



City of Countryside, Illinois | ADOPTED March 27, 2024

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Countryside 2040
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
A Blueprint for Our Future

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with assistance from



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thank you to everyone who participated in the planning process for the City of Countryside's Comprehensive Plan. This Plan was made possible by the contributions and insights of the residents, business persons, property owners, and representatives from various groups and organizations.

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CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION

The City of Countryside Comprehensive Plan is designed to serve the community over the next decade and beyond. It will assist the City in strengthening and improving its identity, housing and neighborhoods, community character, retail areas, and quality of life. The Plan was developed through a planning process that involved public input, including elected officials, appointed officials, residents, and members of the business community.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A Comprehensive Plan represents the City's official vision for the future looking ahead to the next 20 years. As a policy guide, the Comprehensive Plan outlines actions to work towards achieving the City's vision. It is designed to serve as a foundation for decision-making for the City, developers, residents, and other stakeholders.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

Illinois State Law 65 ILCS/11-12-5 grants the City the authority to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for existing and future development or redevelopment. The purpose of the Plan is to guide decisions related to development regulations, capital improvements, and other local policies and actions. It is a tool for the community to help coordinate efforts and direct how the City may use its resources.

Planning Process

The City of Countryside Comprehensive Plan is the result of a multi-step planning process, which stressed community engagement; assessment of existing conditions; identification of opportunities and constraints; the establishment of a vision, goals, and objectives; and the development of planning recommendations and policies. The following is a summary of the Comprehensive Plan process:

Task 1: Project Initiation

To “kick-off” the planning process, the project team conducted meetings with City staff, City Council, and other key stakeholders. The City Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) was formed and held its first meeting. The team collected data and reports to get acquainted with existing conditions and anticipated development.

Task 2: Community Engagement

Following the creation of branding and collateral materials, the project team produced the project website, where community members could learn more about the Plan and upcoming meetings and important dates. City staff distributed an online community questionnaire and map.social, a web-based community issues mapping tool, so that the project team could gain input from community members about issues and concerns. City staff, citizens, business owners, and other community stakeholders were invited to participate in interviews, focus groups, and workshops.

Task 3: Existing Conditions Analysis

Task 3 included the preparation of a Community Profile that provided an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, land uses, transportation networks and community facilities, and demographics and real estate market. The project team identified and reviewed the City's past plans, studies, and reports and analyzed Countryside's demographic and economic trends. Once the studies were complete, the project team delivered an Existing Conditions Memorandum (ECM), which included an inventory and assessment of land use and development; zoning and development regulations; transportation and mobility; community facilities and infrastructure; and parks, open space, and environment features. The ECM was presented before the City Staff and the CPSC to gather feedback.

Task 4: Vision, Goals and Land Use Framework

Task 4 established an overall “vision” for the future of Countryside, and to provide focus and direction for subsequent planning activities. The community vision serves as the cornerstone of the planning process. Goals and objectives were formed based on community feedback and the existing conditions analysis. This task also marked the beginning of the preliminary land use recommendations to form the City’s new future land use map.

Task 5: Subarea Plans and Visualization

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan established six (6) subareas with the purpose of looking more closely at key areas of the City. Three (3) of the six original subareas (the 55th Street, Joliet Road, and Southern Tier) were selected to be examined further and given specific land use and development recommendations. The team held a subarea workshop to work with the community to address land use and development, priority development opportunity sites, transportation and mobility, access and connectivity, parking, urban design, and overall character to provide a detailed framework for each area.

Task 6: Draft City-Wide Framework Plans

Task 6 included the preparation of City-wide frameworks and recommendations for core comprehensive plan elements – the chapters of the Plan.

Task 7: Draft and Final Comprehensive Plan

Based on the previous steps in the planning process, the draft and final versions of the Comprehensive Plan document were prepared for review, consideration, and adoption. The adoption process included a review by the CPSC, a community open house, a Plan Commission public hearing, followed by adoption by City Council.

Existing Conditions Memorandum

Tasks 1 through 3 culminated in the preparation of an Existing Conditions Memo (ECM). This document collected existing land use and transportation data, recent past plans and studies, information provided by the City, and field reconnaissance. The ECM also included a demographic snapshot, market overview, and map book of existing conditions within the City’s planning area.



Countryside Park, 61st Street

USING THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan serves the following key functions:

Communicate the City's Vision

The Plan is a powerful statement of the community's vision for how it grows and changes over the coming years. The Plan identifies the City's priorities and charts a path for strategic growth, infill, and redevelopment.

Inform Development Proposals

The Plan is a long-term guide by which to measure and evaluate public and private proposals that affect the physical, social, and economic environment of the community. The Plan assists in the evaluation of public and private development proposals and helps ensure that proposed development supports the City's long-term objectives.

Complete Community Outreach Summaries

Complete summaries of the outreach events are provided in the Appendix of the Existing Condition Memo. Summaries of outreach were also posted to the Countryside Comprehensive Plan website.

Foundation for the Regulatory Framework

The Plan is a foundation for zoning regulations, the official zoning map, and other decisions guided by these regulations. Amendments to City regulations should be made to support the long-term objectives of the Plan.

Coordinate Initiatives

The Plan informs and coordinates planning initiatives that affect the City at the local, county, and regional levels. The Plan may aid and inform efforts related to housing, transportation, transit, trails, natural resources, economic development, and recreation.

Prepare for Future Studies

The Plan establishes a path forward but cannot address every issue faced by the City in sufficient detail. It will be a tool to help identify additional studies and future action steps to address specific community needs.

Inform and Educate

The Plan is a valuable source of information for City Council, the Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as for other City government committees, elected officials, businesses, and residents. The Plan should be used to inform the community and provide important information that can assist with future initiatives. The Plan is also an effective marketing tool that can be used to promote the community and highlight opportunities for investment.



Countryside Park, 61st Street

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Although the Comprehensive Plan includes 10 chapters, it can be more broadly organized into four sections:

A Baseline Understanding

A full understanding of Countryside's existing conditions is necessary to effectively plan for the future. Planning context and community engagement are the foundation of these elements. These sections introduce the plan and are built on an analysis of past planning efforts, market and demographics data, and public outreach.

- **Chapter 1:** Introduction
- **Chapter 2:** Community Profile

Looking Ahead to the Future

The Plan's Vision and Goals are both ambitious and implementable. Paired with the future land use map and general land use policies, they establish where the community wants to go over the next two decades and provide the framework for the recommendations and policies in the core elements.

- **Chapter 3:** Vision and Goals
- **Chapter 4:** Land Use

Core Elements and Policy Direction

The core elements of the City of Countryside Comprehensive Plan contain specific recommendations for land use and development in the City's commercial and industrial areas; residential areas and neighborhoods; transportation and mobility; community facilities, infrastructure, and environment; and in the three subareas and catalyst sites.

- **Chapter 5:** Commercial and Industrial Areas
- **Chapter 6:** Residential Areas and Neighborhoods
- **Chapter 7:** Transportation and Mobility
- **Chapter 8:** Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Environment
- **Chapter 9:** Subareas

Implementing the Plan

The Plan's implementation strategy identifies specific projects and actions necessary to realize the vision, goals, and recommendations outlined in the core elements. Implementing the Plan includes actions to be undertaken, prioritization, establishing the role of the City, and various departments, committees, and stakeholders in undertaking key actions, and identifying potential sources of funding.

- **Chapter 10:** Implementation and Zoning Alignment



Community Engagement Workshop

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Informed by a planning process dedicated to engaging the community, the Comprehensive Plan is responsive to the City and addresses the issues and opportunities most important to Countryside residents and stakeholders. Public engagement included both in-person and online outreach events.

Outreach Conducted

Coffee with the Mayor

On February 26, 2022, the Comprehensive Plan process was introduced to the community at a regularly scheduled “Coffee with the Mayor” event. Community members were presented with an overview explaining the purpose, function, contents, and positive impacts of an up-to-date plan. An opportunity for Q&A was provided.

Department Heads Meeting

Comprehensive Plan recommendations will impact a wide variety of City policies and support from all City departments will be essential to the overall success and implementation of the plan. The project was introduced at a regularly scheduled Department Heads Meeting, and an exercise reviewing issues and opportunities was conducted to solicit feedback.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting

A Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) was formed for this project. The intent was for the CPSC to meet at key points throughout the planning process to discuss existing issues, opportunities, and assets, provide overall policy direction, and share feedback on project deliverables. The CPSC was comprised of community members, including business owners, residents, and elected officials.

A CPSC kick-off meeting was held on February 22, 2022, to introduce members to the planning process and open discussion about the issues and opportunities in the City of Countryside. The kick-off meeting involved a discussion that touched on a variety of topics, such as land use, residential neighborhoods, commercial developments, economic developments, and transportation.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Confidential key stakeholder interviews were conducted with individuals to discuss existing conditions and potentials within the Countryside community. Residents, business owners, and stakeholders from the City of Countryside were asked to provide unique and direct insight into the community. Key stakeholder interviews were conducted in person and virtually in March 2022. Interviews were framed around a sequence of questions regarding the community and conducted in a conversational style.



Comprehensive Plan Open House

Community Visioning Workshop

The City hosted a Community Visioning Workshop on April 28, 2022, at the Countryside Municipal Complex. The purpose of the workshop was to allow residents and stakeholders to discuss ideas and provide input before plan recommendations were crafted. Attendees were divided into multiple groups, and each group collaborated on a mapping exercise that was designed to gather their perception of Countryside's issues and opportunities, in addition to their vision for the community. The exercise contained a series of topics to help guide the attendee's discussion, including residential areas, commercial areas, transportation and mobility, parks and recreation, and environmental features. After the mapping exercise, each group presented their input and vision for Countryside to the rest of the attendees.

Business Workshop

A Business Workshop was held on May 4, 2022, at the Countryside Municipal Complex. The purpose of this workshop was to gather input and feedback from Countryside's business owners about their perception of Countryside. Attendees were first oriented on the comprehensive planning process. Afterward, they participated in a facilitated discussion where they collectively provided their perception of Countryside's issues, opportunities, and key strengths and assets.

Online Outreach

The comprehensive planning process also included an online engagement component. This included an interactive project website, online questionnaires for residents and business owners, and map.social, an online mapping tool. City staff promoted outreach events and online engagement platforms to the community through the community newsletter and press releases.

Subareas Charrette

The subareas charrette invited the community to offer their input on specific areas of Countryside that require more detailed planning. The intent was to create consensus around a preferred approach to improving, transforming, revitalizing, and investing in these key areas of the City.

Comprehensive Plan Open House

To conclude community engagement, the City hosted a Comprehensive Plan Open House on January 18, 2024. The Open House gave residents an opportunity to review the final draft of the plan in the form of posters, a slideshow, and several physical copies of the document. The event was well attended by residents, municipal staff, and elected leaders.



Community Engagement Workshop

Outreach Takeaways

Outreach feedback themes identified in this section were consistent through workshops, the online questionnaire, focus groups, and interviews. Although a wide range of community-identified issues, opportunities, concerns, and priority projects were used to create the foundation of the Plan, these common themes were immediately recognizable and most important to Countryside residents. The outreach takeaways played a significant role in crafting the Plan's Vision, Goals, and Land Use Framework.

Note on Summary Context

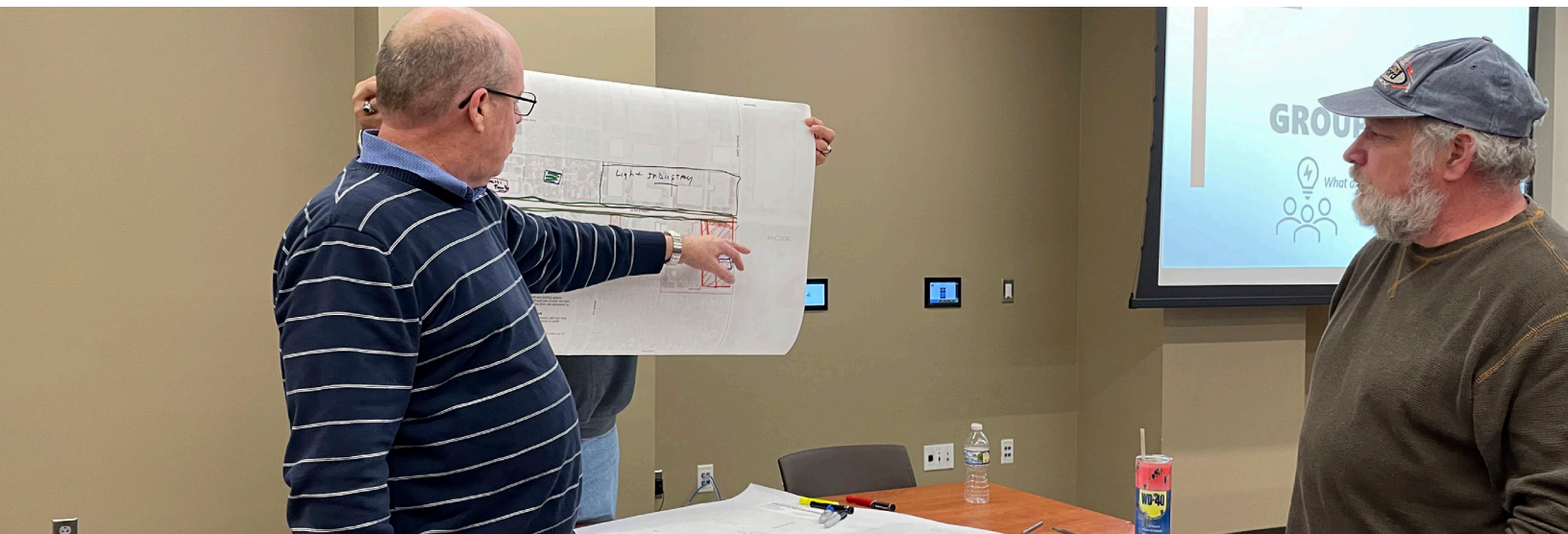
The following summary is the thoughts, comments, and opinions received during the conducted outreach. It is important to note that the items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the planning consultant, but rather feedback and comments received from participants.

Housing and Neighborhoods

- The character of Countryside's attractive neighborhoods is an asset;
- The community enjoys high-quality and diverse housing stock that provides options for families as well as people young and old; and
- Of all topics discussed in the questionnaire, respondents felt that housing is one of Countryside's greatest strengths.

Commercial and Industrial Areas

- Encourage thoughtful redevelopment of vacant or underutilized land in several areas of the City;
- Generally, residents have good access to everyday goods and services;
- Residents feel that restaurants in the City generally have a positive impact on the community, however, they would like to see more local options;
- Residents feel that manufacturing, distribution, and shipping businesses generally have a positive impact; and
- Auto dealerships were identified as having a critical role in the commercial landscape of the community.



Community Engagement Workshop

Transportation and Mobility

- New pedestrian connections, attractive streetscaping, and public gathering spaces should be considered;
- Generally, traffic, congestion, and safety were identified as concerns;
- Pedestrian crossings are lacking on major routes such as LaGrange Road, 55th Street, and Route 66;
- Questionnaire respondents largely considered parking in Countryside to be adequate; and
- Respondents felt that vehicular transportation in Countryside was generally an asset, indicating it is easy to get around the community by car.

Parks and Recreation

- Parks in the City are community assets that should be invested in and built upon.

Community Facilities

- Ideal Elementary School generally receives positive reviews although some identified it as not having the same positive reputation as other nearby schools in neighboring communities.

Community Character and Quality of Life

- People feel positive and proud of the community and its appearance;
- All questionnaire respondents indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall quality of life; and
- Most respondents said that the quality of life in Countryside is at least about the same, if not better than it was 10 years ago.

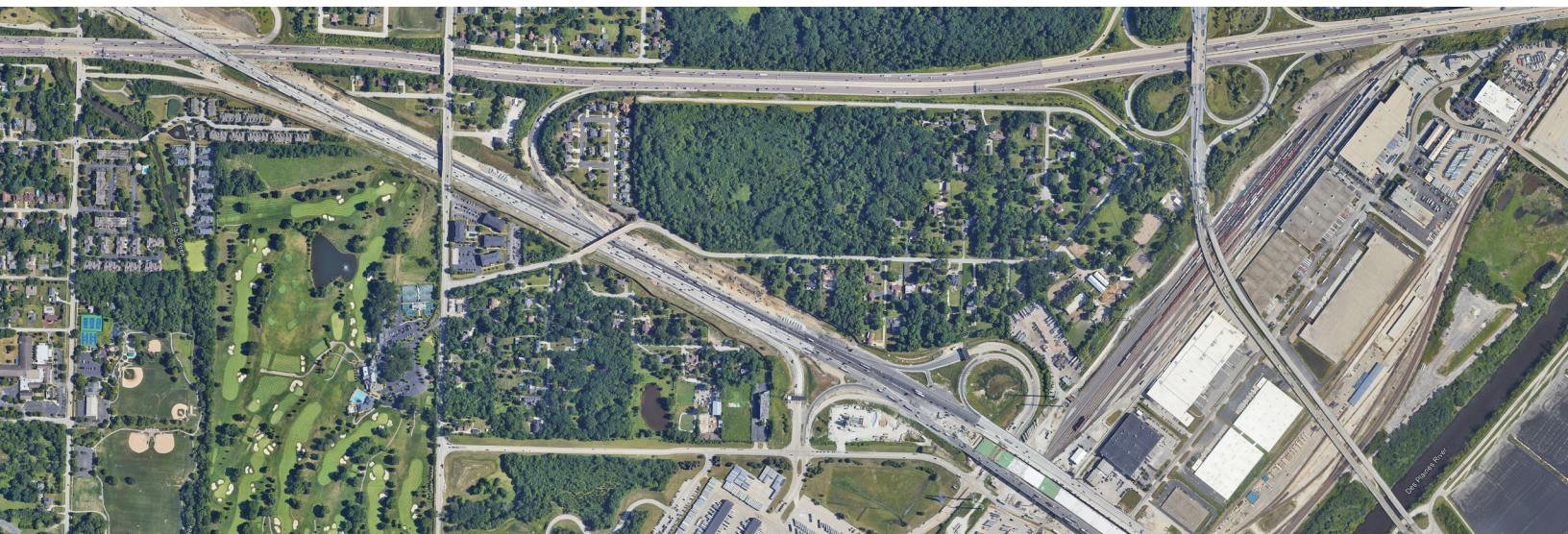


LaGrange Road
City Signage

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Where is Countryside today? The City needs to establish a clear understanding of the community's current conditions as it looks to 2040 and beyond. This chapter provides a snapshot of current conditions related to demographics, market, land use, and zoning regulations. Additionally, it includes a small snapshot of information that was included in Countryside's existing conditions analysis. Collectively, this understanding of the City's needs and existing opportunities, along with community input, created the foundation for Countryside's vision for the future.

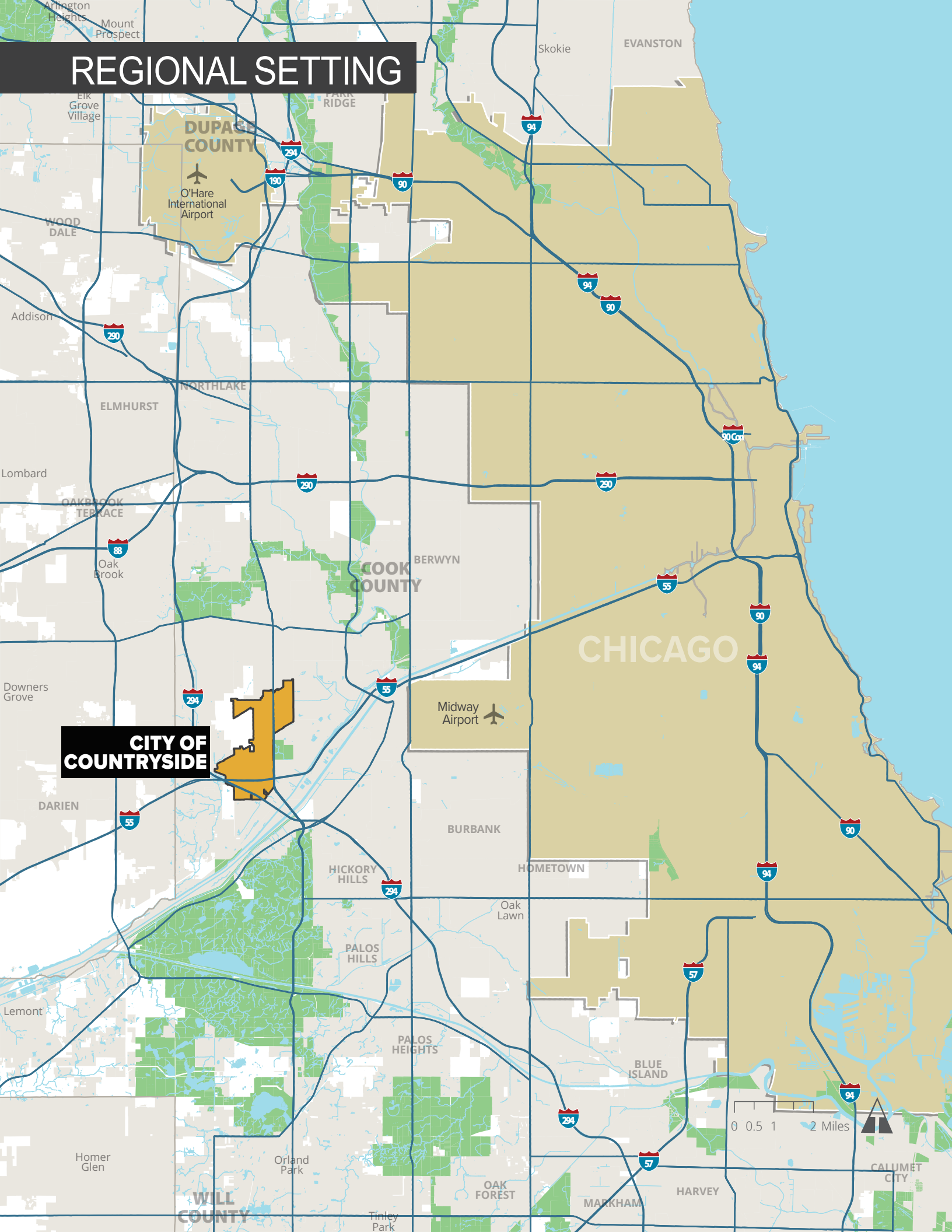


Aerial view of Southern Countryside

REGIONAL SETTING

Located just 15 miles southwest of the Chicago Loop, the City of Countryside is a primarily suburban location with access to forest preserves, major roadways, and a quick access to Chicago's Midway International Airport. The City is located in Cook County, Illinois, northwest of Interstate 55 (Stevenson Expressway) and interstate 294 (Tri-State Tollway). Countryside is nestled in a mix of communities including LaGrange, LaGrange Highlands, McCook, Hodgkins, Willow Springs, Burr Ridge, and Indian Head Park. The BNSF Intermodal Freight Rail Facility sits on the southeast border of Countryside, although this industrial landmark is affectively buffered from much of Countryside's residential areas by the Stevenson Expressway and the Arie Crown Forest (a large natural area in the Community maintained by the Forest Preserve of Cook County).

REGIONAL SETTING



DEMOGRAPHICS

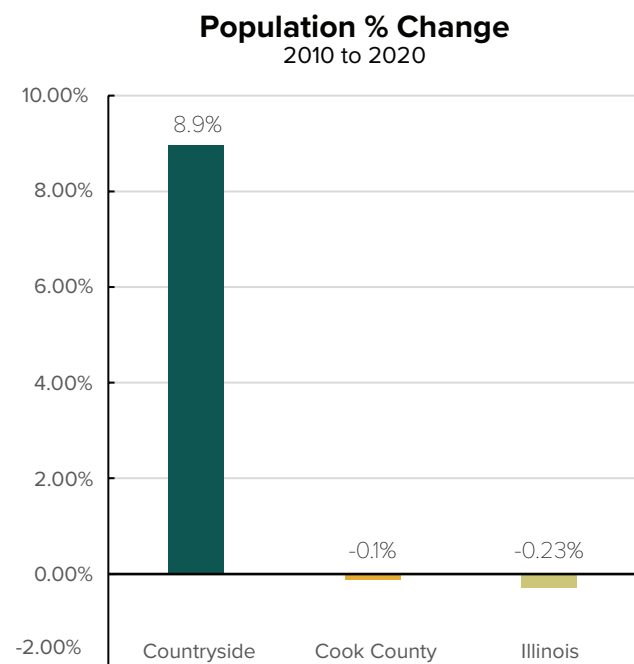
The demographic data of the community plays a major role in the formulation of the Comprehensive Plan. Understanding Countryside's demographic profile allows the City to respond to the community's needs, provide necessary services, and predict future service demands more adequately. Demographic conditions were assessed based on the US Census Bureau's [American Community Survey data](#).

A Summary of Countryside Demographics

The Existing Conditions Analysis provided an overview of a summary of key data points before the development of the new Comprehensive Plan. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan represents a summary of those findings. For more detail, including more information on Countryside's demographics and real estate market, please contact Countryside City staff to view the entire 2022 Existing Conditions Report.

Population

According to 2020 data, Countryside has a population of 6,420. Its population has remained consistent from 2010 to 2020, exhibiting a net increase of 603 residents (8.9% increase). This modest growth suggests that the population of Countryside is stable. Since the white-collar work-from-home lifestyle became more prevalent after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is reasonable to suggest that Countryside may continue to experience modest growth as urban professionals seek more space outside the City. In this regard, Countryside is well-positioned for growth as it offers a suburban lifestyle a short drive from downtown Chicago.



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Age

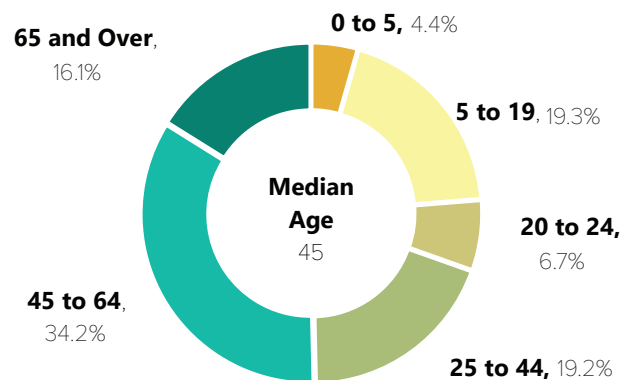
The median age for Countryside residents is 45 years old. The most populous age group is the 45 to 64 year old group (34.2%), followed by the 5 to 19 year old group (19.3%). This suggests the City has a common suburban trend of residents growing up in the community, leaving for college or to start their profession elsewhere, then returning to raise a family. Countryside's senior population (65 and older) represents a larger share of the community than in Cook County and Illinois as a whole. The senior population also indicates a continued need for specific housing types and leisure needs. The Comprehensive Plan will consider best practices to support all stages of life.

Race and Ethnicity

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the majority of Countryside's residents identify as White at 86.2%. The other two most prevalent race categories are Two or More Races and Some Other Race Alone, which together make up just over 17%. The City is less diverse than Cook County and Illinois, which is comparatively composed of 56.7% White and 71.5% White respectively. Countryside has a slightly lower proportion of people who identify as Hispanic (an ethnicity which can be made up of any race) at 24.0%, compared to Cook County which is 26.2%, but higher than the State which has 18.2%.

Age Distribution

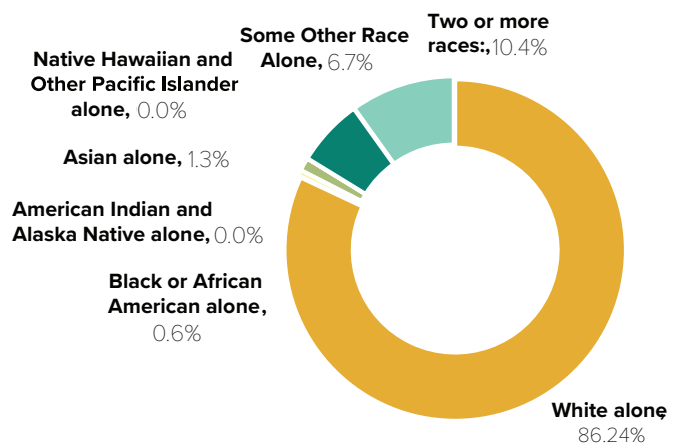
Countryside, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Race Distribution

Countryside, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

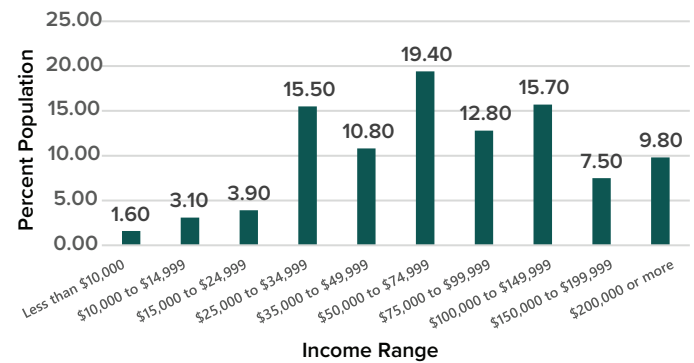
Income

The economic condition of a community's residents is a good measure of their general quality of life and, by extension, that of the community as a whole. For example, a wealthier community would be much more likely to provide higher-quality public facilities and services, or at least be less challenged to provide them at adequate levels, than a lower-income community.

Currently, Countryside's largest household income group is the \$50,000 to \$74,999 group at 19.4%, followed by the \$100,000 to \$149,999 group at 15.7% and the \$25,000 to \$34,999 group at 15.5%. The City experienced the largest increase in income groups \$150,000 and over between 2010 and 2020. Countryside's \$200,000 and over household income notably multiplied by five times. Nearly every income group earning less than \$100,000 experienced a decrease in percent composition, with a greater percentage decrease in lower income groups.

Population Percentages by Income Bracket

Countryside, 2020



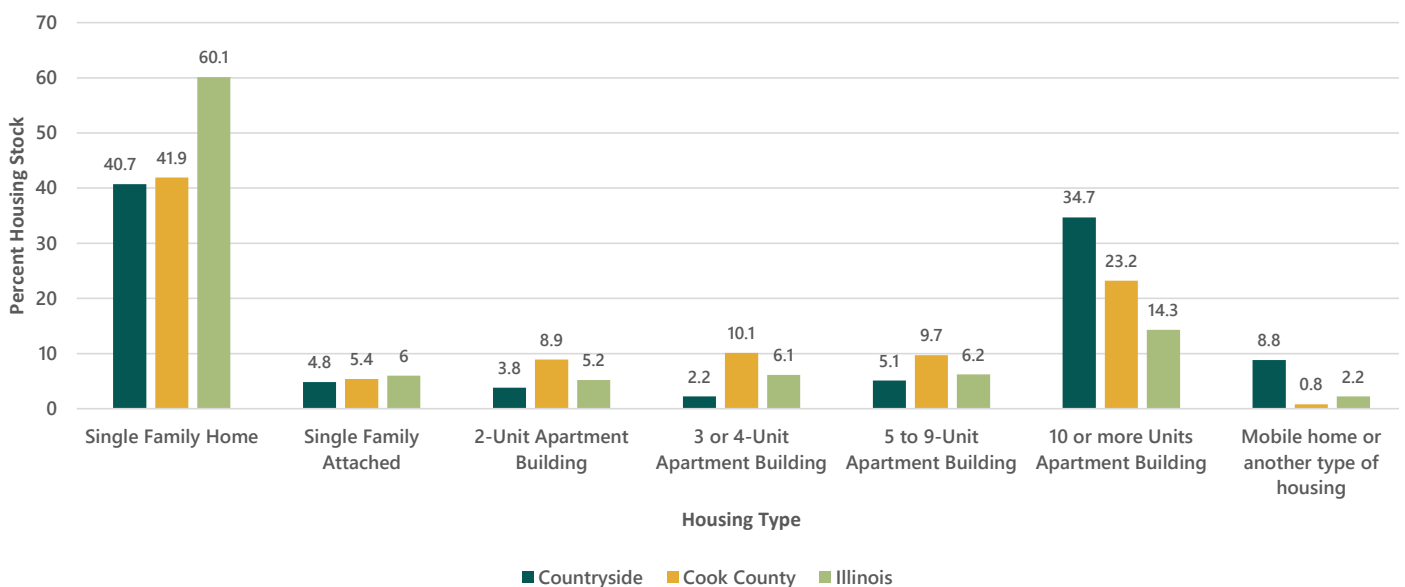
Housing Type

In Countryside, single-family detached homes make up 40.7% of all occupied units. The second most common housing type is apartments with 10 or more units, accounting for 34.7% of units in the City. The remaining quarter of the

housing stock is about evenly split between the remaining housing types. This housing stock composition reflects Countryside's location in the heart of the Chicago metropolitan area as an urban fringe suburban community.

