



Redevelopment Strategies for the Southside Corridor

Mundelein, IL

April 3-4, 2018

Urban Land Institute Chicago

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Village Overview.....	3
The Southside Corridor.....	4
Scope of Work.....	5
Overall Study Area Recommendations.....	6
Corridor Identity & Regional Connections.....	6
Coordinate Development Opportunities.....	10
Site Specific Development Recommendations.....	12
Priority Site 1: Medline Site.....	12
Priority Site 2: Oak Creek Plaza Site.....	14
Priority Site 3: Garden Fresh Site.....	18
Priority Site 4: Patriot’s Plaza Site.....	20
Priority Site 5: Mixed Industrial & Commercial at Eastern End.....	21
Financing.....	22
Conclusion.....	22

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Introduction

The Village of Mundelein, IL has tremendous opportunity—several key sites along Townline Road are poised for redevelopment and have the potential to redefine the Village's entire southside.

Mundelein's southside is centered along Townline Road (IL Route 60), which currently functions as a typical suburban commercial corridor lined on either side by commercial and industrial uses in single-story buildings with large surface parking lots. Changes in the retail industry have had a significant impact on Townline Road—many former retail sites are now either vacant or have underperforming tenants. As these sites are redeveloped with new, viable uses, the Village has tremendous opportunity to guide the transformation of the corridor and the entire southside, from an unattractive, underutilized part of town into a vibrant, attractive gateway into the Village.

The Village of Mundelein engaged the Urban Land Institute, Chicago (ULI Chicago) to provide recommendations for highest and best land use for key

sites along Townline Road (Figure 1) and to provide strategies to guide the overall redevelopment of the southside corridor.

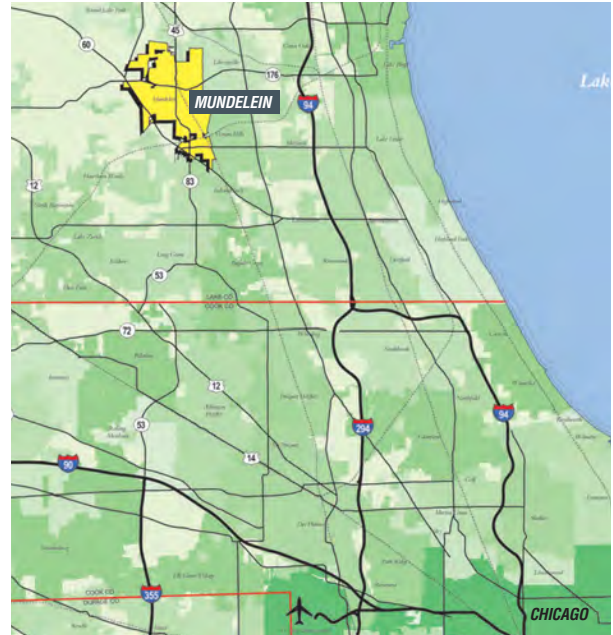


Figure 2. **Locational Context: Village of Mundelein**

Source: Village of Mundelein Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2011



Figure 1. **The TAP Study area is centered on the 1.2 mile stretch of Townline Road from Butterfield Road to IL 83.**

Source: Village of Mundelein

Village Overview

Located in central Lake County, Mundelein is a family-friendly community with nearly 31,000 residents. Mundelein residents have access to all the amenities that draw people to Lake County—stable housing stock, good schools, plentiful open space, and close-by shopping and dining destinations. Mundelein is relatively affordable—median home prices in the Village are lower than the neighboring municipalities such as Libertyville and Vernon Hills. Lower home prices have attracted younger, middle-income working families and immigrant families to Mundelein in greater numbers, making it more diverse than neighboring communities and Lake County as a whole.

Overall, Mundelein is a thriving community. Its school districts are on the upswing, recent residential developments by national home-builders have been very successful, industrial areas have low vacancy and the Village’s sustained effort to create a vibrant downtown is starting to bear fruit. Additionally, the Village’s leadership is embracing growth and positive change, helping create a strong development environment.

Community members share a strong sense of pride in Mundelein—they value its diversity and family-friendly environment and expressed strong interest in promoting high-quality developments that can serve as regional destinations within Mundelein. During interviews with ULI Chicago, many community stakeholders communicated that the Village currently lacks “destination quality” restaurants and entertainment venues, and that the large developable parcels along the Townline corridor might offer the perfect opportunity to incorporate such amenities and uses.

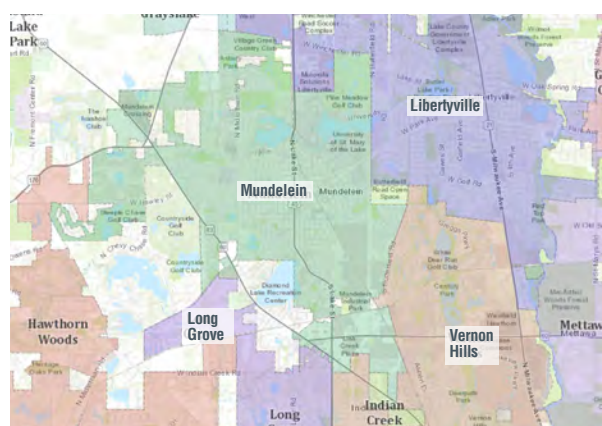


Figure 3. Mundelein and Neighboring Municipalities
 Source: Lake County, Illinois Maps Online

Table 1. Demographic Snapshot of Mundelein and Neighboring Municipalities

	Mundelein	Libertyville	Vernon Hills	Lake County
Total Population (2015):	31,624	20,395	25,768	702,898
Population Change (2000-2010):	0.4%	– 2.1%	24.8%	9.2%
Median Age:	37.4 years	44.4 years	38.1 years	37.6 years
Race and Ethnicity				
White	58.7%	89.6%	61.3%	63.8%
Asian	8.6%	4.4%	22.3%	6.7%
African American	2.2%	0.7%	2.9%	6.7%
Latino origin	28.9%	4.4%	10.2%	20.7%
Median Household Income:	\$76,750	\$115,709	\$92,201	\$78,026
Median Home Value:	\$228,300	\$414,100	\$323,400	\$246,700

Source: Community Data Snapshots prepared by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates

The Southside Corridor

The study area for the ULI TAP is Mundelein's southside centered on the 1.2-mile stretch of Townline Road from Butterfield Road on the east to IL Route 83 on the west (Figure 1). Townline Road extends farther east beyond Mundelein's borders to US Route 41. As illustrated in Figure 4, through this 7-mile long stretch, Townline Road can be viewed as three distinct segments: "Woodlands" in the east, "Shopping" in the middle and the largely undefined segment within Mundelein.

