
Following is a summary of goals and preliminary strategies defined during the Central Street Planning and Design Process. The City engaged The Lakota Group, Gewalt Hamilton Associates, and Infrastructure Engineering Inc. to conduct the process, which included three phases:

State of the Corridor Analysis: inventory/assessment of land use, zoning, transportation, infrastructure, and streetscape/physical conditions; meetings with City staff and stakeholders, and two community workshops.

Community Visioning: public process to generate strategies/concepts for physical improvements and development/redevelopment, and a community workshop to review options and refine ideas.

Master Plan/Streetscape Design: preparation of a Preliminary Master Plan and Streetscape Design booklet, a community workshop to review the Preliminary Master Plan, a joint Plan Commission/City Council workshop (April 12, 2007), and a Final Plan and Streetscape Design approach and report.

Central Street: Future Vision

The draft Master Plan and Streetscape Design provide a vision for how Central Street can be enhanced as a unique mixed-use, neighborhood-oriented district that includes residential, retail, office, service, civic, institutional, and transit uses. The Plan/Design is based on the community's desire for higher-quality development and streetscape improvements that maintain the area's eclectic, "funky," "European village," "small town" character.

The following are key Master Plan objectives:

- **Sustain and enhance Central Street as:**
 - An attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented street with its own unique character.
 - A location for diverse, small-scale retail shops, service businesses, and restaurants.
 - A transit-oriented community with multi-modal transportation options.
 - An area of well-maintained, vibrant and green neighborhoods.
 - A local and regional destination for civic, cultural, and athletic facilities.
- Encourage commercial development, including office uses, in key locations to provide more goods and services to residents and visitors.
- Enhance existing multi-family housing and provide diverse residential opportunities, including apartments, condominiums, and townhomes.
- Improve the appearance and use of existing open space.
- Improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access and circulation.
- Encourage the use of sustainable building and site design, both in new buildings and in adaptive reuse/renovations/façade improvements.

- Establish a defined “building envelope” for new development with appropriate setbacks, “stepbacks,” and sidewalk and alley widths that enhance the street’s pedestrian-oriented shopping environment while respecting adjacent residential uses.

Recommended Strategies

To improve Central Street’s physical character, preserve its eclectic charm, and provide a vision for future improvement and development, the Master Plan highlights numerous opportunities for positive change along commercial and residential blocks and at Northwestern University’s Ryan Field. Recommended strategies include the following:

Zoning

Potential District Changes

- Consider form-based code and design standards to more specifically tailor development regulations to Central Street. A form-based code would allow a more “block-by-block” approach to defining the physical form/building envelope on Central Street by taking into account the range of existing conditions.
- Rezone B2 district between Hartrey and Eastwood, including the northern one-half of the Chase Bank site at Green Bay Road, to B1a, reducing building height from 4 to 3 stories. Southern half of Chase site will remain B2.
- Rezone C1 district along Green Bay south of Harrison to B2 or keep as C1 commercial district.
- Rezone O1 district between Eastwood and Ashland and north of Central to B1a (3 stories).
- Rezone portion of OS district covering CTA station to B2 to encourage retail uses.

Potential Regulation/Form Changes

- **R4:** Keep district as is.
- **R5:** Change maximum height from 5 to 4 stories.
- **B1a, B2, C1 & C2:**
 - Change front setback to 14 feet from curb to building (for wider/consistent sidewalk).
 - Change corner/side yard to 20 feet from curb to building (for transition to residential).
- **C2:** Change front setback to 30 feet from curb to building for Gross Point/Crawford/Central intersection.
- **C1 & C2:** Require shared parking/curb cuts/access drives where feasible.

Design Guidelines:

- Develop landscape ordinance with site maintenance requirements.
- Articulate buildings with projections, recesses, material changes, parapets, cornices, varying roof heights/lines, and/or new facades to avoid long, monolithic structures.
- Design buildings with a clearly defined base, middle, and top.

- Consider special features for highly visible and prominent corner buildings such as cupolas, atriums, clock towers, and/or varying rooflines.
- Incorporate setbacks or upper floor terraces to further articulate buildings.
- Establish a distinct first-floor base with easily identifiable storefronts with clear glass and kneewalls for retail and mixed-use buildings.
- Design the rear/side of buildings that are visible from streets, sidewalks or parking lots in a manner consistent with front or sides of building.
- Screen parking lots and loading areas with landscaping.

Building Envelope:

Setbacks

- Commercial – 14 feet on Central curb to building.
- Commercial – 14 feet on the west side of Green Bay curb to building.
- Commercial – 20 feet on side streets curb to building.
- West End (Crawford/Gross Point) – 30 feet curb to building.
- Residential – 27 feet from property line to building (+ parkway/sidewalk)

Stepbacks

- Incorporate stepbacks at upper stories to further articulate buildings and reduce their perceived height/mass.

Sidewalks

- Set buildings back for improved sidewalk width, wider sight lines, and streetscape.
- Commercial: 14 feet wide for new development.
- Commercial: Add 5 feet to blocks west of Lincolnwood (for 12 feet minimum), where feasible.
- Install new walks along commercial blocks.
- Residential: Continue 5-foot width.
- Install new walks along residential blocks where missing.

Alleys

- Minimum 18-foot alley width with direct access to new development.
- No alley obstructions such as utility poles, trash cans, or loading/service areas (although access to trash/loading/service areas would allowed from alleys).

Parking:

- Refine parking ratios to provide adequate spaces for new development.
- Possibly lower residential parking ratios near transit stations.
- Add short-term, 15-minute parking east of Hartrey for quick errands.

Street Width:

- Narrow Central Street west of Lincolnwood to 40 to 42 feet, where feasible.