Housing Type

Collected 2020



Housing Value

Countryside home values have increased since 2010. The median home value in the City is \$242,700, a gain of 6.35% since 2010. Despite modest gains, it is important to note that values in Countryside have not outpaced inflation; there was an 18.5% cumulative rate of inflation between 2010 and 2020).

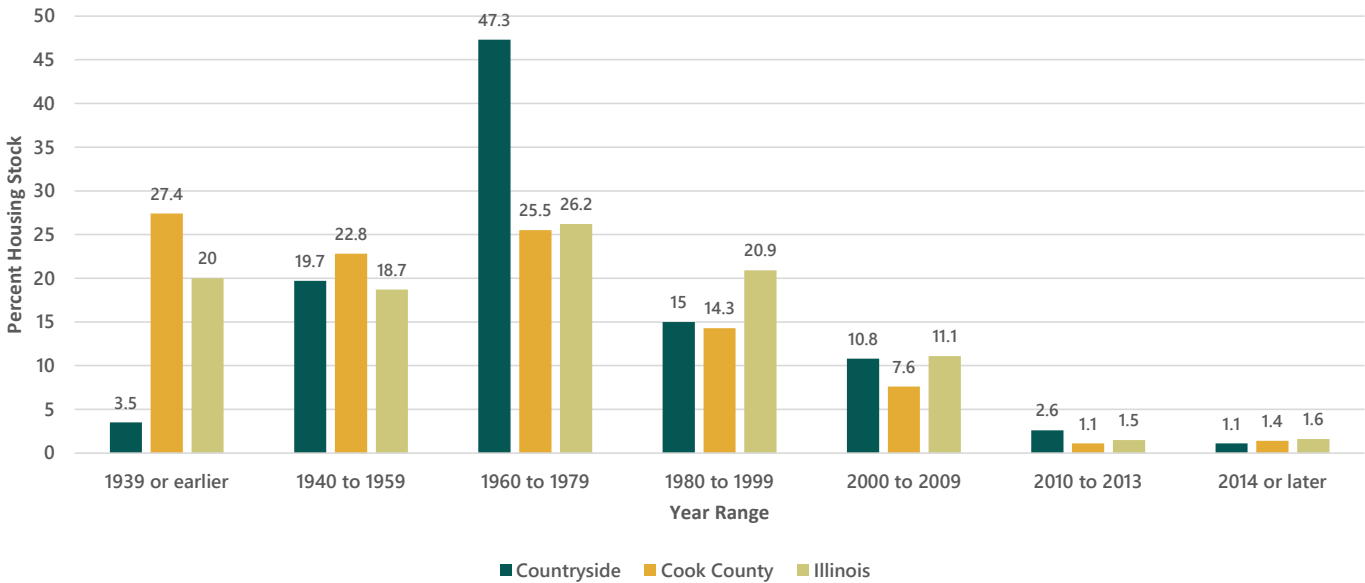
Housing Age

Nearly half (47.3%) of Countryside’s housing stock was built between 1960 and 1979, about 30% was built prior to 1960, and about 20% was built in 1980 or later. This reflects the community’s incorporation in 1960 and showcases Countryside’s significant growth period during the 1960s and 70s as the United States was experiencing a post-war suburban expansion.

Median Housing Values
2010-2020

Median Value	Illinois	Cook County	Countryside
2010	202,500	265,800	228,200
2020	202,100	255,500	242,700
Change	-0.20%	-3.88%	6.35%

Year Structure Built
Collected 2020

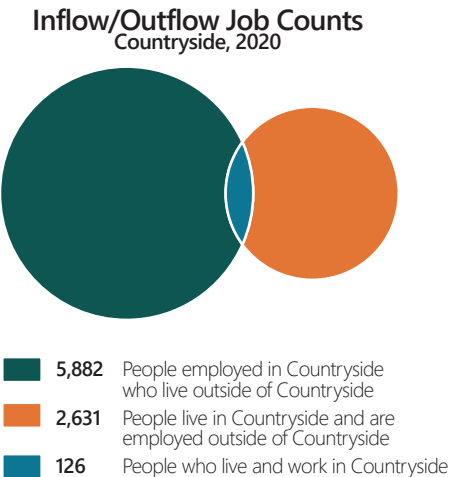


Employment

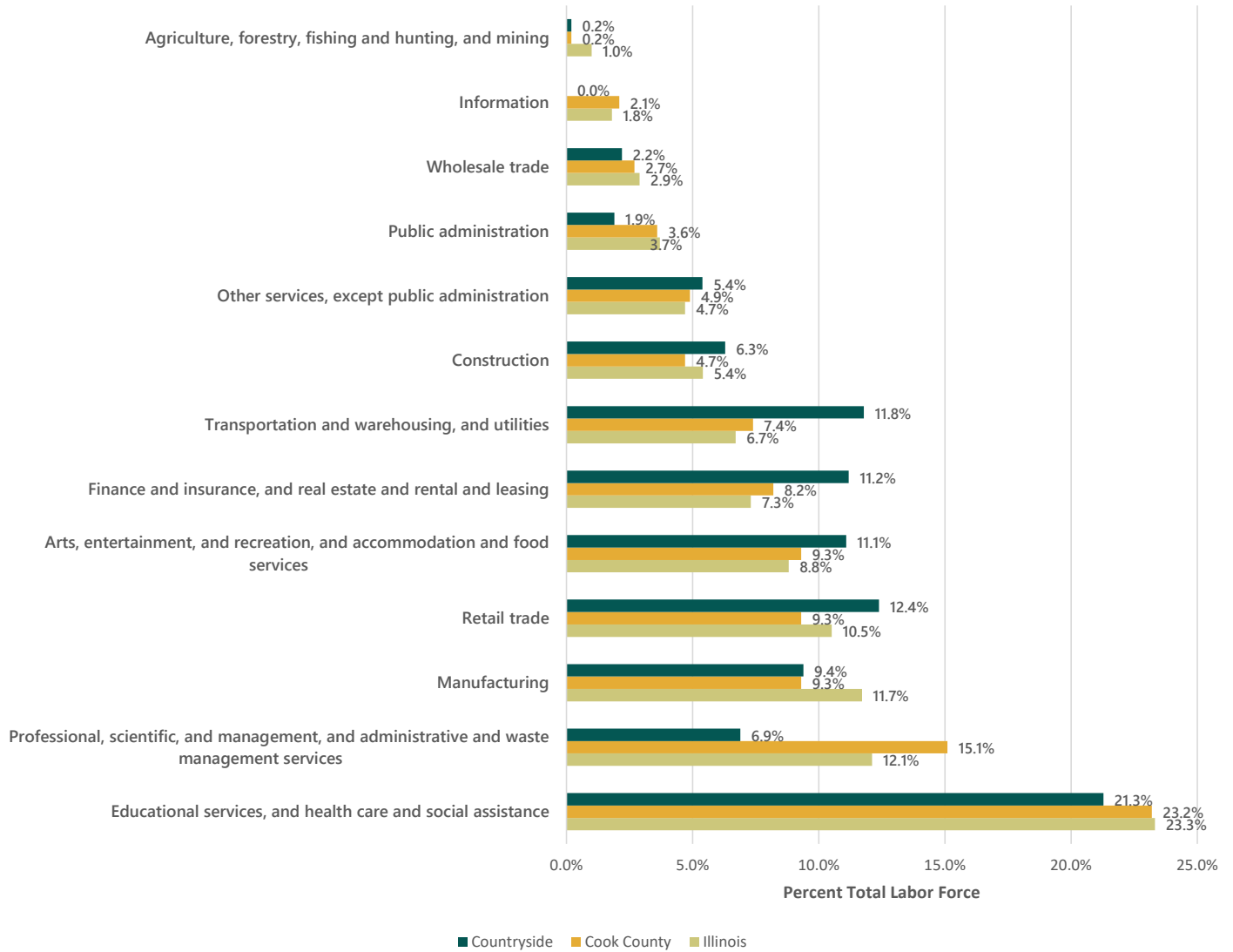
Countryside's mix of office/industrial users and retail/service users has created some local job opportunities over the past 10 years. It has experienced an almost 1% increase in total primary jobs between 2010 and 2020, reflective of the stable economy that is common among residential-heavy Chicago suburbs. Presently, the City's largest industry is Education/Healthcare/Social Services, which makes up 23.3% of its employment base (671 people). Countryside's next largest industries are Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (12.1% of jobs or 348 people), Manufacturing (11.7% or 336 people), and retail trade (10.5% or 302 people). While Education/Healthcare/Social Services currently provide the most jobs within the City, Manufacturing experienced the largest growth between 2010 and 2020 (228 new jobs—an increase of almost 60%).

Because Countryside is a predominantly residential community, the percentage of the economy that each business sector occupies can be drastically increased or decreased by the addition or subtraction of one mid-sized business. With this in mind, as a percentage of the City's economy, Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities are disproportionately represented in Countryside compared to both Cook County and Illinois, where it is 45% and 55% larger respectively. In contrast, the information sector is 200% smaller in Countryside than in both Cook County and Illinois.

Of the jobs located in Countryside, 5,882 people live outside the community but work in it, while 2,631 people live in the community but work outside it, and only 126 people live and work in the City. This characterizes Countryside as a “bedroom” community, where most residents leave the community to work. The City also experiences an increased daytime population as a higher number of people commute into the community to work.



Employment Sectors Collected 2020



LAND USE

Land use data was compiled using the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's 2015 Land Use Inventory dataset, close examination of current aerial photography, and field reconnaissance conducted in February 2022. The Future Land Use was first articulated in the Vision, Goals and Land Use memo. Information from the memo has been incorporated into the plan document. For more detail, please contact Countryside City staff to view the entire 2023 Vision, Goals and Land Use memo.

Single-Family Detached

Single-family detached consists of single-family homes occupying individual lots. This use includes the older, established neighborhoods of Countryside, such as along Plainfield Road, as well as newer subdivisions, like Woodland Ridge.

Single-Family Attached

Single-family attached includes units that share an exterior wall with separate entrances. This includes townhomes and duplexes. Countryside's townhomes are in many subdivisions, like Clocktower Pointe and Countryside Meadows.

Multi-family

Multi-family includes structures containing multiple dwelling units stacked vertically with shared entrances, stairways, hallways, and amenities, like apartments, condominiums, and assisted living facilities. Multi-family buildings are interspersed within the residential areas of Countryside and the City's major thoroughfares.

Mobile Home

Mobile Homes include manufactured, detached single-family homes that are constructed on a permanent chassis, allowing for transportability. One mobile home park exists at Joliet Road and Main Drive (Country Club Woods).

Community Commercial

Community Commercial includes commercial establishments that sell a product or service. Community commercial uses are primarily concentrated along major commercial corridors. Community commercial includes the significant auto dealerships along LaGrange Road.

Regional Commercial

Regional Commercial includes large-scale retail and service establishments with a regional customer draw. This includes Salem Square Shopping Center and Countryside Plaza.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use is characterized by different land uses that coexist in either the same multi-storied building or mixed horizontally in a unified complex. Mixed-use properties can be found along and north of 55th Street.

Industrial

Industrial includes facilities involved in the manufacturing, storage, and distribution of goods and materials. Most of the City's industrial uses are located along East Avenue, including an older industrial park north of 55th Street, the Dansher Industrial Park.

Office

Office includes offices used for professional services as well as medical office uses. Individual small offices, legal firms, and family physicians are included. Most of the City's office land use is located along Joliet Road.

Public/Semi-Public

Public/Semi-Public includes local government uses, community service providers, schools, nonprofit organizations, and religious institutions. An example of public/semi-public land use is the City Municipal Complex.

Parks/Open Space

Parks/Open Space includes public parks managed by the City, as well as privately-owned recreational facilities and open space. The latter includes Ideal Elementary School's playgrounds and soccer fields, community greenways, and detention and retention ponds.

Utility

The utility land use designation includes utility infrastructure, such as electrical substations, power line right-of-ways, and water treatment facilities.

Vacant/Undeveloped

Vacant/Undeveloped includes areas that have not been developed and is not designated open space. This also includes land that contains a vacated existing structure that can be reasonably considered available for redevelopment. Vacant/Undeveloped lots are dispersed throughout the City, with the largest one located just north of Countryside Plaza.

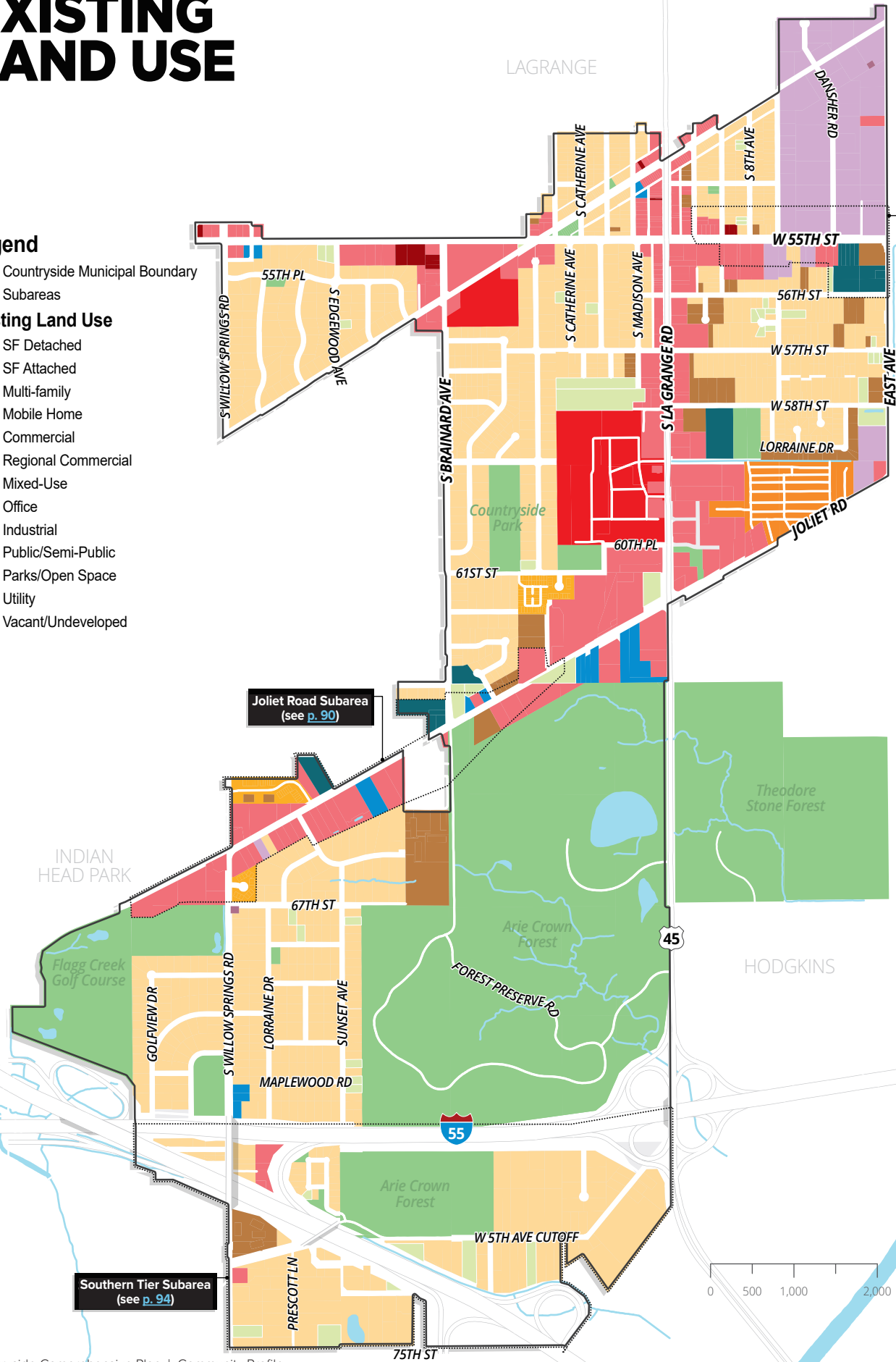
EXISTING LAND USE

Legend

- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas

Existing Land Use

- SF Detached
- SF Attached
- Multi-family
- Mobile Home
- Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Office
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Parks/Open Space
- Utility
- Vacant/Undeveloped



CURRENT ZONING

Development controls such as the City's municipal zoning code and sign ordinance provide the legal framework to regulate the built environment. Land use within the City of Countryside is regulated through the Countryside, Illinois Code of Ordinances. Regulations for each zoning district can be found on the City's website; summarized district descriptions are included here for reference.

R-1 to R-3: One-family Residence

Intended for single-family dwellings and other compatible uses in areas predominantly developed or desired for such housing. Each district allows for progressively denser development with decreasing lot size and width minimums.

R-4: Two-family Residence

Designed for single-family and attached two-family dwellings, mainly located in the northeast part of the city.

R-5: General Residence

Accommodates various residential uses, including row homes, townhouses, apartments, and condos on parcels less than 5 acres, scattered throughout the residential areas.

R-7: Rural

Preserves rural character and accommodates one-family residences in a low-density setting.

B-1: Retail

For retail and shopping uses, including shopping plazas and large grocery stores.

B-2: Limited Service

Suitable for retail and service uses primarily within buildings, except for off-street parking. Located along major roads.

B-3: Service and Wholesale

Intended for larger-scale commercial uses along major corridors, such as auto dealerships and drive-thru restaurants.

O: Limited Office Space

Preserves small office facilities offering personal services and acts as a buffer between residential and commercial areas. Adjacent to commercial or existing office districts.

M-1: Limited Manufacturing

Accommodates various manufacturing activities that do not seriously disrupt the quality of life for nearby areas, primarily in the business area north of 55th Street and east of 9th Avenue.

M-2: General Manufacturing

Designed for "heavier" uses like cement manufacturing, motor freight terminals, and truck storage yards. Currently, there are no parcels zoned M-2.

P-1: Public and Semi-Public District

Accommodates publicly and semi-publicly owned land in Countryside, including government and non-profit buildings.

L-1: LaGrange Road Arterial Road Corridor (ARC) Overlay District

Overlay District promotes businesses generating sales tax in line with the city's previous comprehensive plan. Overlay regulations apply, subject to underlying zoning, with restrictions on certain uses like check-cashing agencies and Special Use permits for others, such as advertising displays and amusement establishments.

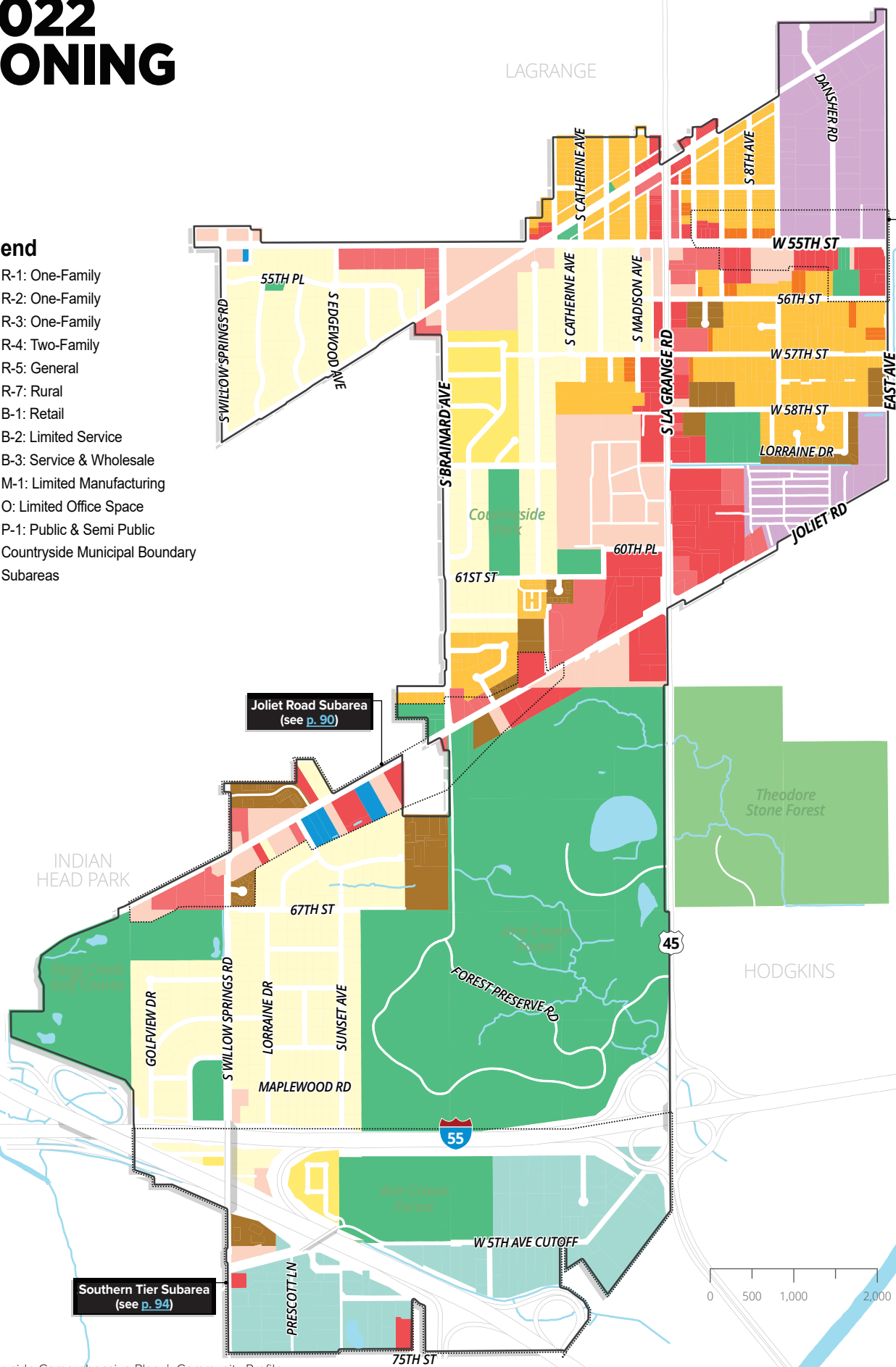
City Zoning Code

Land use within the City of Countryside is regulated through Title 10 "Zoning" of Countryside's City Code. This section provided summarized district descriptions. More information on zoning regulations for each zoning district can be found on the [City's website](#).

2022 ZONING

Legend

- R-1: One-Family
- R-2: One-Family
- R-3: One-Family
- R-4: Two-Family
- R-5: General
- R-7: Rural
- B-1: Retail
- B-2: Limited Service
- B-3: Service & Wholesale
- M-1: Limited Manufacturing
- O: Limited Office Space
- P-1: Public & Semi Public
- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas





Countryside Park, 61st Street

CHAPTER

3

VISION AND GOALS

Driven by community and stakeholder input, this chapter details the Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals, which provide the framework for planning recommendations, policies, projects, and actions.

The Community Vision Statement is an aspirational narrative that paints a picture of what the City can achieve following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement is the foundation for the Plan's goals, policies, recommendations, and actions.

Goals are broad and long-range desired outcomes. They are ambitious and will require the culmination of many incremental actions to be fully achieved. The City's planning efforts should work to support these goals.



A COMMUNITY VISION FOR COUNTRYSIDE

Countryside will be known as a welcoming, prosperous, sustainable, and well-connected community, home to people of all ages and backgrounds, from young professionals and growing families to life-long residents and retirees. Countryside’s reputation and services will appeal to its residents, continue to attract visitors, and create new opportunities to enjoy the community. Meanwhile, the City will stay true to its heritage – a charming place with a lot to offer.

In 2040, Countryside will stand out as a great place to live within the Chicago region thanks to its attainable and attractive homes in desirable neighborhoods. People will continue to choose to live in Countryside based on its accessibility and connectivity within the region, and the City’s reputation will grow over the coming decades as a strong residential community that attracts people at all stages of life.

The City will be defined by its bustling commercial corridors and centers. Key employment areas will thrive, supporting new creative businesses from co-working spaces to microbreweries, alongside established industrial and manufacturing areas. Increasingly, locally-owned establishments will call the City’s commercial spaces home, drawn to the areas’ unique character and vibrancy. Attractive shops and restaurants will take root along the corridors and provide a place for residents and visitors to enjoy shopping, dining, and entertainment.

The City will build on its transportation assets and advantageous location within the Chicago region, maintaining its reputation as “Chicago’s western gateway.” The City will be known as a connected community where residents can easily access anything they need. As projects are planned, the City will ensure roads and intersections are designed efficiently to relieve congestion and promote safety. The City will support sustainable transportation with expanded bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and EV infrastructure, offering residents healthy and active options for getting around.

The City will become even more active, healthy, and sustainable by reinvesting in its existing green spaces and creatively identifying new parks and recreational areas for all to enjoy. The City will work with the Forest Preserve District to ensure that its most significant open space, the Arie Crown Forest, remains a vital asset that serves the community. Similarly, the City will continue to work with local and regional partners to offer a variety of services, support great schools, and ensure its community facilities meet the needs of its residents and businesses.



Carl W. LeGant Memorial Park

GOALS AND POLICIES

Residential Areas and Neighborhoods

Goal 1 Provide high quality housing and neighborhoods for residents in all stages of life and socioeconomic status, maintaining and expanding the City's reputation as a great place to live.

Commercial and Industrial Areas

- Goal 1** Continue to enhance the economic viability, productivity, and uniqueness of the City's primary commercial corridors.
- Goal 2** Attract, retain, and expand businesses in the City's key industrial and employment areas.

Transportation and Mobility

Goal 1 Provide a seamless, efficient transportation system that offers good connectivity, supports mobility for people using all modes (walking, biking, transit, and driving), and enhances the character of the City.

Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Environment

- Goal 1** Support the delivery of high-quality community facilities and availability of quality public places, ensuring a high quality of life, and maintaining the City's overall desirability.
- Goal 2** Offer a park and open space system that meets the recreational and environmental needs of Countryside residents and visitors.



A home in Countryside

CHAPTER

4

LAND USE

The City of Countryside is defined by its attractive neighborhoods, prosperous commercial corridors, good location, and access to natural areas. The City is a desirable place to live, with accessible but regionally competitive housing prices supporting a slightly increasing senior population, and a consistent population of middle to upper-middle income residents. Similarly, the reliable commercial areas make it a great place to maintain a business. The Land Use Plan is intended to emphasize the City's assets, build on existing land use patterns, and guide development and redevelopment in a way that leverages limited available opportunity sites within the City's built-out area. This section presents long-range policies and recommendations for high quality and compatible new residential, commercial, and industrial development, as well as the protection and enhancement of open spaces and environmental resources within the community.



Homes and Parks in Countryside

GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

Develop and redevelop strategically. With limited area available due to its landlocked municipal boundary, the City should maintain a balanced pattern of development and redevelopment that provides for well-designed, compatible, and economically sustainable neighborhoods, businesses, and employment areas. When developable sites are available, the City should work with property owners and developers to ensure they contribute to local economic stability and meet the needs of residents. Community feedback has indicated a desire for unique, local commercial development, and for residential development that meets high-quality standards.

Collaborate regionally. Countryside should continue the strong partnerships that help it capitalize upon local and regional resources and assets for residents, such as library services, transit, recreational programming, and regional open space access. Regional collaboration includes maintaining relationships with the organizations, civic groups, institutions, and neighboring municipalities that positively influence the community.

Maintain the high-quality Countryside image and identity.

The City should continue to provide a physically distinctive and high-quality environment that contributes to its quality of life and character. To enhance a sense of community and pride, the City should ensure that private investment and new development is context sensitive, and that the public realm is well-cared for. Similarly, the City should maintain its community facilities and ensure its services continue to meet the high expectations of Countryside's residents. The City's tools to implement a high-quality image and identity, such as the City Center Design Standards and the zoning code, should be regularly reviewed and revised as needed.

Set the standard for sustainability. With the opening of its state-of-the-art municipal complex, the City of Countryside has established a public commitment to sustainability, social equity, and environmentalism. Through the recent City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021), the City has articulated its support of the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Greenest Region Compact (GRC) which offers consensus-based goals for communities. The City should continue to make land use decisions through the lens of its broad sustainable land use goals, which include:

- Conserve, restore and enhance natural features and ecosystems;
- Support networks of accessible well-used and enjoyable parks;
- Sustain a robust urban forest canopy;
- Sustain beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services;
- Achieve greater livability through sustainable land use and housing policies; and
- Cultivate a conservation ethic in the community.

What is Land Use Planning?

Land use planning allows communities to consider the impacts of land use decisions on immediate and future growth and development. Local governments create land use plans to respond to these potential impacts and guide desired development. Countryside's Land Use Plan evaluates what the City will look like if the Comprehensive Plan's land policies, implemented to reach the desired future, are successful.



Homes in Countryside

LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

The categories listed below should be used to formulate general policy and desired land uses within Countryside. More detailed recommendations to support the City's high-quality residential, commercial, industrial, and open space areas will be contained within the subsequent plan chapters. Parcels within the City have been assigned nine (9) general land use categories to serve as the basis for development review and approval, and for future zoning amendments.

Note: Refer to Future Land Use Map on [page 35](#).

Single-Family Detached

The Single-Family Detached category consists of single-family homes occupying individual lots. Single-family detached homes are the most predominant existing residential type in the City. The single-family detached land use includes the older, established neighborhoods of Countryside, such as the ones along Plainfield Road, and newer planned subdivisions, such as Woodland Ridge. Countryside's existing housing stock generally exhibits a high quality in terms of image, character, and stability.

Single-family detached development will align with the patterns of existing neighborhoods. New single-family homes will be built through infill and redevelopment. The City should continue to monitor infill and residential redevelopment to ensure that changes are sensitive to and reflective of the existing neighborhood character.

Single-Family Attached

The Single-Family Attached category includes structures where dwelling units share an exterior wall with at least one adjacent unit. Each dwelling unit has a dedicated entrance, such as townhomes, duplexes, and triplexes. Countryside's existing attached homes are in multiple subdivisions, including Clocktower Pointe, Country Estate, and Countryside Meadows.

Single-family attached residential development should be encouraged in areas where a single-family character is desired, infrastructure and services can accommodate additional density, and there is increased demand for attainable homes in proximity to amenities. Single-family attached homes are an opportunity for first-time homeownership and for residents looking to downsize or age in place.

Multi-family

The Multi-family category includes structures with multiple dwelling units stacked vertically with shared entrances, stairways, hallways, and amenities. This land use includes apartments, condominiums, and assisted living facilities. Multi-family buildings are interspersed throughout the residential areas of Countryside. Some are located along the City's major thoroughfares, such as Joliet Road. Country Club Condominiums and Forest Villa Condominiums constitute a larger-sized multi-family complex and are located on Brainard Avenue south of Joliet Road.

New multi-family residential developments should reflect the overall character of the community, offering high-quality living environments, amenities, and sufficient parking. A variety of price points in rental and condominium configurations should be incorporated to serve young professionals, senior residents, and workforce residents.



Commercial Uses in Countryside

Mobile Home

The Mobile Home category includes manufactured, detached single-family homes constructed on a permanent chassis, allowing for transportability, as well as low-density single-family detached homes. The City has one mobile home park within municipal limits at Joliet Road and Main Drive, offering an attainable homeownership option to residents. No areas are designated for new mobile home park uses and the land use plan does not accommodate expansion of the existing mobile home park.

Community/Corridor Commercial

The Community/Corridor Commercial category includes commercial establishments that sell a product or service, such as grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, salons, clothing stores, pharmacies, or home goods stores. Existing commercial uses are primarily concentrated along corridors like LaGrange Road, Joliet Road, 55th Street, and Plainfield Road, taking advantage of their visibility and easy access. Office uses, such as medical buildings, real estate offices, legal firms, tax offices, and other professional services are a subset of commercial uses within this category.

