

# 3 Land Use

## Definition

Land Use is the way a piece of real estate is utilized. Existing, proposed, and adopted land uses all play a role in the planning process. Once a land use plan is adopted, the next step is to take measures to ensure that the proper public policies are in place to realize the Village's vision.

## Overview of Existing Land Use

A community's land use plan provides a "blueprint" from which private and public investment resources will be directed. There are different kinds of land uses, including: *existing* land use (how a piece of property is currently used), *proposed* land use (how a piece of property could be used), and *adopted* land use (how a piece of property expects to be used based on an official decision by the elected officials of a community). Words that generally describe the land uses in any Downtown area include: retail, service, restaurant, office, mixed-use (office or residential above first floor retail), residential, transportation, and vacant. Words that more specifically describe the uses in the Downtown that reflect the character and ambiance of the Downtown include: specialty stores, sit-down restaurants, movie theater, architectural office, multiple-family residential, and train station.

The existing land uses in Downtown Glen Ellyn are consistent with a very successful and vibrant suburban core. Glen Ellyn is the beneficiary of a renowned historic Downtown heritage with accompanying land uses that are the result of over a century-long development pattern and progression. The Downtown is a current suburban commercial destination that is recognized for the volume and quality of its retail and restaurant establishments. The diversity of the Downtown uses that are in the adopted Village of Glen Ellyn Comprehensive Plan include: Downtown Commercial, Public/Governmental, Church, Medium-Density Residential, Low-Density Attached Residential, Single-Family Residential, and Park/Open Space.



Hardware



Street Vendor



Mixed-Use

The core retail (C5A) area includes retail, service, office, restaurant, residential, and parking uses. There is a range of one- to three-story buildings, with a large concentration of two-plus-story buildings on Main Street (between

Pennsylvania Avenue and Crescent Boulevard) and on Crescent Boulevard (between Main Street and Forest Avenue). Other than a few buildings with residential uses between Duane Street and Hillside Avenue, the uses in the core area are commercial in nature.

The service (C5B) area includes civic and institutional uses such as the Civic Center, Fire Station, Post Office, Library, and several churches. In addition, it includes retail, service, general office, medical office, restaurant, residential, parking and park uses. Recently, several new, large-scale developments have been constructed, including a medical clinic and multiple family residential developments on Pennsylvania Avenue. Other recent developments include a new bank and a remodeled/expanded insurance office on Pennsylvania Avenue, and two mixed-use buildings near the intersection of Crescent Boulevard and Park Boulevard. Several newer developments have received mixed reviews by the public, and any negative comments have been primarily due to the modern building designs that have few if any ties to the historic character of some of the older Downtown buildings.

The Prairie Path Park (less than a ½-acre) and Volunteer Park (less than a ¼-acre) are small enough to accommodate passive recreational uses (sitting, reading, eating, etc.); however, they are unable to accommodate a central gathering space for a community of 27,000 people. A “rule of thumb” for transit-oriented development (TOD) design is to create a civic space of real importance adjacent to transit and declare its importance in the design.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the multiple family developments are located on the outer “four corners” of the Downtown study area. A few dwelling units can be found in the core and service areas as well. General “rules of thumb” for residential densities include 50 to 100 dwelling units per acre to accommodate Metra rail, and 20 dwelling units per acre to reduce dependency on the automobile and increase transit ridership. There are no density standards in the C5A or C5B districts related to the number of permitted dwelling units on a given property. The “R4” (Multiple Family) Residential District on the periphery of the Downtown study area allows up to a maximum of 17 dwelling units per acre.

The rail corridor is a dominant feature of the Downtown. It serves as a passenger connector to the Chicagoland region, a freight corridor to locations across the country, and a divider of the Downtown when the trains pass through and/or stop in the Downtown area. In addition, the Illinois Prairie Path connects bicyclists and pedestrians from the region to Downtown Glen Ellyn.

