway ditches
- o 130 miles of storm sewers
- o 12 miles of streams
- o 9 miles of culverts

Wastewater

The Downers Grove Sanitary District provides sewer and wastewater treatment to Downers Grove and portions of Westmont, Woodridge, Lisle, Oak Brook, and Darien, serving a population of more than 60,000 people. The wastewater is collected through over 250 miles of sanitary sewers and is treated to a tertiary level of purification at the Wastewater Treatment Center. The wastewater treatment facility has the capacity to treat an average of 11 million gallons per day of sanitary wastewater.

Water Service

The Village owns and operates a public water system, providing water to approximately 17,000 residential and business customers. The water supply is obtained from Lake Michigan through the DuPage Water Commission (DWC). Water supplied by the Village meets all Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) standards. The Village is currently implementing the Lead Water Service Line Inventory and Replacement Plan project as mandated by the State of Illinois.

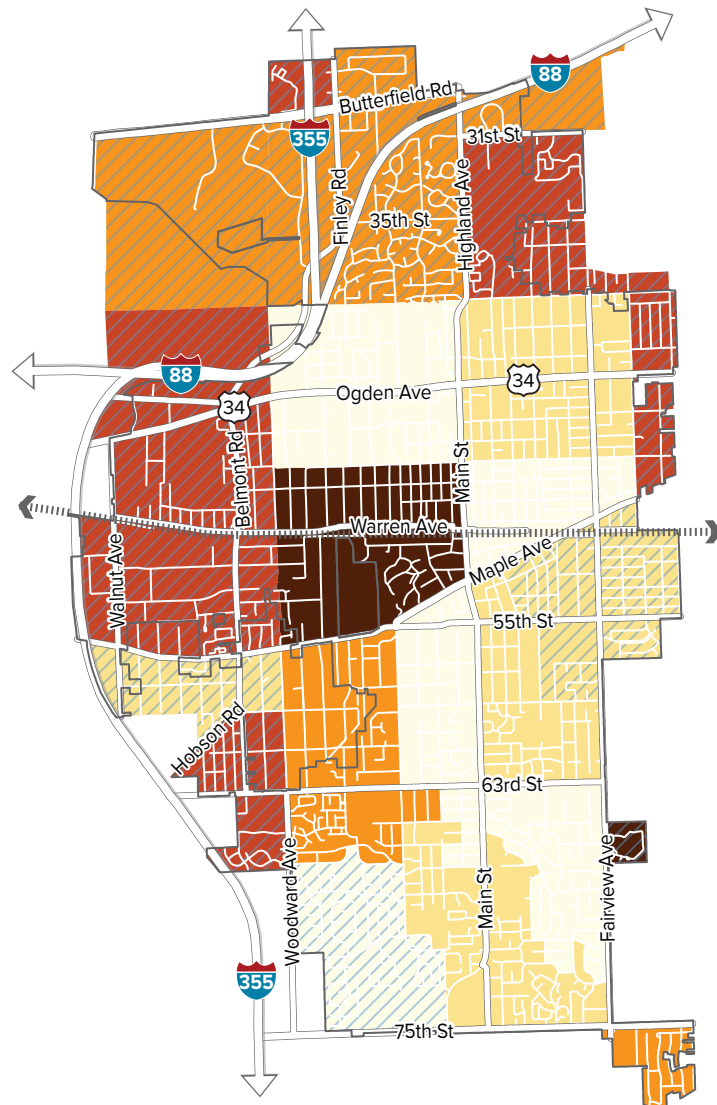
Energy

ComEd powers the lives of more than 4 million customers across northern Illinois, or 70 percent of the State's population. ComEd's service territory borders Iroquois County to the south (roughly Interstate 80), the Wisconsin border to the north, the Iowa border to the west and the Indiana border to the east. Managing more than 90,000 miles of power lines in an 11,400-square-mile territory, ComEd is the main service provider in Downers Grove.

Nicor Gas is the state's largest natural gas distributor, providing natural gas to 2.3 million residential, public sector and business customers in more than 650 communities throughout northern Illinois.

Telecommunications and Broadband

High-speed internet service is available within the Village from AT&T and Xfinity providers.



Broadband Access

Percent of Households with No Internet Access

- 0.0 - 2.5%
- 2.5 - 5.0%
- 5.0 - 7.5%

- 7.5 - 10%
- 10.0% or More
- Village of Downers Grove
- Tracts that are only partially inside the Village

Community Facilities

- Government
- Fire Station
- Police Station
- Healthcare
- Religious Institutions
- Utilities
- Transportation
- YMCA

- 1 IRS
- 2 State Tollway Maintenance
- 3 Good Samaritan Hospital
- 4 Fire Station #103
- 5 American Legion Post 80
- 6 Downers Grove Township
- 7 Downers Grove Park District
- 8 State Police District 15
- 9 Downers Grove Sanitary District
- 10 Downers Grove Public Works
- 11 Fire Station #101
- 12 Belmont Station
- 13 Downers Grove Public Library
- 14 Main St. Station
- 15 Downers Grove Post Office
- 16 Village of Downers Grove Civic Center (which includes Village Hall, Police, District 58 and EOC)
- 17 Fairview Station
- 18 Lincoln Center
- 19 Fire Station #102
- 20 Social Security Office
- 21 Fire Station #105



Education

Downers Grove has many public and private schools, including five pre-schools, eleven public elementary schools, two public middle schools, two public high schools, four private schools, and a private medical and professional university.