The City should ensure community and corridor commercial areas continue to accommodate a blend of local business, regional chains, and national retailers, positioned on individual lots or in configurations of multiple stores within a commercial development linked by shared parking lot areas.

Regional Commercial

The Regional Commercial category includes large-scale retail and service establishments with a regional customer draw. Two regional commercial centers exist in the City – Salem Square Shopping Center and Countryside Plaza. Along LaGrange Road, there is a concentration of auto dealerships, which have been one of the City's biggest sources of tax revenue and draws car buyers from the surrounding region. These areas appeal to residents while drawing on a customer base that extends beyond Countryside limits.

The City should continue to recognize the importance of its regional commercial centers, working with national retailers to ensure that these major centers remain viable for the long term. Similarly, as car buying moves toward online and direct-to consumer sales, the City should acknowledge the importance of its automobile sales tax base and work with dealers to ensure they can continue to operate successfully.

Land Use and Zoning

Zoning regulations are the legal tool used to implement the Land Use Plan. Zoning addresses physical characteristics of development such as height, bulk, density, and lot coverage. It also defines allowable uses within zoning districts. Zoning regulations should align with the Land Use Plan to achieve the desired land use and development patterns within a community.



Industrial, Institutional, and Recreational Uses in Countryside

Industrial

The Industrial category includes areas and facilities used for low intensity manufacturing, processing, storage, commercial service, and distribution of goods and materials. Most of the City's industrial uses are along East Avenue in the Dansher Industrial Park. The Park consists of many smaller-sized and older light industrial buildings. It is becoming harder for these buildings to support contemporary industrial operations, which often require greater space and building height.

New industrial areas are not identified within the land use plan. The City should prioritize retaining and improving existing light industrial uses, and ensure they offer flexibility to attract non-traditional uses to these important areas. Permitting non-traditional commercial and industrial tenants, such as fitness centers, indoor recreation center, medical offices, co-working spaces, dance studios, and microbreweries, will expand the pool of potential uses within these areas and keep them activated.

Public/Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public category includes existing local government uses (such as the City Municipal Complex), community service providers, schools, nonprofit organizations, and religious institutions. The category also includes land dedicated to utility infrastructure, such as electrical substations, power lines, rights-of-way, and water treatment facilities. These uses are anticipated to remain over the 20-year planning horizon.

Mixed Use

The mixed-use development category is characterized by land uses that coexist in the same multi-storied building or mixed horizontally in a unified complex.

The City should continue to support existing mixed-use structures in Countryside and consider designating suitable new areas as mixed use in the future.

Parks/Open Space

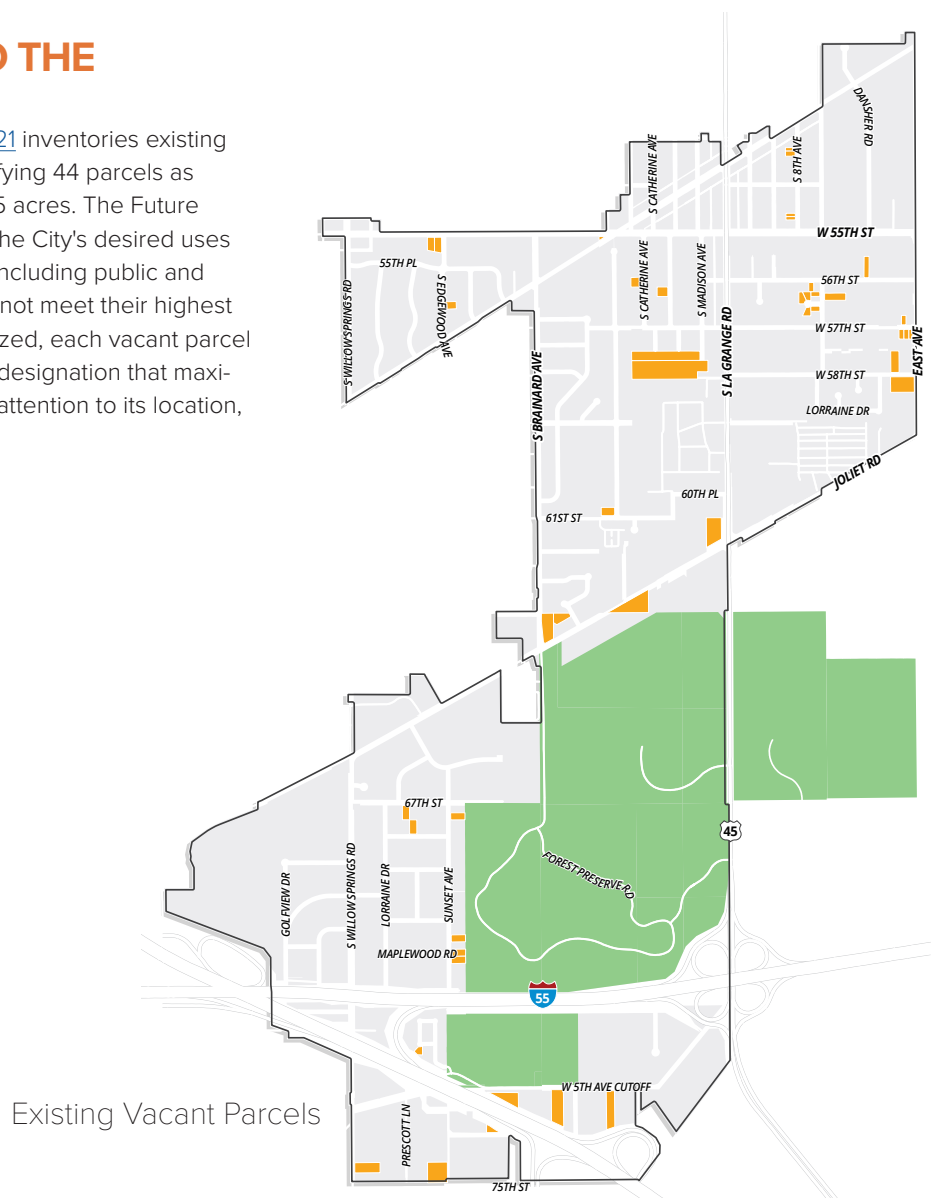
The Parks/Open Space category includes public parks managed by the City, and privately-owned recreational facilities and other open spaces. This includes Ideal Elementary School's playgrounds and soccer fields, community greenways, and detention and retention ponds, Flagg Creek Golf Course, and forest preserve land. The City of Countryside maintains and oversees six (6) neighborhood parks, a Little League/Soccer park, the City's Carl W. LeGant Memorial Park, and the flagship Countryside Park. The City partners with the Park District of LaGrange for classes and programs. The largest preserved open space within City limits is Arie Crown Forest, owned and operated by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC). The City should continue to work with the Park District of LaGrange for programming and FPDCC for the upkeep and access to the preserve.



LaGrange Road Corridor in Countryside

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE VACANT PARCELS?

The Existing Land Use map on [page 21](#) inventories existing land uses in countryside today, identifying 44 parcels as currently vacant for a total of about 35 acres. The Future Land Use map on [page 35](#) presents the City's desired uses for all properties within Countryside, including public and private land. As vacant properties do not meet their highest use and can be considered underutilized, each vacant parcel has been allocated a future land use designation that maximizes its development potential with attention to its location, size, and surrounding context.



FUTURE LAND USE

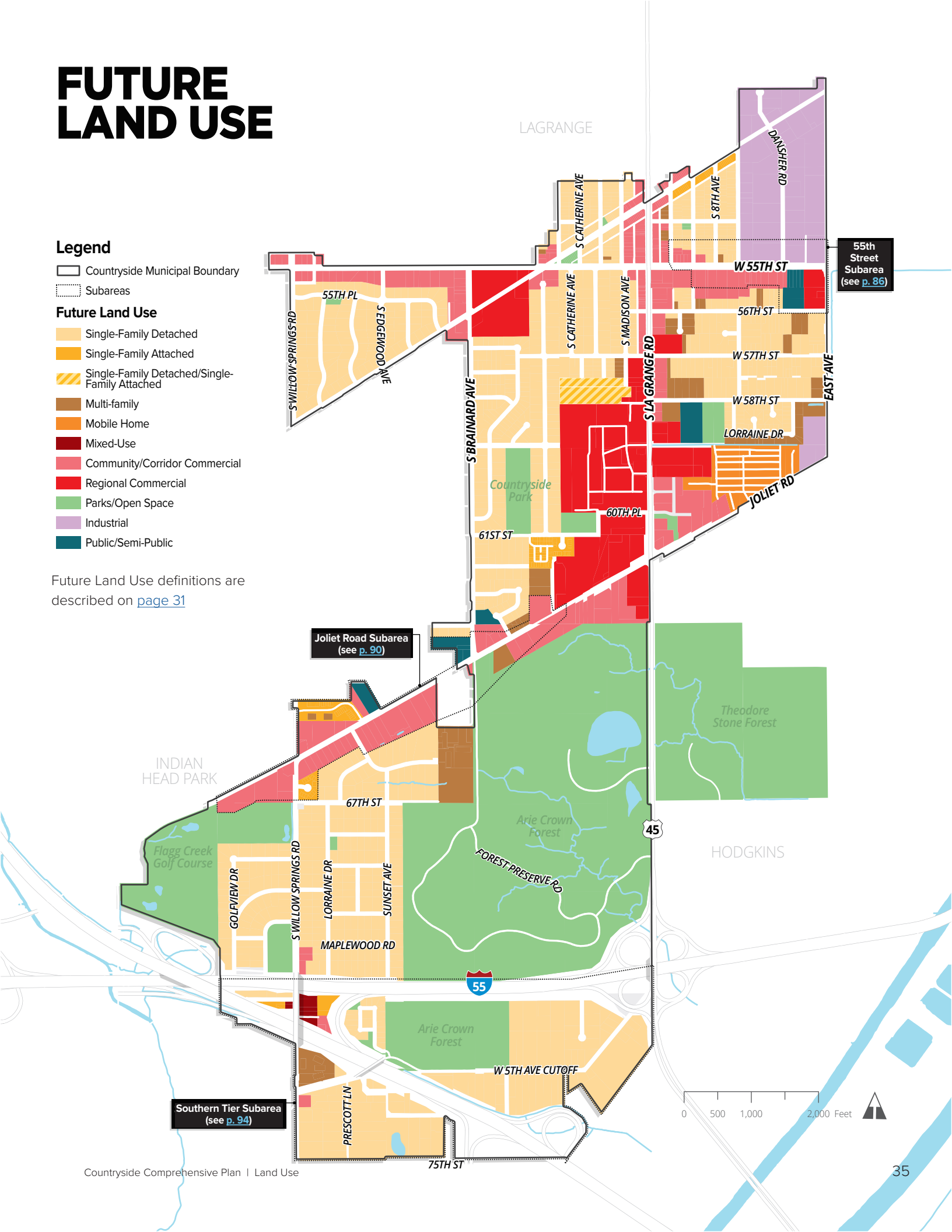
Legend

- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas

Future Land Use

- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Attached
- Single-Family Detached/Single-Family Attached
- Multi-family
- Mobile Home
- Mixed-Use
- Community/Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Parks/Open Space
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public

Future Land Use definitions are described on [page 31](#)





5545 Plainfield Road

CHAPTER

5

Goals for Countryside's Commercial and Industrial Areas

- ▶ Continue to enhance the economic viability, productivity, and uniqueness of the City's primary commercial corridors.
- ▶ Attract, retain, and expand businesses in the City's key industrial and employment areas.

Plan goals are described in more detail, starting on [page 26](#)

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The **Commercial and Industrial Areas** chapter identifies goals, recommendations, and implementable policies for the City's commercial corridors. The goals, recommendations, and policies outlined in this section are intended to strengthen the City's identity as a destination for regional retailers, drawing individuals from throughout Chicagoland to Countryside's shopping malls, restaurants, and auto dealerships.

Provide High-quality Commercial Areas and Support the City's Employment Base

Countryside has built a reputation for offering retail and service, accommodating the needs of its residents, and in some sectors, serving individuals from throughout the Chicago region. The City's auto dealerships serve a regional demand for new vehicle purchases and are a key part of the City's local economy. Countryside's shopping areas feature large scale retailers with a diverse mix of commercial uses.

Based on Census data, employment in the immediate region within the production, transportation, and manufacturing sectors experienced a 60% increase over the past ten years. Countryside's industrial areas, like Dansher Industrial Park, Joliet Road, and East Avenue, provide a strong employment base and strengthen the City's tax base. While industrial areas are built out and buildings have few vacancies, the City can ensure they continue to provide stable jobs for both residents and commuters.

Understanding the current commercial and industrial uses offered throughout the City will support Countryside's economic and employment bases. Commercial and industrial areas will continue to foster a business-friendly environment, encouraging long-term businesses to stay, and attract new businesses to relocate in the City. The following policies and recommendations for the City's commercial and industrial areas are intended to ensure high-quality jobs, a business-oriented community, and retail and services that establish themselves as hallmarks of Countryside.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREA POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policies describe the desired outcome for Countryside's commercial and industrial areas. Recommendations are found below each policy section, detailing implementable actions the City can take to move toward its vision over the coming decades.

Business-Friendly Environment

Businesses choose to locate in Countryside due to its visibility, regional location, and the unique retail landscape and services offered within the community. The City is located just 15 miles from the Chicago Loop with access to I-55, I-294, and LaGrange Road – expressways and arterials that are assets for freight delivery and a regional market share.

Countryside currently offers a supportive, business-oriented community. Information for operating a business can be found on the City website, communicating the available commercial and industrial properties within the City, tax information, TIF district information, and offering a business guide. This ensures a welcoming environment for existing and incoming businesses.

Supporting a business-friendly environment helps ensure businesses stay in Countryside for the long term. The City can work with its businesses to ensure they continue to create local jobs, support the local economy, and ensure both established business owners and new entrepreneurs want to do business in the community.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will help Countryside ensure its reputation as a business-friendly community continues:

- Ensure projects such as IDOT's East Avenue intersection improvements at 55th Street and Joliet Road have mitigated impacts to established businesses;
- Work with IDOT to improve access from interstates to commercial areas on Joliet Road and LaGrange Road;
- Collaborate with West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry to communicate the benefits of owning and/or operating a business in Countryside;
- Continue to provide clear regulatory and permitting processes, giving business owners and entrepreneurs fair certainty for new ventures in the City; and
- Continue to support the City's auto dealerships by ensuring they occupy areas that are attractive, convenient for customers, and have the necessary parking and utilities to maintain a high-quality business that attracts regional customers.

Commercial Character

Commercial areas anchor the entry points and edges of the City, from LaGrange Road to East Avenue to Plainfield Road to Joliet Road. These areas are the first features visitors see when entering Countryside. The City should continue its work toward creating an attractive image and encouraging a sense of local pride within each of its commercial areas.

Countryside has a unique advantage over nearby communities, as it caters to necessary retail and services for an area beyond its municipal boundaries and attracts a regional draw. The City's primary commercial corridors are successful,



600 W. Plainfield Road

but will continue to require investment and public realm improvements to maintain a high quality aesthetic. This will continue the City's established identity, providing a positive perception for residents and visitors.

To create a high standard of building design, the City should review potential design guidelines so that commercial buildings follow a cohesive design standard. Standards for commercial buildings can address landscaping, building façade, signage, lighting, and connectivity to the overall area. Determining detailed design guidelines will not only shape an identity for the City, but also can beautify outdated buildings and create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Additionally, enhanced landscaping can preserve and protect the environment by helping with stormwater management, reducing noise pollution, and mitigating heat island effects. The plan should build on the [March 2012 Design Standards](#).

Recommendations

The following recommendation should be applied so that commercial buildings reinforce the City's unique identity and are inviting for Countryside's visitors:

- Explore design guidelines to ensure the City's commercial buildings are aesthetically pleasing, functionally well-designed, and complementary to the community's existing context;
- Re-examine the City's established design standards (Countryside's City Center Design Standards, 2012) for suitability and applicability to key commercial opportunity sites. (Design Standards Sec. 10-8D-1);
- Work with the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry to promote the City's commercial and industrial areas, and to celebrate the City's best businesses;
- Establish design, signage, wayfinding, and streetscape standards for 55th Street, LaGrange Road, and Joliet Road that reflect a consistent Countryside identity;
- Consider a façade improvement program to inspire private property owners to upgrade the visible, corridor-facing components of their properties, which will improve existing property values, continue to enhance the overall attractiveness of the City, particularly at the entry points;
- Create an inviting public realm, using features like landscaped green spaces and plazas to make the City inviting and attractive to visitors and shoppers;
- Promote site design that encourages the development of vibrant, walkable, commercial areas in alignment with the [City of Countryside Sustainability Plan \(2021\)](#); and
- Promote Sustainable Sites Certification for landscaping around commercial areas in alignment with the [City of Countryside Sustainability Plan \(2021\)](#).



5331 Dansher Road

Commercial and Industrial Reinvestment

Countryside's commercial and industrial areas are performing well, but the City should plan for incoming industries, future development, and economic development tools. This will help Countryside maintain its solid retail tax base. It will also improve the quality of life for residents by attracting unique businesses and amenities.

Countryside should consider its potential sites for commercial and industrial development, ensuring they provide flexible commercial and industrial spaces of varying sizes and capacity. The City should plan for reinvestment and flexible spaces in Dansher Industrial Park, working with IDOT to ensure streets can accommodate traffic volumes and updated truck routes.

Lastly, the City should consider which of its corridors would be most appropriate for deploying economic development tools, such as tax increment financing (TIF), special service areas (SSAs), and/or business development districts (BDDs). The City has already established LaGrange Road Commercial and 55th Street Commercial TIF Districts, which provide public and private investments to these corridors.

Recommendations

To continue the fostering successful commercial and industrial areas, the City should:

- Position key employment areas such as Dansher Industrial Park for long-term success by encouraging a greater diversity of users;
- Amend zoning code language within the City's M-1 and M-2 Manufacturing zoning districts to encourage a variety of new commercial and industrial uses that will provide space for emerging industries;
- Work with IDOT to ensure the streets around Dansher Industrial Park continue to support truck in/out maneuvers as street reconstruction occurs;
- Where appropriate, use economic development tools such as TIF and Special Service Areas (SSAs), or Business Development Districts (BDDs) to facilitate desired commercial developments, which would be new to Countryside;
- Incentivize businesses to locate in the City's TIF districts, to continue to attract new investment to LaGrange Road and 55th Street;
- Continue to maintain an inventory of the City's available commercial and industrial opportunity sites, and work with landowners to remove any barriers to redevelopment; and
- Encourage and support redevelopment of key vacant sites or obsolete uses that have the potential to catalyze additional investment in the area.



5330 S. LaGrange Road

Relationship to Surrounding Neighborhoods

Countryside provides many shopping and employment areas, which keep the local economy strong but can potentially disturb the quality of life for residents. To fuse the City's active commercial areas and its quiet neighborhoods, design requirements should be in place so that commercial and industrial facilities do not disturb residents at home.

The City should implement screening and buffering around higher-intensity commercial and industrial areas so that Countryside's neighborhoods are not adversely impacted by health, visual, and noise issues attributed to industrial emissions. When redevelopment occurs, the City should ensure its zoning supports side and rear yard setbacks and landscape buffers, particularly for higher-intensity residential and industrial areas, so that homeowners are not disrupted by noise, such as loading from freight trucks; light, such as lighting from vehicles during nighttime hours or parking lot lights; or other forms of unwanted visuals. Buffering and screening should be incorporated in the site development of the City's commercial and industrial areas to provide visual relief between differing uses.

Recommendations

Initiatives the City can take to strengthen neighborhood transitions include:

- Ensure that higher-intensity commercial and industrial areas are effectively screened and buffered where they are adjacent to residential neighborhoods;
- Review and as necessary amend regulations for industrial zoning districts to better align parking and landscaping requirements with parcel sizes, site capacity, and other City objectives; and
- Encourage mid-density (2-3 stories) buildings between industrial and residential uses to act as a buffer from residential areas.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLAN

Countryside is noted for its employment opportunities and automobile dealerships, offices, restaurants, and regional commercial centers. Key corridors, including Plainfield Road, LaGrange Road, and Joliet Road, allow for easy access to the City's commercial areas. The Commercial and Industrial Areas Plan establishes direction for the City to continue to support modern commerce and employment opportunities (as referenced below and on [page 43](#)).

Auto Dealerships

- 1 This area is characterized by the number of automobile dealerships and automobile service uses along LaGrange Road and Joliet Road. Countryside is a regional automobile dealership destination, providing a stable sales tax base. This area should continue to support automobile dealerships and site design should complement vehicular traffic on LaGrange Road and Joliet Road, while increasing pedestrian safety and mobility.

Commercial Areas of Change

- 1 Land uses along the 55th Street corridor include commercial, office, single-family detached, and mixed-use properties. As 55th Street is a minor arterial and an entryway into the City, over time it should redevelop as entirely commercial. This area should support the transition between dense building design on the 55th Street and Willow Springs Road intersection and the strip malls and single tenant buildings east of the area along 55th Street.
- 2 This area contains commercial, industrial, and residential buildings. This site should be redeveloped for commercial complementing the surrounding commercial area on LaGrange Road. Commercial uses in this area would be more suitable to provide goods and services for employees at Dansher Industrial Park. Screening should be deployed to limit disturbance to adjacent residences. The 55th Street Subarea ([page 86](#)) offers more detail.
- 3 This underutilized lot is oriented along one of Countryside's gateways into the City. It features high visibility along 55th Street and East Avenue. The site is approved for development for a travel center and automobile/truck fueling station, with commercial development situated on the west side of the site.

- 4 Two hotels currently occupy this space. The City should prepare for future regional commercial uses in the event the owners sell their properties. The central location and large size makes this site suitable for mixed use development in a walkable, pedestrian-friendly format. Countryside's [City Center Design Standards \(2012\)](#) could be re-examined for suitability and applicability to this site.
- 5 This site is occupied by three (3) office buildings. If the opportunity arises, the City should promote the site for redevelopment to commercial uses and build on the proximity to the City's municipal complex. Future buildings on this site should be attractive and high-quality and should provide a positive image of Countryside. The Joliet Road Subarea ([page 90](#)) offers more detail.
- 6 This site includes small-scale commercial properties, including a bar, and single-family homes. This site should be considered for commercial uses, providing mixed use and neighborhood retail for nearby residential areas. The Southern Tier Subarea ([page 94](#)) offers more detail.

Large Scale Commercial Center

- 1 A supermarket and large-sized multi-tenant retail anchor are on this site, drawing visitors from outside of the City to shop. This area should continue to support regional commercial anchors, drawing vehicular traffic and many visitors from throughout the City and the region daily.
- 2 Countryside Plaza includes large-scale multi-tenant retail anchors and this area should continue to serve as a regional shopping hub. The City should encourage a parking and land use study to determine the feasibility of further outlot development onsite (developers can reference Ord. No. 76-11-0). The potential for additional commercial units of various sizes could offer space for tenants interested in small or mid-sized units.

Reposition and Reinvestment

- 1 The area known as Dansher Industrial Park is the largest concentration of industrial uses within Countryside. This area is completely built-out and leased. To prepare for available units, the City should provide flexible zoning codes within industrial districts to permit diverse users to operate here. The City should encourage unique tenants, such as coffee roasters or breweries, to occupy space within the Industrial Park, and welcome customers to shop, taste, or tour these types of uses. The 55th Street Subarea ([page 86](#)) offers more detail.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

LAGRANGE

Legend

- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas

Framework Areas

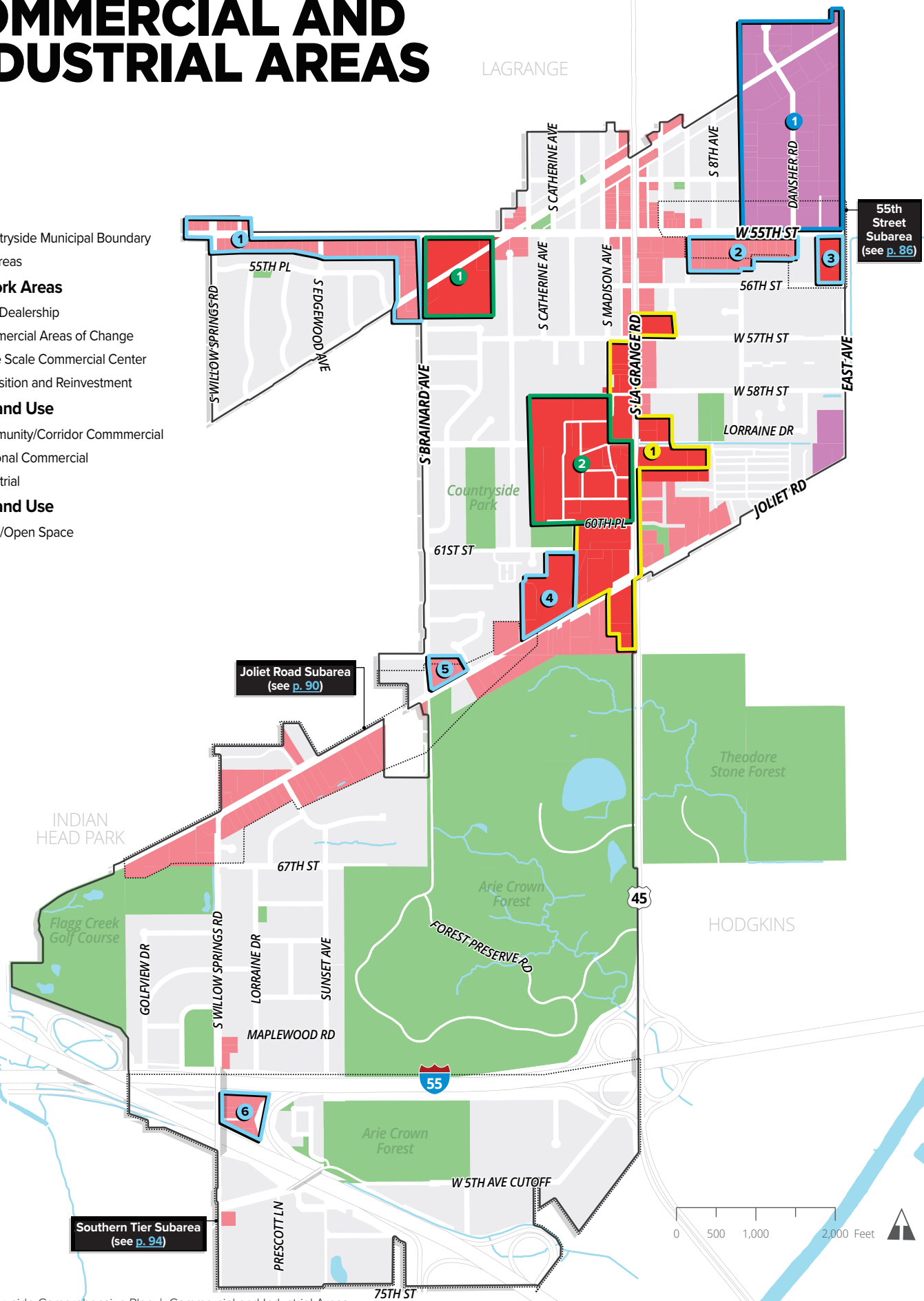
- Auto Dealership
- Commercial Areas of Change
- Large Scale Commercial Center
- Reposition and Reinvestment

Future Land Use

- Community/Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Industrial

Future Land Use

- Parks/Open Space





A home in Countryside

CHAPTER

6

A Goal for Countryside's Residential Areas and Neighborhoods

- Provide high quality housing and neighborhoods for residents in all stages of life and socioeconomic status, maintaining and expanding the City's reputation as a great place to live.

Plan goals are described in more detail, starting on [page 26](#)

RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Countryside is an established residential community, with neighborhoods that contribute to its desirability within the region. The City's neighborhoods invite people to invest in a home and root themselves as part of the community. A primary purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to assist the City in efforts to protect, maintain, and enhance the character of its neighborhoods while accommodating appropriate new infill development. The Residential Areas chapter guides the City in this purpose, ensuring it can achieve the vision articulated by residents and leaders for housing over the next few decades – a vision defining the community as a great place to live, with high quality housing and neighborhoods for residents in all stages of life and socioeconomic status.

Exceptional Residential Areas for All Stages of Life

A variety of age groups reside in the City, and over the coming decades, new residents will continue to look to reside in Countryside's family-friendly community. The community is built out and land for brand new subdivisions or housing developments is limited. Still, current and incoming residents will be looking for high-quality and rehabbed housing, as well as attractive and well-maintained neighborhoods. Through upkeep, strategic infill, and some new residential development, the City's neighborhoods will continue to serve its residents.

Attracted to the City's schools, location, and reputation, families represent a growing portion of Countryside's population. To support them, attainable price points offering room to raise a family will be an important part of the City's housing makeup. These will include diverse housing types, tenures, and sizes to accommodate growing families that match the quality residential character of Countryside. The following policies and recommendations for the City's housing and neighborhoods are intended to ensure high-quality homes, attainable price points, and attractive neighborhoods remain staples of Countryside.



Homes in Countryside

RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBORHOODS POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Countryside's neighborhoods are stable and in good condition. To maintain its status over the next few decades, the City should maintain and improve the appearance and character of its neighborhoods, continue to encourage residential property maintenance, promote attainable homes and neighborhoods, and ensure neighborhoods are well-connected to services and amenities.

Median Housing Values
2010-2020

Median Value	Illinois	Cook County	Countryside
2010	202,500	265,800	228,200
2020	202,100	255,500	242,700
Change	-0.20%	-3.88%	6.35%

Housing Availability and Attainability

A variety of housing options makes a community attractive, stable, and accessible to people whether they are just starting their careers or family or are looking to retire. To house aging adults as well as incoming young families, the City should increase housing diversity and a greater of housing types. These homes should be affordable for people in all stages of life. People want to live in Countryside due to its high-quality schools, parks and natural areas, and access to the Chicagoland area. Providing attractive and attainable housing will be essential for the City's incoming residents as well as for the health of Countryside's local economy.

Countryside is a built-out community, as its residential neighborhoods have little to no room for new housing. However, there remains potential to increase housing diversity and build new residential development on key vacant or underutilized sites. In order to prepare for infill development, parcels should be identified so that they can be easily developed. Within residential neighborhoods that are targeted for infill, new homes should maintain the same high-quality character as existing homes. Infill development should be context sensitive, meaning that they are developed in a collaborative manner, and they appropriately fit into the neighborhood. Infill development in residential neighborhoods will mostly likely remain single-family to fit into the context of Countryside's existing neighborhoods.



Homes in Countryside

Recommendations

To accommodate people at all stages of life, the City should encourage housing of varying types, sizes, and price points. In order to achieve housing availability and attainability, the City should consider the following:

- Promote diversity of housing stock accessible to diverse residents in alignment with the [City of Countryside Sustainability Plan \(2021\)](#);
- Support the provision of a variety of different residential types, tenures, lot sizes, and unit sizes at a diversity of price points to meet the needs of the City's residents;
- Promote the development of expanded senior housing options attractive to support residents who want to age in place;
- Support the development and use of all types of housing, including single-family detached, attached, or multi-family dwellings for senior housing;
- Promote areas for new multi-family and mixed use development near local amenities, such as commercial centers, public uses, and parks and open space;
- Promote investment in the City's existing neighborhoods, in the form of infill development, home renovation, or home expansion;
- Encourage new development and infill development that is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential neighborhoods;
- Consider infill development sites as an opportunity to promote development that can strengthen existing areas of the City; and
- Facilitate the adoption of residential renewable energy technologies including solar and geothermal by adapting building and zoning codes, as directed in the [City of Countryside Sustainability Plan \(2021\)](#).





A Home in Countryside

Neighborhood Appearance and Character

Countryside's existing residential areas are generally composed of well-established single-family home neighborhoods. However, most of the housing stock in Countryside was built in the middle of the 20th century. Nearly half (47.3%) of Countryside's housing stock was built between 1960 and 1979, about 30% was built prior to 1960, and about 20% was built in 1980 or later. This reflects the community's incorporation in 1960 and highlights Countryside's significant growth period during the 1960s and 70s as the United States was experiencing a post-war suburban expansion.