Private, public off-street, and public on-street parking is provided throughout the Downtown; however, it is not conveniently-distributed and/or it creates a gap in the primary Downtown streetscape (e.g. the “South Main” lot by the flower clock).

Many of the Downtown parcels are small; therefore, any redevelopment efforts will likely require the merger of two or more parcels to make the reinvestment financially-feasible for the developer and property owner(s).



*Downtown Panoramic View – Northeast Corner of Main Street and Railroad Tracks*

<sup>1</sup> Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) are mixed-use neighborhoods focused around a transit station. Information provided at a two-day Transit-Oriented Development Design seminar hosted by AICP Planners Training Service.



Existing Land Use



Village of Glen Ellyn  
Downtown Strategic  
Plan

June 2, 2008



## Adopted Land Use

The Village of Glen Ellyn Comprehensive Plan, prepared by Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen & Payne, Inc. with Parsons Transportation Group, was adopted on April 9, 2001, by Ordinance Number 4930. It serves as an update to the Village's 1986 Comprehensive Plan.

### Village of Glen Ellyn Comprehensive Plan and Summary

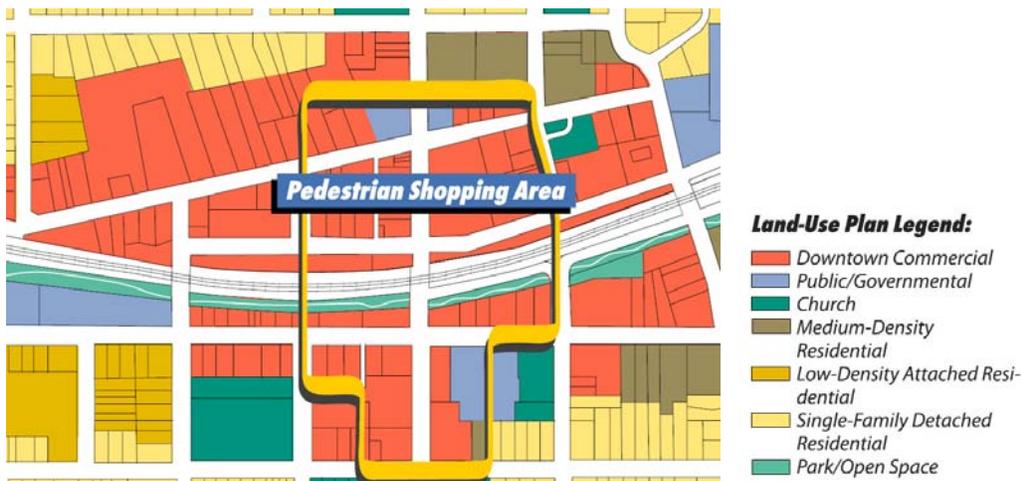
Many of the issues that were considered for the Downtown in 2001, continue to affect the Downtown today.

#### Sample of Comprehensive Plan Issues

The following list contains a sample of the full list of the Village's Comprehensive Plan issues for the Downtown area:

- The Downtown is the "historic commercial and multi-purpose focal point" for the Village of Glen Ellyn community.
- The Downtown could be enhanced and compatible, high-quality redevelopment should be promoted in the area. New buildings should be compatible with the existing, predominant architectural styles found in the Downtown.
- Rail traffic causes delays in vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.
- Parking is not well distributed in the Downtown.
- The Downtown should consist of an "exciting mix of retail, service, entertainment, office and public uses, as well as housing units."
- The Glen Art Theater should be maintained and enhanced.
- Multiple family residential could serve as buffers between commercial uses and single family neighborhoods, and add "life and vitality" to the character of the Downtown.
- Maintenance and repairs are needed, including buildings and surfaces (pavement).
- Storefront façade improvements are needed.
- Metra riders base their impressions on the community by what they see from the train.
- Pedestrians should be a priority.
- A small new "forecourt" to the Glen Ellyn Civic Center should be constructed along the north side of Duane Street.