Townline Road is one of the major east-west routes in central Lake County—the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count on Townline Road west of US Route 45 is nearly 29,000 vehicles. Its intersection with US Route 45 in

the western half of the study area is among the busiest in Mundelein.

Within Mundelein, Townline Road has a hodge-podge of uses including commercial strip centers with a mix of retail and service tenants, big box retail, office, and industrial uses. The corridor has a strong anchor in Medline Industries and the re-positioned Townline Square shopping center, but many of the other sites are struggling with vacancies and/or under-performing uses. The overall corridor experience is disjointed and unattractive, providing little reason for the large number of drivers traveling through the area to stop in Mundelein.



Figure 4. Townline Road from IL 83 to US 41



Within the study area, Townline Road has a mix of retail, service, office and industrial uses.

As retail development continues to shift and major retailers increasingly focus on fewer stores in the strongest locations and on expanding their online presence, it is likely that the vacant/under-utilized single-story commercial buildings and the associated large surface parking lots will be redeveloped into alternative uses. There is also a lingering mis-perception of limited spending power within Mundelein and upscale retailers tend to gravitate towards stronger retail clusters in neighboring Libertyville and Vernon Hills. And while the active rail lines serving the area are a great benefit for manufacturing and warehousing businesses, they can result in significant traffic back-ups at the crossings located at the eastern and

western ends of the study area, discouraging potential customers from visiting the area.

Even with the noted disadvantages, the area's excellent location within central Lake County at the confluence of major arterial roadways and the large size of redevelopable parcels create a strong development environment. This report presents recommendations for the Village on how to best guide redevelopment through strategic investments that will help create a cohesive, attractive Townline Road corridor and establish a land-use mix that will serve Mundelein well for years to come.

Scope of Work

ULI Chicago convened a 2-day panel on April 3-4, 2018 that brought together ten ULI members with expertise in different aspects of the real estate industry including residential and commercial development, site selection, market analysis, land-use law, financing and urban design. The panelists worked collaboratively over 2 days—they reviewed detailed background briefing materials in advance, and while on site, they toured the study area, engaged in discussion with the Village's leadership team, and interviewed community stakeholders, including residents, business owners, civic and institutional leaders and developers. With this information, the panelists prepared realistic, implementable recommendations to address the four questions posed by the Village:

1. What are appropriate future land uses for the corridor, which has been split between large commercial uses and industrial/office uses?
2. What transportation enhancements may be necessary to improve the appeal of the corridor?
3. What public improvements are advised to enhance the corridors appearance and development potential?
4. What are the development tools, if any, that should be implemented throughout the corridor?

Overall Study Area Recommendations

1. Create a Unique Corridor Identity and Strengthen Regional Connections

Consistent with the recommendations of its Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2011, the Village of Mundelein has been actively working to implement a community-wide branding plan. As a part of this effort, the Village has commissioned new gateway signs and instituted a Business Improvement Grant (BIG) program to incentivize businesses to make improvements to their building façade, signage and streetscaping. The Village should continue and expand on these efforts in the southside corridor. As key sites along Townline Road are redeveloped/reused, the Village should work with private owners/developers

to incorporate streetscaping elements that will help create a cohesive appearance and establish a unique identity for the corridor and the larger southside area.

The panel also recommends strengthening pedestrian, bike and transit linkages between the study area and other parts of Mundelein and Lake County. Stronger transportation connections will expand the customer base and help create a revitalized southside area that functions as an integral part of the larger sub-region. The following strategies will be integral to creating an inter-connected, attractive southside:



The ULI Panel recommends low-cost, incremental improvements to enhance the visual appeal and user experience along Townline Road. To improve the existing streetscape (top), the panel recommends installing a multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists and coordinated plantings (middle). Burying powerlines can be expensive and therefore should be considered as a longer-term improvement (bottom).

Streetscape Enhancements

A few properties along Townline Road have a well-landscaped street frontage. But for the most part, the visual experience of driving through Townline Road is defined by large parking lots with wide curb cuts, cluttered signage, drooping powerlines, and a mix of businesses in varying states of maintenance. To begin creating an attractive and cohesive streetscape, the Village should add trees and plantings with a consistent theme along the roadway, on private or public property. This relatively low-cost improvement will have an immediate and significant impact for all users, including vehicles traveling at 40 miles/hour, bicyclists and pedestrians. Additionally, instead of burying power lines, which can be very costly to do, the panel recommends tightening the power lines so they are not drooping as low between poles. This simple and inexpensive measure can mitigate the negative visual impact of power lines to a considerable extent. In addition to landscaping, the Village can promote placemaking by working with local artisans and students to create public art to be installed at strategic locations along Townline Road and elsewhere within the study area.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets are defined as streets that provide safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Townline Road and IL Route 45 are both high-speed, high traffic arterial roadways with very limited pedestrian/bike access. Currently, potential pedestrians, such as guests at the DoubleTree hotel, employees at the Medline complex and customers at local stores are unable to access other parts of the area except by car. As the area redevelops and new uses bring in additional workers and residents to the area, the panel recommends working with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and property owners to add sidewalks and bike paths. Increased walkability will allow the southside area to function as an integrated network rather than a series of disconnected developments. People could potentially park once and patronize multiple area businesses, generating increased street activity and adding to the area's vibrancy. Safe, walkable sidewalks could also draw-in residents from nearby neighborhoods.

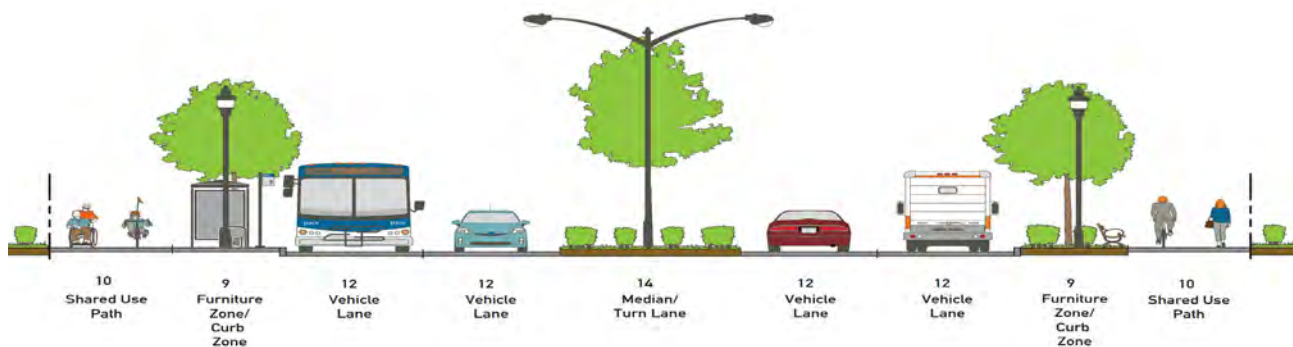


Figure 5. **Cross-Section for a “Complete Street” Suburban Commercial Boulevard**

Source: *Complete Streets, Complete Networks Design Manual*, Active Transportation Alliance

Overall Study Area Recommendations

1. Create a Unique Corridor Identity and Strengthen Regional Connections (continued)

The images on this spread provide examples of the type of public places/improvements that the Village should encourage as sites in the southside corridor are redeveloped.