District 58

District 58 serves approximately 4,900 (pre-K to 8th grade) students in 11 neighborhood elementary schools, two middle schools, and one preschool program. These schools include:

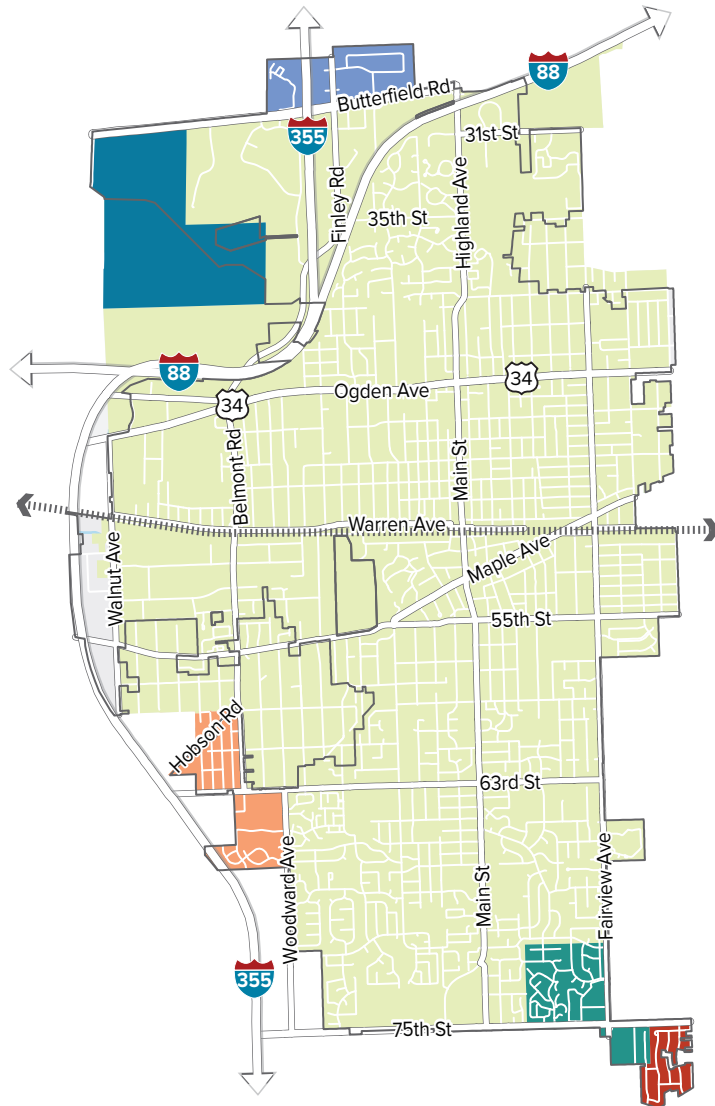
- o Belle Aire School
- o Indian Trail School
- o El Sierra School
- o Kingsley School
- o Fairmont School
- o Lester School
- o Henry Puffer School
- o Pierce Downer School
- o Highland School
- o Whittier School
- o Hillcrest School
- o Herrick Middle School
- o O'Neill Middle School

District 99

District 99 serves an enrollment of nearly 5,000 students from the communities of Downers Grove and Woodridge, and portions of Bolingbrook, Darien, Lisle, Oak Brook, and Westmont. This district includes two high schools: Downers Grove South and Downers Grove North. District 99 encompasses the entirety of the Village.

Private Schools

Downers Grove offers a variety of private learning institutions serving students pre-K to 8th grade including the Avery Coonley School, St. Joseph School, St. Mary of Gostyn School, and Downers Grove Christian School. While the Village does not host a private high school, neighboring communities offer such educational opportunities.