By focusing on public-realm improvements, the City can demonstrate a commitment to improving the connectivity and character of its neighborhoods. Sidewalks, street trees, and lighting contribute to neighborhood character, and an effort to add these features over time will result in more attractive and desirable neighborhoods for Countryside over the next two decades.

The City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021) recommends housing policies, programs, and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability. Walkability and connectivity within neighborhoods are key components of sustainability. Although not every neighborhood will need a full sidewalk grid, most of the City's residential areas should offer opportunities for residents to move through the neighborhood to parks or commercial areas without relying on a car. Vibrant and attractive residential areas will improve the perception of Countryside as a family-friendly and desirable place to be.

Recommendations

The City should consider the following to improve and maintain neighborhood appearance and character:

- Establish design standards within existing residential neighborhoods;
- Build new or connect existing sidewalks with a focus on connectivity between neighborhoods and established commercial areas, as street improvements occur;
- Improve existing and strategically install new street lighting along residential streets;
- Improve, maintain, and enhance the aesthetic of homes in the City's neighborhoods through regular code enforcement and preventative maintenance programs to strengthen existing neighborhoods;
- Advertise grants or low-interest loans to property owners to help fund private property improvements;
- Audit the contractor licensing and residential permitting process, and if necessary, revise the process for clarity and ease of use;
- Ensure that inspection practices preserve the appearance and property value of existing housing through efficient, systematic code enforcement; and
- Work with commercial and industrial property owners to install 8' high screening and vertical buffering on the property line to mitigate their impact on residential areas, particularly near regional commercial and employment areas.

Residential Services

Countryside has a reputation for high quality residential services. City services keep up the appearance of the community and proactively address infrastructure repairs. Areas that Countryside can continue to address residential services include monitoring its drainage systems, street trees, and residential programs.

During outreach for the project, some residents noted drainage issues and flooding in residential streets, an increasingly common occurrence within the greater Chicago region. This is not only an inconvenience, but also causes property and infrastructure damage, road closures, and can pollute natural areas and water systems.

An example of an existing residential initiative where the City services its residents is the Residential Tree Removal program. Currently, Countryside offers a Shared Cost Tree Removal Program where the City assists property owners remove dead, diseased, or nuisance trees from private property on a shared cost basis.

Recommendations

To provide high-quality residential services, the City should consider the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the City's residential areas are high quality, with curb, gutter, streetlights, sidewalks, and street trees contributing to the character where appropriate;
- Continue to support the City's Shared Cost Tree Removal Program to remove trees in the public way that are dead or damaged; and
- Consider programs to support the direction of the *City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021)*, such as educational materials for federal and state tax credits, incentives, or rebates available for residential solar panels.

Neighborhood Amenities

The City's amenities contribute to its attractiveness and as a place residents love and individuals want to live in. Neighborhoods with easy access to the City's parks and natural areas, schools, commercial areas, and other amenities are the most desirable in the community. While Countryside does not contain some amenities and essential services, such as a post office, library, or community recreation center, these facilities are found in nearby communities, like Hodgkins, Western Springs, and LaGrange. To ensure residents have access to these facilities, the City should prioritize equitable transportation connections from residential areas. As the opportunity arises and sites become available, the City should work with developers to ensure new public spaces are well-connected to neighborhoods.

Recommendations

The City should work towards the following recommendations so that amenities and everyday needs are provided in residential neighborhoods:

- Ensure that the City's neighborhoods have accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections;
- Continue to offer residential reimbursement programs, such as the Library and Pool Reimbursement Program and the Senior Citizen Ride Program; and
- Strategically encourage or develop public spaces as sites become available, such as community gardens, tot lots, and plazas, which can provide a place for people to gather and connect with their neighbors.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBORHOODS FRAMEWORK

The following content corresponds with the map on [page 51](#).

Context Sensitive Infill

- 1 The Lorraine Drive/Sunset Avenue neighborhood exhibits a range of homes on larger lots, with an age ranging dating back as far as the 1940s to some built or significantly remodeled as recently as the past decade. Large lots and proximity to the forest preserve will continue to drive infill development on the few available lots and redevelopment or significant remodels of the existing, aging homes.
- 2 This neighborhood is comprised of older homes built from the 1940s-60s interspersed with newer, larger homes built as recently as the early 2000s. Remodels and improvements have created a pleasant neighborhood with a distinct mix of home sizes and price points. On the east side of the neighborhood, homes along Madison Avenue share an alley with LaGrange Road commercial development. Many of the homes are newer and are unlikely to change over the 20-year horizon of the plan, but as infill development occurs, west side screening from commercial areas, and strategic increases in density through context sensitive duplexes that fit with the character of the neighborhood may be appropriate.
- 3 East of LaGrange Road, the neighborhood between 56th and 57th streets is an example of an existing mix of residential uses. As with other established neighborhoods in the City, there is a range of home sizes, price points, and construction eras. With some dating back as far as the 1940s to some built or significantly remodeled as recently as the past decade. Some denser housing is interspersed within the neighborhood and there may be opportunity for duplex or townhome infill to take advantage of the proximity to 55th Street and the anticipated increase in commercial activity on the City's northeast corner.

Preserve and Maintain

- 1 The Memorial Park/Plainfield Road neighborhood on the City's north edge is unique for its configuration of smaller lot sizes and prevalence of mid-century bungalows. Remodels and second-story additions are common, but larger footprint homes or significant new residential developments will be limited due to lot size. The built-out and well-maintained character of this neighborhood means that a focus should be placed on preservation and maintenance over the coming decades.
- 2 The 5th Avenue Cutoff/Southern Tier neighborhood is distinctive for its secluded and intermittently agrarian character despite its location wedged between two interstates. The neighborhood has a prevalence of large, estate-style properties. Residents in this neighborhood value the sense of autonomy and privacy afforded by the limited access and established residential pattern, and it is anticipated that this will continue through the 20-year planning horizon. The Southern Tier Subarea ([page 94](#)) offers more detail.

Residential Development Opportunity

- 1 This 8-acre property is the largest development opportunity in the City. Located just west of the La Grange Road-fronting car dealerships and north of Countryside Plaza, it occupies a central location in the City and interfaces with its commercial center as well as established residential neighborhoods. This area should develop with a mix of single-family detached and attached homes (townhomes and duplexes) in a manner that is cohesive with the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Site access – potentially via an extension of 58th Street, but more likely/feasible through Ashland or Madison avenues, will be a key consideration for future neighborhood development. Adequate areas of transition and green space buffers should be incorporated into neighborhood design, ensuring new homes are well-screened from the rear of Countryside Plaza. If the opportunity arises, the City has expressed interest in a new centrally located park space. While this parcel is identified as residential in the Future Land Use Map ([page 35](#)), a configuration showing potential park space is identified in the Parks Service Areas map on [page 79](#).

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Legend

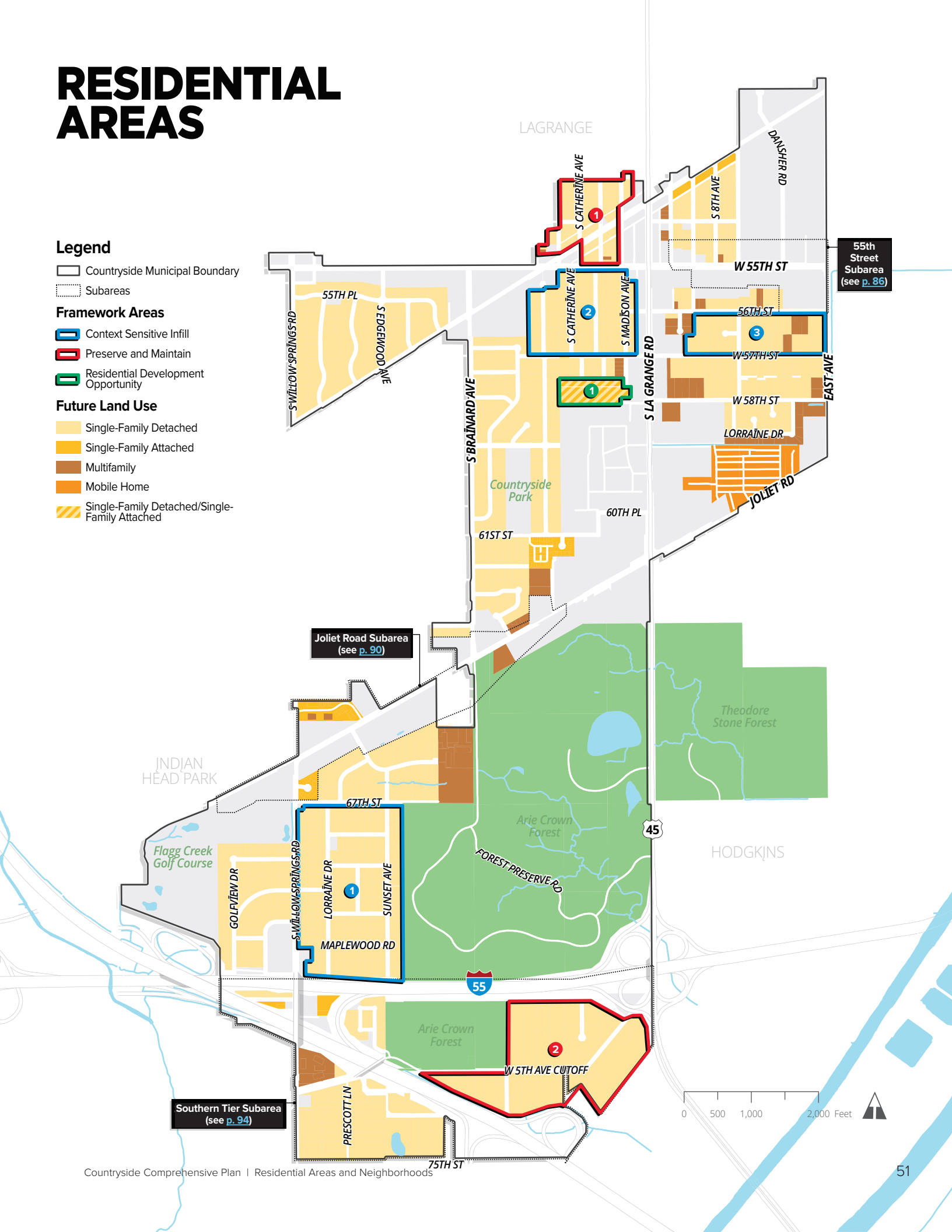
- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas

Framework Areas

- Context Sensitive Infill
- Preserve and Maintain
- Residential Development Opportunity

Future Land Use

- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Attached
- Multifamily
- Mobile Home
- Single-Family Detached/Single-Family Attached





LaGrange Road Corridor

CHAPTER 7

A Goal for Countryside's Transportation and Mobility

- Provide a seamless, efficient transportation system that offers good connectivity, supports mobility for people using all modes (walking, biking, transit, and driving), and enhances the character of the City.

Plan goals are described in more detail, starting on [page 26](#)

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

The Transportation and Mobility section highlights goals and recommendations for Countryside's transportation networks. The goals and recommendations outlined in this section supports an equitable community, as it draws on the need for safer active transportation options for all people commuting through Countryside. Transportation goals and recommendations are a direct reflection of aspirations made by community members and stakeholders during public outreach events, which include bike lanes on major streets, improved walkability through more sidewalks, and less traffic congestion on high-volume intersections.

Offer Safe Transportation Systems for All

A balanced, efficient, and well-connected transportation system provides access to goods, services, and community resources, and supports land use development through a variety of modes. The transportation system in the City of Countryside consists of an integrated network of roadways, regional public transit services, pedestrian facilities, and an emerging bicycle system.



1416-1418 W. 55th Street

ROADWAYS

The following content corresponds with the map on [page 57](#).

Countryside is traversed by a network of roadways that accommodate traffic circulation throughout the City, maintain efficient connections between local neighborhoods and commercial corridors, and provide direct access to the regional expressway system. The roadways are classified as either expressways, arterial roads, collector roads, or local roads based on the function that they serve and their capacity. The road classification also indicates eligibility for certain types of federal transportation funds. Interstates 55 and 294 are the expressways in Countryside, and LaGrange Road and Joliet Road are the City's two primary arterial roads, each of which convey the highest volumes of traffic through the City. LaGrange Road and Joliet Road are also designated by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) as Strategic Regional Arterials which have more stringent access control and traffic signal spacing requirements.

The interstate system, forest preserves, and Vulcan Materials constrain traffic circulation in the City to a degree, but most of the arterial and collector roadways continue through the City to the adjoining communities with the exception of Joliet Road, which is closed through the quarry area between East Avenue and 55th Street, and Plainfield Road which terminates at East Avenue.

To improve traffic circulation, safety, and congestion, Countryside should continue to work with IDOT, Cook County, and surrounding municipalities to discuss planned improvements for its roadways. Additionally, Countryside should consider multimodal transportation improvements so that all modes of transportation can travel through the City.

Roadway Jurisdiction

The roadways in Countryside are controlled by jurisdictional entities like IDOT, the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (ISTHA), Cook County, and the City of Countryside. I-294 is controlled by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority. I-55 and other arterial roadways in the City are controlled by the IDOT, including LaGrange Road (US Route 12/20/45), Joliet Road, 55th Street, East Avenue, and Willow Springs Road. The Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDTH) controls one of the arterial roads (Wolf Road), both collector roads (Plainfield Road, Brainard Avenue), and two of the local roads (5th Avenue Cutoff, 71st Place). All other roadways are controlled by the City of Countryside.

Moving forward, the City should continue to partner with IDOT and Cook County, and maintain close communication to ensure maintenance and improvement of their roadways while supporting future development and multimodal connectivity. Coordination with adjacent municipalities that rely on these roadways is also important in addressing traffic flow concerns and organizing larger corridor safety projects.

Roadway Capacity Improvements

Overall, the roadway network adequately manages traffic flow through the City. Congestion occurs on the interstate system and along the City's arterial roadways during weekday rush hours due to inadequate road capacity, high traffic volumes, outdated traffic signal systems, and an abundance of commercial access driveways. The Tri-State tollway is currently being reconstructed and IDOT and Cook County have plans to improve and redesign key roadways and critical intersections in the City. To reduce congestion and improve safety, the City should partner with IDOT and Cook County as these projects progress through the final design stage.



Commercial Uses in Countryside

Tri-State Tollway (I-294)

The Central Tri-State Tollway Project is a \$4 billion project currently underway and scheduled for completion in 2026. The project includes the reconstruction and widening of a 22-mile segment of the Tollway between Balmoral Avenue and 95th Street to provide congestion relief and reconstruct old infrastructure to meet current and future transportation demand. As part of the project, the ramp connecting I-55 to northbound I-294 will be reconstructed and the Tollway bridges over I-55, Wolf Road, Joliet Road, Plainfield Road, and Flagg Creek will be rebuilt. In addition, new noise walls will be installed adjacent to the Woodland Ridge subdivision and existing noise walls will be replaced off Maridon Road and 71st Place.

I-55

IDOT has plans to add two new lanes to I-55 between I-355 and I-94 to assure travel time reliability. The project would include the provision for managed lanes. Given the success of the I-55 bus on shoulder service, IDOT should specifically incorporate bus priority features into the roadway design and plan for increased service as an improvement over the current bus on shoulder service. Riders on this service would benefit as free users of the managed lane.

East Avenue

A priority project from the Joliet Road Feasibility Study is the reconstruction of East Avenue between Joliet Road and 55th Street, which is currently underway and scheduled for completion in late 2024. The feasibility study identified intersections and roadway segments impacted by the 1998 closure of Joliet Road between East Avenue and 55th Street. The East Avenue project involves reconstructing and realigning existing intersections, installing modernized traffic signals at 55th Street and at Joliet Road, improving drainage, installing ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps, and replacing the sidewalk on the west side of the roadway with an 8-foot multi-use path.



9943 W. 55th Street

55th Street

Two other priority projects from the Joliet Road Feasibility Study that are currently in the planning stages at IDOT will improve segments of 55th Street to address capacity constraints and drainage concerns which is intended to enhance safety and mobility for all users.

Between LaGrange Road and East Avenue, 55th Street will be widened to a continuous five-lane cross section. At the LaGrange Road intersection, left-turn lanes will be lengthened, right-turn lanes and barrier medians will be constructed, crosswalks will be added, and the traffic signal will be modernized with pedestrian/bicycle accommodations.

Between Wolf Road and Brainard Avenue, 55th Street will be widened to provide a median with left-turn lanes at Laurel Avenue, Edgewood Avenue and Calle View Drive. The signal-controlled intersections of Brainard Avenue, Willow Springs Road and Wolf Road will also be improved with modernized traffic signal equipment and crosswalks.

Joliet Road

IDOT has plans for improvements to the Brainard Avenue intersection, including left turn lanes on Brainard Avenue, crosswalks and pedestrian signals, and modernized traffic signal equipment.

LaGrange Road

LaGrange Road is an active and congested commercial corridor through the City with an abundance of curb cuts and vehicular conflict points. Redevelopment opportunities along LaGrange Road offer the ability to consolidate driveways, interconnect parcels, and re-direct parcel access to the cross streets, each of which reduces conflict points, improves traffic flow, and enhances safety in the corridor.

In general, the City should support the consolidation of driveways and cross access between parcels on all the City's arterial roadways as a means of reducing congestion.

Plainfield Road

Cook County has plans to improve a 3.5-mile segment of Plainfield Road between County Line Road in Burr Ridge and East Avenue in Countryside. The preferred design will widen the roadway to three lanes, improve drainage and intersection geometrics, and incorporate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. As a member of the Corridor Advisory Committee, the City should continue to provide input towards final design approval in late 2024.

Willow Springs Road

IDOT will be improving the pavement quality on Willow Springs Road with a design overlay, new shoulders, ADA improvements, and a milled rumble strip from 53rd Place south to Archer Avenue in Willow Springs. The City should coordinate with IDOT, as needed, to pursue a safe pedestrian crossing at Soehrman Park.

ROADWAY NETWORK

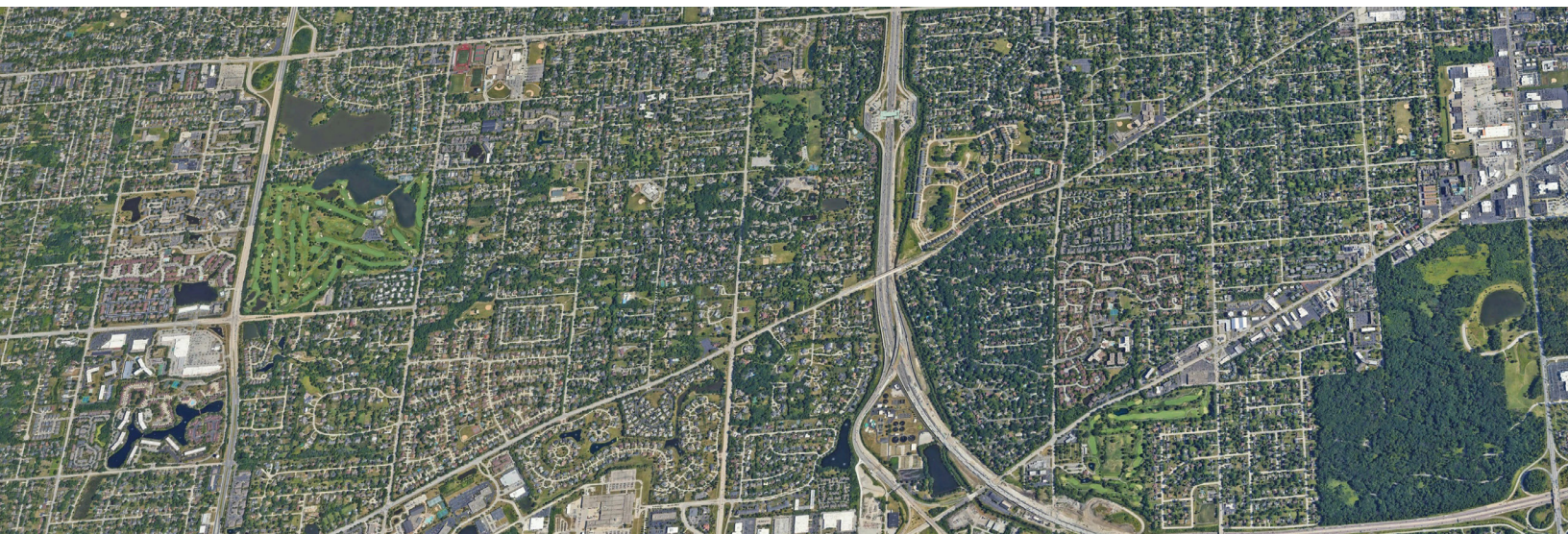
Legend

- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Parks/Open Space
- IDOT Class Truck Route
- Signalized Intersection

Functional Classification

- Interstate
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector





Aerial of 294 Corridor

Traffic Controls

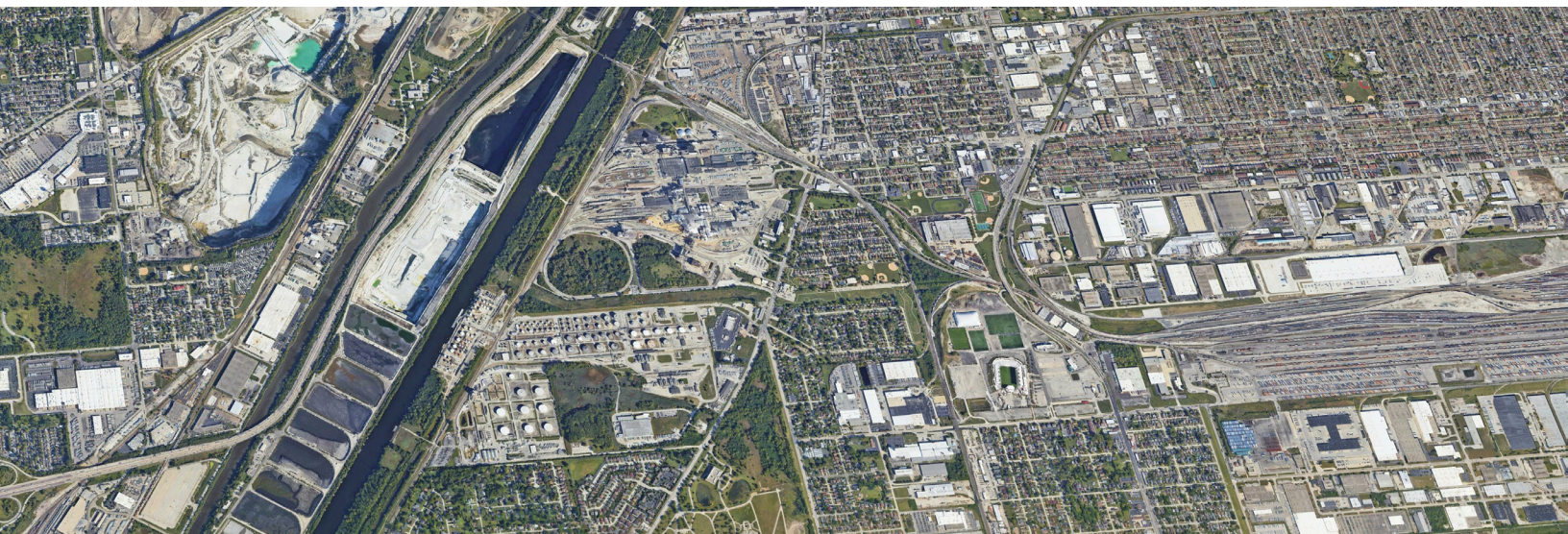
There are twenty-one (21) traffic signal-controlled intersections in the City. Of these, 20 are located on arterial roadways under IDOT control, and the remaining signal is located at the intersection of Brainard Avenue with Plainfield Road which is under CCDTH control. The remaining intersections in the City are under stop sign control. The seven (7) traffic signals on LaGrange Road, six (6) signals on Joliet Road, and four (4) signals on 55th Street are all part of an IDOT coordinated traffic signal system that also includes the signals at LaGrange Road with 47th Street and 55th Street with Wolf Road, Laurel Avenue, Sergo Drive, Electro-Motive Drive, and Joliet Road. IDOT has plans to modernize signals along Joliet Road and 55th Street. The City should regularly coordinate with IDOT to ensure that these signal modernization plans incorporate adequate safety provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Complete Streets

A “complete street” is a roadway that is designed to accommodate and be safe for all users of the transportation network, including motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Designing roadways that encourage walking, biking, and public transit use is an effective strategy for increasing traffic safety, mitigating congestion and air pollution, and promoting a healthy, active lifestyle. In addition, these road design projects have been shown to improve property values, boost local business, attract new home buyers, and allow families and individuals to save on transportation costs.

In 2007, the State of Illinois adopted a Complete Streets law, directing IDOT to implement Complete Streets policies as part of future roadway projects. As a result, any reconstruction or widening of IDOT-jurisdiction roadways within Countryside will incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities in their design.

The City of Countryside should develop and adopt a local Complete Streets Policy ordinance, establishing a clear emphasis and dedication to designing roadways for all users. The City should review similar policies adopted by other municipalities in the area, as well as [Illinois' 2007 Complete Streets law](#), to develop a local policy that is thorough and incorporates regional best practices. This policy should address all components of the transportation system and be reflected in the implementation of policies, programs, and projects for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Further, the policy should formalize the City's intent to plan, design, operate, and maintain streets that are safe and accessible for all users of all ages and abilities.



Recommendations

The recommendations below should be used throughout Countryside's major street network to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety among cyclists and pedestrians:

- Redesign critical intersections in partnership with IDOT or Cook County to reduce traffic congestion and improve bicycle and pedestrian safety;
- Continue to maintain close communication with IDOT and Cook County to ensure appropriate maintenance and improvement of their roadways while supporting future development and multimodal connectivity;
- Partner with IDOT as the planned improvement projects for 55th Street, Joliet Road and Willow Springs Road progress through the final design and construction stages;
- Partner with Cook County as the Plainfield Road improvement project progresses through the final design and construction stages;
- Coordinate with the Illinois Tollway to complete the noise wall and screen barrier along the Tri-State Tollway;
- Consolidate curb cuts along the City's arterial and collector roadways, and encourage cross access between parcels as opportunities arise, to reduce conflict points and congestion;
- Coordinate with IDOT to ensure that traffic signal modernization plans incorporate adequate safety provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy ordinance to ensure pedestrian, bicycle and public transit accommodations are incorporated into future City-controlled roadway infrastructure projects;
- Regularly review traffic volumes and speeds along collectors and local roadways to identify problem areas and address shifts in how drivers move through the community over time;
- Use traffic calming best practices to promote safe and efficient streets City-wide. See the [NACTO Urban Street Design Guide](#) for more information on car sharing; and
- Coordinate with adjacent municipalities to address traffic flow concerns and organize larger corridor safety projects.

DESIGN STANDARDS

High-quality streetscaping in communities welcomes visitors into the City and provides a better sense of place for residents. Streetscaping not only introduces commuters to a City, but also creates a comfortable setting for those biking and walking through Countryside. Without streetscaping, cyclists and pedestrians are bound to walk through an area without character and where they potentially feel unsafe. Streetscaping is intended to evoke positive feelings for those who spend time in the community, and the City should consider implementing streetscaping design guidelines on its highest visibility roads. Streetscaping includes landscaping, adequate signage, and lighting for both motor vehicles and pedestrians.

Recommendations

The recommendation for design standards highlighted below should be applied to Countryside's most visible corridor to promote the image and identity of the City:

- Improve streetscape design standards to beautify the public realm along the City's highly visible corridors.



5750 S. LaGrange Road



Electric Vehicle Charging Station at City Hall

SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES

Sustainable transportation refers to low- and zero-emission and energy-efficient modes of transportation. These include electric and alternative-fuel vehicles, which are intended to reduce carbon emissions, resulting in less air pollution. To accommodate alternate fuel vehicles, Countryside should consider providing additional electric vehicle charging stations in parking lots where there are none. The City should coordinate with business owners to determine locations for electric vehicle charging stations on their properties. As electric vehicle charging stations are built on Countryside's surface parking lots, the City can release public information that informs its residents and those who shop in the City where electric vehicle charging stations are located. Additionally, City staff can continue to work with its Sustainability Committee to determine feasible services that will reduce carbon emissions as well as traffic congestion, such as car sharing programs.

Electric Vehicle Services

There are currently nine (9) electric vehicle charging stations in Countryside. Locations include the Countryside City Hall, Ettleson Hyundai Countryside, Harley Davidson Countryside, Countryside Nissan, Continental Mitsubishi, Westfield Ford, and Hooters Countryside. These stations, which provide dedicated parking spaces for no-emission vehicles, offer environmental benefits to the community. The City should work with businesses and property owners to expand the inventory of charging stations to increase convenience for electric vehicle owners and encourage greater use of these zero-emissions vehicles.

Car Sharing

Households with access to car sharing services are likely to have lower auto ownership rates and spend less of their disposable income on associated costs of ownership such as insurance, maintenance, fuel, and registration fees. Currently there are no carsharing services operating in Countryside. The City should pursue working agreements with car sharing companies and property owners to identify carshare storage locations to inaugurate service in Countryside.

Recommendations

As Countryside commits to sustainability, the City should consider the following recommendations for its transportation networks:

- Work with businesses and property owners to dedicate parking spaces for electric vehicle charging stations to expand the inventory of charging stations in the City and enhance convenience for electric vehicle owners and
- Work with the Sustainability Committee to research and consider establishing new services and technologies for sustainable alternatives in transportation in Countryside such as carsharing.



Example of Pace Bus Stop

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The following content corresponds with the map on [page 63](#).

A high proportion (81.1%) of Countryside residents drive to work alone as the City lacks a Metra station. Although, Pace Routes 330 and 392 serve Countryside with pick-up locations at LaGrange Road and Joliet Road, 55th Street and East Avenue, and Willow Springs Road and 75th Street. As significantly less individuals take public transportation to work, this leads to traffic congestion and increased levels of air pollution. With more single-occupancy vehicles on the road, Countryside's arterial roads will experience more traffic, compared to if individuals were to take the bus or train into work. Single-occupancy vehicles are more harmful for a community's air quality as single-occupant trips inefficiently release more carbon emissions compared to individuals riding public transportation. Additionally, a lack of public transportation is inequitable for those who do not drive as those individuals will be limited to where they can go without a vehicle.

Countryside should promote its public transportation options to offer equitable transit for all of its residents as well as support sustainable alternatives. The City can promote its public transportation by ensuring that the Pace bus stations have covered shelters with benches and ensure real-time information for the bus schedule. Additionally, to accommodate those walking and biking to the Pace bus, the City should guarantee that sidewalks are at grade and comply with ADA standards and that bicycle parking is available at bus stops and instructions are available for putting bicycles on buses. Lastly, the City should consider bus priority lanes as well as increased service as Countryside and IDOT plan for road widening projects.

Pace Suburban Bus

Pace operates two (2) fixed bus routes through the City of Countryside. The routes provide feeder service to the Metra system, CTA rapid transit system, Amtrak service, and O'Hare International Airport. Most residential neighborhoods and commercial developments are within a convenient walking distance (1/4-mile) of a Pace bus route except for the homes and commercial developments west of Kensington Avenue and north of 61st Street. Pace is also the designated public rideshare administrator for Northeastern Illinois and the agency facilitates a free carpool and vanpool matching service through their website.

<https://www.pacerideshare.com/rp2/Home/Home>

Route 330 Mannheim – LaGrange Roads: Operates daily along LaGrange Road, Joliet Road, and East Avenue between the O'Hare Multi-Modal Facility (MMF) in Chicago and Archer Avenue/Harlem Avenue CTA station in Summit with stops at Countryside Plaza, the Quarry Shopping Center, and the LaGrange Metra Station.

Route 392 Little Village – UPS Hodgkins Limited: Operates on weekdays along Willow Springs Road and 75th Street between the Cicero CTA Green Line station in Chicago and the UPS Hodgkins Terminal with stops at the Cicero CTA Blue Line and Pink Line stations.