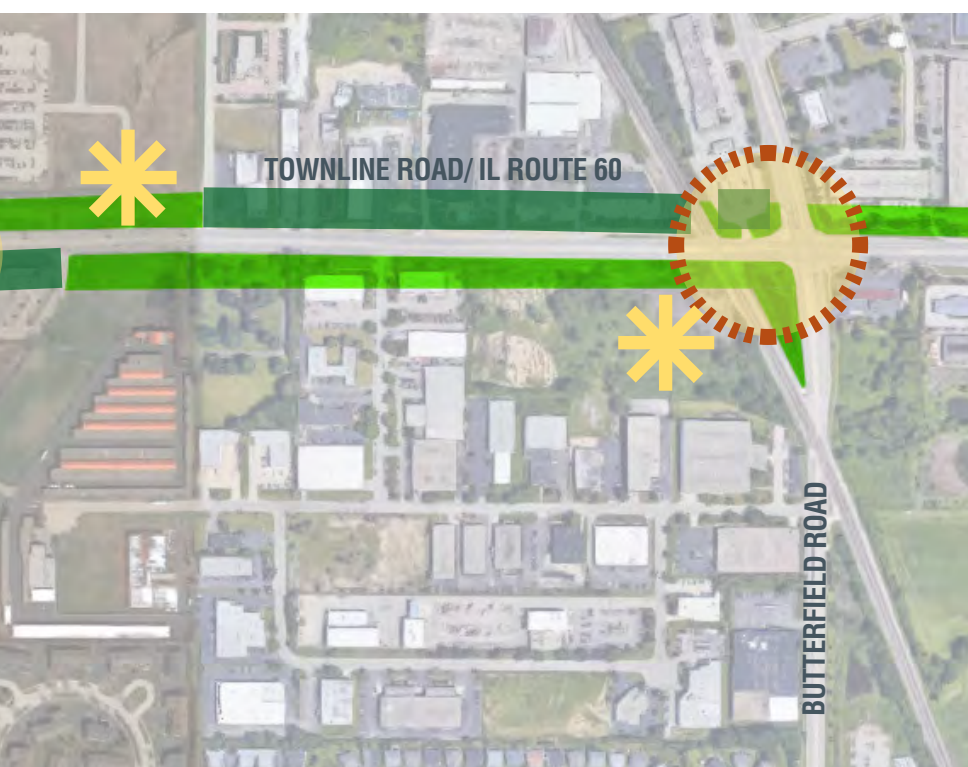
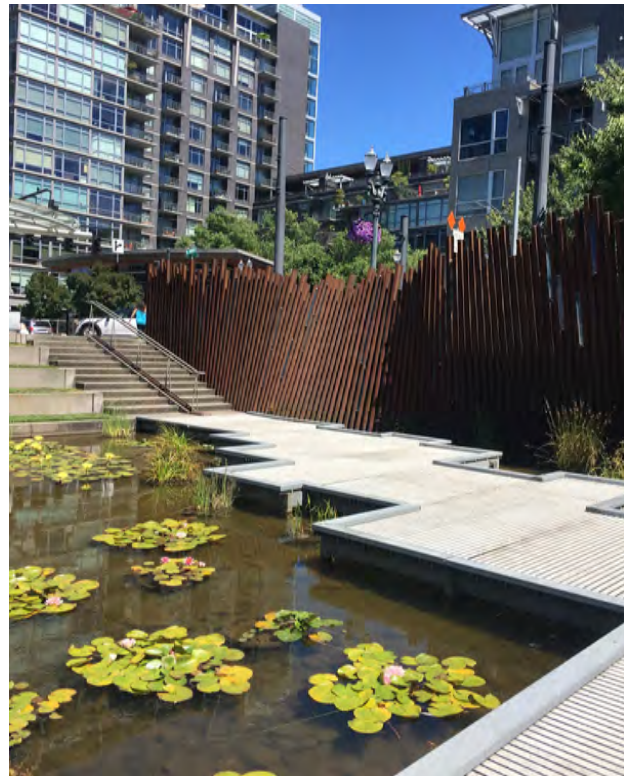
Pocket parks/plazas with amenities such as shade trees, seating, public art and water features and nearby restaurants (such as Pita Inn & Culver's along Townline Road), create a perfect setting for a lunch-time retreat for area workers and gathering place for area residents and visitors.

The Panel recommends creating pocket parks and public plazas in strategic locations in the southside and to commission local artisans for art installations to help create an environment that is authentic and unique to Mundelein. In other words, the Village should create a unique "brand" for its southside.





Streetscape elements, such as pedestrian countdown signals, crosswalks marked with special pavers, pedestrian refuge areas and public art, serve as a signal for motorists to slow-down and thereby help create a safe, inviting environment for pedestrians.



Legend

-  Existing Green Streetscape
-  New Continuous Streetscape
 - Consolidate curb-cuts
 - Coordinate signage
 - Continue coordinated plantings
-  Pocket Parks/ Public Spaces
-  Enhanced intersection
 - Safe, attractive pedestrian crossings
 - Areas for pedestrian refuge
 - Public art
-  Enhanced Intersection & Gateway Feature

Overall Study Area Recommendations

2. Coordinate Development Opportunities Within the Southside Corridor

The Village has identified five priority sites within the study area that could potentially be redeveloped in the near-term. Each priority site presents unique opportunities and challenges associated with its location, access, use, maintenance and ownership status.

The panel's recommendations for the sites are based on their unique attributes and informed by a coordinated land-use strategy for the larger southside area. Development potential for various land uses is discussed below and site-specific development opportunities are presented in the next section.

Industrial Flex

Mundelein has a low industrial vacancy rate of 6%, making it increasingly challenging for new tenants to find industrial space within the Village. The panel identified potential sites in the study area that could be developed as industrial flex to meet the strong demand.