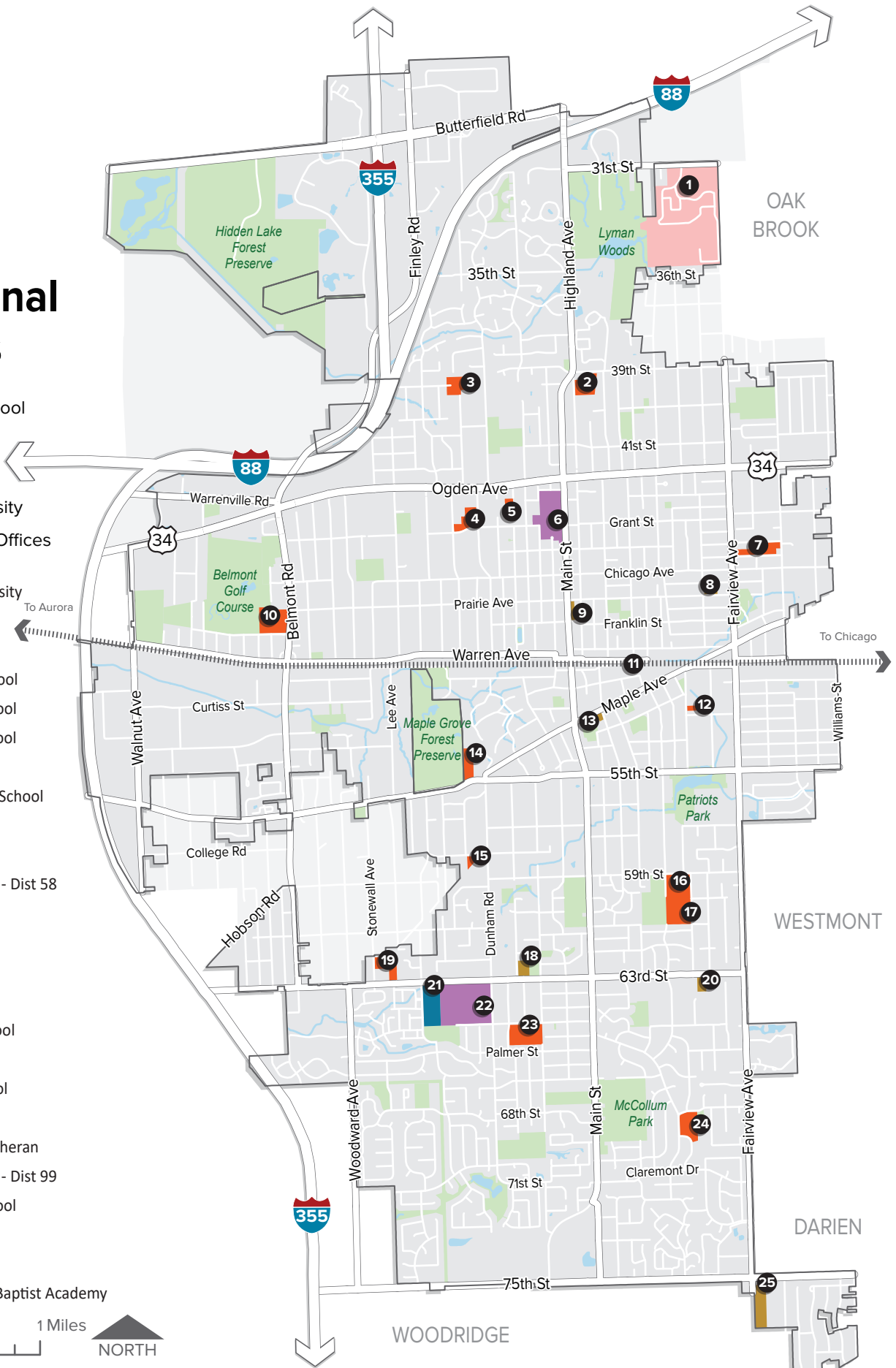
Elementary School Districts

- | | |
|--|--|
| DISTRICT 44 | DISTRICT 66 |
| DISTRICT 58 | DISTRICT 68 |
| DISTRICT 61 | DISTRICT 89 |

Educational Facilities

- Elementary School
- High School
- Private School
- College/University
- Administrative Offices

- 1 Midwestern University
- 2 Highland School
- 3 Belle Aire School
- 4 Herrick Middle School
- 5 Pierce Downer School
- 6 DG North High School
- 7 Lester School
- 8 St. Mary of Gostyn School
- 9 St. Joseph School
- 10 Puffer School
- 11 Board of Education - Dist 58
- 12 Whittier School
- 13 First Baptist School
- 14 Avery Coonley
- 15 Hillcrest School
- 16 O'Neill Middle School
- 17 Fairmount School
- 18 Grace Baptist School
- 19 Indian Trail School
- 20 Good Shepherd Lutheran
- 21 Board of Education - Dist 99
- 22 DG South High School
- 23 Kingsley School
- 24 El Sierra School
- 25 Marquette Manor Baptist Academy



Parks and Recreation

Downers Grove has a substantial amount of open space and parks, totaling around 600 acres. The Downers Grove Park District owns and maintains roughly 571 acres, with an additional 39 acres leased from other agencies. These sites are categorized into “park sites” and “non-park sites,” with park sites totaling about 45 percent and non-park sites comprising the remaining 55 percent of open space in the Village. Non-park sites include natural areas, special-use sites, and linear parks. Community parks account for the largest portion of the Park District’s acreage inventory, followed by Natural Areas. Downers Grove’s total park and open space area surpasses national and local benchmarks.

Community Parks

Community parks are designed to meet regional and community-wide recreation needs, serving as vibrant gathering places for residents. Connecting two or more neighborhoods, community parks are usually located within a 0.5- to 3-mile radius, making them easily accessible to a broad range of people. Community parks are intended to preserve unique landscapes and often host athletic teams and affiliate programs. These parks typically feature playgrounds, pavilions, trails and path systems, and various sports courts and fields. The following text provides a brief description of notable community parks in Downers Grove.