In general, the update to the 1986 Comprehensive Plan scales back the intensity of development around the periphery of the Downtown, ensuring the protection of existing single family homes and focusing the commercial closer to the heart of the Downtown.



Source: Comprehensive Plan, Glen Ellyn, Illinois (April 2001)

Prepared by: Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen and Payne, Inc. with Parsons Transportation Group



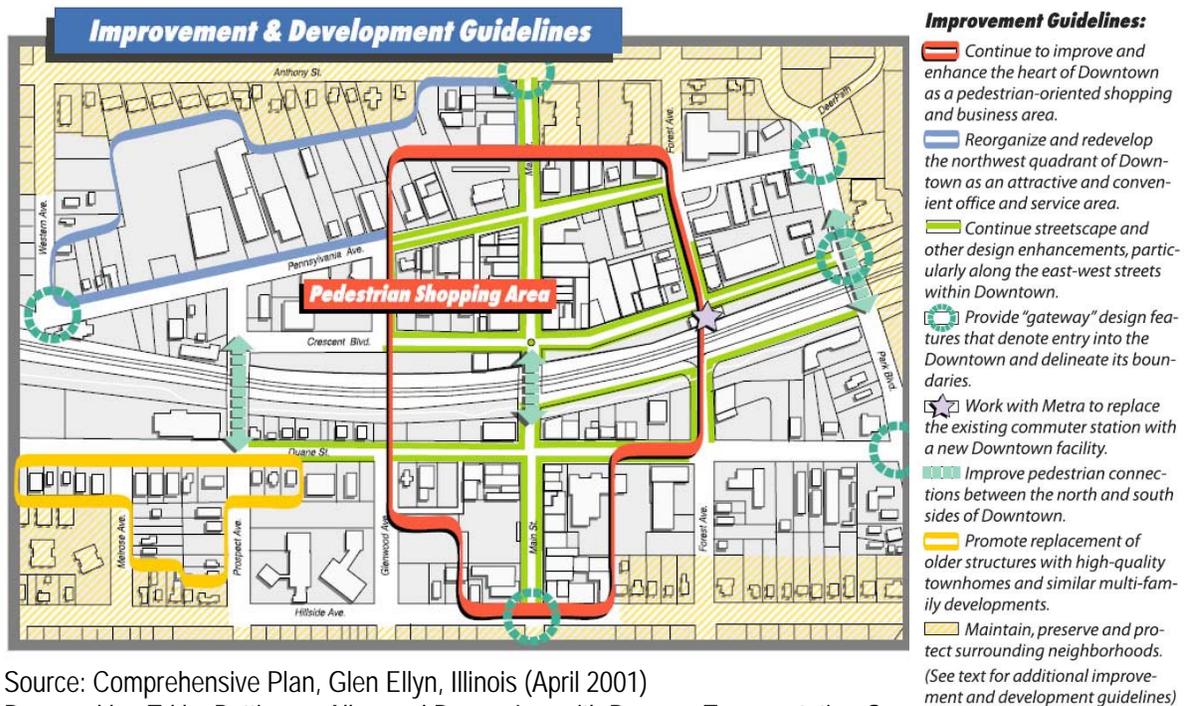
### Core Pedestrian and Shopping Area

The core pedestrian and shopping area is generally bound by Pennsylvania Avenue to the north, Hillside Avenue to the south, Glenwood Avenue to the west, and Forest Avenue to the east. The Glen Ellyn Depot is located along the eastern edge of the shopping area and should be replaced.

Streetscaping expansion and enhancement opportunities are located along the rail corridor and Duane Street, in addition to the entire pedestrian and shopping area.

Redevelopment opportunities are identified in the northwest and southwest corners of the overall Downtown area, while the residential neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown are identified to be maintained, preserved, and protected.

Gateways into the Downtown include Main Street, Park Boulevard, and Pennsylvania Avenue. Internal circulation enhancements for pedestrians include the rail crossings at Prospect Avenue, Main Street, and Park Boulevard.