Industrial flex buildings provide office space in the front, and warehouse/ light manufacturing space in the back. Typically, they are multi-tenant and can range in size from 2,500 square feet to 10,000 square feet or more. Smaller industrial flex buildings can be developed “on-spec,” i.e. without any committed tenants, specially in strong industrial/office markets such as Mundelein. Therefore industrial flex could be a viable land-use for several sites in the southside area.

Retail

The retail industry is continuing to evolve, and most national and regional retailers are shrinking their physical presence while expanding online operations. Retailers are also choosing to locate new stores and/or remain open only in the strongest, highest performing locations such as the retail cluster farther east on Townline near Milwaukee Avenue in Vernon Hills.

Given current industry trends, attracting new big-box tenants to fill the vacant retail space on priority sites

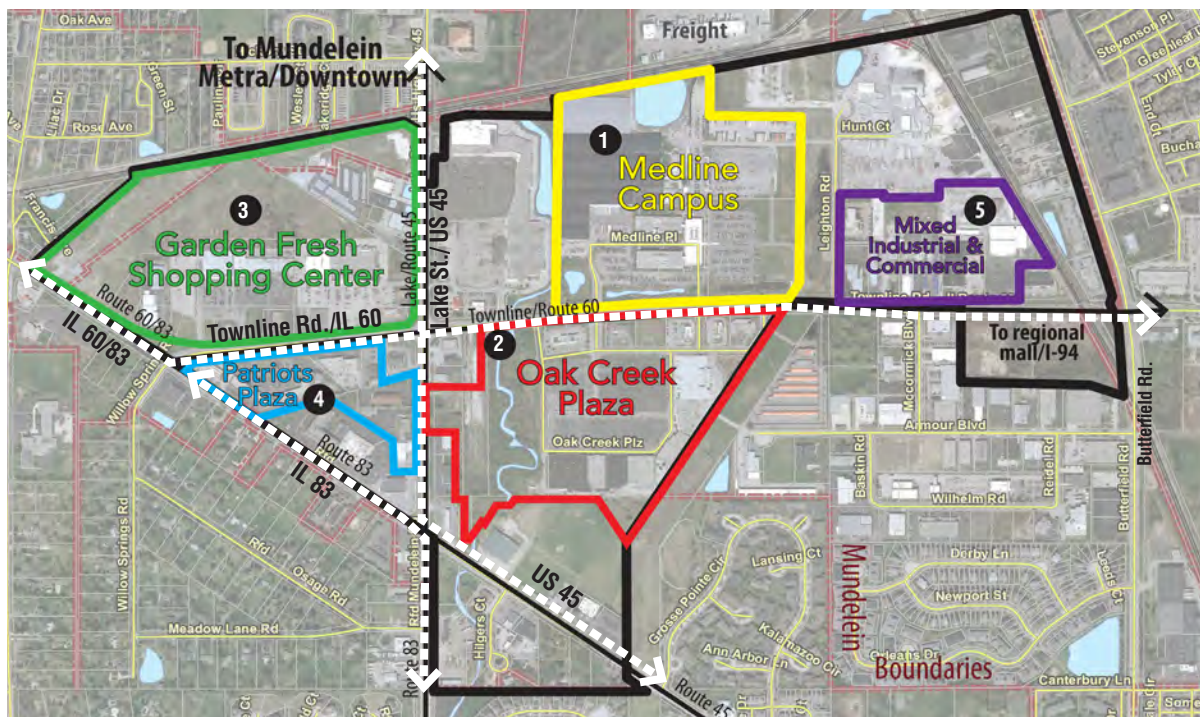


Figure 7. Priority Sites in the Study Area
Source: Village of Mundelein

seems unlikely and potentially unsustainable in the long-term. The panel recommends convenience retail uses for high visibility locations along Townline Road to serve area residents as well as attract motorists traveling through the study area. Potential uses could include dry cleaners, hair and nail salons, coffee shops, and fast casual or locally owned restaurants.

Residential

Recent residential developments near the study area—Lakeridge Townhomes by D.R. Horton and the single-family homes in Orchard Homes and Maple Hill by K. Hovnanian—have been well received, and there continues to be strong interest in the area from

reputable home builders. Because of their location along high speed, high traffic arterial roadways and proximity to commercial and industrial uses, most of the priority redevelopment sites do not lend themselves to new residential development.

The notable exception is the 34-acre Oak Creek Plaza site, which is large enough to accommodate residential in a mixed-use development, adequately buffered from larger commercial buildings and the high-traffic arterial roadways. The panel recommends residential as an appropriate land use for a part of the Oak Creek Plaza site; detailed recommendations are outlined in the following section.



Photo Credit: Village of Mundelein



Development opportunities in Mundelein's southside include undeveloped land (top), vacant commercial buildings and large, often underutilized surface parking lots (bottom).

Site Specific Development Recommendations

Priority Site 1: Medline Site

Medline, the largest privately held manufacturer and distributor of medical supplies, employs over 1,000 employees in its offices and 24/7 manufacturing facility along Townline Road in Mundelein (Figure 8). Medline is an anchor for the southside, and as the Village's largest employer, is an important component of the local economy. Therefore, amidst all the change along Townline Road, creating and sustaining an environment in which Medline can thrive in its current location should be a top priority for the Village.

In 2016, Medline moved its corporate headquarters from Mundelein to a larger and more modern office space in Northfield. Medline has indicated to the Village that even as it consolidates office-based employees at the new Northfield location, it will maintain manufacturing operations in Mundelein. The Medline site on Townline, with a railroad spur, nearby electrical substation and easy access to the interstate highway system, is particularly well suited for manufacturing.

However, there is a valid concern that as Medline's business and associated space needs change, it might relocate additional operations outside of Mundelein. Medline's departure would create a hard-to-fill vacancy on Townline Road and have a significant negative impact on the local economy. At the same time, it is possible that if Medline continues its current growth trajectory and adds many new employees, it will back-fill the extra office space in Mundelein. During conversations with the ULI panel, Medline representatives indicated that if needed, they might consider expanding their current footprint in Mundelein. Because of Medline's importance to the local economy, the panel recommends that the Village leadership continue to work closely with Medline, as it has in the past, to help create the best possible business environment for them. Potential strategies are outlined below.