PACE Bus

Boardings and alightings (departures) within the City of Countryside are highest on Route 330. Infrastructure along the Pace routes is minimal with only two bus shelters along LaGrange Road and only one shelter along Joliet Road, 55th Street, and East Avenue. Several of the bus stops that are utilized daily do not offer any form of rider amenity and are not ADA compliant. To improve the rider experience, encourage greater ridership, and preserve existing service frequency, the City should complete sidewalk gaps adjacent to bus stops and coordinate with Pace to upgrade all bus stops to be ADA accessible with paved waiting areas, benches, and posted bus route maps and timetables. Bus shelters should be installed at higher ridership bus stops and all bus shelters should feature real-time technology.

Locations that should be considered for new shelters include:

- Joliet Road at Main Drive (Country Club Woods);
- Joliet Road at Brainard Avenue (LaGrange Estates);
- Willow Springs Road at Joliet Road; and
- LaGrange Road at Countryside Plaza Drive.

Pace express buses operate along I-55 connecting suburban riders with downtown Chicago. To provide an additional transit service option for Countryside, the City should consider working with Pace to determine a Park-n-Ride lot location in the City.

Lyons Township

Lyons Township offers a free curb-to-curb bus service for seniors and residents with disabilities through a Dial-A-Ride program. Pre-arranged rides are available on weekdays for distinct types of trips in and around Lyons Township.

<https://lyonstownshipil.gov/senior-transportation/>

Recommendations

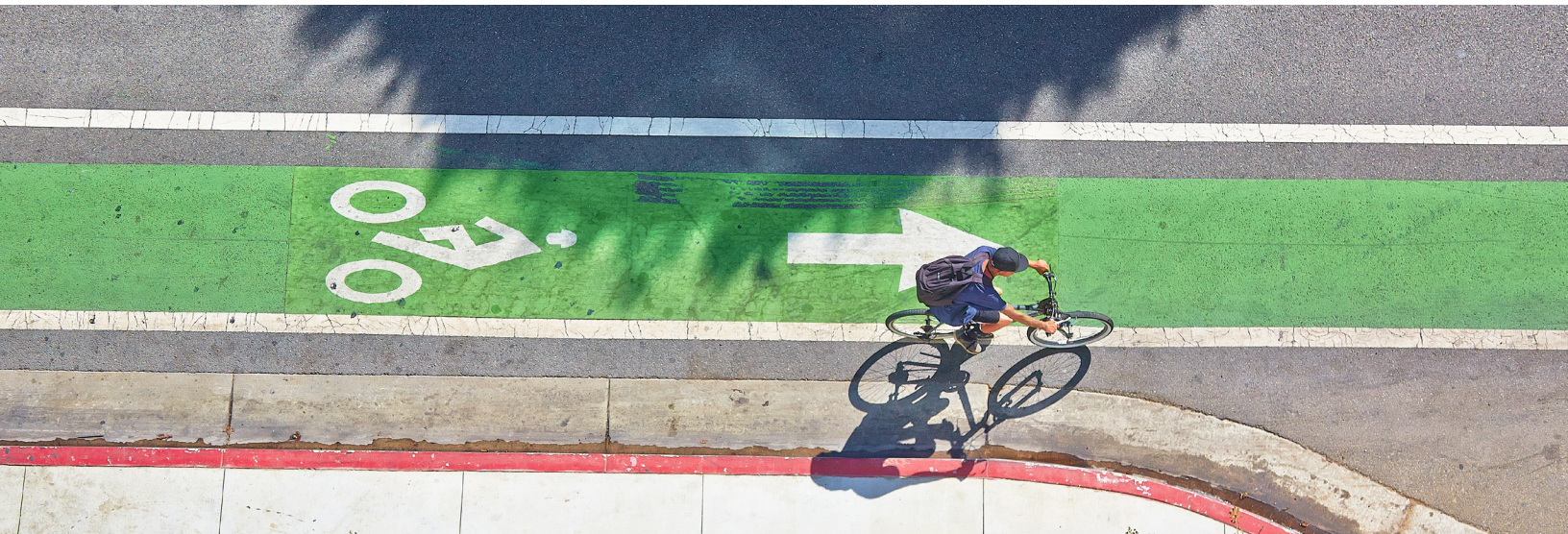
To support Countryside's bus riders, the City should follow the Public Transportation recommendations below:

- Coordinate with Pace on transit service and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the rider's experience and encourage ridership, including bus shelters, ADA compliance, sidewalk connections, route information, and real-time technologies;
- Support biking to transit with instructions posted at bus shelters on putting bikes on buses;
- Collaborate with Pace to explore a location for a Park-n-Ride lot in the City or a multi-community area with access to I-55 express bus service; and
- Work with IDOT and Pace to promote bus priority features and increased service for the future I-55 widening project to add managed lanes.

Legend

- ### Existing Transit Route

-
- LAGRANGE
- HODGKINS
- 55TH PL
- S EDGEWOOD AVE
- S WILLOW SPRINGS RD
- S BRAINARD AVE
- S CATHERINE AVE
- S MADISON AVE
- S GRANGE RD
- S 8TH AVE
- DANSHER RD
- W 55TH ST
- 56TH ST
- W 57TH ST
- W 58TH ST
- LORRAINE DR
- 60TH PL
- 61ST ST
- 67TH ST
- LORRAINE DR
- SUNSET AVE
- MAPLEWOOD RD
- PRESCOTT LN
- W 5TH AVE CUTOFF
- 75TH ST
- Theodore Stone Forest
- Arie Crown Forest
- FOREST PRESERVE RD
- 45
- 55
- 0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Example image: dedicated bike lane

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY

Countryside strives to develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian system to promote mobility that does not rely on the automobile and encourages an active, healthy lifestyle. Countryside benefits from an extensive sidewalk network along one side or both sides of most of the arterial and collector roadways which enhances walkability to the City's major destinations. While the network reaches much of the community, there are still gaps to be filled, particularly within the residential areas. By comparison, the bicycle network is not as well developed, with little infrastructure dedicated to bicycle mobility. Efforts to improve both systems and expand bicycle infrastructure will contribute to quality of life in Countryside and encourage alternatives to automobile transportation.

In 2012, Countryside and the Active Transportation Alliance partnered to develop the City's Active Transportation Plan. This Plan sets out to improve pedestrian, bike, and public transportation improvements so that residents have the option to reach their destinations without a car. Since then, the City constructed a bike path along Brainard avenue beginning at Joliet Road. This is one example of how the City provided active transportation connections from residential neighborhoods to amenities, like the Arie Crown Forest Preserve and retailers in Salem Square along Plainfield Road. Recommendations outlined in the [2012 Active Transportation Plan](#), as well as highlighted below will help create a healthier, active, and equitable environment for Countryside's residents and visitors.

Pedestrian System Gaps

The arterial and collector roadways provide the most direct pedestrian connections to City's commercial areas, civic facilities, parks, forest preserves, schools, and public transit stops. Gaps in the pedestrian system along these roadways limit this convenience and reduce the safety of the system. Notable gaps are present along portions of LaGrange Road, Joliet Road, 55th Street, Plainfield Road, Brainard Avenue (south of Joliet Road), Willow Springs Road, and East Avenue (north of 55th Street). The City has planned for new pedestrian connections in the near future. Some gaps will be filled by the IDOT and Cook County road improvement projects along 55th Street and Plainfield Road. The lack of sidewalks in residential neighborhoods can constrain local mobility and access to the broader pedestrian system although new sidewalk installations may not be feasible or necessary in neighborhoods where traffic is calm, and it is safe and appropriate to walk on the roadway shoulder.

The City should continue to maintain and repair the pedestrian infrastructure as part of its annual Capital Improvement Program and pursue opportunities to close the gaps in the system. Some may require collaboration with residents and private property owners for both public right-of-ways and easements or other governing entities, including IDOT, Cook County, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Lyons Township, and the adjoining municipalities.



Countryside Park, 61st Street

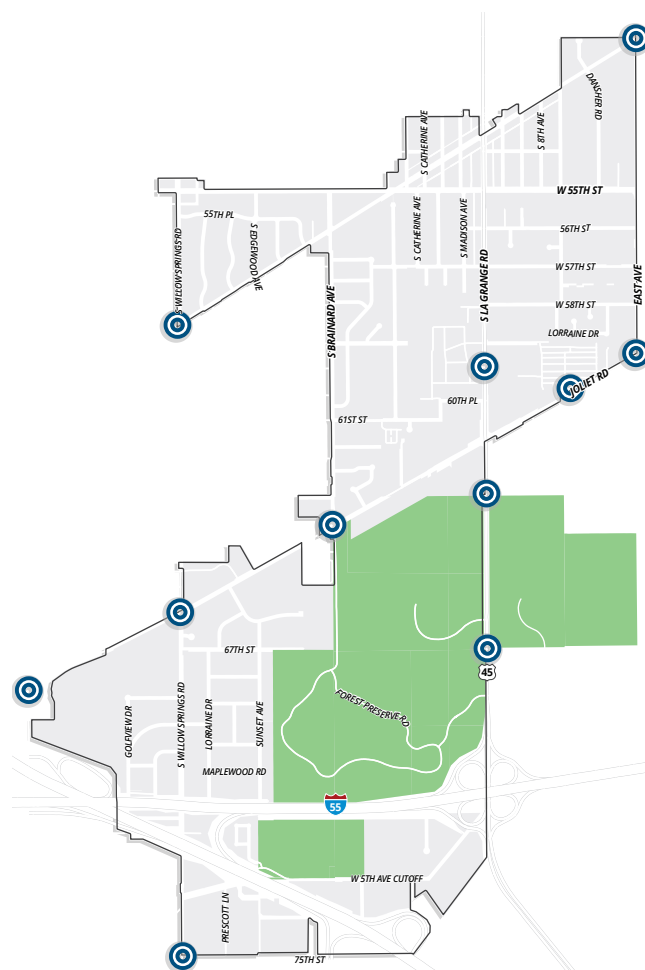
Pedestrian Amenities

Pedestrians are sensitive to the character, safety and convenience of their surroundings when choosing where and how far they feel comfortable walking. Streetscape amenities can make walking a more attractive and inviting option and can include features such as pedestrian-scale lighting, sit walls, benches, trash cans, trees and plantings, and public art, among others. These amenities are most effectively used in areas with higher pedestrian traffic such as commercial corridors. The City should seek to improve streetscape design standards to beautify the public realm along its highly visible corridors.

Pedestrian Crossings

The City's arterial and collector roadways can be barriers to pedestrian travel due to the width of the roadway, high volumes of traffic, and traffic speeds. The signalized intersections along these roadways are the safest locations for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the road, and many have been upgraded with pedestrian enhancements including pedestrian signals, countdown timers, high-visibility "ladder-style" crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps. There are signalized intersections in the City still in need of enhancements, most notably those listed below. Some will be improved by the IDOT and Cook County road improvement projects along 55th Street and Plainfield Road. The City should address these needs through its annual Capital Improvement Program or through coordination with IDOT or Cook County.

- **LaGrange Road** with Countryside Plaza Drive, 63rd Street, and 67th Street;
- **55th Street** with Willow Springs Road;
- **Plainfield Road** with East Avenue;
- **75th Street** with Willow Springs Road; and
- **Joliet Road** with Wolf Road, Willow Springs Road, Brainard Avenue, The Quarry Shopping Center Drive, and East Ave.



Proposed Pedestrian Crossings



Example of pedestrian infrastructure

Off-Street Bicycle Facilities

The bicycle network in Countryside is currently limited to off-street facilities, including a paved side path along the east side of Brainard Avenue (55th Street-Joliet Road), a crushed stone trail loop around the west half of Arie Crown Forest, and paved paths within Countryside Park, Soehrman Park, and south of Ideal Elementary School. A paved side path is currently under construction along the west side of East Avenue (55th Street to Joliet Road).

In conjunction with IDOT's 55th Street improvement project, a side path will be built along the north side of the road in LaGrange from I-294 east to Plainfield Road and along the south side of the road in Countryside from LaGrange Road east to East Avenue. The City should collaborate with IDOT to connect these two side paths along the ¼-mile segment 55th Street between Plainfield Road and LaGrange Road.

A Cook County Invest in Cook grant is funding engineering for a side path along the south side of Joliet Road between Wolf Road and East Avenue. This multi-jurisdictional project involving Countryside, Hodgkins, and Indian Head Park will improve access to the Arie Crown Forest Preserve. The City should continue to partner with these communities and with IDOT towards construction of this path.

The City's [Active Transportation Plan](#) suggests additional paved paths to expand the current network of off-street bicycle facilities, including:

- **LaGrange Road:** Replace sidewalk with multi-use path between 57th Street and 58th Street;
- **59th Street:** Replace sidewalk with multi-use path between Countryside Plaza and Kensington Avenue;
- **61st Street:** Replace sidewalk with multi-use path from Countryside Plaza through City Park to Brainard Avenue; and
- **67th Street:** Install multi-use path south of Forest Villa Condominiums connecting 67th Street to Brainard Avenue.

The City should coordinate with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to improve access to Arie Crown Forest by extending a trail around the east half of the forest and potentially constructing a parking lot at the corner of Joliet Road and Brainard Avenue. The City should also seek partnerships with neighboring municipalities (LaGrange, McCook, Indian Head Park, Hodgkins, Willow Springs) on bicycle facility projects that connect existing trails and paths. This will help expand the off-street bicycle system in the region and foster improved connectivity and access to wildlife areas, recreational amenities, and commercial destinations



Example of bike infrastructure

On-Street Bicycle Facilities

There are roadways in Countryside that carry lower volumes of traffic at lower speeds and can safely accommodate on-street bicycle facilities. This is particularly relevant where there is limited off-street space for such accommodation within the public right-of-way. On-street facilities can also bridge the gap between the off-street trails and paths and can be implemented quicker at a lower cost.

The [Active Transportation Plan](#) suggests on-street facilities that can integrate the current bicycle system into a cohesive network that extends throughout the City and connects with the major destinations. The on-street facilities could include dedicated bicycle lanes, shared lanes, or simply posted bike routes. The Plan provides the north-south and east-west connections to the existing and planned side paths and trails. Roadways included in the Plan are Brainard Avenue (south of Joliet Road), Cantigny Road, Edgewood Avenue, Kensington Avenue, Lorraine Drive, Plainfield Road, Stalford Road, Sunset Avenue, W. Lorraine Drive, Willow Springs Road, 57th Street, 58th Street, 59th Street, 61st Street, 64th Street, and 67th Street.





Example images: Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure

Bicycle Parking

Bike parking racks should be located at commercial centers, public buildings, schools, parks, and on public property near businesses and multi-unit residences throughout Countryside. The [Active Transportation Plan](#) gives priority for new bike parking installations to the City's commercial districts around the LaGrange Road/55th Street/Plainfield Road, LaGrange Road/Joliet Road, 55th Street/Plainfield Road/Brainard Avenue, and Willow Springs Road/Joliet Road intersections.

Recommendations

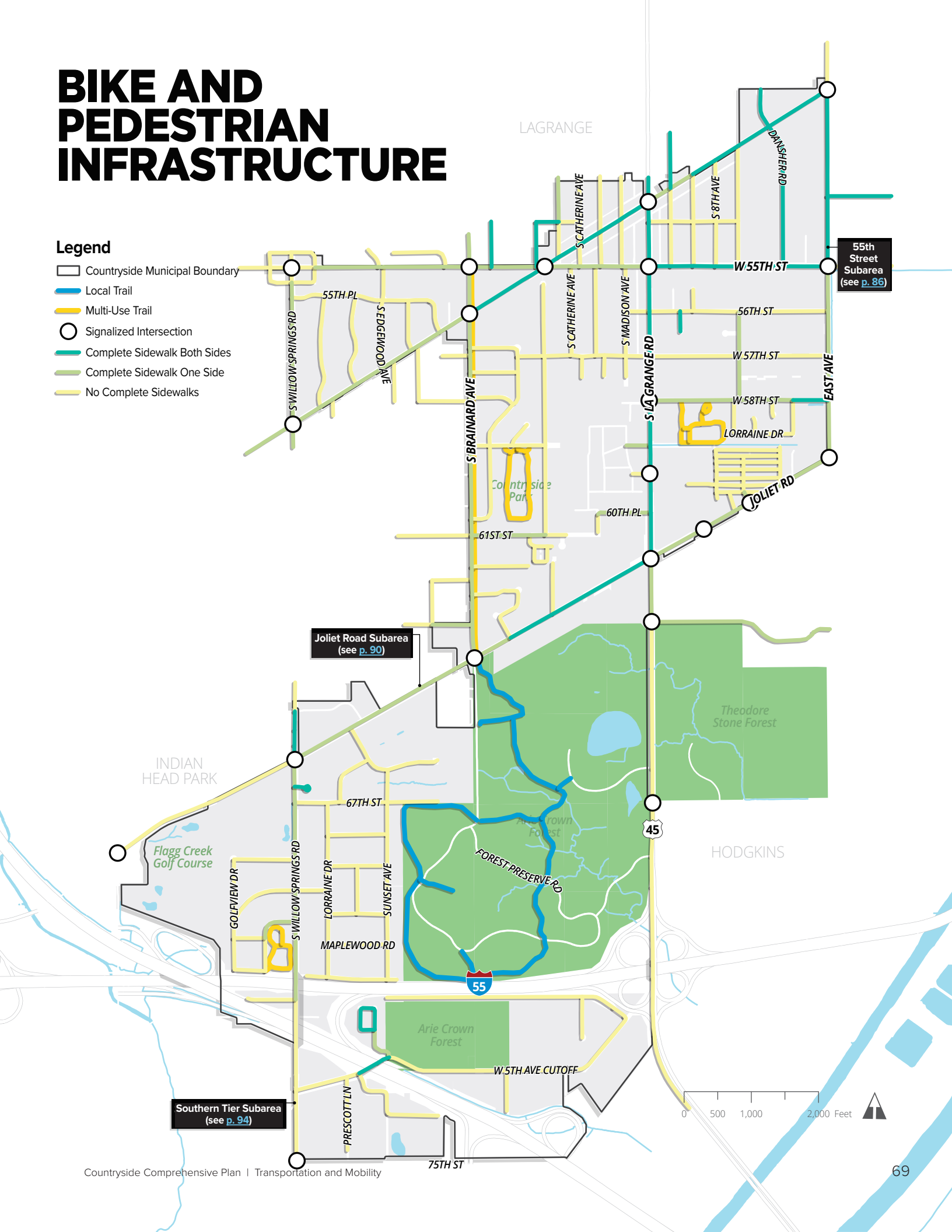
The City should work towards the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility recommendations below so that cyclists and pedestrians can commute on safer streets:

- Continue to develop an active transportation system that incorporates interconnected paths, sidewalks, and on-street bikeways, as guided by the Active Transportation Plan;
- Support regional bike and pedestrian connectivity, ensuring Countryside's network connects to the City's residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, green spaces, and neighboring communities;
- Ensure that sidewalks provide good access and mobility for all residents by closing gaps, providing adequate width, maintaining pavement quality, and adhering to ADA standards City-wide;
- Emphasize sidewalk improvements or installations as priorities for the City's major corridors while recognizing such installations may not be feasible or necessary for the City's residential neighborhoods where traffic is calm, and it is safe and appropriate to walk on the neighborhood road shoulder;
- Coordinate with IDOT as the planned side path projects on 55th Street and Joliet Road progress through the final design and construction stages;
- Partner with IDOT and Cook County to ensure that the planned improvement projects for 55th Street, Joliet Road, Plainfield Road, and Willow Springs include provisions to close any gaps in the pedestrian system;
- Collaborate with IDOT and Cook County to install missing pedestrian safety measures at signalized intersections including pedestrian signals with countdown timers, high visibility crosswalks, and ADA compliant curb ramps;
- Collaborate with IDOT to install safe mid-block pedestrian crossings, potentially with pedestrian refuge islands, on Willow Springs Road at Soehrman Park and on Joliet Road between Willow Springs Road and LaGrange Road;
- Continue to add bicycle parking infrastructure to encourage bicycle travel for short-distance trips;
- Install wayfinding signage to guide cyclists to local destinations and nearby Metra stations;
- Work with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to improve access to Arie Crown Forest including parking at the corner of Joliet Road/Brainard Avenue and a new trail extension around the east side of the Forest; and
- Work with LaGrange School District 105 to develop a Safe Walking Route plans for each of the District's schools.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Legend

-  Countryside Municipal Boundary
-  Local Trail
-  Multi-Use Trail
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Complete Sidewalk Both Sides
-  Complete Sidewalk One Side
-  No Complete Sidewalks





Countryside City Hall

City Municipal Complex

CHAPTER

8

Goals for Countryside's Community Facilities and Environment

- Support the delivery of high-quality community facilities and availability of quality public places, ensuring a high quality of life, and maintaining the City's overall desirability.
- Offer a park and open space system that meets the recreational and environmental needs of Countryside residents and visitors.

Plan goals are described in more detail, starting on [page 26](#)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

The **Community Facilities and Environment** section identifies goals, recommendations, and implementable policies so that the City can offer a high-quality of living for its residents. The goals, recommendations, and policies outlined in this section are intended to support the reliability, efficiency, and capacity of the City's community facilities. They are also intended to provide well-maintained public places for residents and visitors to enjoy, contributing to Countryside's unique identity. Lastly, the goals, policies, and recommendations aim to offer a park and open space system for all to enjoy.

Committed to Great Facilities and Access to Open Space

High-quality and up-to-date community facilities and infrastructure contribute to residents', businesses', and other stakeholders' wellbeing. The City has several community facility departments that provide basic services and amenities for households and businesses, including the City Administrator's Office, the City Clerk's Office, the Community Development Department, the Pleasantview Fire Protection District, the Countryside Police Department, and the Public Works Department. The City's infrastructure includes systems that keep residents and businesses served with water, sewer, and stormwater conveyance (electric services are maintained by ComEd). These systems require upkeep and maintenance to reliably serve the community, in addition to improving efficiency and capacity of the City's infrastructure systems.

Countryside's neighborhood parks, open spaces, and forest preserves will continue to be amenities for residents and be a regional draw for visitors. Some of the City's public parks include the Carl W. LeGrant Memorial Park and Countryside Park, and the City also coordinates with LaGrange's Park District to offer local recreational programs to Countryside's residents. Countryside features several different parks, from small tot lots, playgrounds, and mini-parks, to ornamental parks, to neighborhood parks, to community parks. Small tot lots, playgrounds, and mini-parks consists of smaller-sized properties and serve as recreation spaces to provide safe, modern playground equipment for Countryside's younger population. Countryside's ornamental park is the Carl W. LeGrant Memorial Park, which is a community focal point, constructed in memory of those who served in the U.S. military. Neighborhood parks accommodate passive and active recreation for all age groups and are larger than small tot lots, playgrounds, mini-parks, and ornamental parks. Along with Countryside's many parks, it features other amenities such as Flagg Creek Golf Course and Arie Crown Forest.



Countryside Park, 61st Street

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The policies outlined below describe techniques to ensure the finest community facilities, infrastructure, and environmental amenities offered throughout the City.

Levels of Service

As infrastructure ages, it can consume City budget and resources, reduce efficiency, and cause problems when failure occurs. To address this, the City will maintain its high standards for community facilities and infrastructure, providing adequate levels of police and fire service for residents and businesses. Based on community outreach conducted, participants stated that it is important that the City's Level of Service (LOS) for existing parks and facilities are maintained or improved. Outreach participants stated that the City is facing emerging issues, such as rising crime rates within adjacent communities, homelessness, and increasing public safety costs. While the Countryside Police Department is praised for keeping crime rate low in the City, the crime rate in nearby municipalities is still a concern. The City should continue to support its public facilities, ensuring that all residential and commercial areas of the community are protected and adequately served.

The City should also continue to support amenities for residents of all ages. While Countryside does not have a public library, residents can contact nearby municipalities, like LaGrange or Hodgkins, to access their libraries. Countryside offers its residents a 50% reimbursement toward the annual cost of membership at a public library. Countryside should continue this partnership to ensure that residents have access to community facilities.

Recommendations

Actions that the City can take to improve the level of service for residents and businesses include:

- Maintain and strengthen relationships with community service providers by supporting their operations and partnering to provide services or acquire resources;
- Ensure that Countryside continues to benefit from an adequate level of fire protection through the Pleasantview Fire Protection District;
- Ensure that Countryside continues to benefit from a high level of public safety and police protection throughout the City;
- Ensure that the City's infrastructure meets the needs of current and future residents and businesses, including telecommunications, water, wastewater, and energy; and
- Continue the program of library partnership and ensure it extends to Hodgkins when they build and open their new library.



Countryside Park, 61st Street

Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

The City of Countryside infrastructure includes systems that keep residents and businesses served with water, sewer, and stormwater conveyance (electrical services are maintained by ComEd). These systems require upkeep and maintenance to reliably serve the community. As infrastructure ages, it can consume City budget and resources, reduce efficiency, and cause problems when failure occurs.

The Comprehensive Plan can provide recommendations to improve reliability, efficiency, capacity, and funding of the City's municipal infrastructure assets. The Comprehensive Plan can also set the stage for specific infrastructure improvements on a timeline to be outlined in a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – a short-range plan identifying capital projects on a schedule.

Water Department

The City of Countryside serves its residents' water needs along with an expanded service area to include the Village of Indian Head Park and the LaGrange Highlands, as well as other unincorporated areas of Cook County. The Countryside water system includes a 16-inch water supply line to a one and a half-million gallon underground reservoir, a pump house near the former City Hall, a half million gallon above-ground storage tank and a large water distribution system.

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

The City's CIP establishes priorities and schedules for all public improvement projects within a five-year period. The CIP typically schedules the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities and infrastructure facilities, including the water system, sanitary sewers, storm water facilities, and the street system. Expansion or improvement of public works facilities are generally included in the CIP. Countryside's financial resources will always be limited, and public dollars must be spent wisely, and the CIP allows the City to prioritize and provide the most desirable public improvements.

Recommendations

While the City is landlocked, population growth will increase demand for services across all types of community facilities and infrastructure:

- Continue to evaluate levels of service and facility capacities to support current and future residents;
- Utilize the CIP to address short- and long-term infrastructure improvements and facility planning; and
- Undertake a regular review of the CIP to ensure it addresses community needs.

Community Facilities

Education

Countryside is served by three school districts, LaGrange School District No. 105, Lagrange Highlands School District No. 106, and Pleasantdale School District No. 107. District 106 services the northwestern edge of the City, north of Plainfield Road and west of Brainard Avenue. District 107 serves the southern portion of the City, south of Joliet Road and west of Brainard Avenue. District 105 serves most Countryside, with students residing in the District 105 boundary attending Ideal Elementary School. This school is located along 58th Street, east of LaGrange Road. In addition to the school district boundaries, St. Cletus School, a catholic middle school, is located outside the City's boundaries on 55th Street.

City Services

The City of Countryside provides a variety of municipal services to its residents and businesses. Daily operations are divided into seven (7) departments, each overseen by the City Administrator. City departments also include the Office of the City Clerk, the Community Development Department, the Finance Department, the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the Public Works Department.

Countryside Municipal Complex and Police Headquarters

The Countryside Municipal Complex is an innovative, net zero building located on the northwest corner of Brainard Avenue and Joliet Road. Completed in 2019, the Municipal Complex is the site of Countryside's new City Hall as well as the Countryside Police Headquarters. It meets various sustainability goals, including generating 100% of the energy it consumes on an annual basis through on-site renewable energy, providing bike racks and electric vehicle charging stations, efficiently managing water usage through automatic faucets and low-flow toilets, installing motion-censored light poles, and using sustainable building design using glass to heat the building's interior.

Public Safety

The Countryside Police Department serves the people of Countryside, keeping the City's residents safe and businesses secure. The Countryside Police Department is made up of a Chief of Police, Deputy Chief, Commander, four (4) shift sergeants, fourteen (14) patrol officers, three (3) investigators, as well as other administrative full-time employees. The Countryside Police Department provides crime alerts on its website, free child safety seat inspections, community programs, and assistance with the City's Crime Free Rental Housing Program.

Countryside's fire protection needs are fulfilled by the Pleasantview Fire Protection District. This District's headquarters is in LaGrange Highlands, and three (3) stations are maintained outside the City limits, the closest being the Pleasantview Fire Protection District Station 3, located on Joliet Road.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Legend

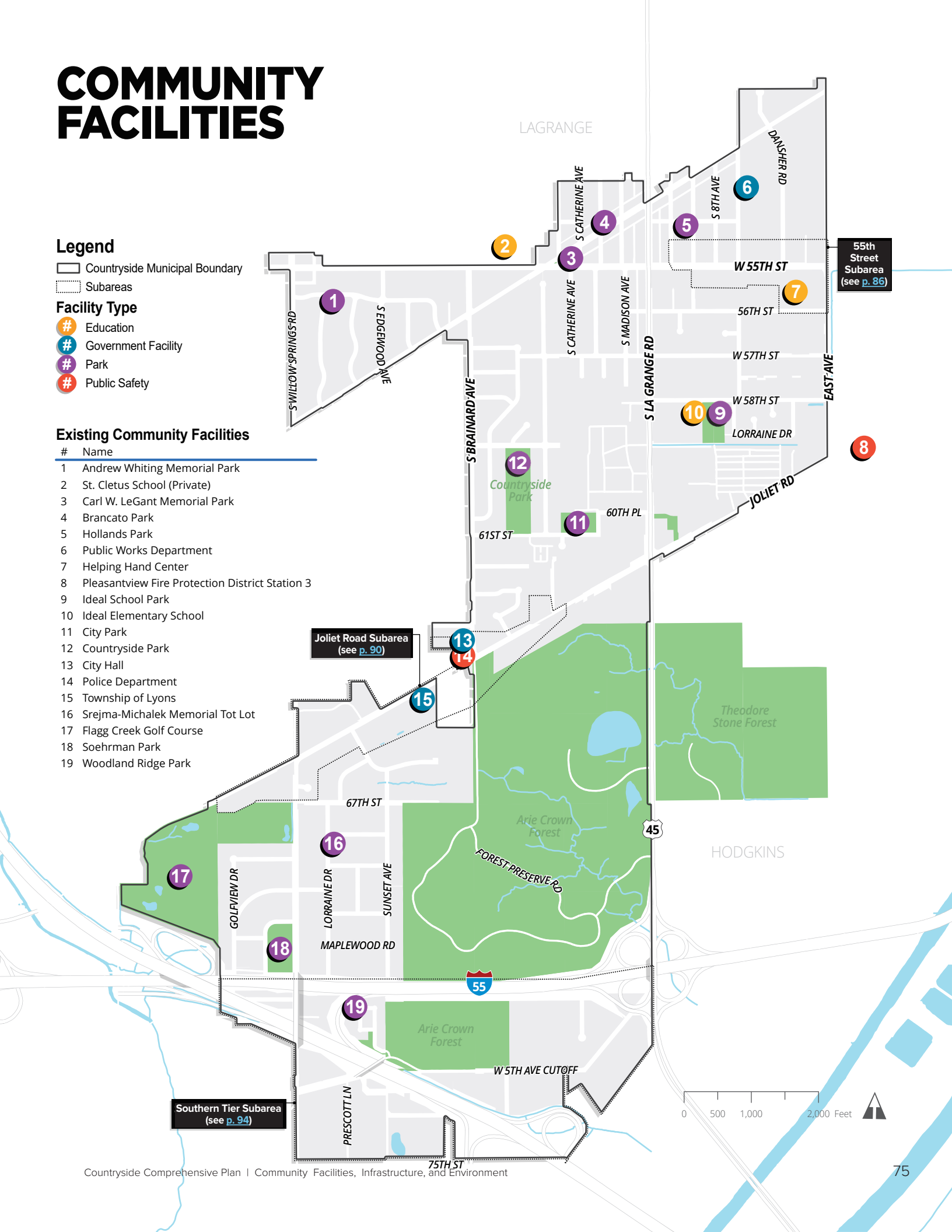
-  Countryside Municipal Boundary
-  Subareas

Facility Type

- Education
- Government Facility
- Park
- Public Safety

Existing Community Facilities

#	Name
1	Andrew Whiting Memorial Park
2	St. Cletus School (Private)
3	Carl W. LeGant Memorial Park
4	Brancato Park
5	Hollands Park
6	Public Works Department
7	Helping Hand Center
8	Pleasantview Fire Protection District Station 3
9	Ideal School Park
10	Ideal Elementary School
11	City Park
12	Countryside Park
13	City Hall
14	Police Department
15	Township of Lyons
16	Srejma-Michalek Memorial Tot Lot
17	Flagg Creek Golf Course
18	Soehrman Park
19	Woodland Ridge Park





Countryside Park, 61st Street

ENVIRONMENT

Countryside's parks are overseen by the City. The City maintains six (6) neighborhood parks, a Little League/Soccer park, the City's Carl W. LeGrant Memorial Park, and Countryside Park. The City's neighborhood parks, including Andrew Whiting Memorial Park, Brancato Park, Hollands Park, Srejma-Mochalek Memorial Tot Lot, Soehrman Park, and Woodland Ridge Park, accommodate passive and active recreation for all age groups.