Source: Comprehensive Plan, Glen Ellyn, Illinois (April 2001)

Prepared by: Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen and Payne, Inc. with Parsons Transportation Group

In general, many of the features identified in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan still hold true today. Some observed differences include: the possibility that the core shopping area is more focused along Main Street and Crescent Boulevard west of Forest Avenue, and less so on other side streets and periphery streets; other gateways and wayfinding features should include the Main Street intersections with Geneva Road, Hill Avenue, and Roosevelt Road, and Park Boulevard intersections with Hill Avenue and Roosevelt Road;

## Key Thoughts – Proposed Land Use

Potential future land uses will be considered later in the Downtown Strategic Plan process after the data collection and analysis phase is complete; however, based on the recommendations of Glen Ellyn’s residents, merchants and stakeholders who gathered throughout the public involvement process – and the recommendations of the *Market Analysis and Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Glen Ellyn*, prepared by Gruen Gruen + Associates – the proposed land uses which should be considered for the Downtown Strategic Plan include the following:

Proposed Land Use	Purpose
Community Greenspace	Provide a large area for the citizens of Glen Ellyn to gather in the Downtown for recreation and socialization (picnics, concerts, events, etc.) This urban park should be an iconic space designed as trophy landscape that is recognized internationally for its character and charm. The success of the park will spill over to the Downtown economics by functioning as a magnet for people who also will be consumers for Downtown retail.
Mixed-Use	While retail and restaurant uses should be reserved for first floor space throughout the core of the Downtown, it is important to increase the overall density and activity in the Downtown. This additional density will increase the consumer population of the Downtown to fuel the economic engine to support the existing and future retail. Mixed-use redevelopment is a key means for accomplishing this objective. Although mixed-use can be described as office above first floor retail, ensure that any new developments accommodate residential dwelling units above first floor retail (in the core shopping district) and above first floor office (on the periphery of the Downtown). In addition, ensure that existing buildings are remodeled and new infill development is historically-sensitive.
Office and Service	The infusion of additional service businesses and professional and medical offices into the Downtown would increase employment and thus the demand for retail and other services. Businesses and offices are typically daytime consumers; however, they can spill-over into evening and weekend consumption as well. The location of these businesses must be strategically positioned so as not to interrupt critical retail street corridors. An appropriate location is above or below first floor retail in a mixed-use setting or a site that is on the periphery of the Downtown core.
Multiple Family Residential	There is a demand for Downtown residential living for people who want to enjoy the benefits of the Downtown including charm, convenience, and the cluster of services available within a comfortable walk from home; therefore, the opportunity exists to provide additional dwelling units for all sectors – particularly empty-nesters (couples who no longer need a big house but want to remain in Glen Ellyn) and young professionals (individuals and couples with good salaries who want to live in Glen Ellyn but don’t need or want a house at this stage in their lives).

Single Family Residential with  
Accessory Dwelling Unit

There are a limited number of single family residential homes in the Downtown study area, several of which have charm and historic value. The opportunity exists to provide single family property owners the option to add on to their homes, to add on the top of their garages, or to remodel a portion of their existing homes to accommodate an accessory dwelling unit. (An accessory dwelling unit is similar to an efficiency apartment, and the unit size is approximately 600 square feet in area.)

Civic and Institutional

The charm and architectural richness of Glen Ellyn's Downtown exists partly because of the elegance of many civic and institutional buildings. These buildings and the viewsheds to these buildings must be recognized and either preserved or enhanced. New civic and institutional uses should also be considered and be accompanied with the strictest standards of architectural excellence.

Parking

Provide additional parking to accommodate the needs of future development, including the event and recreation programming for the community greenspace. Parking improvements should be coupled with efficient traffic circulation recommendations. Additionally, the Village may opt for a parking garage, which could liberate existing parking fields for higher and better uses.