Site Improvements to Allow Facilities Expansion

The Medline site is constrained by adjacent developments on all sides. Therefore, in order free up developable land for expansion, Medline will likely have to

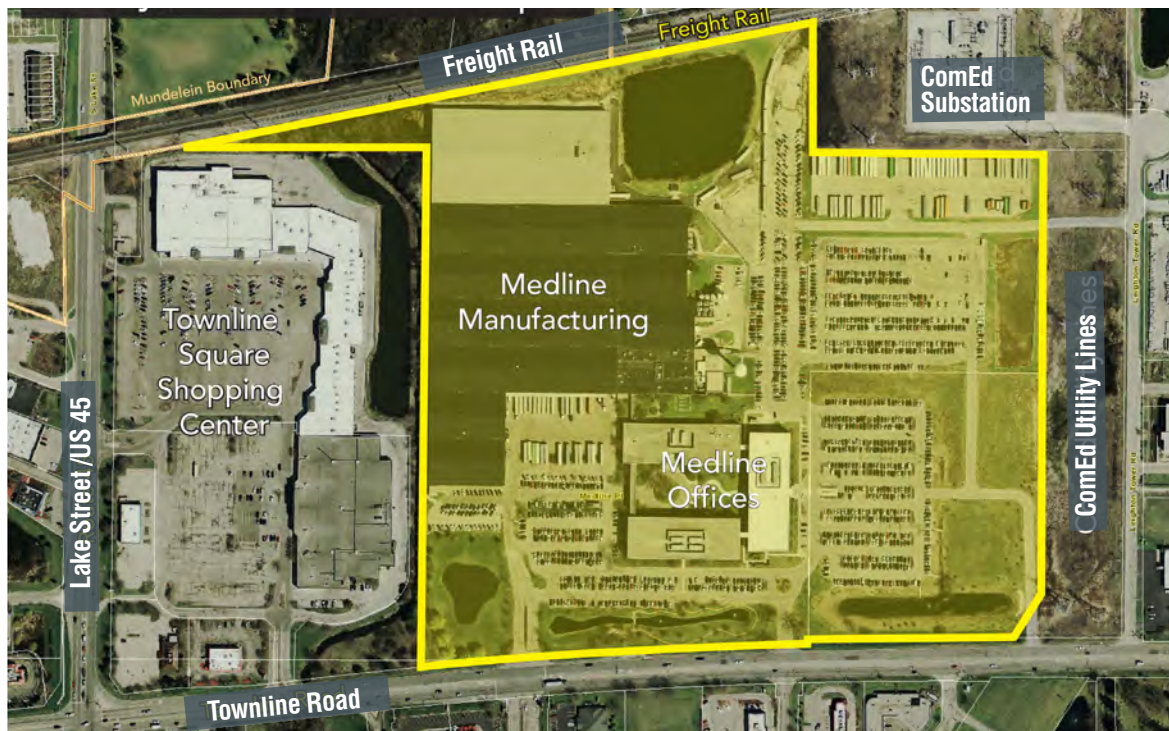


Figure 8. Medline Offices and Manufacturing Facilities along Townline Road
Source: Village of Mundelein

build structured parking and/or relocate stormwater detention to an off-site area. If Medline were to undertake such expansion plans, the Village should consider providing financial assistance as appropriate. The Village should especially consider partnering with Medline on completing infrastructure improvements—such as regional storm-water detention facilities—that would benefit the entire study area.

Access Improvements

With hundreds of employees and delivery trucks accessing its facilities every day, improving traffic flow on Townline Road especially ingress and egress from its facilities, would be a significant benefit for Medline. The Village should actively engage Medline representatives in any transportation planning processes for Townline Road and ensure that future improvements proposed by Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) are consistent with the needs of Medline and other businesses along the corridor.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

Access to a skilled workforce is a key consideration in locational decision-making for companies. By expanding and promoting workforce partnerships with educational institutions in the area, including

the College of Lake County and the STEM program at Mundelein High School, the Village can help Medline establish a pipeline of skilled workers.

Additionally, creating a revitalized Townline corridor with amenities such as convenience retail, dining options and parks within an easy, comfortable walking distance would help attract younger workers who are increasingly interested in walkable, mixed-use environments. Providing transit connections to the downtown Metra station via a shuttle service would be an added benefit for employees and help strengthen the connection between Mundelein's southside and downtown.

Financial Incentives

In the past, the Village has provided financial incentives to Medline in the form of tax breaks and assisted in securing grants from the State. The panel recommends continuing to provide incentives in the future, as appropriate, to support Medline's expansion and investment in Mundelein. The Village could consider establishing a TIF district to pay for specific infrastructure and streetscape improvements in the area.



Large surface parking lots and stormwater detention facilities on Medline's property offer opportunities for expanding office/manufacturing facilities on an otherwise landlocked site.

Site Specific Development Recommendations

Priority Site 2: Oak Creek Plaza Site

The largest and the most significant redevelopment opportunity in the southside commercial area is the 34-acre Oak Creek Plaza site. Except for small-scale commercial establishments along Townline Road and the indoor trampoline park in the former Hobby Lobby building, the entire shopping center is vacant (Figure 9). It has been vacant for the past few years – the previous owners, the Boorstein family, were unable to strike any reuse/redevelopment agreements and filed for bankruptcy. After years of court proceedings, Thrivent Financial now has sole control of the site and is eager to see it redeveloped. Thrivent is currently engaged in pre-development activities, including creating a master plan concept to assess the site's development potential and market it to developers.

The Oak Creek Plaza site has the potential to catalyze the revitalization of the entire southside commercial area – the development program, design features and timing of redevelopment of Oak Creek Plaza will set the tone for the rest of the corridor. The Village leadership recognizes the strategic importance of Oak Creek Plaza and would like to see it redeveloped with use(s) that are tax-generating, but also sustainable and can help create a healthy, attractive Townline corridor.

The panel considered a variety of different uses for the site including mixed-use, large-scale retail and industrial. A new big-box retail seems unlikely given that most retailers are closing stores at a far more rapid pace than opening them. In the past, Walmart was interested in this site but backed out due to failed negotiations with the previous property owner.



X-Factor Trampoline, and indoor trampoline park, occupies the former Hobby Lobby store in Oak Creek Plaza. The rest of the site is vacant except for the outlots under separate ownership.



Oak Creek flows through the wooded, western portion of the site.

Since then Walmart has not attempted to reactivate negotiations with the new owners, further illustrating the difficulty of attracting a large retail development. Industrial/industrial flex uses are currently operating at very low vacancy rates in the Village, indicating that there is likely a market for additional space. However, other sites within the study area, while not ideal for residential development, are well-suited for industrial flex and therefore better sites for meeting the Village's need for additional industrial space.