Gelwicks Park

Formally known as Walnut Park, Gelwicks Park was acquired through two past land purchases in 2008 and 2015, totaling 19.6 acres of park space. In 2020, the Downers Grove Park District initiated the development of a comprehensive master plan for Gelwicks Park. Released in 2021, the Walnut Park Master Plan outlines a vision for the park, including proposed amenities such as an athletic dome, outdoor recreational facilities, restored natural areas, and pedestrian and bike paths.

McCollum Park

McCollum Park offers a wide range of recreational opportunities for visitors of all ages on 50 acres of parkland. With its expansive green spaces, walking trails, and sports facilities, making it a popular destination for families and sports enthusiasts alike. Additionally, McCollum Park hosts community events and programs throughout the year, fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for social engagement.

Patriots Park

Across 27 acres of park space, Patriots Park offers a picturesque outdoor setting with a variety of amenities for visitors to enjoy. The park boasts nearly half a mile of pedestrian pathways, providing opportunities for leisurely walks and scenic strolls amidst the natural surroundings. One of the park’s highlights is the 5.8-acre Barth Pond, originally constructed in 1978 as a stormwater detention facility but now cherished as a popular fishing spot in the Village. In 2022, the park undertook a major improvement with the replacement of the 45-year-old pedestrian bridge. The new bridge, measuring 10 feet in width and featuring weathering steel, enhances pedestrian and cyclist safety and creates a more enjoyable experience for all visitors.

Ebersold Park

Ebersold Park offers a diverse range of amenities across two distinct areas, all connected by a convenient 0.75-mile paved perimeter walking path linked to neighboring communities. The southern half, also known as the “upper level,” is designed for active recreation, featuring a soccer field, playground equipment, and a popular sledding hill. The “lower level” at the park’s northern section offers a serene setting with an open field and a small wetland area surrounded by native plantings, providing a tranquil environment for relaxation and nature appreciation.

Doerhoffer Park

Spanning 14.02 acres, the park offers a range of recreational activities under lights, making it a central hub for community sports and leisure. The park features lighted baseball and softball fields, a synthetic turf field for football, soccer, and lacrosse, and courts for basketball, tennis, and pickleball, all available for evening use until 11 pm. It also includes ADA accessible playgrounds for tots and children aged 5-12, seating areas, concession services, and a 0.39-mile loop walking path, ensuring a variety of activities for all ages and abilities.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the cornerstone of the park system, designed for both informal active and passive recreation as well as community gatherings. These parks often include playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, and trail systems, serving as the recreational and social hubs of the neighborhood. Typically, a neighborhood park is located within a 0.25- to 0.5-mile radius, ensuring it is easily accessible without crossing non-residential roads or other physical barriers. The following text provides a brief description of notable neighborhood parks in Downers Grove.

O'Brien Park

O'Brien Park, spanning 17.5 acres, is a sizable neighborhood park offering various recreational amenities. The park features a sled hill, an irrigated soccer field, a 9-hole disc golf course, two distinct play areas with playground equipment, and a newly renovated basketball court. It also has a small backstop for pick-up baseball games. Parking is available for approximately 40 vehicles along the west side of the recreational space.

Whitlock Park

Whitlock Park is a spacious neighborhood park situated between Cumnor Road and Fairview Avenue, north of Shady Lane. The park features two ball fields, batting cages, a multi-purpose playing field, a playground, a picnic shelter, and restroom facilities. It also offers approximately 0.8 miles of paved pathways for jogging and walking. Additionally, there is a parking lot accessible from Fairview Avenue that can accommodate around 90 vehicles.

Dunham Place

Dunham Place is a large neighborhood park located just southwest of the intersection of Dunham Place and 71st Street. The park is made up of various segmented parcels, many of which are utilized for stormwater detention, and it is intersected by the Nicor Gas easement and several residential streets. The park's east side features two stormwater retention ponds suitable for fishing. Additionally, there is an open lawn area with play equipment accessible from Dexter Road, located south of the ponds.

Prince Pond

Prince Pond is located just south of Franklin Street, between Linscott Avenue and Parkway Drive. The park is characterized by the picturesque Prince Pond, surrounded by mature trees and native landscaping. Just north of the pond, the park includes amenities such as a playground, a shelter, benches, and picnic tables. In the winter, the pond transforms into a popular ice-skating spot, often used by neighborhood kids for informal hockey games.

Hummer Park

Hummer Park is a prominent neighborhood park located just northeast of the intersection of Fairview Avenue and Sheldon Avenue. In the summer, the park is a hub for group picnics and Park District camps, primarily utilizing its large pavilion and open lawn areas. The playground has recently been renovated, offering separate play areas for different age groups. The park features two parking lots with a combined capacity of approximately 50 vehicles. Large mature trees and the creek enhance the park's natural beauty, creating an inviting environment for visitors. Additionally, a large flagpole adjacent to the pavilion doubles as a cellular phone tower, providing a continuous revenue source.