The map on [page 77](#) illustrates Flagg Creek Golf Course, a nine-hole par 33 golf course that features Bentgrass greens, watered fairways, and three (3) sets of tees to accommodate golfers of all skill levels. The golf course is jointly owned by the Pleasant Dale Park District and the City. The map also depicts Score Tennis and Fitness Center, a privately owned recreation center that serves a significant number of Countryside residents. This facility offers a broad range of recreational opportunities, including soccer, volleyball, indoor golf lessons, and tennis programs.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Legend

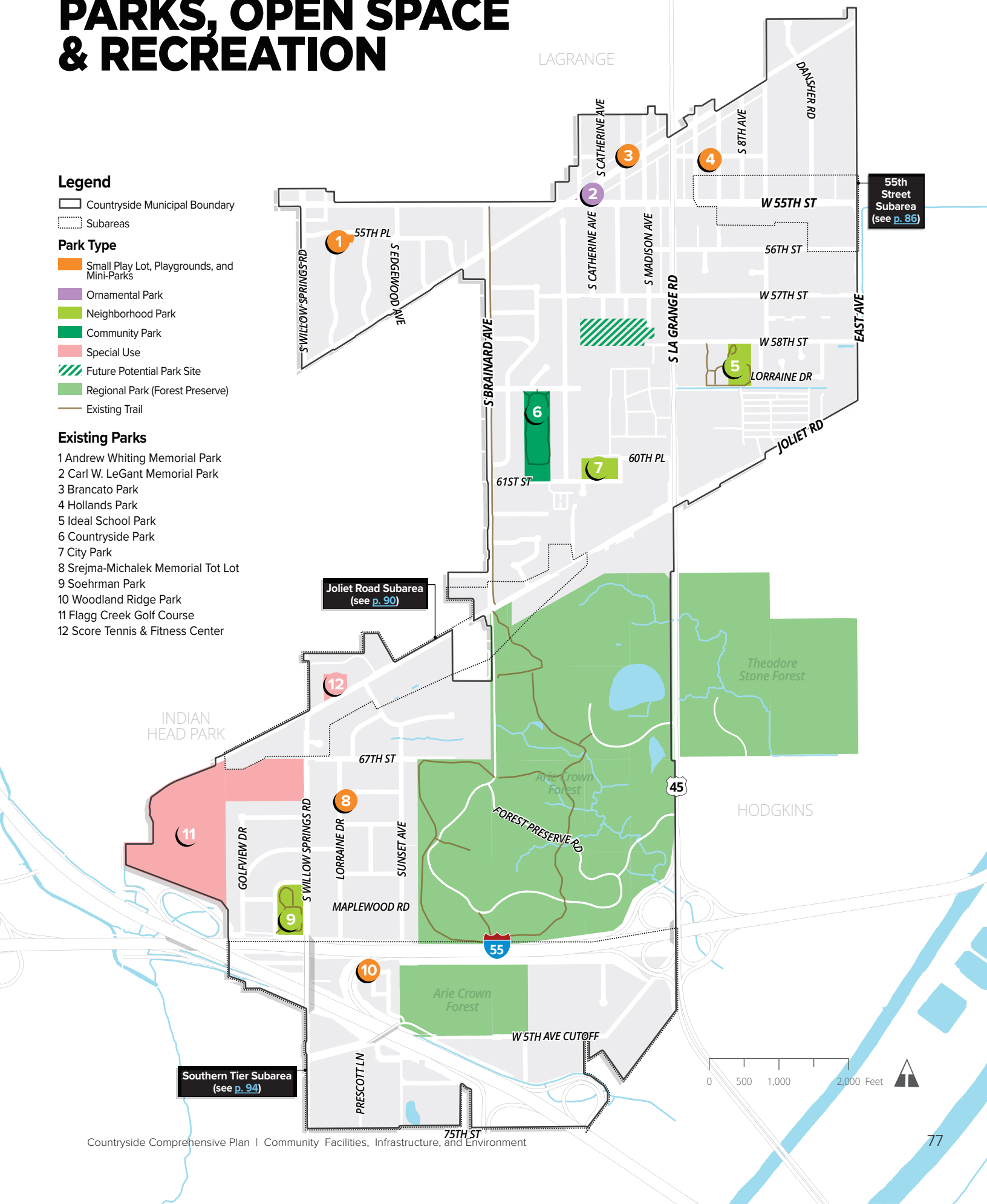
- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas

Park Type

- Small Play Lot, Playgrounds, and Mini-Parks
- Ornamental Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Special Use
- Future Potential Park Site
- Regional Park (Forest Preserve)
- Existing Trail

Existing Parks

- 1 Andrew Whiting Memorial Park
- 2 Carl W. LeGant Memorial Park
- 3 Brancato Park
- 4 Hollands Park
- 5 Ideal School Park
- 6 Countryside Park
- 7 City Park
- 8 Srejma-Michalek Memorial Tot Lot
- 9 Soehman Park
- 10 Woodland Ridge Park
- 11 Flagg Creek Golf Course
- 12 Score Tennis & Fitness Center





Countryside Park, 61st Street

Access to Parks

A family-friendly, safe, and beautiful residential area can be achieved through planning for parks. Park distribution can be measured based on the service area for each type of park within the City's residential areas. Based on a mapping analysis of the park service areas in Countryside, most residents are in reasonable proximity to either a community park – a large park space with amenities designed to serve the entire community, or a neighborhood park – a small park space with amenities designed to serve only nearby residents. While the northern half of the City is well served, residential areas south of Joliet Road have less access to the City's parks. Despite this, residents on the southern half of the City live close to Arie Crown Forest, although the forest preserve does not offer similar amenities as the City's traditional parks.

To better serve Countryside residents and provide an amenity that is only a short walk away, the City should work towards acquiring lots that would be suitable for pocket parks and tot lots within residential neighborhoods. Lots should be small and should be well-incorporated within the residential fabric of a neighborhood. These lots should be well connected to nearby homes and should fit the need for a small recreational space suitable for residents and families of all ages.

To ensure connectivity to the City's new and existing parks and open spaces, Countryside should assess paths needed along existing rights-of-way and through neighborhoods where possible. The multi-use path along Brainard Avenue has been successful for the City, allowing cyclists and pedestrians to travel to the City's parks. Countryside secured a state grant which helped fund the project, and additional funds and stakeholders can be used as resources to make cycling and walking safe, convenient, and fun for all Countryside residents.

Public Art

While there are many nice Parks in Countryside, most of them lack public art pieces to create a stronger sense of place. Existing public art pieces should be preserved and new pieces should be encouraged in the City's various open spaces. The City should work to collaborate with a variety of groups, including local scouts troupes, on new public art pieces.

Future Potential Park Site

Although designated for Single-Family Detached and Single-Family Attached residential development within the Future Land Use Map ([page 35](#)), this parcel represents the largest single development opportunity site within the City. As a "built out" community, and given the site's access constraints, the City should consider some or all of this area for a centrally-located new park if the opportunity should arise.

PARKS SERVICE AREAS

Legend

- Countryside Municipal Boundary
- Subareas

Park Service Areas

- 0.25 Mile Park Service Area Buffer
- 0.5 Mile Park Service Area Buffer

Park Type

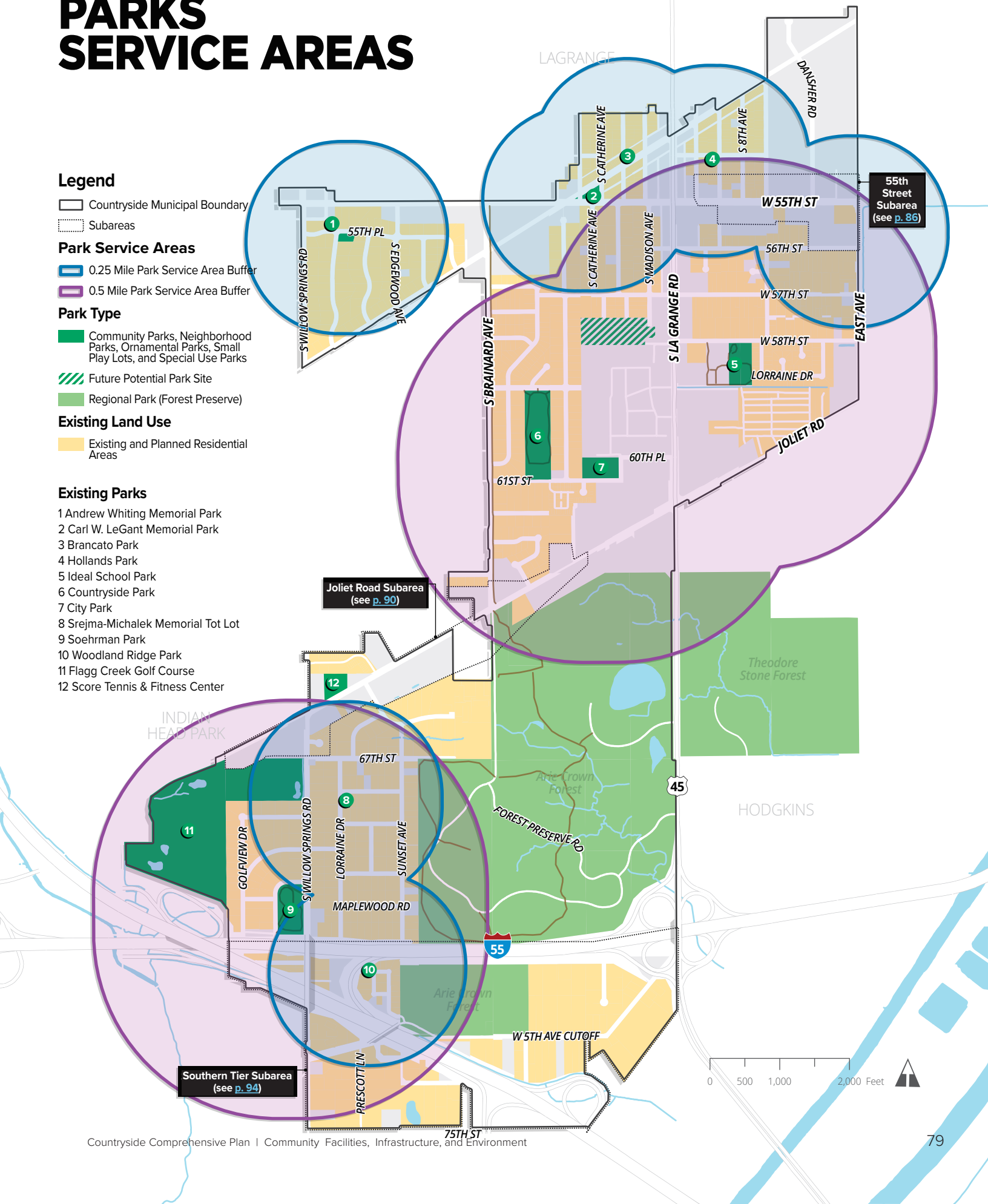
- Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Ornamental Parks, Small Play Lots, and Special Use Parks
- Future Potential Park Site
- Regional Park (Forest Preserve)

Existing Land Use

- Existing and Planned Residential Areas

Existing Parks

- 1 Andrew Whiting Memorial Park
- 2 Carl W. LeGant Memorial Park
- 3 Brancato Park
- 4 Hollands Park
- 5 Ideal School Park
- 6 Countryside Park
- 7 City Park
- 8 Srejma-Michalek Memorial Tot Lot
- 9 Soehrman Park
- 10 Woodland Ridge Park
- 11 Flagg Creek Golf Course
- 12 Score Tennis & Fitness Center





Countryside Park, 61st Street

Sustainability Plan – Strategies for Parks and Open Space

The City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021) supports a goal of networks of accessible, well-used and enjoyable parks throughout the City. It includes several strategies that the City should continue to work on and partner with local parks and recreation agencies, private landowners, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

- Update the Parks and Open Space Master Plan;
- Collaborate to provide access to under-utilized land for trails, community gardens, and sustainable landscapes;
- Optimize linkages between parks and open spaces;
- Collaborate with private property owners to create vibrant public gathering spaces;
- Enhance parks, open space, and recreational opportunities accessible to all residents;
- Collaborate with park and forest preserve districts;
- Collaborate to create and maintain hiking, biking, canoe, and other recreational trails;
- Collaborate to provide accessible recreational services involving parks and open space; and
- Foster healthy community relationships through open space.

Recommendations

Ways for the City to provide accessibility and connectivity between residential areas and parks include:

- Continue the strategies outlined under the Parks and Open Space goal of the [City of Countryside Sustainability Plan \(2021\)](#);
- Strategically acquire land to develop pocket parks and tot lots in neighborhoods where community parks are not within walking distance; and
- Connect parks and recreation areas with trails on existing rights-of-way and through neighborhoods where possible to create a more connected park system.



Carl W. Legant Memorial Park

Preserved Natural Areas

Countryside is home to Arie Crown Forest, a Forest Preserve District of Cook County land preserve with over three miles of paved trails, a pond for fishing, and opportunities to hike, bike, or cross-country ski. To enhance the Arie Crown Forest experience, Countryside should explore opportunities for new trails, groves, and other recreational infrastructure for families and residents of all ages to enjoy. Additional paved trails in the Arie Crown Forest can connect to residential areas within the Southern Tier Subarea, granting these residents safe connectivity into one of Countryside's best natural features. To further enhance Countryside's existing parks and open spaces, the City can update aging facilities in its recreational areas. Based on outreach responses, Countryside residents said that the City offers many park facilities for young children, but few facilities for pre-teens and teenagers. These areas can provide passive and active opportunities for all residents, particularly teenagers, such as seating areas and picnic tables. Additionally, the City can consider sites for new athletic fields to not only provide recreational activities for residents, but also a regional draw for individuals outside Countryside.

Recommendations

To improve and redevelop Countryside's natural areas, the City should consider the following recommendations:

- Work with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to initiate a more active Arie Crown Forest and their underutilized land in the Southern Tier with new trails, pavilions, and other recreational infrastructure;
- Support coordination among neighboring municipalities to ensure residents throughout the community have access to the forest preserves;
- Build safe and visible pedestrian-oriented entryways into the Arie Crown Forest, particularly along Willow Springs Road and Brainard Avenue;
- Invest in existing green spaces by modernizing aging facilities and building new recreational options such as new athletic facilities and dog parks; and
- Consider additional facilities to build in the City's parks and public spaces, such as seating options, to provide active and passive opportunities for residents of all ages.



Dansher Industrial Park

CHAPTER

9

SUBAREAS

The Countryside Comprehensive Plan provides specific recommendations for three (3) areas of the City facing unique challenges and opportunities. The subarea plans include site-specific improvements related to future land use, potential development, built form, transportation and mobility, and access to parks, open space, and recreation amenities. These address the issues and opportunities specific to each subarea while also demonstrating how the broader vision and themes of the Comprehensive Plan can be applied.



Example images: Subarea Recommendations

Subarea Improvement Recommendations

In addition to land use and development recommendations found in this chapter, the subarea plans provide several recommendations related to the character, function, appearance, identity, access, and mobility of a subarea. Several improvement recommendations are highlighted in this section of the chapter that correlate to the individual subarea plan maps and graphics found on the following pages. Collectively, these recommendations, along with land and development, can significantly improve and transform the overall quality and sense of place for each subarea.

New Sidewalks

Sidewalks serve as essential infrastructure in built environments, facilitating pedestrian movement and ensuring pedestrian safety. Sidewalks contribute to creating walkable communities, promoting active transportation, and enhancing accessibility for people of all ages and abilities. Several parts of the subareas lack sidewalks and recommendations for new sidewalks or sidewalk extensions have been identified in order to provide a fully connected sidewalk network in all areas.

Streetscape Improvements

Countryside presents a mix of street-edge treatments – some attractive and effective, while others are unattractive, poorly maintained, or lacking amenities. Streetscape treatments refer to enhancements made within the right-of-way along public roads and can include landscaping, trees, lighting, benches, and other amenities that improve the visual appeal and functionality of the street and right-of-way while creating a unique sense of place. Areas in need of streetscape improvement have been identified for the different subareas.

Cross Access

Coordinated and efficient cross access between adjacent parking areas allows convenient travel between neighboring commercial uses. Such cross access minimizes the need for traffic to enter and exit busy roadways. As new developments occur, the City should work with property owners to create a coordinated cross access network. The City should also work with owners of existing developments to retroactively implement cross access where feasible.

Crosswalk Enhancement

Several major and side streets lack a clearly demarked pedestrian crosswalk. A pedestrian crossing is a designated area on a road where pedestrians can safely cross, typically marked with painted lines, unique pavers, signs and sometimes activated signal lights (HAWK, High Intensity Activated Crosswalk). To better connect the community and further increase pedestrian safety, the City should create highly visible uniquely paved or striped crosswalks at unmarked intersections.

Intersection Improvement

Intersection improvements involve enhancing the functionality and safety of crossroads through measures like optimizing traffic signal timing, adding dedicated turn lanes where necessary, improving signage, and creating pedestrian crossings, all aimed at ensuring smoother traffic flow, reducing congestion, and minimizing the potential for accidents at these critical points in a road network. Several intersections in Countryside have been identified for intersection improvements.



Example images: Subarea Recommendations

Gateway Opportunity

Throughout the subareas, gateway features can be used to announce entry into a unique area of the City, helping to enhance its sense of place and distinguish it from other areas of the City. District gateway features should have a complimentary design to the City gateway features.

Development Opportunity Site

Several parcels in the community have been identified as being opportunities for new development/redevelopment. These are sites that are well positioned for new development or have planned developments slated to begin. These locations have been identified in the subarea plans and have the potential to significantly contribute to and enhance the character of an area.

Parking Lot Landscape Improvement

Parking lot landscape improvements typically include perimeter landscaping, landscape island and peninsulas, and parkway landscaping. Each of these areas can include shade trees, decorative trees, shrubs, flower beds, and other plantings. These improvements enhance the appearance of a site and area, and can also provide shade and reducing heat island effects. These improvements can also include the installation of permeable surfaces, rain gardens, and bio-swales to help better manage stormwater runoff and promote environmental sustainability.

Screening

In several areas, commercial development abuts residential uses. These residential areas should be adequately screened with landscaping and fencing to both improve the appearance of commercial properties and to mitigate the negative impact of commercial uses and activities on adjacent neighborhoods.

Bicycle Lane

A bike lane is a designated part of a roadway that is exclusively reserved for bicyclists and can provide improved cyclist safety, increased visibility, and better integration of cycling as a viable mode of transportation. New bike lanes would make Countryside more active and connected and they are recommended along several key corridors.

Trailhead

A trailhead serves as the starting or entry point for a trail system. It should include amenities such as informational signage, rest areas, and public transportation connections. In Countryside, they should be designed to provide easy access to recreational trails within the Arie Crown Forest, encouraging outdoor activities and providing a connection between the city and natural spaces. A trailhead is recommended to be located on Joliet Road for this purpose.



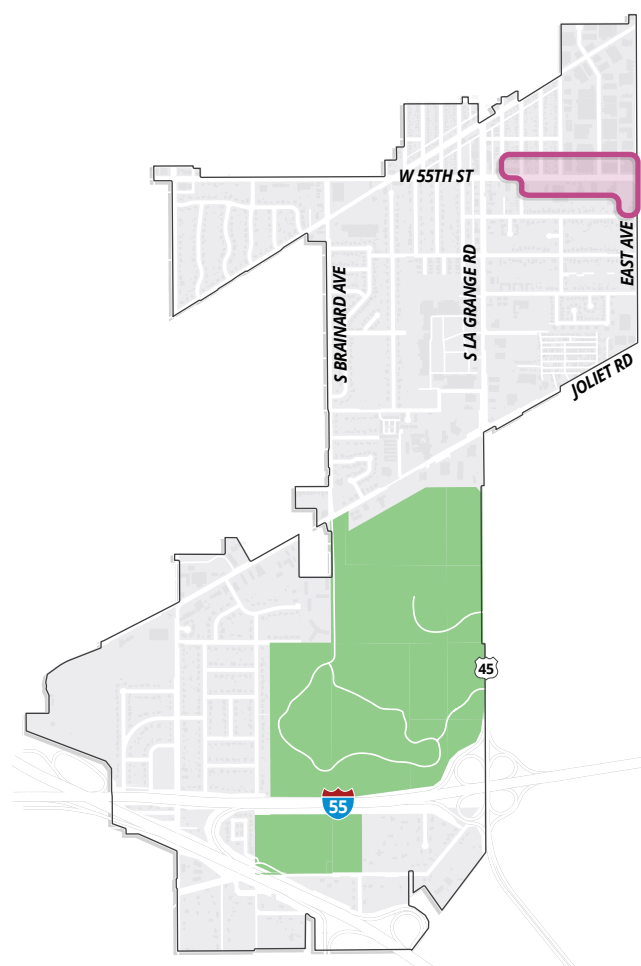
Aerial View: 55th Street

55TH STREET SUBAREA

The 55th Street Subarea includes the area along the north and south sides of 55th Street between East Avenue and LaGrange Road. The Subarea consists of a mix of community and regional commercial uses, public/semi-public uses, and industrial uses. There are several opportunities for improvement and new development in the area. The Dansher Business Park is possibly the most notable use in this area and has been an important contributor to the local economy for decades, but ready for some aesthetic updates along its perimeter. The area also provides opportunities for reinvestment in aging and vacant properties, and public areas and infrastructure.

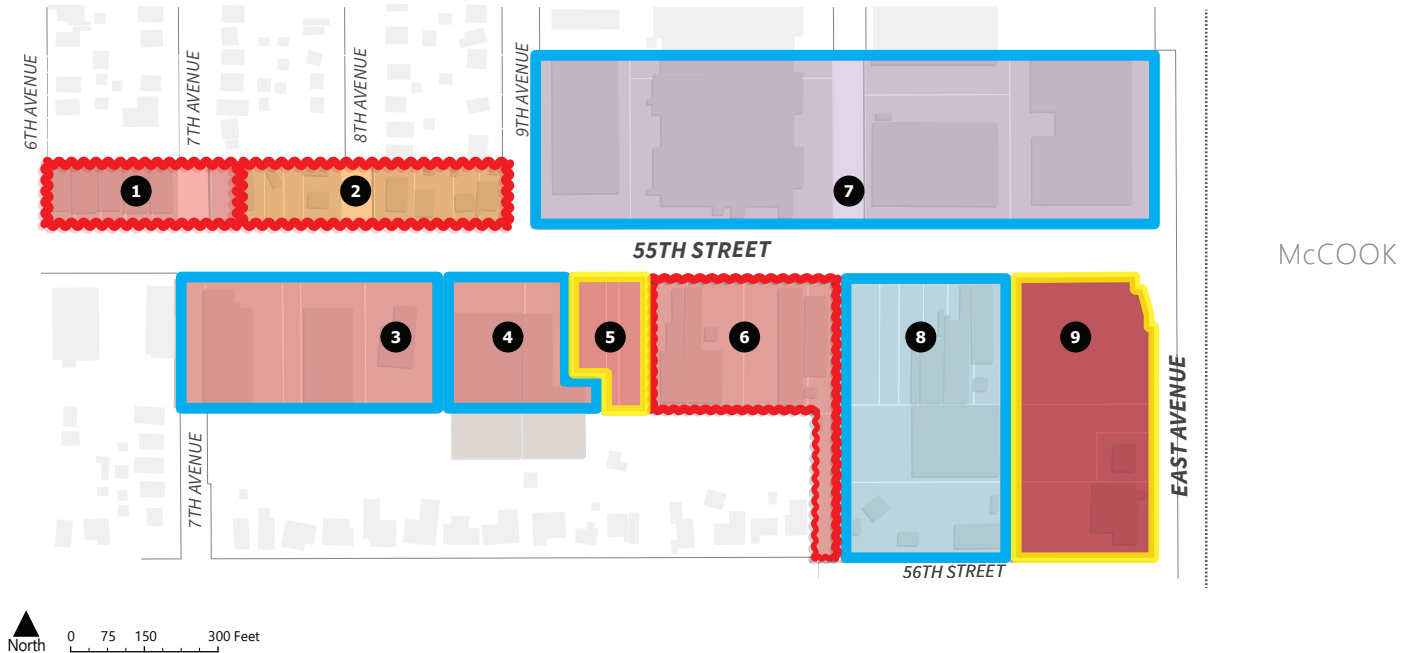
The purpose of the 55th Street Subarea is to create a framework for desired development, improve connectivity for both vehicles and pedestrians, and identify improvements that will incrementally increase the quality of place in the subarea. The Subarea Plan identifies character areas, functional improvements, as well as a Catalyst Site that should provide guidance related to development in the corridor. As the City prioritizes this area, it should:

- Initiate new private investment by making strategic reinvestments in the public realm;
- Invest in improved lighting, street furniture and gateway design elements to qualitatively improve the built environment;
- Invest in edge treatments and landscaping to clean up aging infrastructure such as curbs and gutters, add landscaping where possible, and make the area more welcoming and safer for pedestrians; and
- Position the area for success as the new multi-use development is implemented at the southwest corner of 55th Street and East Avenue.



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The 55th Street Subarea focuses on reinforcing the strong mix of uses along the 55th Street corridor while identifying areas for reinvestment and new development. This area represents a key gateway into the Countryside community.



Stable and Maintain
These properties, outlined in blue, include appropriate and stable uses along the corridor that are viable and in good condition. Focus should be on ensuring these properties remain attractive, well-maintained, and economically viable. **These include properties 3, 4, 7 and 8.**

Reinvestment Needed
These properties, outlined in red, would benefit from reinvestment, improvement, and possible redevelopment. While they may remain as is for years to come, potential exists for significant improvement. **The three properties in need of reinvestment are described below:**

1 The existing strip mall may remain, but site improvements should be encouraged and redevelopment considered. Access, parking, and aesthetic improvements are needed to improve safety and appearance. The parking lot should be reconfigured to provide on-way traffic flow accessing angled parking.

2 These blocks reflect the “edge” of the residential neighborhood to the north and includes homes and an established commercial use. While the residential uses may remain, conversion to commercial uses over time would be appropriate. Parking and access improvements are needed along the frontage of the commercial uses.

6 The existing strip mall will likely remain, but site improvements should be encouraged and redevelopment considered. Access, parking, and aesthetic improvements are needed to improve safety and appearance. The parking lot should be reconfigured to provide one-way traffic flow accessing angled parking.

New Development Opportunity
These properties, outlined in yellow, are currently vacant and represent obvious opportunities for new development. **The two development opportunity properties are described below:**

5 This vacant parcel is ideal for small-scale retail, restaurant, or commercial use, including fast food with drive-thru.

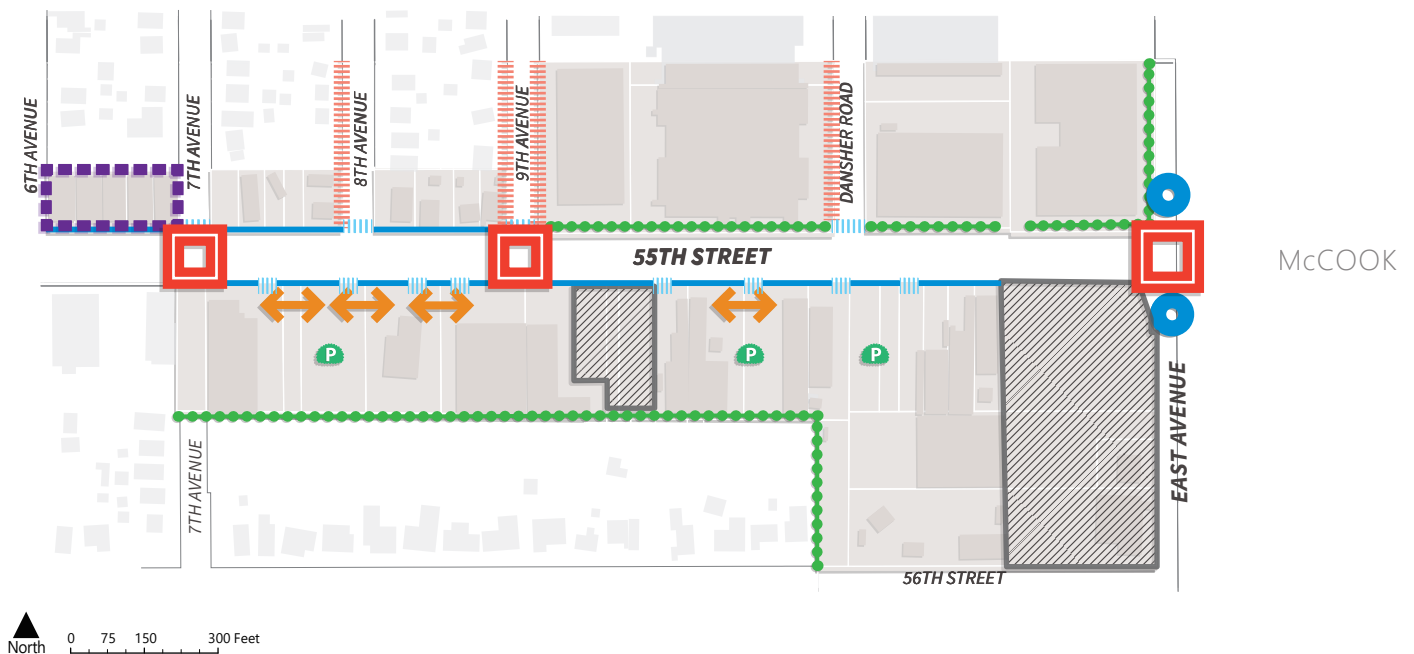
9 This site is a highly visible gateway into the city and is slated for redevelopment as a multi-use commercial development.

Future Land Use

- Community Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Light Industrial

IMPROVEMENTS FRAMEWORK

As growth occurs within the 55th Street Subarea, it is essential that new development contributes to the area's character and ensures efficient movement for all modes of transportation. This will require the coordination of public and private efforts to address mobility and urban design aiming to foster an active business area where residents and visitors enjoy spending their time. The City should focus on improvements that enable safe and efficient pedestrian mobility, reduce the impacts of commercial development on adjacent neighborhoods, and elevate the appearance of the subarea.