The panel recommends mixed-use development with residential on the south and west sides of the site, enhanced natural areas and park space along Oak Creek, and convenience commercial uses closest to Townline Road. This combination of uses capitalizes on the unique assets of the Oak Creek Plaza site that are not necessarily available to other redevelopment sites along Townline Road and meets the Village's goal to transform and revitalize its southside.

continued



Pita Inn, a fast casual restaurant located on the outlot just west of the signalized entrance into Oak Creek Plaza, is popular among area workers, visitors as well as residents.

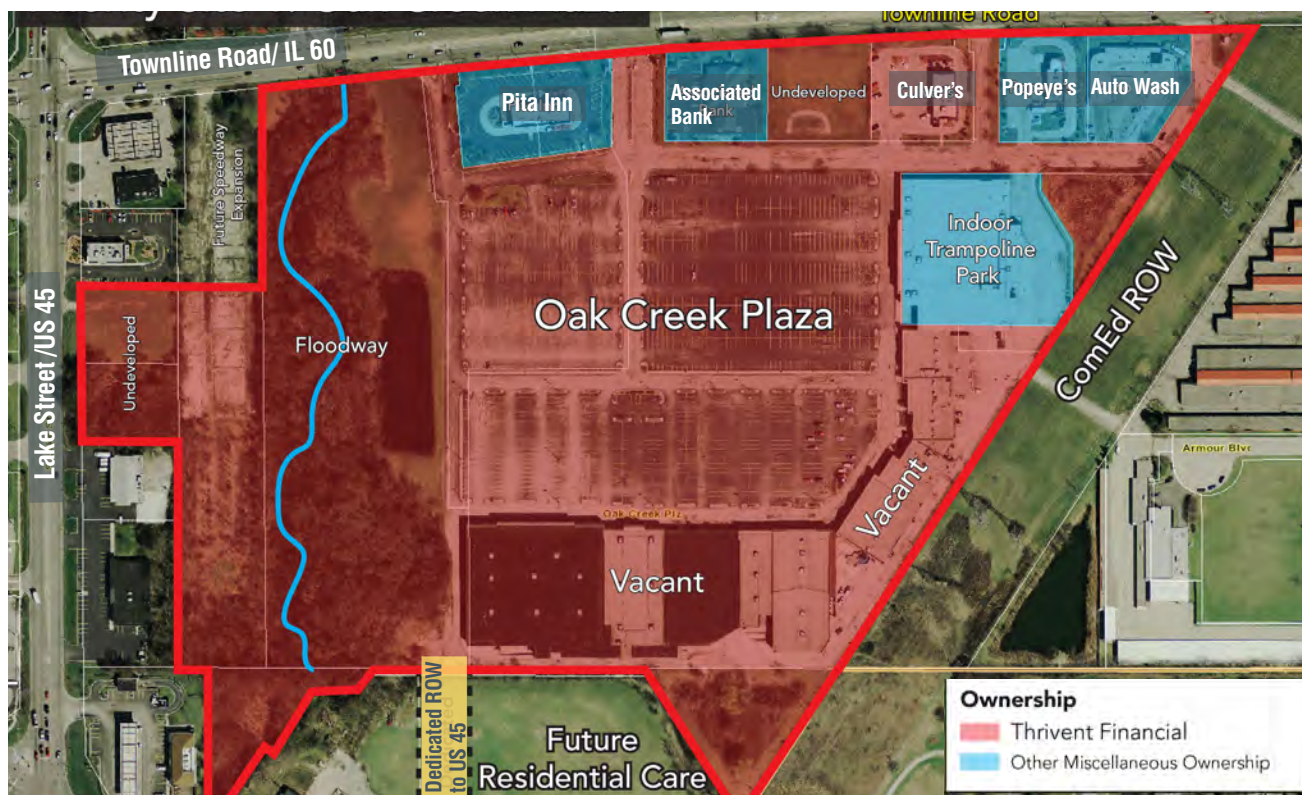


Figure 9. **Oak Creek Plaza** offers a catalytic redevelopment opportunity for Mundelein's southside
Source: Village of Mundelein

Site Specific Development Recommendations

Priority Site 2: Oak Creek Plaza Site

(continued)

Residential

The site's proximity to existing residential neighborhoods on the south and west sides, the opportunity to create a scenic natural retreat around Oak Creek that flows through the western portion of the site, and perhaps most importantly, its location within the prestigious Stevenson High School District, make it very desirable for new residential development.

The panel recommends building for-sale housing on the southern and western portions of the site to be accessed from a new roadway off Route 45 rather than Townline Road. This will allow for a stronger connection with the existing residential areas while keeping new residential traffic away from Townline Road. While the final development program will be determined in collaboration with the selected developer, the panel recommends townhomes at a density of approximately eight units per acre and price-points around \$300,000 as a suitable development option. Several reputed home-builders are very interested in exploring this development opportunity.

Open Space

Oak Creek, which flows through the western portion of the site, is a wonderful natural feature that should be preserved and enhanced for stormwater mitigation and as an amenity for the area. With thoughtful design and programming, Oak Creek and the natural landscape around it could be a destination for the southside – pocket parks along the creek with areas for seating and programming such as live music and art displays – would provide a great retreat for residents, a perfect outdoor lunch spot for workers, and a place for visitors such as guests at the DoubleTree hotel to enjoy. The park should connect to surrounding areas and the larger Lake County trail system via walking/biking trails.

Commercial

The panel recommends convenience retail and service uses such as dry cleaners, hair and nail salons, fast casual restaurants, bakeries and coffee shops for the portion of the site closest to Townline Road. Visibility and access from Townline Road will allow businesses to tap into the large number of drivers that travel down Townline Road every day and provide a buffer for the new proposed residential.

Given strong interest from residential developers, it is likely that the mixed-use development concept driven by for-sale residential, if approved, could break ground in the very near-term. The Village should be able to work with the developer to incorporate higher quality materials and design elements throughout, creating an attractive, high-amenity development that could drive the revitalization of Mundelein's southside.

Other Considerations

X-Factor Trampoline located in the former Hobby Lobby building is a new business in the area, and as per its owner/operator, already very popular and successful. Any new development on the Oak Creek Plaza site would have to accommodate the trampoline park and the associated traffic and parking requirements. Other entertainment destinations and restaurants could potentially be synergistic with the trampoline park.

Local school districts are concerned about educating additional school-age children that any new residential development can generate. They believe they are already operating at full capacity and accommodating new students could be a challenge. However, the new mixed-use development will generate property and sales tax revenues; tax revenues from other properties are also likely to increase as the study area is revitalized. The Village should work with the school districts and other agencies to understand and address their concerns related to new development.








A new park along Oak Creek can provide a gathering place for area workers, visitors and residents.