Concord Square

Concord Square, located in southwest Downers Grove, offers diverse recreational opportunities for local residents and the wider community. The park features a spacious dry-bottom detention basin along Springside Avenue, a popular space for soccer practice and games. Other amenities include a playground and a newly resurfaced basketball court positioned atop a scenic hill, providing picturesque views of the detention basin.

Hooper's Hollow

Hooper's Hollow, a spacious neighborhood park, is situated just north of Chicago Avenue at its junction with Cornell Avenue. The park's terrain ascends steeply from south to north, with a creek flowing diagonally from northeast to southwest in the southern region. A wooden bridge spans the creek, offering pedestrian access to the park's northern section. Here, a 0.36-mile asphalt pathway curves northward, linking to Cornell Avenue at the park's northern extremity before looping back southward, where it connects to a Village sidewalk within the Chicago Avenue right-of-way.

Washington Park

Washington Park, located at the corner of Washington and Prairie, is a newly redesigned 4.7-acre park that boasts beautiful prairie grasses and flowers. Known for its stunning views, the park offers a variety of amenities, including two age-appropriate play areas that comply with ADA and Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines. These features provide numerous activities for children, making Washington Park a favorite spot for families. In response to a 2006 storm that produced severe flooding throughout Downers Grove and the resulting 2007 Watershed Infrastructure Improvement Plan, the Village partnered with the Park District between 2008 and 2010 to construct stormwater detention basins within the park.

Mini Parks

Mini parks provide convenient, walkable spaces for drop-in recreation. These parks typically feature playgrounds, picnic areas, and seating, but they usually do not include parking. Designed to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs, mini parks serve residents within a 0.25-mile radius, making them easily accessible for quick visits and informal gatherings. The following text provides a brief description of notable mini parks in Downers Grove.

Wallingford Park

Wallingford Park, located just one block south of Good Samaritan Hospital, serves as a small retreat for surrounding residential neighborhoods. Equipped with playground amenities installed in the early 2000s, the park offers children ample opportunities for active play. Additionally, during the same period, a substantial area adjacent to the playground was established as a DuPage County Wetland Bank, serving the dual purpose of flood reduction and wildlife habitat creation within the Lacey Creek watershed. Now encompassing several parcels east of Earlston Road, this area boasts picturesque landscapes and serves as a habitat for diverse wildlife.

Highland and 39th

Located at the northwest corner of Highland Avenue and 39th Street, this small passive park benefits from its location, effectively minimizing noise from passing traffic. Towering mature oak trees offer ample shade and contribute to a serene and inviting ambiance. With existing picnic tables and park benches, the park offers a tranquil retreat for those at the nearby hospital and medical offices to enjoy lunch or simply unwind.

Belmont and Curtiss

Situated at the southeast corner of Belmont Road and Curtiss Street, merely two blocks south of the Belmont Metra Stop, this tranquil one-acre park features native plantings and a few picnic tables. The location offers easy access for workers from the nearby manufacturing district seeking a pleasant outdoor spot to enjoy their lunch breaks.

Open Space and Natural Areas

Downers Grove Park District and the DuPage Forest Preserve District maintain over 200 acres of natural and native space. Additionally, the Park District cares for and manages 5,169 trees, featuring 92 species including a large number of maple and oak species in addition to baldcypress, serviceberry, hackberry, Kentucky coffeetree, douglas fir, and alder trees. Reflecting the Village's dedication to caring for its trees, the Downers Grove Park District is recognized as an accredited arboretum in the Morton Register of Arboreta, a database of the world's arboreta and gardens dedicated to woody plants.

Hidden Lake Forest Preserve

Maintained by the DuPage Forest Preserve District, the 390-acre Hidden Lake Forest Preserve in Downers Grove is a perfect destination for fishing, paddling, picnicking, or simply relaxing. It features two lakes, a river, trails, and a new picnic shelter, offering a variety of recreational activities. Additionally, Hidden Lake is home to King's Grove, a remnant woodland of red, white, and bur oaks.

Maple Grove

Spanning 81 acres, Maple Grove is one of the oldest forest preserves in DuPage County and represents the largest remnant of the vast maple forest that became Downers Grove. This preserve is recognized as a “globally endangered ecosystem,” featuring black maple savanna and upland maple forest communities that host hundreds of plant species, including some that are threatened. Given that a very small fraction of Illinois’ natural areas remain intact today, Maple Grove stands out as both a rare historic forest and a valuable natural area.

Lyman Woods

Spread across 150 acres, Lyman Woods encompasses diverse habitats such as oak woods, prairie, and marsh, providing a haven for over 300 species of native plants. Visitors can explore the natural beauty of the area through 2.5 miles of pedestrian pathways, offering opportunities for leisurely walks and immersive nature experiences. Additionally, the park features an Interpretive Center, serving as an educational hub where visitors can learn about the local ecosystem and wildlife.

Belmont Prairie

Belmont Prairie, nestled within Gelwicks Park, stands as one of Illinois’ few remaining native prairies. Recognized as an Illinois Nature Preserve, this pristine prairie hosts an impressive array of over 300 plant and animal species, making it a valuable educational and cultural asset for residents and visitors. The prairie displays a rich tapestry of seasonal grasses and plants and supports a diversity of animals. Wildlife enthusiasts can routinely see foxes, raccoons, meadow voles, opossums, ground squirrels, garter snakes, and, occasionally, coyotes and white-tailed deer, further enhancing the immersive nature experience offered by Belmont Prairie.