McCOOK

Subarea Improvements

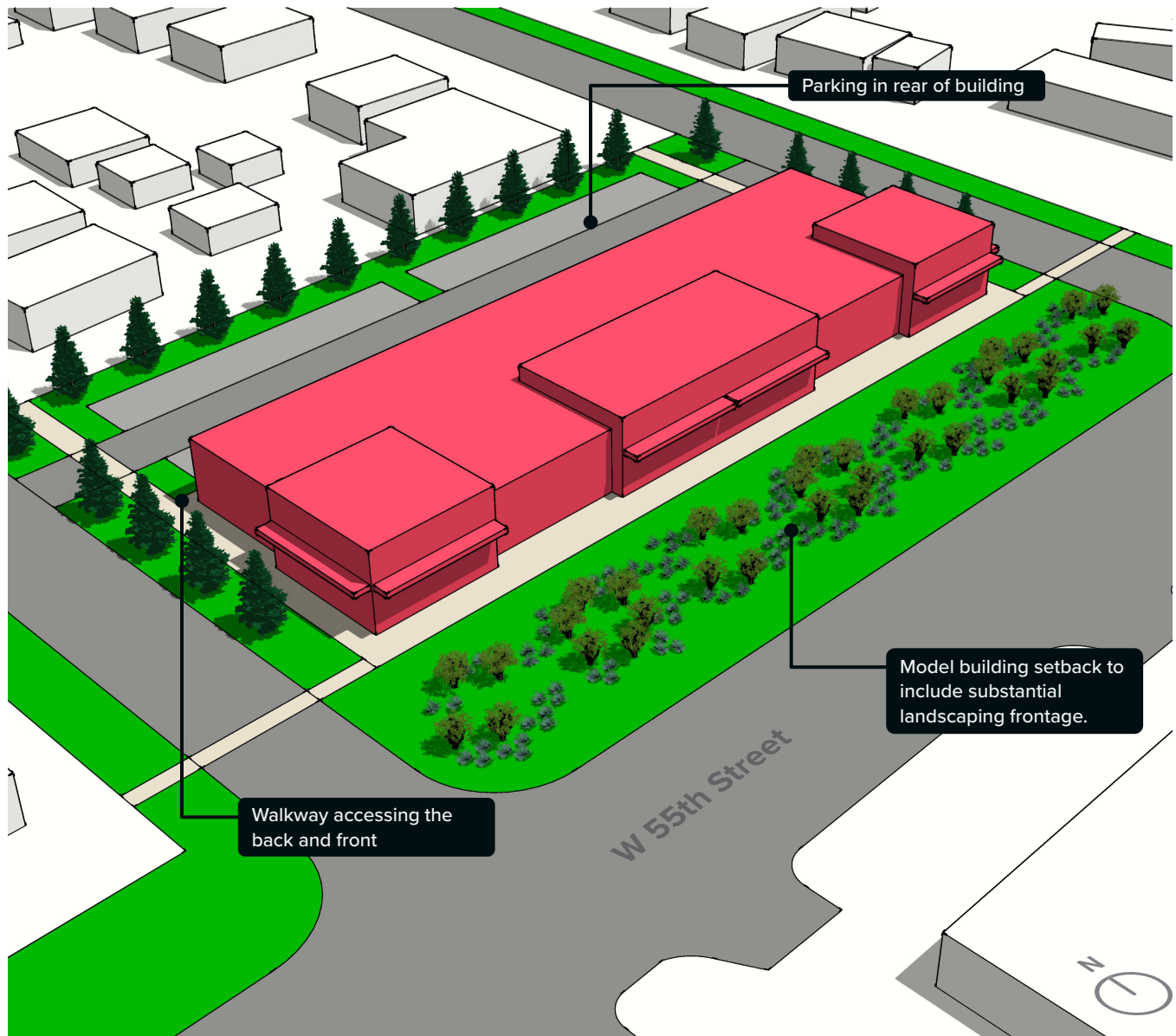
See [pages 84-85](#) for detailed descriptions of improvements.

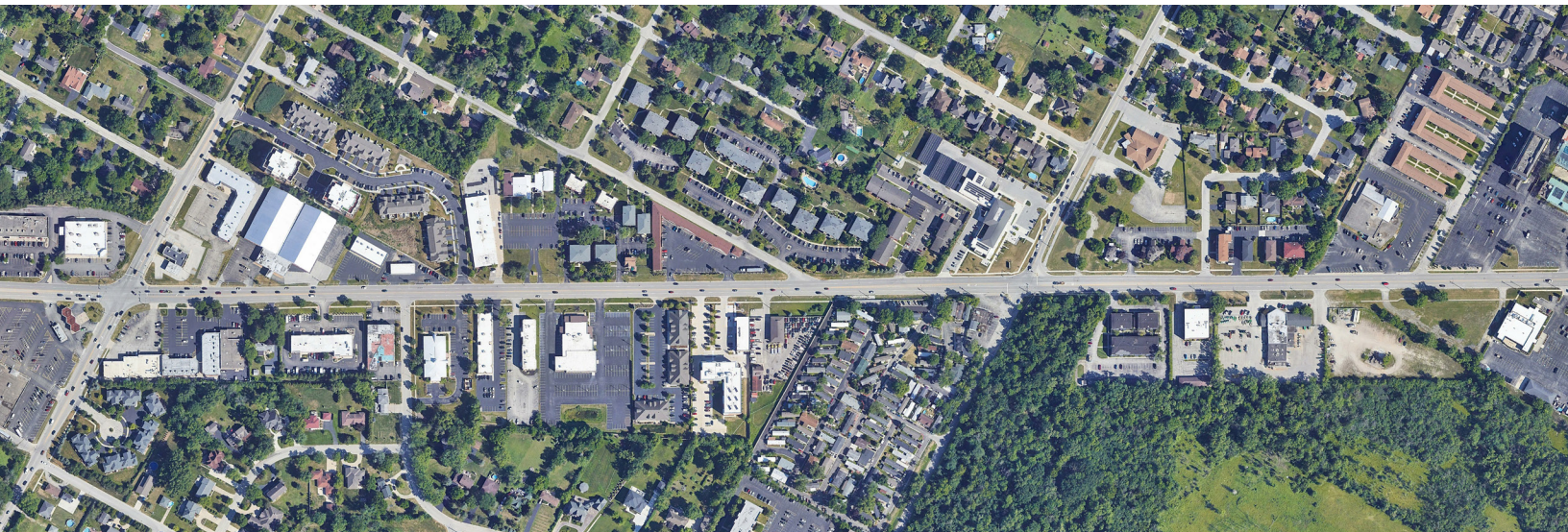
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Sidewalk | Screening |
| Edge Treatment | Gateway Opportunity |
| Cross Access | Catalyst Site |
| Crosswalk Enhancement | Potential or Planned Redevelopment site |
| Intersection Improvement | Parking Lot Landscaping Improvement |

55TH STREET REDEVELOPMENT SITE

Land Use

- Commercial
- Existing Structures

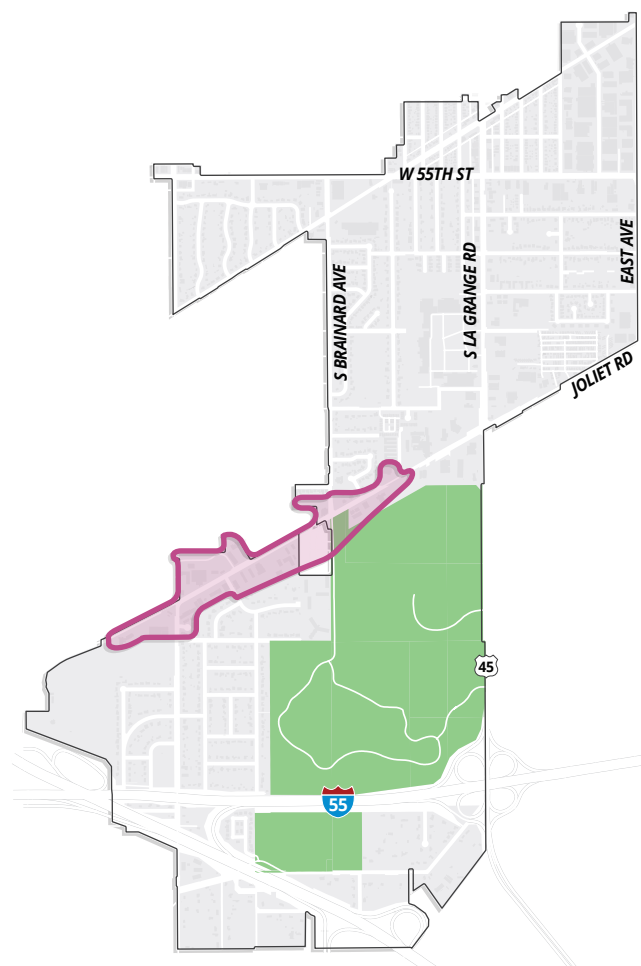




Aerial View: Joliet Road

JOLIET ROAD SUBAREA

The Joliet Road Subarea includes areas along both sides of Joliet Road west of LaGrange Road. This subarea is bounded by Kensington Avenue to the east and Countryside Bank to the west. Positioned on Joliet Road, this subarea acts as a gateway into Countryside and offers a variety of retail, service, and public/semi-public uses.



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

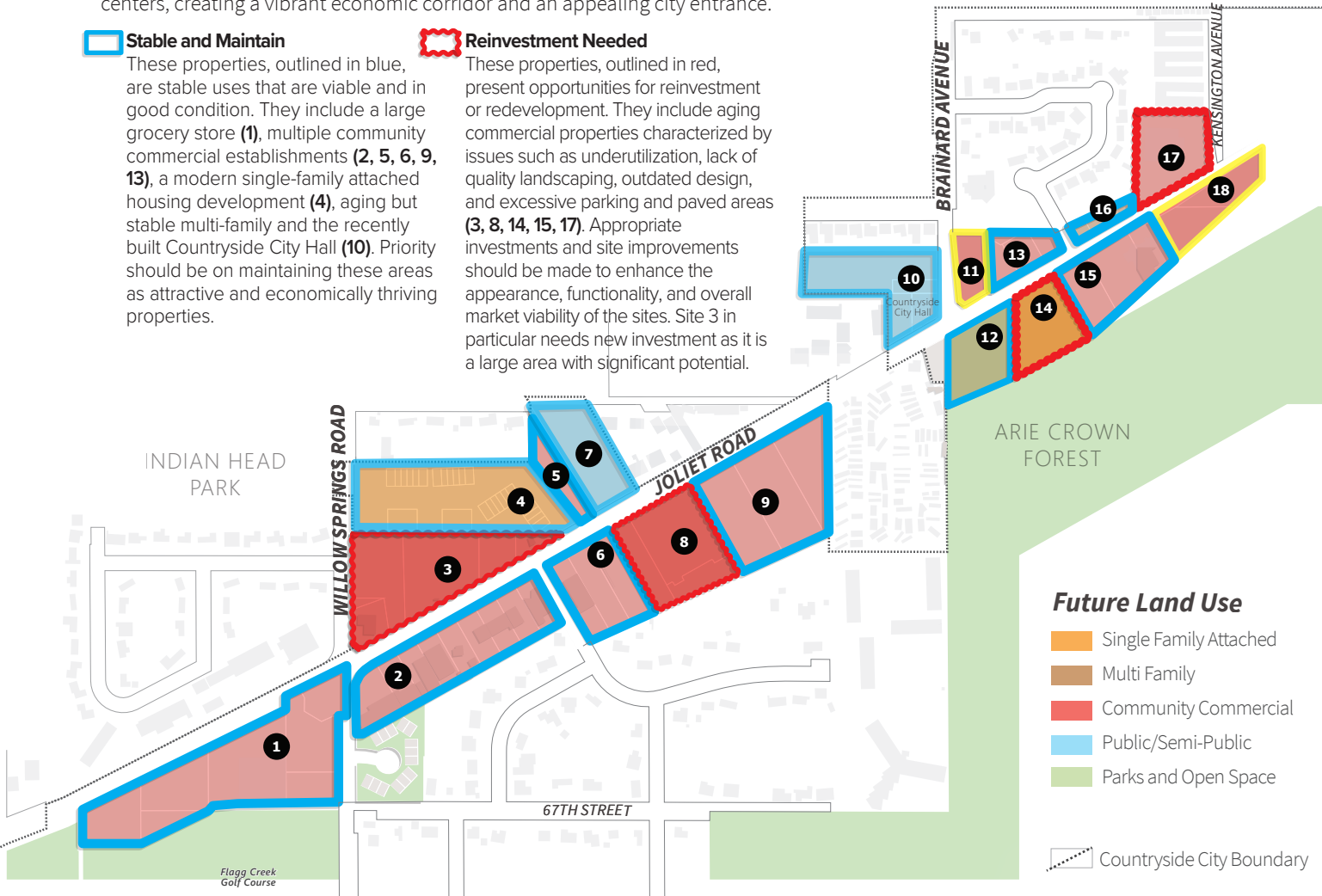
The Joliet Road Subarea serves as Countryside's gateway, offering diverse land uses including residential areas and commercial centers, creating a vibrant economic corridor and an appealing city entrance.

Stable and Maintain

These properties, outlined in blue, are stable uses that are viable and in good condition. They include a large grocery store (1), multiple community commercial establishments (2, 5, 6, 9, 13), a modern single-family attached housing development (4), aging but stable multi-family and the recently built Countryside City Hall (10). Priority should be on maintaining these areas as attractive and economically thriving properties.

Reinvestment Needed

These properties, outlined in red, present opportunities for reinvestment or redevelopment. They include aging commercial properties characterized by issues such as underutilization, lack of quality landscaping, outdated design, and excessive parking and paved areas (3, 8, 14, 15, 17). Appropriate investments and site improvements should be made to enhance the appearance, functionality, and overall market viability of the sites. Site 3 in particular needs new investment as it is a large area with significant potential.



Future Land Use

- Single Family Attached
- Multi Family
- Community Commercial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Parks and Open Space

Countryside City Boundary

3 While this mall is built out, there are aging buildings and vacant storefronts that pose opportunities for redevelopment. The community should target these vacant sites for reinvestment in order to create a lively commercial area, ideally with new buildings situated at the street and parking in the rear. Landscaping should be updated and sidewalks should be expanded where possible.

8 This well-landscaped former car dealership is vacant. A new car dealership or other community commercial use would be ideal for the site and would help reactivate the property and corridor.

14 While these apartment buildings are well maintained, they are showing signs of age and would benefit from rehabilitation and site improvements.

15 This property is occupied by a viable commercial use, however the building is aging and streetscape improvements are needed.

17 This large corner property has great visibility and access and should be maintained as a commercial use. However, the site is fairly unattractive and provides virtually no landscaping anywhere on the site. The large parking lot and other paved areas are excessive and detract from the appearance of the corridor. Consideration should be given to commercial or mixed-use redevelopment of the site if the opportunity presents itself. If the current use and building remain, the site should provide perimeter and parking lot landscaping.

New Development Opportunity

These properties are currently vacant, and include a vacant commercial parcel at the northeast corner of Joliet Road and Brainard Avenue and a large parcel on Joliet near Kensington Avenue. These sites are suited for commercial development.

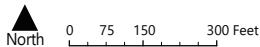
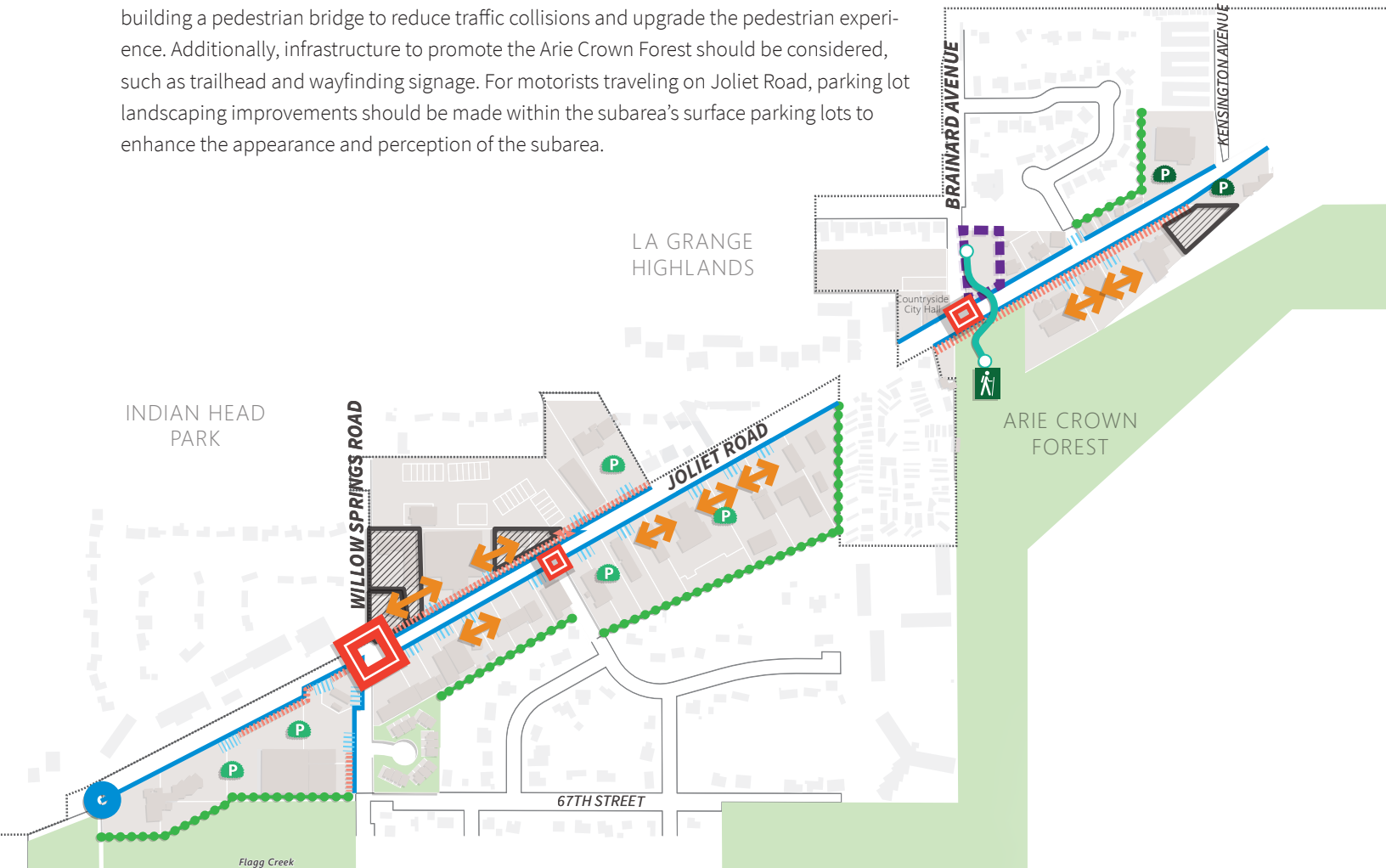
The two development opportunity properties are described below:

11 This vacant site has a prime location at the intersection of two major streets and across from the recently completed Countryside City Hall. This high-visibility parcel would be well suited for commercial development and urban design elements to complement the forest preserve.

18 This large unbuilt site is used for storage by a nearby business, but a better use should be supported. The City should work with property owners to attract a new commercial or entertainment use.

IMPROVEMENTS FRAMEWORK

To enhance the quality of life within the Joliet Road Subarea, improvements to the appearance and mobility should be prioritized. These improvements are intended to improve safety for pedestrians and motorists and establish a sense of place in the area. Pedestrian enhancements include planning for and painting crosswalks between plazas within the subarea, ensuring sidewalks are constructed on both sides of Joliet Road, and potentially building a pedestrian bridge to reduce traffic collisions and upgrade the pedestrian experience. Additionally, infrastructure to promote the Arie Crown Forest should be considered, such as trailhead and wayfinding signage. For motorists traveling on Joliet Road, parking lot landscaping improvements should be made within the subarea's surface parking lots to enhance the appearance and perception of the subarea.



Subarea Improvements

See [pages 84-85](#) for detailed descriptions of improvements.

- Edge Treatment
- Cross Access
- Crosswalk Enhancement
- Intersection Improvement
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Sidewalk

- Screening
- Gateway Opportunity
- Catalyst site
- Potential or Planned Redevelopment Site
- Trailhead
- Parking Lot Landscaping Improvement

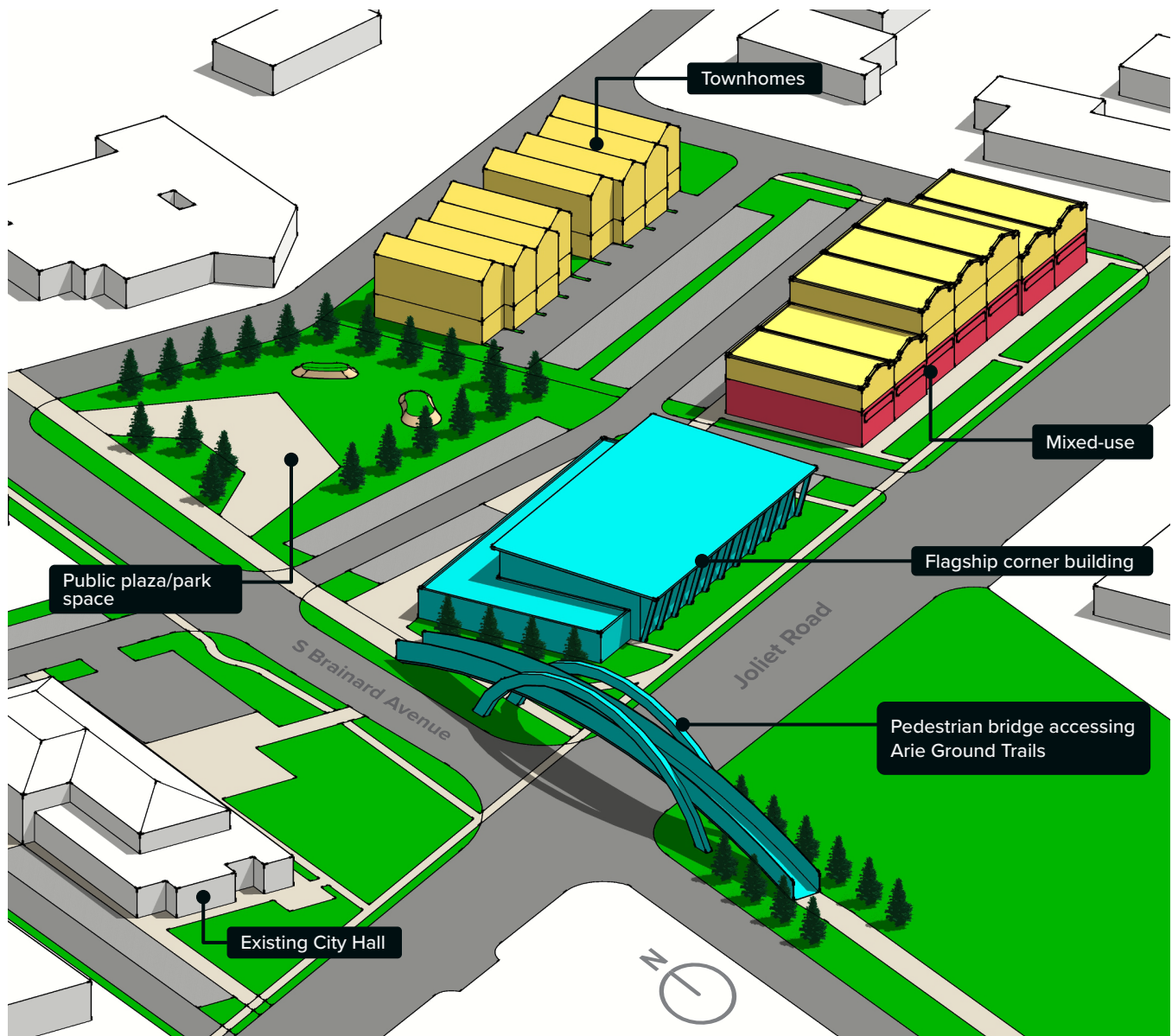
Legend

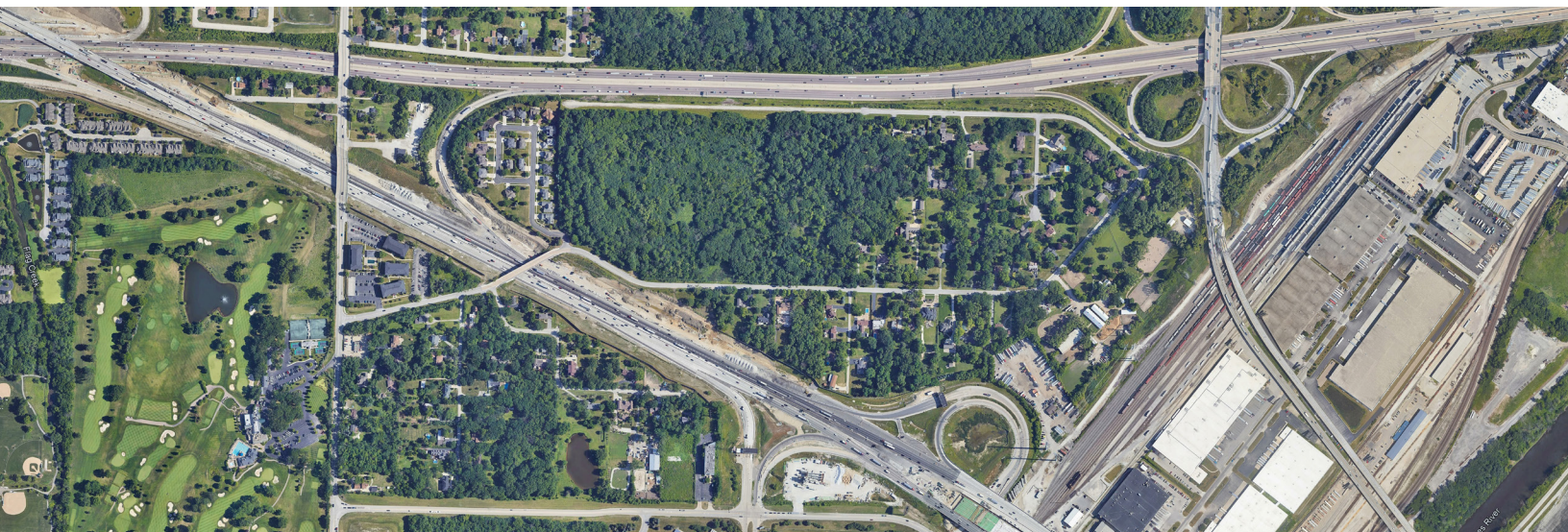
- Countryside City Boundary
- Parks/Open Space

JOLIET ROAD BRAINARD AVENUE SITE

Land Use

- Commercial
- Single-Family Attached
- Public/Semi-Public
- Existing Structures

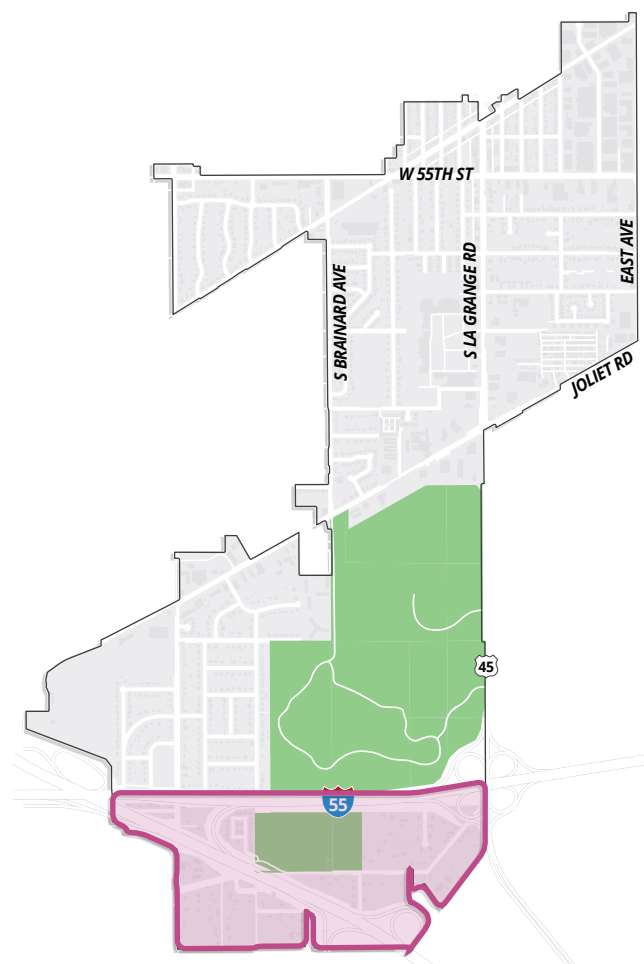




Aerial View: Southern Tier

SOUTHERN TIER SUBAREA

The Southern Tier Subarea includes the southern edge of Countryside. The Subarea is bounded by I-55 to the north, I-296 to the west, Route 45 to the east, and 75th Street to the south. This Subarea currently consists of single-family homes, open space, commercial uses, and a multi-family development community, as well as a few vacant or undeveloped parcels. There is opportunity for residential, commercial, and mixed-use infill development. New development should supplement existing development in this subarea, preserving the natural environment and peaceful character.



Southern Tier Subarea

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Despite its location between I-55 and I-294, the Southern Tier Subarea maintains a quiet, residential environment, as it provides single-family detached and multi-family homes with ample green space. Within this subarea is the southern portion of Arie Crown Forest, a nature preserve with hiking trails. An equestrian center is also located within this subarea, which contributes to this area's rural setting.



Stable and Maintain

In Countryside's Southern Tier, these areas, highlighted in blue, are stable residential uses that are occupied and maintained by residents. They have a rural character that is significantly different from Countryside's other neighborhood areas, and as such should be treated differently by the community. They are viable and should be maintained as rural, large-lot residential going forward.

Reinvestment Needed

Properties in areas 1, outlined in red, include single-family homes and an older commercial building. Redevelopment of this area for commercial uses could be accommodated through parcel assembly. Such development should bring and vitality to the area. **The only reinvestment site in the subarea is site 1.**

- 1 This site is uniquely situated along Willow Springs Road between Highways 55 and 294. Consideration should be given to redeveloping the area into a larger unified commercial development.

Green Space Activation

This area, highlighted in green, is owned by the Cook County Forest Preserve, but is underutilized as an open space asset. The community should work with the Forest Preserve to activate this natural area with trails and other passive outdoor amenities so it can become a greater asset to residents.

Future Land Use

- Single Family Detached
- Multi Family Residential
- Community Commercial
- Parks and Open Space

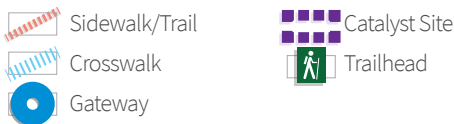
IMPROVEMENTS FRAMEWORK

The Southern Tier Subarea should continue to be a quiet, residential area. While there are few opportunities for infill development, improvements should be made to enhance pedestrian safety, such as filling missing sidewalks on Willow Springs Road as well as incorporating pedestrian signals with countdown timers, high visibility crosswalks, and ADA compliant curb ramps at the Willow Springs Road and 75th Street intersection. Additionally, to improve the portion of the Arie Crown Forest south of I-55, the City should coordinate with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to plan for and develop a trail network/loop throughout the large natural area.



Subarea Improvements

See [pages 84-85](#) for detailed descriptions of improvements.



71ST PLACE REDEVELOPMENT SITE

Land Use

- Commercial
- Single-Family Attached
- Existing Structures





Carl W. Legant
Memorial Park

CHAPTER 10

IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Countryside Comprehensive Plan should be used as the official policy guide for planning decisions made by the City's Mayor, Countryside City Council, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, and other City committees and elected officials. The Plan should serve as a primary reference in guiding policy formation, evaluating projects and planning initiatives, reviewing development proposals, and prioritizing public expenditures. Referencing the Comprehensive Plan will ensure future planning efforts and decisions align with the community's long-term vision and goals. Service providers and partner organizations should also be encouraged to use the Comprehensive Plan when considering new development, facilities, infrastructure updates, and programming within their parameters. To promote regular use of the Plan, the City should:

- Post the Comprehensive Plan document on the City website and make it available as a hardcopy at City Hall;
- Educate the public on how the Plan connects to development projects and other proposals occurring in the City;
- Guide the City Council, the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, and other City committees in the administration, interpretation, and continuous application of the Plan;
- Meet with key department heads and officials to explain the purpose, importance, and benefits of the Plan;
- Maintain a list of possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be the subject of change, addition, or deletion from the Plan; and
- Coordinate with and assist the City Council and the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals in the Plan amendment process, as necessary.

COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Implementation requires a coordinated effort between local service providers and community organizations. The City of Countryside should assume the leadership role in taking action on the Countryside Comprehensive Plan, but it will need to maintain partnerships to facilitate regular communication and cooperation with the various local groups. Partnerships will help identify opportunities to work collaboratively toward mutual interests and create an organized approach to implementation.

Countryside already has a variety of partnerships that should be maintained, including nearby municipalities; federal, state, and county elected officials; school districts; the local business community; and other groups with a vested interest in Countryside. The City should continue to strengthen partnerships with or explore new opportunities with the following:

- Pleasant Dale Park District;
- Forest Preserves of Cook County;
- Nearby public libraries (LaGrange, Hodgkins, McCook, and Western Springs);
- West Suburban Chamber of Commerce;
- Utility and Service Providers;
- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); and
- Pace Suburban Bus.