Photo Credit (Right): OLIN, photography by Peter Mauss/Esto and Felice Frankel



Figure 10. The Panel recommends a mixed-use development program focused on new residential for the Oak Creek Plaza site.

Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  Enhanced Open Space |  Enhanced Intersection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, attractive pedestrian crossings • Areas for pedestrian refuge • Public art |  New Roadway Access |
|  Enhanced Intersection & Gateway Feature |  Pedestrian & Bike Connections | |

Site Specific Development Recommendations

Priority Site 3: Garden Fresh Site

The northwest quadrant of Townline Road and US 45 intersection is anchored by Garden Fresh, a local grocer that has built its reputation on providing fresh produce at competitive prices and niche ethnic foods. Garden Fresh's owner holds most of the land on this site, including undeveloped land behind the shopping center. A few outlots along Townline Road, an inline retail center, and a tile store are under separate

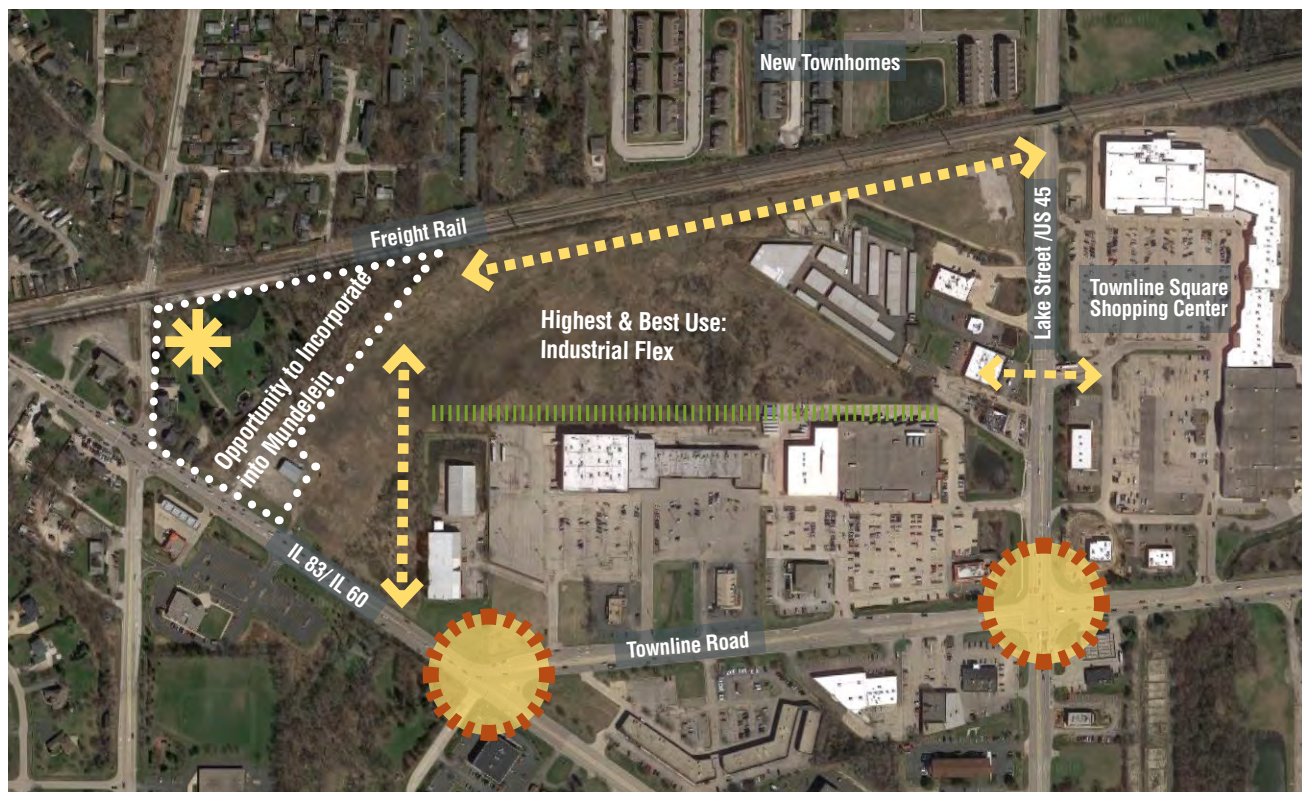
ownerships (Figure 11). The locally-owned restaurants as well as McDonald's and Burger King are doing well, but the retail, which includes a Salvation Army and Dollar General, appear to be under-performing. Garden Fresh has also seen declining sales in the past years raising some concerns about its long-term viability; but for now, it appears to have enough of a loyal customer base in the area.



Garden Fresh Market is the anchor store in the northwest quadrant of the IL 60 and US 45 intersection.



Figure 11. Garden Fresh Market Site with a large undeveloped area at the back.
Source: Village of Mundelein





Site Specific Development Recommendations

Priority Site 4: Patriot's Plaza Site

Patriot's Plaza, located on a triangular site at the western end of the study area, is a commercial strip center. With a few exceptions, its current tenants are auto-related and include car repair, car-wash and car rental businesses. The non-auto businesses include a thrift store and a pet day care; a former gas station site is vacant. In addition to Patriot's Plaza, other uses on the site include a Super 8 Motel, liquor store and bank. A former auto parts store and a small retail strip are vacant (Figure 13).

Currently, the Patriot's Plaza site presents an unattractive entrance from the west into Mundelein with structures in varying states of disrepair, significant vacancies and several underperforming tenants. Representatives from the adjacent DoubleTree hotel, which underwent recent renovations and enjoys high occupancy levels, talked about the difficulty of operating a hospitality business in an environment surrounded by dilapidated, car-centric businesses.

Development Recommendation

The panel recommends convenience, drive-thru retail or industrial flex uses for the Patriot's Plaza site. Existing structures could be renovated depending on their condition and the type of new use—this is likely the most cost-effective solution and easier to implement in the near term because renovations can be undertaken as current tenants' leases run-out. Demolition and new construction is likely a longer-term solution and will in part be guided by the redevelopment of other key sites along the corridor.

Regardless of the site's final use and whether some structures are renovated or demolished and rebuilt, its redevelopment is an opportunity to create an appealing environment and to integrate it with adjacent properties, including the DoubleTree hotel and Oak Creek Plaza site.