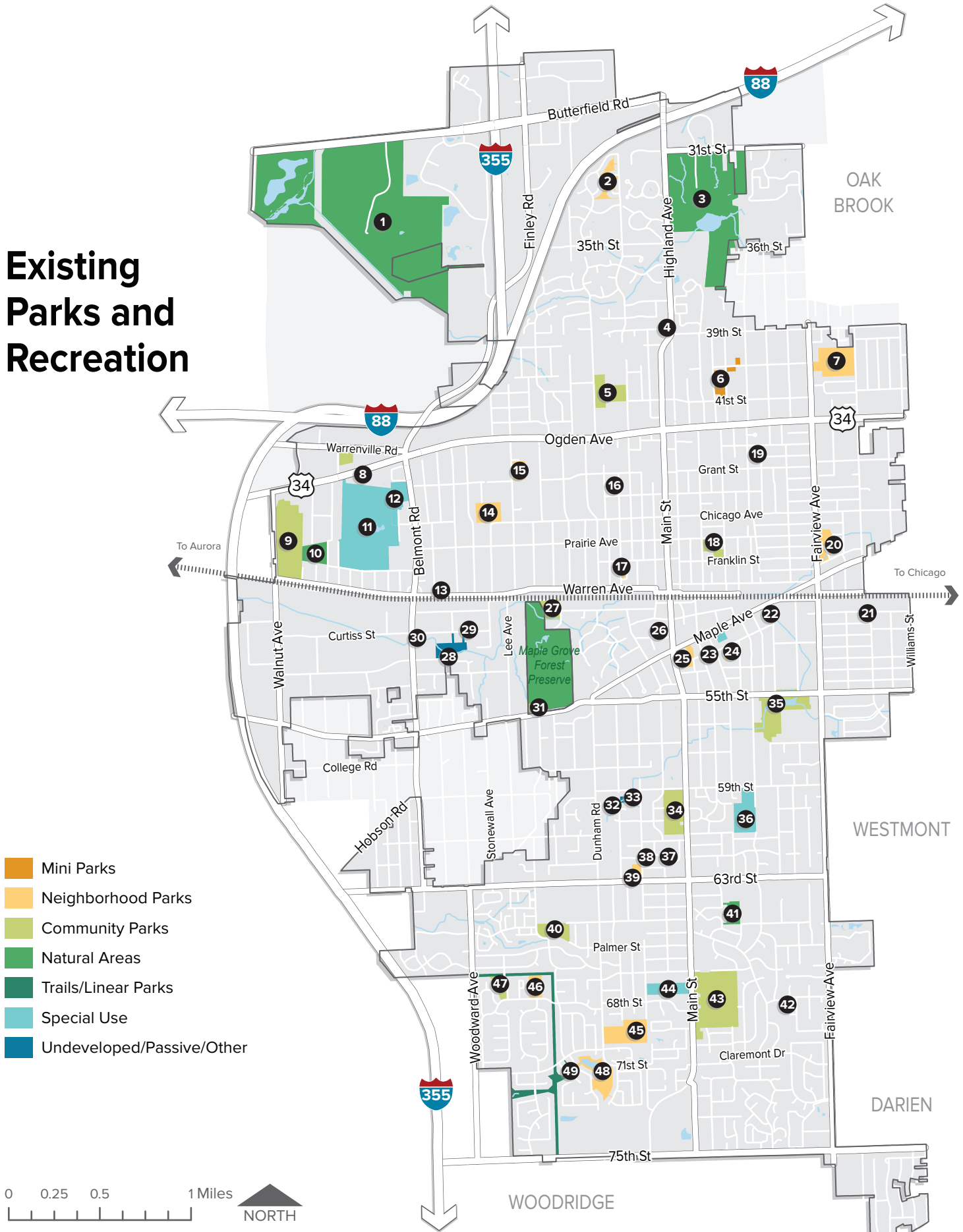
Trails/Linear Parks

Downers Grove offers a network of over 9 miles of pathways and trails within the Park District’s parks and natural areas. In addition to these trails, the Village offers around 14 miles of on-street bikeways. Many of the bikeways are located on the northern side of the District and provide connection to nine parks, three of which are community parks. Although the Village provides pathways and trails for active transportation, it was noted in the 2019 Focus Forward Master Plan that the Park District was deficient in trails on a National level by 12.5 miles.