ENABLE REGIONAL COOPERATION

Given Countryside's position within the region and the number of individual districts and service providers, regional cooperation is a component of the City's success. Many of Countryside's issues are shared with nearby communities and should be addressed with a holistic, regional perspective. As such, close communication and partnerships with adjacent and nearby municipalities, inter-jurisdictional groups, and other organizations will be vital in addressing these shared issues, challenges, and opportunities. The City should consider the following recommendations to establish potential partnerships and foster greater regional cooperation:

- Establish a schedule of meetings with partner organizations to review emerging trends and issues, share long-term goals, and identify opportunities for partnership and cooperation. Key groups should include adjacent and nearby municipalities, Cook County, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Pleasant Dale Park District, the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, and other organizations and associations;
- Seek active involvement in regional projects that will affect the community;
- Partner with Cook County, IDOT, and nearby municipalities to address the movement and distribution of traffic through the area, accounting for how roadways function from a regional perspective instead of individual segments in the City;
- Partner with the Forest Preserves of Cook County and adjacent municipalities to connect existing trails and bicycle routes and create a regional system that connects residents to key destinations; and
- Encourage greater participation by local business community members in the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Committee (City Council) to strengthen Countryside's regional economic presence and ensure the City's economic goals are met.

MAINTAIN PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The Comprehensive Plan community outreach program was designed to solicit feedback on issues and opportunities from residents and stakeholders. Public engagement included a community workshop, a series of key stakeholder interviews, subarea workshops, focus group discussions, an online questionnaire, an interactive mapping tool, and other methods to engage with residents, businesses, property owners, local officials, and community stakeholders. In addition to supporting the planning process, these outreach efforts helped foster stewardship for the Comprehensive Plan and communicate the importance of planning within Countryside.

Sustaining this core value of public engagement, the City should continue to communicate with the public via online updates, announcements of major project achievements, and newsletters including information about planning and development efforts.

The City should maintain a way for residents and stakeholders to offer feedback and ask questions about planning initiatives and ongoing projects. Further, the City should consider hosting additional workshops and engagement opportunities in the future where residents could review the Plan and offer feedback about changing issues, opportunities, trends, and community preferences.

REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document and must be able to evolve and change over time. For example, if community attitudes change or new issues arise that are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the Plan should be revised and updated accordingly.

The City should undertake a complete review and update of the Plan every five (5) years, and intermittent evaluations every two (2) to three (3) years to identify smaller changes. The City should maintain a public list of potential amendments, issues, or needs. Ideally, these reviews should coincide with the preparation of the City's budget and upcoming capital improvements. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

TARGETING LAND ACQUISITION TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Depending on financial capacity, the City may wish to strategically acquire sites to further the development goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Through site acquisition, the City can maintain control over future use and timing of development. Ultimately the City would need to go through a developer solicitation process to relinquish properties for redevelopment. A subsequent development agreement would be predicated on policy decisions related to the use and type of development; fiscal and economic impacts; ability to attract additional development; and/or return on investment.

While municipal ownership affords the best control over development, it is understood that the capacity for the City to purchase and maintain multiple properties may be fiscally constrained. A viable alternative is to work with property owners to help them develop their properties or facilitate arrangements with buyers and/or developers. The City can then take an active role in the development process, relaxing or waiving permit fees, granting variances, and other actions.

While site acquisition can be an extremely effective means of controlling and facilitating development, it must be done strategically. The City should adhere to a policy governing land acquisition.

The following represents general guidance for site acquisition in the City:

- Catalytic development sites are well-positioned to spur other development or anchor an area. These sites are typically well located, but are currently underutilized or devoid of development and/or currently impacted by inadequate infrastructure;
- Sites that complete or enhance a larger development area could improve access or exposure to a larger site or provide for more options and flexibility. For example, a parcel near or adjacent to a commercial development could provide the opportunity for outlots and an additional entry point;
- Sites that provide a buffer to existing uses offer development potential for a use that is more intensive or may

negatively impact a nearby or adjacent use. Acquiring surrounding property can afford the opportunity to create a buffer through landscaping, sound walls, open space, or other mechanisms;

- Sites that can be leveraged as a part of a land exchange or relocation include locations that are well suited for a public facility or related use such as a new police or fire station but are not currently under municipal ownership. The City could acquire a site that may be more attractive from a development perspective and negotiate a land swap to secure the desired property. An additional example would involve securing multiple sites to help relocate a use better suited for another location elsewhere in the City;
- Sites that represent key pieces of a site assemblage. Development opportunities are often lost due to the inability to assemble the necessary parcels or acreage. Whether in a coordinated effort with a developer or as a proactive approach, the City should consider these opportunities on a case by case basis; and
- Blighted sites or uses that have a detrimental impact on an area. Site development is not always the final objective of acquisition. In some cases, the removal of a particular use can enhance the desirability of a larger area. Even if allowed under current zoning or operating as a legal non-conforming use, an existing business or use can detract from the potential of adjacent or nearby properties. The existing use may include a viable business that the City would like to retain but would be better suited for another location. The City can work to relocate those businesses including the potential for land exchanges.

MEASURE PROGRESS

A key element of implementation will be measuring progress in achieving the goals and objectives set out in the Countryside Comprehensive Plan. Measuring the success of planning initiatives and projects informs additional implementation efforts and provides an understanding of when core goals have been achieved. To measure the Plan's progress, the City should identify potential programs and incentives organized by the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The metrics should direct preferred trends that demonstrate positive change while encouraging continued improvement over the life of the Plan.

General Economic Development

Tax Incrementing Financing (TIF)

The City established two (2) commercial TIF districts: The first being along LaGrange Road, north of Joliet Road; the second along 55th Street between LaGrange Road and East Avenue.

TIF utilizes future increases in property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for improvements and further incentivize continued reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF district increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established, is reinvested in that area. Local officials may then issue bonds or undertake other financial obligations based on the growth in new revenue. The maximum life of a TIF district in the State of Illinois is twenty-three (23) years, although a district can be extended beyond that horizon to thirty-five (35) years through authorization from the State Legislature.

The City needs to be judicious in how funds are allocated to ensure that catalyst projects receive priority to ensure that it is in keeping with the vision for the City.

Small Business Assistance Program

A small business assistance grant program can be utilized to attract targeted retail businesses and assist existing businesses located within a particular area. As with a façade improvement program, business assistance funds are typically offered in the form of a matching grant that pays for a defined percentage of eligible expenditures. The expenditures are typically limited to build-out costs, signage, moving expenses, and physical improvements to the property necessary to accommodate a new business or the expansion of an existing business.

Priority can be given to businesses that complement the City's vision. The size of the grant available can also be tied to the overall impact the proposed project can have on the area. For example, the grant could be varied based on the anticipated sales tax to be generated by the project. Grant monies could be used to lessen the cost burden of relocating or expanding in Countryside. A business assistance program would likely have the most influence in attracting small and medium-sized retail tenants and restaurants.

Sales Tax Rebate

A sales tax rebate is a tool typically used by municipalities to incentivize a business to locate to a site or area. The rebate is offered as a percentage of the annual sales tax revenue generated by the establishment and is often tied to benchmarks so that as sales volume increases, so too does the proportion of the rebate. Sales tax rebates have proven effective in attracting new businesses and encouraging redevelopment and renovation.

Special Service Area (SSA)

SSAs can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated service area. An SSA is essentially added to the property tax within the identified service area and the revenue received is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. An SSA can be rejected if 51 percent of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. SSA funds can be used for such things as streetscape improvements, extra trash pickup, district marketing, and special events. An SSA could help facilitate improvements within specified areas of the Comprehensive Plan. Note: The City does not currently levy a property tax.

Business Districts

As authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code for the State of Illinois, a municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area as a Business Development District (BDD). A BDD would allow the City to levy up to an additional one percent retailer's occupation tax, one percent hotel tax, and one percent sales tax within a designated district. Similar to a TIF district, a BDD has a maximum life of twenty-three (23) years. BDD legislation also permits municipalities to utilize tax revenue growth that has been generated by BDD properties to fund improvements in the district.

BDD empowers a municipality to carry out a business district or redevelopment plan through the following actions:

- Acquire all development and redevelopment proposals;
- Acquire, manage, convey, or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired according to the provisions of a development or redevelopment plan;
- Apply for and accept capital grants and loans from the federal government and the State of Illinois for business district development and redevelopment;
- Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for business district development and redevelopment, and in this connection, issue such obligation or revenue bonds as it shall be deemed necessary, subject to applicable statutory limitations;
- Enter into contracts with any public or private agency or person;
- Sell, lease, trade, or improve such real property as may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment plans;
- Expend such public funds as may be necessary for the planning execution, and implementation of the business district plans; and
- Create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as an agent for the municipality for business district development and redevelopment.

BDD funds can be used for infrastructure improvements, public improvements, site acquisition, and land assemblage and could be applicable in the identified subareas or the Dansher Industrial Park.

Given the limited amount of funds that a BDD is capable of generating, compared to a TIF district, BDD is best suited for funding small scale improvements and property maintenance programs.

Tax Abatement

A property tax abatement is a versatile tool that can be applied to address a wide range of community issues. Property tax abatements are typically used as an incentive to attract businesses and revitalize Countryside's local economy. In the State of Illinois, municipalities and other taxing districts can abate any portion of the tax that they individually levy on a property. The period of tax abatement on a given property can be no longer than ten (10) years and the total combined sum of abated taxes for all taxing districts can administer the abatement by one of the two methods: 1) lowering the tax rate; or 2) initiating a property tax freeze where the property is taxed based on a pre-development assessed value.

In some circumstances, municipalities can also petition the County to lower a property's assessment. For example, a commercial property could be assessed at a percentage equivalent to that of a residential property. This is an effective means of lowering a property tax bill; however, it should be noted that this method impacts all taxing districts and not just the district making the request.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

PILOT is a tool similar to tax abatement. The City can use PILOT to reduce the property tax burden of a business for a predetermined period. In this instance, the City and property owners will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of property taxes. Payments are generally made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property.

PILOT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the City of a non-profit, institutional use, or other non-tax-paying entity location on a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services because they do not pay taxes. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the City to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

Incubators

Business incubators provide low-cost space and specialized support to small companies. Such services might include administrative consulting, access to office equipment and training, and assistance in accessing credit. Incubators are typically owned by public entities such as municipalities or economic development agencies who then subsidize rents and services with grants. In addition to job creation and generating activities, the goal is to facilitate the growth and expansion of startup businesses within an area.

On-Site and Façade Improvement Programs

An On-Site Improvement Program assists property owners in upgrading their existing parking lots and installing onsite landscaping. The program would apply to such things as improvements to surface parking areas, privately owned open space, and other areas not directly related to façade features. This could function separately or in conjunction with a Façade Improvement Program.

A Façade Improvement Program encourages projects that contribute to the economic revitalization and character of an area by providing financial and technical assistance for façade improvements. Building facades, both individually and collectively, create a strong first impression of an area. By implementing a Façade Improvement Program, current property owners are provided an opportunity to improve their outdated or failing structures without having to relocate.

Revolving Loan Fund

A Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is administered to provide financial support and assistance to new or expanding businesses. The borrower may use the low-interest loan for construction, property rehabilitation/improvements, and land acquisition, among other things. As Countryside aims to develop key sites, the City may consider securing its own RLF as local entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Fixing American's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

The [FAST Act](#), a five-year transportation reauthorization bill, was established in December 2015 as a replacement for the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act. The FAST Act is implemented and administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Act aims to improve infrastructure, provide long-term certainty and increased flexibility for states and local governments, streamline project approval processes, and encourage innovation to make the surface transportation system safer and more efficient. It authorized \$305 billion through 2020 for highways, vehicle safety, motor carrier safety, rail, public transportation, hazardous materials safety, and technology, research, and statistics programs.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The [HSIP program](#) aims to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The HSIP is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This core Federal-aid program had a 2020 budget of \$2.4 billion. To obligate HSIP funds, a State must develop, implement, and update a state highway safety program (SHSP), produce a program of projects or strategies to reduce identified safety problems, and evaluate the SHSP regularly. Eligible local projects include pedestrian hybrid beacons and roadway improvements that provide separation between pedestrians and motor vehicles, such as medians and pedestrian crossing islands.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) administers [ITEP funds](#) with federal reimbursement, which has historically been available for up to 50 percent of the costs of right-of-way and easement acquisition, and 80 percent of the costs for preliminary engineering, utility relocation, construction engineering, and construction costs. It should be noted that starting in the 2020 cycle, the ITEP no longer funds Phase I Engineering or Street Lighting that is not co-located with a transportation alternative facility. ITEP eligible projects include:

- Pedestrian/bicycle facility projects that create an alternative transportation option for access to workplaces, businesses, schools, shopping centers, and residential neighborhoods. Pedestrian/bicycle facility projects can be new construction or improvements to existing facilities;
- Landscape/streetscape projects;
- Scenic beautification projects;
- Conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails;
- Vegetation management in transportation rights-of-way;
- Stormwater management control and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff;
- Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats; and
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The [SRTS program](#) provides funding for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bike to school. SRTS projects are funded at 100 percent with no local match required, with a funding limit of \$200,000 for infrastructure projects and \$50,000 for non-infrastructure projects. Eligible applications include:

- Sidewalk improvements;
- Traffic calming and speed reduction;
- Pedestrian and bicycle-crossing improvements;
- On-street bicycle facilities;
- Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Secure bicycle parking system;
- Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools; and
- Education programs and activities to increase rates of walking and biking to school.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)

[STBGP funds](#) are administered by IDOT and allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway-related items. STBGP funds may be used for a variety of projects, including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration; widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements; traffic signage improvements; and green infrastructure funding. Projects must be identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and be consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Urban STBG funds are programmed and awarded to communities by the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), CMAP. Projects require a 20 percent match which is paid by the state and/or locally. Generally, these funds may not be used on local roads or rural minor collector projects. Exceptions include bridge and tunnel projects; safety projects; fringe and corridor parking facilities/programs; recreational trails, pedestrian, and bicycle projects; safe routes to school projects; boulevard/roadway projects largely in the right-of-way of divided highways; and inspection/evaluation of bridges, tunnels, and other highway assets.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) Set-Aside

[STP Set-Aside](#) is a sub-program of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program which provides funding for non-motorized transportation projects. Projects range from on-street bike facilities to multi-use paths and sidewalk infill programs to Safe Routes to School projects. Bicycle projects must be principally for transportation, rather than recreation.

Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The [Illinois Land and Water Conservation Fund program \(LWCF\)](#), similar to OSLAD, provides grants to municipalities, counties, and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50 percent match.

Park and Recreational Facilities Construction Program (PARC)

[PARC](#) is a state-financed program with grant funds offered to eligible local governments for park and recreation unit construction projects and land acquisition. Funded project amounts range from \$25,000 to \$2.5 million.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

IDNR administers several grants-in-aid programs to help municipalities and other local agencies provide public outdoor recreational areas and facilities. The programs operate on a cost-reimbursement basis to a government or not-for-profit organization.

Local governments can receive one grant per program per year, with no restrictions on the number of local governments that can be funded for a given location. IDNR grants are organized into three (3) major categories: Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD); Boat Access Area Development (BAAD); and the Illinois Trails Grant Program.

Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD)

The [OSLAD program](#) awards up to 50 percent of project costs up to a maximum of \$750,000 for acquisition and \$400,000 for development/renovation of recreational facilities, such as playgrounds, outdoor nature interpretive areas, campgrounds, park roads and paths, and beaches.

Illinois Trails Grant Program

The [Illinois Trails Grant Program](#) offers five (5) financial assistance grants for the acquisition, development, and occasional maintenance of trails for public recreational uses. These programs include the Bike Path Program, the Local Government Snowmobile Program, the Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund, the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program, and the Federal Recreational Trails Program.

These reimbursable grants are administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) under a 50 percent state, 50 percent local cost share. There is a \$200,000 maximum per project with \$1 million in grant funds available each year. Only off-road paths and trails with a hard paved or aggregate surface are eligible. The grants can fund land acquisition for securing a linear corridor or right-of-way to be used for bicycle path development.

Energy Efficiency and Resiliency

Illinois Clean Energy Foundation

The Illinois Clean Energy Foundation provides financial support for clean energy projects in Illinois. The Foundation was established with a \$225 million endowment provided by Commonwealth Edison. The Foundation offers grants under two (2) programs, the Energy Program and the Natural Areas Program. The Foundation's relevant active grant programs are listed below.

Energy Program

- [First Responders Resilience Pilot Program](#) – Municipal police stations, fire stations, and public agencies supplying water can apply for grants that help pay for solar electric panels with battery energy storage systems;
- [Photovoltaic Systems for Nature/Welcome Centers](#) – The Illinois Clean Energy Foundation provides grants to install photovoltaic (PV) systems at existing nature/welcome centers owned by park districts and forest preserves. Projects are encouraged to both use renewable energy as a system for power and as a medium for teaching about sustainable energy use;
- [Solar Thermal, Biomass, Advancing Renewable Energy and Emerging Technology Grants](#) – The Foundation supports Solar Thermal, Biomass, Advancing Renewable Energy, and Emerging Technology projects in categories where incentives are determined on a case-by-case basis; and
- [Net Zero Energy Building Grants](#) – Pre-proposal applications are by invitation only upon approval of a Request for Information (RFI).

Natural Areas Program

- [Land Acquisition](#) – The Foundation will consider projects that protect valuable natural resources in perpetuity through the purchase of conservation easements. These projects should support the protection of wildlife habitat in natural areas.

ACTION MATRIX

The Action Matrix ([pages 110-113](#)) presents a complete list of all actionable recommendations made within the Countryside Comprehensive Plan. The matrix includes key actions, time estimates, and potential partnerships. The Action Matrix should be used to evaluate the City's progress based on completed actions.

Key Action

Key actions include capital projects, policy or regulatory amendments, and strategies that should be prioritized to lay the foundation for long-term Plan implementation. For example, a key action may include regulatory amendments that remove barriers to desired development or coordination among stakeholders to procure funding for recommended improvements.

Priority Level

Priority is assigned with consideration for the cost, ease of implementation, and importance. Each action in the Implementation Action Matrix is indicated with one of the following:

- Priority 1: Near-term, low-cost, easier to implement, critical;
- Priority 2: Mid-term, essential; and
- Priority 3: Long-term, desirable.

Ease of Implementation

The ease of implementation is indicated by a traditional grade scale from A to D, with "A" being the easiest to implement and "D" being the most difficult to implement. This category is a collective indicator of the anticipated level of effort by the responsible parties, estimated cost, budget opportunities, and general stakeholder interest.

Time Estimate

Time estimates indicate, in years, how long it would take to complete a specific action. Descriptions of each timeframe are detailed below:

- Short-term: less than two (2) years.
- Mid-term: two (2) to five (5) years.
- Long-term: greater than five (5) years; and
- Ongoing: requires immediate action and continued attention throughout the life of the Comprehensive Plan.

Partners

Countryside will require the assistance of local and regional governments, organizations, and community groups to fully implement the Comprehensive Plan. While the City is generally responsible for initiating and implementing most of the Plan's policies and recommendations, there are many partnership opportunities that will be required to achieve the Plan's goals and supporting objectives. The partners section of the Action Matrix identifies potential partner organizations; however, there may be instances where an organization that is well-matched to one of the Plan goals, supporting policies, or recommendations is not listed as a potential partner for a given topic, and should be added. As with the rest of the Countryside Comprehensive Plan, the Action Matrix is a **flexible** document that should be regularly revisited and updated to reflect the evolving needs and opportunities within the Countryside community.

Ch #	Action	Priority	Ease (ABCD)	Timeframe	Partners
5 Commercial and Industrial Areas					
Business-Friendly Environment					
5-1.1	Ensure projects have mitigated impacts to established businesses.	1	B	Ongoing	IDOT
5-1.2	Work to improve access from interstates to commercial areas.	2	C	Long-term	IDOT
5-1.3	Work to communicate the benefits of owning and/or operating a business in Countryside.	3	B	Short-term	West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry
5-1.4	Continue to provide clear regulatory and permitting processes, giving business owners and entrepreneurs fair certainty for new ventures in the City.	2	B	Mid-term	
5-1.5	Continue to support the City's auto dealerships by ensuring they occupy areas that are attractive, convenient for customers, and have the necessary parking and utilities.	3	B	Long-term	
Commercial Character					
5-2.1	Explore design guidelines to ensure the City's commercial buildings are aesthetically pleasing, functionally well-designed, and complementary to the community's existing context.	3	B	Mid-term	
5-2.2	Re-examine the City's established design standards for suitability and applicability to key commercial opportunity sites.	2	B	Mid-term	
5-2.3	Work to promote the City's commercial and industrial areas.	1	B	Ongoing	West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry
5-2.4	Establish consistent design, signage, wayfinding, and streetscape standards.	3	A	Short-term	
5-2.5	Consider a façade improvement program to upgrade the visible, corridor-facing components of properties.	2	C	Mid-term	
5-2.6	Create an inviting public realm, using features like landscaped green spaces and plazas.	3	C	Long-term	
5-2.7	Promote site design that encourages the development of vibrant, walkable, commercial areas (City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021)).	2	B	Ongoing	
5-2.8	Promote Sustainable Sites Certification for landscaping around commercial areas (City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021)).	2	B	Ongoing	
5-2.9	Work with IDOT to plan for future reinvestment and flexible spaces in industrial corridors.	2	D	Long-term	IDOT
Commercial and Industrial Reinvestment					
5-3.1	Position key employment areas for long-term success by encouraging a greater diversity of users.	1	C	Mid-term	
5-3.2	Amend zoning code language within the City's M-1 and M-2 Manufacturing zoning districts to encourage a variety of new commercial and industrial uses.	1	B	Short-term	
5-3.3	Work with IDOT to ensure the streets continue to support truck in/out maneuvers as street reconstruction occurs.	2	C	Long-term	IDOT
5-3.4	Where appropriate, use economic development tools such as tax increment financing (TIF), special service areas (SSAs) and business development districts (BDDs) to facilitate desired commercial developments.	3	C	Mid-term	
5-3.5	Incentivize businesses to locate in the City's TIF districts.	3	B	Short-term	
5-3.6	Continue to maintain an inventory of the City's available commercial and industrial opportunity sites.	2	B	Ongoing	
5-3.7	Work with landowners to remove any barriers to redevelopment.	2	C	Short-term	
5-3.8	Encourage and support redevelopment of key vacant sites or obsolete uses.	3	C	Long-term	
Relationship to Surrounding Neighborhoods					
5-4.1	Ensure that higher-intensity commercial and industrial areas are effectively screened and buffered.	1	A	Short-term	
5-4.2	Review and amend regulations as necessary for industrial zoning districts to better align with City objectives.	2	C	Mid-term	
5-4.3	Encourage mid-density buildings (two to three stories) to act as a buffer between industrial and residential uses.	3	D	Long-term	

Ch #	Action	Priority	Ease (ABCD)	Timeframe	Partners
6	Residential Areas and Neighborhoods				
	Housing Availability and Attainability				
6-1.1	Promote diversity of housing stock accessible to diverse residents (City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021)).	2	C	Ongoing	
6-1.2	Support the provision of a variety of different residential types, lot sizes, and unit sizes at a diversity of price points.	2	C	Mid-term	
6-1.3	Promote the development of expanded senior housing options.	2	C	Mid-term	
6-1.4	Support the development and use of all types of housing, including single-family detached, attached, or multi-family dwellings for senior housing.	2	D	Long-term	
6-1.5	Promote areas for new multi-family and mixed use development near local amenities.	2	C	Mid-term	
6-1.6	Promote investment in the City's existing neighborhoods.	1	B	Short-term	
6-1.7	Encourage new development and infill development that is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential neighborhoods.	1	C	Mid-term	
6-1.8	Consider infill development sites to promote development that can strengthen existing areas of the City.	3	B	Short-term	
6-1.9	Facilitate the adoption of residential renewable energy technologies (City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021)).	2	B	Ongoing	
	Neighborhood Appearance and Character				
6-2.1	Establish design standards within existing residential neighborhoods.	2	A	Short-term	
6-2.2	Build new or connect existing sidewalks with a focus on connectivity between neighborhoods and established commercial areas.	2	C	Long-term	
6-2.3	Improve existing and strategically install new street lighting along residential streets.	3	B	Short-term	
6-2.4	Improve, maintain, and enhance the aesthetic of homes in the City's neighborhoods.	2	B	Ongoing	
6-2.5	Advertise grants or low-interest loans to property owners to help fund private property improvements.	1	C	Short-term	Local and regional financial institutions
6-2.6	Audit the contractor licensing and residential permitting process for clarity and ease of use.	3	C	Short-term	
6-2.7	Ensure that inspection practices preserve the appearance and property value of existing housing.	2	A	Ongoing	
6-2.8	Work with commercial and industrial property owners to install 8' high screening and vertical buffering on their property line.	1	B	Short-term	
	Residential Services				
6-3.1	Ensure that the City's residential areas provide high quality streetscapes.	1	C	Ongoing	
6-3.2	Continue to support the City's Shared Cost Tree Removal Program.	2	B	Ongoing	
6-3.3	Consider programs to support the direction of the City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021) .	3	C	Short-term	
	Neighborhood Amenities				
6-4.1	Ensure that the City's neighborhoods have accessible and equitable pedestrian and bicycle connections.	2	C	Ongoing	
6-4.2	Continue to offer residential reimbursement programs.	3	B	Ongoing	
6-4.3	Strategically encourage or develop public spaces as sites become available.	3	C	Mid-term	

Ch #	Action	Priority	Ease (ABCD)	Timeframe	Partners
7	Transportation and Mobility				
	Traffic Circulation, Safety and Congestion				
7-1.1	Redesign critical intersections to reduce traffic congestion and improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.	2	D	Long-term	IDOT, Cook County
7-1.2	Continue to ensure appropriate maintenance and improvement of roadways.	1	B	Ongoing	IDOT, Cook County
7-1.3	Partner with IDOT as the planned improvement projects for 55th Street, Joliet Road and Willow Springs Road progress through the final design and construction stages.	3	B	Short-term	IDOT
7-1.4	Partner with Cook County as the Plainfield Road improvement project progresses through the final design and construction stages.	3	B	Short-term	Cook County
7-1.5	Coordinate with the Illinois Tollway to complete the noise wall and screen barrier along the Tri-State Tollway.	2	C	Short-term	Illinois Tollway
7-1.6	Consolidate curb cuts along the City's arterial and collector roadways and encourage cross access between parcels.	3	B	Mid-term	
7-1.7	Ensure that traffic signal modernization plans incorporate adequate safety provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists.	2	C	Short-term	IDOT, Cook County
7-1.8	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.	1	A	Short-term	
	Design Standards				
7-2.1	Improve streetscape design standards to beautify the public spaces along the City's highly visible corridors.	3	C	Mid-term	
	Sustainable Alternatives				
7-3.1	Work with businesses and property owners to dedicate parking spaces for electric vehicle charging stations.	2	B	Short-term	
7-3.2	Work with the Sustainability Committee to research and consider new services and technologies for sustainable alternatives in transportation.	3	C	Mid-term	Sustainability Committee
	Public Transportation				
7-4.1	Coordinate with Pace on transit service and infrastructure improvements.	2	B	Ongoing	Pace
7-4.2	Support biking to transit with instructions posted at bus shelters and/or stops on putting bikes on buses.	2	A	Short-term	Pace
7-4.3	Collaborate with Pace to explore a location for a Park-n-Ride lot in the City or a multi-community area.	3	C	Mid-term	Pace, RTA, adjacent communities
7-4.4	Work with IDOT and Pace to promote bus priority features and increased service for the future I-55 widening project.	2	D	Long-term	IDOT, Pace
	Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility				
7-5.1	Continue to develop an active transportation system that incorporates interconnected paths, sidewalks, and on-street bikeways.	2	C	Ongoing	
7-5.2	Support regional bike and pedestrian connectivity.	3	C	Ongoing	
7-5.3	Ensure that sidewalks provide good access and mobility for all residents.	1	B	Ongoing	
7-5.4	Emphasize sidewalk improvements or installations as priorities for the City's major corridors where appropriate.	2	C	Short-term	IDOT, Cook County
7-5.5	Coordinate with IDOT as the planned pedestrian pathway projects on 55th Street and Joliet Road progress through the final design and construction stages.	2	B	Short-term	IDOT
7-5.6	Partner with IDOT and Cook County to ensure that planned improvement projects include provisions to close any gaps in the pedestrian system.	2	C	Mid-term	IDOT, Cook County
7-5.7	Collaborate with IDOT and Cook County to install missing pedestrian safety measures at signalized intersections.	2	B	Mid-term	IDOT, Cook County
7-5.8	Collaborate with IDOT to install safe mid-block pedestrian crossings.	2	C	Mid-term	IDOT, Cook County
7-5.9	Continue to add bicycle parking infrastructure to encourage bicycle travel for short-distance trips.	1	B	Short-term	
7-5.10	Install wayfinding signage to guide cyclists to local destinations and nearby Metra stations.	2	A	Short-term	Metra
7-5.11	Work with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to improve access to Arie Crown Forest.	3	B	Mid-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County
7-5.12	Work with LaGrange School District 105 to develop Safe Walking Route Plans for each of the District's schools.	2	C	Mid-term	LaGrange School District
7-5.13	Continue to maintain and repair pedestrian infrastructure as part of the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP).	1	B	Ongoing	

Ch #	Action	Priority	Ease (ABCD)	Timeframe	Partners
8	Community Facilities and Environment				
	Levels of Service				
8-1.1	Maintain and strengthen relationships with community service providers and organizations.	1	B	Short-term	
8-1.2	Ensure that Countryside continues to benefit from an adequate level of fire protection.	1	A	Ongoing	Pleasantview Fire Protection District
8-1.3	Ensure that Countryside continues to benefit from a high level of public safety and police protection.	1	A	Ongoing	Countryside Police Department
8-1.4	Ensure that the City's infrastructure meets the needs of current and future residents and businesses.	1	A	Ongoing	Public Works Department
8-1.5	Continue the program of library partnership and ensure it extends to Hodgkin's new library.	1	A	Ongoing	LaGrange Public Library, Hodgkins Public Library
	Capital Facilities and Infrastructure				
8-2.1	Continue to evaluate levels of service and facility capacities to support current and future residents.	1	B	Ongoing	
8-2.2	Utilize the CIP to address short- and long-term infrastructure improvements and facility planning.	2	C	Ongoing	
8-2.3	Undertake a regular review of the CIP to ensure it addresses community needs.	2	C	Ongoing	
	Access to Parks				
8-3.1	Update the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.	2	C	Short-term	
8-3.2	Collaborate to provide access to under-utilized land for trails, community gardens, and sustainable landscapes.	3	C	Long-term	Private property owners
8-3.3	Optimize linkages between parks and open spaces.	2	B	Short-term	
8-3.4	Collaborate with private property owners to create vibrant public gathering spaces.	3	C	Long-term	Private property owners
8-3.5	Enhance parks, open space, and recreational opportunities for all residents.	2	C	Short-term	
8-3.6	Collaborate with park and forest preserve districts.	2	C	Long-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Pleasant Dale Park District, Park District of LaGrange
8-3.7	Collaborate to create and maintain hiking, biking, canoeing, and other recreational trails.	3	C	Long-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Pleasant Dale Park District, Park District of LaGrange
8-3.8	Collaborate to provide accessible recreational services involving parks and open space.	3	C	Long-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Pleasant Dale Park District, Park District of LaGrange
8-3.9	Foster healthy community relationships through open space.	2	B	Ongoing	
8-3.10	Continue the strategies outlined under the Parks and Open Space goal of the City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021) .	1	B	Short-term	
8-3.11	Strategically acquire land to develop pocket parks and tot lots in neighborhoods.	2	C	Ongoing	
8-3.12	Connect parks and recreation areas with trails on existing rights-of-way and through neighborhoods.	3	C	Long-term	
	Preserved Natural Areas				
8-4.1	Work to initiate a more active Arie Crown Forest.	2	B	Mid-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County
8-4.2	Support coordination among neighboring municipalities to ensure residents have access to the forest preserves.	3	C	Mid-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, neighboring municipalities
8-4.3	Build safe and visible pedestrian-oriented entryways into the Arie Crown Forest.	1	B	Short-term	Forest Preserve District of Cook County
8-4.4	Invest in existing green spaces by modernizing aging facilities and building new recreational options.	2	C	Short-term	
8-4.5	Consider additional facilities to build in the City's parks and public spaces.	2	B	Short-term	