Figure 13.
Patriot's Plaza Site
Base Map: Village of Mundelein

Priority Site 5: Mixed Industrial & Commercial at Eastern End

Buildings located at the eastern end of the study area contain a mix of service, retail and industrial businesses (Figure 14). This area, between the railroad tracks and Leighton Tower Road, was frequently described as among the least attractive parts of the southside commercial area along with the Patriot's Plaza site. Unlike Patriot's Plaza however, the businesses on the eastern end appear to be doing well. Northfield Block, another major employer in the Village, manufactures concrete masonry and hard-scape products. Northfield Block has an office here with a large manufacturing facility at the back.

Development Recommendation

The panel recommends working with existing property and business owners to improve the functionality and appearance of the sites to help create a stronger business environment and an attractive gateway into Mundelein.

Working with multiple property owners can be challenging, but strict enforcement of the Village's building and design codes and streetscape improvements as part of a corridor-wide improvement plan, can have an immediate impact. New sidewalks, plantings, and coordinated, well-designed signage are all improvements that can be implemented quickly and at relatively low costs. Consolidating curb-cuts and encouraging interconnected/shared parking lots between businesses can also significantly improve traffic flow along Townline Road while allowing for a more continuous, green streetscape.

In the longer term, as current businesses relocate, the Village can consider more substantive changes to the area. Instead of a mix of retail, service and industrial uses, the panel recommends encouraging industrial flex uses on the site. The Village could consider partnered relocation for interested existing non-industrial businesses to a suitable location elsewhere in the Village. This could allow the eastern end of the study area to evolve into a hub of creative/maker businesses.

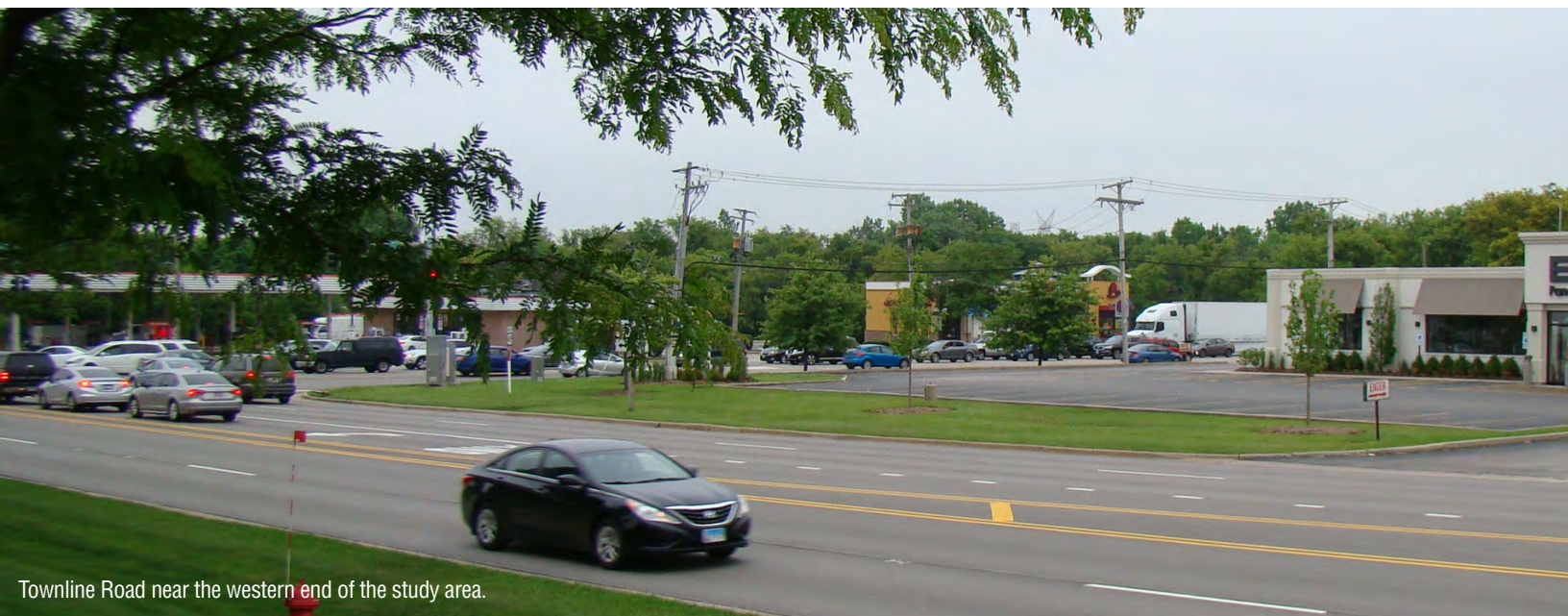


Financing

The panel recommends exploring options including establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district and issuing municipal bonds for financing infrastructure improvements such as regional stormwater detention and transportation improvements. Retaining existing and attracting new businesses/uses that can activate vacant and underperforming sites is key to revitalizing the area. The Village should establish a clear policy for providing financial incentives such as property tax rebates and sales tax sharing agreements to support businesses. Additionally, Mundelein should expand and utilize its Business Improvement Grants (BIG) program to incentivize business owners to renovate their properties and help create a more attractive space.

Conclusion

The Village of Mundelein does not directly control any of the priority sites or other properties in the southside area. However, by careful planning and use of regulatory tools and incentives, the Village can encourage development that supports its goals for revitalizing the southside commercial area. By having a clear vision for the future and by working closely with property and business owners to create a successful business environment for them consistent with that vision, Mundelein can transform the southside side area into a prime community asset.



ULI Chicago TAP Participants

Panel Chair

Lance Ramella

President

Housing Trends LLC

Panel Members

Matthew Cermak

Commercial Account Manager

Chicago Title Insurance Company

Randal Dawson

Executive Vice President

CBRE

Matthew Latimer

Real Estate Investment Professional

Danielle Leach

Manager

John Burns Real Estate Consulting

Joseph Maschek

Urban Designer

BSB Design

Aaron May

Associate

Gould & Ratner LLP

Brittani Sanders

Director

CRG (Clayco Realty Group)

Jerry Szatan

Principal

Szatan & Associates

Juan Villafane

Associate Principal

Krueck + Sexton Architects

Sponsor Representatives

Steve Lentz

Mayor

Village of Mundelein

John Lobaito

Village Administrator

Village of Mundelein

Amanda Orenchuk

Community Development Director

Village of Mundelein

Colleen Malec

Planner

Village of Mundelein

Taylor Wegrzyn

Planner

Village of Mundelein

ULI Chicago

Cynthia McSherry

Executive Director

Swasti Shah

Director of Community Engagement

Carl Vogel

Staff Writer, Vogel Editorial



**Urban Land
Institute**

Chicago

ULI Chicago
1700 West Irving Park Road
Suite 208
Chicago, IL 60613
773-549-4972
chicago.uli.org