Existing Parks and Recreation

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Hidden Lake Forest Preserve | 18 Washington Park | 35 Patriot Park (Barth Pond) |
| 2 Northside Park | 19 Sterling and Davis Park | 36 YMCA |
| 3 Lyman Woods | 20 Hummer Park | 37 62nd and Carpenter |
| 4 Highland and 39th | 21 2nd and Cumnor | 38 62nd and Brookbank |
| 5 Doerhoefer Park | 22 Blodgett and Elmwood | 39 Ned Bell Park |
| 6 Wallingford Park | 23 Wandschneider Musuem | 40 Ruth K. Powers Park |
| 7 Whitlock Park | 24 Randall Park | 41 Spring Park |
| 8 Administrative Office | 25 Lincoln Community Center | 42 68th and Blackburn |
| 9 Gelwicks Park | 26 Fishel Park | 43 McCollum Park |
| 10 Belmont Prarie | 27 Gilbert Park | 44 Mar-Duke Farm |
| 11 Belmont Golf Course | 28 Bending Oaks | 45 O’Brien Park |
| 12 Recreation Center | 29 Sterling North Park | 46 Concord Square |
| 13 Loy Park | 30 Belmont and Curtiss | 47 Stonewall and Concord |
| 14 Hoopers Hollow Park | 31 Memorial Park | 48 Dunham Place |
| 15 Lee and Grant Park | 32 Walter B. Carrol | 49 Northern Illinois Gas Easement |
| 16 Downer Burial Place | 33 Frankowiak Park | |
| 17 Prince Park (Prince Pond) | 34 Ebersold Park | |

Existing Parks and Recreation



Key Takeaways

The Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan will include recommendations to improve the Village’s community services, infrastructure, and parks and recreation facilities based on the existing conditions. These recommendations can be implemented by the Village’s local government and various Downers Grove departments, including the Police Department, Fire Protection, Library, and Public Works Department. Additionally, other entities like the Park District and School District can also adopt these recommendations. The key takeaways based on the existing conditions analysis are listed below.

- **Public Safety Services:** The Downers Grove Police Department, a nationally-accredited agency, ensures civil order, enforces laws, and investigates crime through various divisions. Meanwhile, the Downers Grove Fire Department offers comprehensive emergency services, including 24-hour fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services, along with specialized responses for hazardous materials and domestic terrorism incidents, among others.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, a Level 1 trauma center, and nationally-recognized hospital, serves the northern section of the Village. Additionally, smaller medical offices and clinics, including Edward-Elmhurst Healthcare Center, cater to the community’s healthcare needs.
- **Education:** Downers Grove boasts numerous public and private schools, covering pre-schools, elementary, middle, and high schools, along with private medical and professional universities, providing comprehensive educational opportunities for residents.
- **Infrastructure Management:** The Village manages stormwater through an extensive infrastructure system, including drainage structures, detention facilities, storm sewers, streams, and culverts. Additionally, the Downers Grove Sanitary District handles sewer and wastewater treatment, while the Village provides water services sourced from Lake Michigan through the DuPage Water Commission.
- **Utility Services:** ComEd and Nicor Gas serve as the primary energy and natural gas providers, respectively, ensuring reliable services to Downers Grove residents. ComEd’s service territory covers northern Illinois, while Nicor Gas supplies natural gas to various communities in the region. The Village has sufficient access to high-speed internet service. The area in and surrounding Downtown is the least connected with 12.9% of residents of household not having internet access.
- **Recreational Facilities:** Downers Grove offers ample park acreage, exceeding national standards. Downers Grove Park District and DuPage Forest Preserve District maintain significant natural and native spaces, including thousands of trees across various species.

SECTION 9

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Drawing from the Village's current conditions and insights gathered from stakeholder interviews, community engagement, and online outreach, the following issues and opportunities are provided for consideration as the Comprehensive Plan and other Guiding DG plans are developed.

Housing Supply

Housing supply in Downers Grove presents a significant challenge, exacerbated by inconsistencies among available housing types, evolving household needs, and increasing housing costs that are making homeownership less attainable. As family sizes decrease, this disparity is expected to worsen. While homeowners in the Village experience less financial strain compared to those in DuPage County, renters are at risk of displacement due to greater financial pressure. Stakeholder input and community feedback underscore a pressing need for more affordable housing, particularly for essential workers, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. However, survey data further complicates the issue as apartments, traditionally a more affordable residential option, received the least support. To alleviate housing concerns, the Comprehensive Plan should explore potential solutions such as infill development, continuing to support reinvestment in existing housing stock, diversifying housing types to meet varying needs, and implementing measures to preserve historic properties.

Traffic Safety

Residents, business owners, and stakeholders in Downers Grove have voiced concerns about traffic safety, highlighting the community's need for a more accessible, safe, and sustainable transportation network. One critical issue is the presence of non-signalized mid-block crossings, especially near parks and schools, which pose risks to pedestrians. The Comprehensive Plan and Bike and Pedestrian Plan should investigate the introduction of signalized crossings at these high-traffic areas to ensure vehicles stop for pedestrians, significantly enhancing safety and accessibility. Additionally, the implementation of traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, enhanced signage, and better lighting to further protect pedestrians and cyclists should be considered. The Comprehensive Plan and Bike and Pedestrian Plan should explore expanding sidewalks and creating dedicated bike lanes, which can also contribute to a safer, more integrated transportation system. By addressing these issues, Downers Grove can build a safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment that meets the needs of its residents and supports the community's overall well-being.

Traffic Congestion

Stakeholders and community members have emphasized significant concerns about traffic congestion in Downers Grove. Existing conditions reveal a poor level of service and functionality along key thoroughfares such as Main Street, Ogden Avenue, and Finley Road, exacerbating congestion issues. To address these challenges, the Comprehensive Plan and Bike and Pedestrian Plan should consider continuing to prioritize infrastructure improvements that improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. Implementing traffic management strategies such as signal optimization, lane modifications, and intersection redesigns can help alleviate congestion hotspots.

Pedestrian Connections

Residents, business owners, and stakeholders in Downers Grove have voiced concerns about the insufficient pedestrian infrastructure and connections. The Village's consists of mostly narrow rights-of-way and limited space for sidewalks expansion, especially when compared to neighboring communities with newer thoroughfares. To address these issues, the Comprehensive Plan and Bike and Pedestrian Plan can explore innovative solutions such as utilizing flexible street design techniques to optimize space usage and enhance pedestrian accessibility. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan and Bike and Pedestrian Plan should explore prioritizing pedestrian-friendly initiatives, such as widening sidewalks and implementing traffic calming measures to improve safety and encourage more walking in the community. Collaborating with local businesses and property owners to create pedestrian-friendly zones to enhance streetscapes should be investigated in the Downtown and the Fairview Focus Area. By focusing on these solutions, Downers Grove can overcome its pedestrian infrastructure challenges and create a more walkable and connected community.

Streetscape Identity

Maintaining a well-kept public streetscape is essential, but there is a significant opportunity to enrich the streetscapes in Downtown and Fairview Avenue to better reflect the community's character. Participants noted that attention is needed for retail areas beyond Downtown, such as revitalizing the Fairview Avenue corridor. Stakeholders have suggested that while Downtown and Fairview Avenue could share some consistent elements, Fairview Avenue could also develop its unique neighborhood style. A potential solution posed during community outreach involved the incorporation of cultural and public art components, such as murals, sculptures, seasonal installations, and historical references, into the streetscape. These elements can represent the community's heritage and values, fostering a sense of pride and attracting visitors. The Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan should investigate the feasibility of cultural and public art component incorporation. Enhancing street furniture, lighting, and landscaping with unique designs can also contribute to a more engaging and attractive environment. Additionally, outdoor dining opportunities were discussed with mixed reaction. Participants either wanted to eliminate it and free up the parking spaces or close portions of more public spaces, such as Main Street, to create more space for dining.

Open Space

Despite surpassing national and local standards in total park acreage in Downers Grove, stakeholder outreach has revealed a strong community desire for more open spaces, green spaces and gathering areas. These areas, along with other examples, are known as third places. Third places are informal areas where residents and visitors can meet and gather outside of home (first place) or work (second place). These amenities offer an opportunity for social interaction and can anchor civic life in Downers Grove. Third places can serve as focal points for future pedestrian activity, functioning as an amenity to business patrons as well as residents and visitors. The mix and number of these spaces may be an issue that is further investigated spaces upon completion of the existing conditions memorandum for the Environmental Sustainability Plan (forthcoming) and input from the Downers Grove Park District.

Trail Connectivity

While the Downers Grove Park District and the DuPage County Forest Preserve District offer trails for recreation and nature engagement, the Park District falls short of national benchmarks by 12.5 miles. Notably, 41% of survey respondents identified pedestrian and bicycle trails as a weakness, indicating a clear need for improvement. Stakeholders have also emphasized the need for improved connectivity between existing parks and County trails to ensure seamless access to recreational opportunities. To address this, the Comprehensive Plan should consider possible rights-of-way where the development of new trails and the extension of existing ones can bridge the gap. Strategic planning can pinpoint key areas where new trails can link parks, neighborhoods, and natural areas, thereby enhancing overall connectivity. Additionally, investing in safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, such as well-marked crosswalks and dedicated bike lanes, will support the integration of these trails into the community.

Stormwater and Green Infrastructure Improvements

The Village currently operates a large, complex stormwater infrastructure system to manage runoff and prevent flooding. The system includes 8,700 drainage structures, 315 detention facilities, 140 miles of roadway ditches, 150 miles of storm sewers, 15 miles of streams, and nine miles of culverts. Further, under the Village's Watershed Infrastructure Improvement Plan, the Village has partnered with the Downers Grove Park District to implement the Washington Park stormwater improvement project, providing the area with significant flood relief while creating a renovated park as the focal point of the neighborhood. Still, nearly 30% of participants in the Community Facilities Survey identified stormwater drainage as a weakness. The Comprehensive Plan can continue to consider and explore the implementation of additional projects and solutions to enhance and expand the Village's stormwater management efforts. Continuing to update and modernize the existing stormwater infrastructure, including the installation of efficient drainage systems and permeable pavements, can help manage runoff more effectively. Expanding existing Village implementation of green infrastructure solutions such as rain gardens, bioswales, and green roofs, can enhance natural water absorption and reduce the burden on the drainage system. By continuing its established best practices and maintaining its emphasis on stormwater and green infrastructure, Downers Grove can keep on its positive path toward more resilient and sustainable community.