



MEMORANDUM

To: Steve Gutierrez, Village Administrator
From: John Houseal, AICP
Principal
Date: January 22, 2010
Re: Corridors Plan Revisions

Based on feedback from the Plan Commission and comments received from the Village Board at the January 10, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting, the following changes have been made to the River Forest Corridors Plan:

Page 5: The text under “Resident Questionnaire,” and “Business Community Questionnaire” was modified to include the following statement: “The on-line questionnaire was used to solicit residents’/business owners’ and managers’ feedback, but is not considered a statistically valid survey instrument.”

Page 68: The potential parking configuration options have been removed so only the existing configuration remains. Additional text was added to detail the existing configuration and state that the Village and residents should work together to explore options that may improve the parking configuration.

Page 70: The following text added to the “Central Avenue to Quick Avenue” analysis: Also located on the Forest Preserve District’s property is the historic Cummings Memorial.

Page 77: The last three sentence of the Harlem Avenue Land Use Plan introduction have been removed so as not to reference “Land Use Conversion Opportunities.”

Page 78-79: All text and graphics pertaining to Land Use Conversion Opportunities have been removed.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS OFFERED IMPORTANT INSIGHT ON LOCAL ISSUES, CONCERNS AND OPINIONS AND WERE USED TO INFORM THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORRIDORS STUDY



Community park.



Road underpass.

The community was engaged in five separate Community Outreach activities at the outset of the planning process. Outreach activities, undertaken by the Consultant, involved elected officials, residents and representatives of the business community. These outreach efforts offered important insight on local issues, concerns and opinions that were used to inform Corridors Study recommendations. This section summarizes each of the following outreach activities:

A **Plan Commission Initiation Meeting** was conducted by the Consultant with seven members of the Plan Commission on August 26, 2008 at the River Forest Village Hall.

A **Community Workshop** was conducted at the Village Hall on October 2, 2008 with eleven River Forest residents.

A **Business Workshop** was conducted with representatives of the River Forest business community on the evening of October 10, 2008. Each corridor was represented by at least two businesses at the workshop.

An on-line **Resident Questionnaire** was posted on the Corridors Study project website between September and December of 2008. Eighty residents responded to the questionnaire which was comprised of a mix of multiple choice and open-ended response questions regarding existing conditions within the four corridors. The on-line questionnaire was used to solicit residents' feedback, but is not considered a statistically valid survey instrument.

An on-line **Business Community Questionnaire** was posted on the Corridors Study project website between September and December of 2008. Eight representatives from the local business community responded to the questionnaire which was comprised of a mix of multiple choice and open-ended response questions regarding the existing business climate within the four corridors. Each corridor was represented by at least one business in responses to the questionnaire. The on-line questionnaire was used to solicit business owners' and managers' feedback, but is not considered a statistically valid survey instrument.

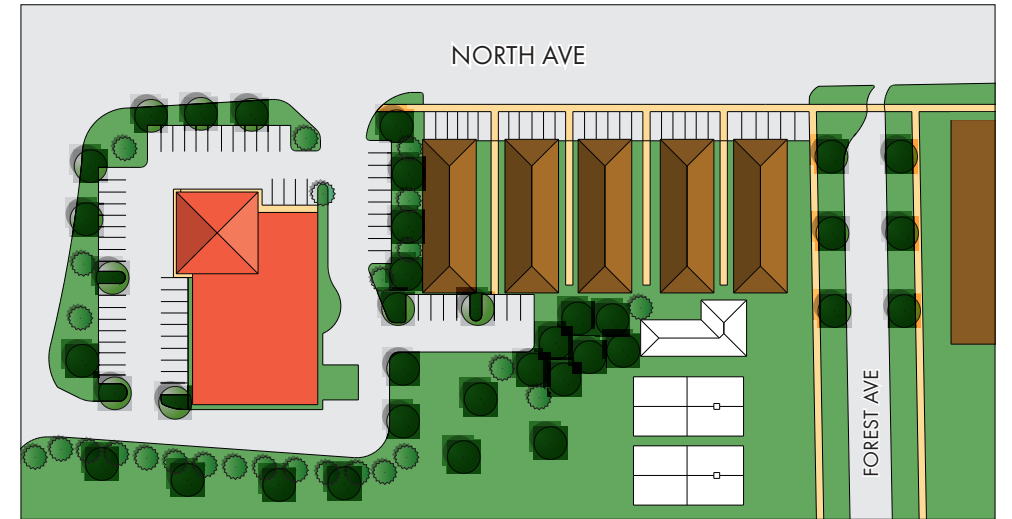
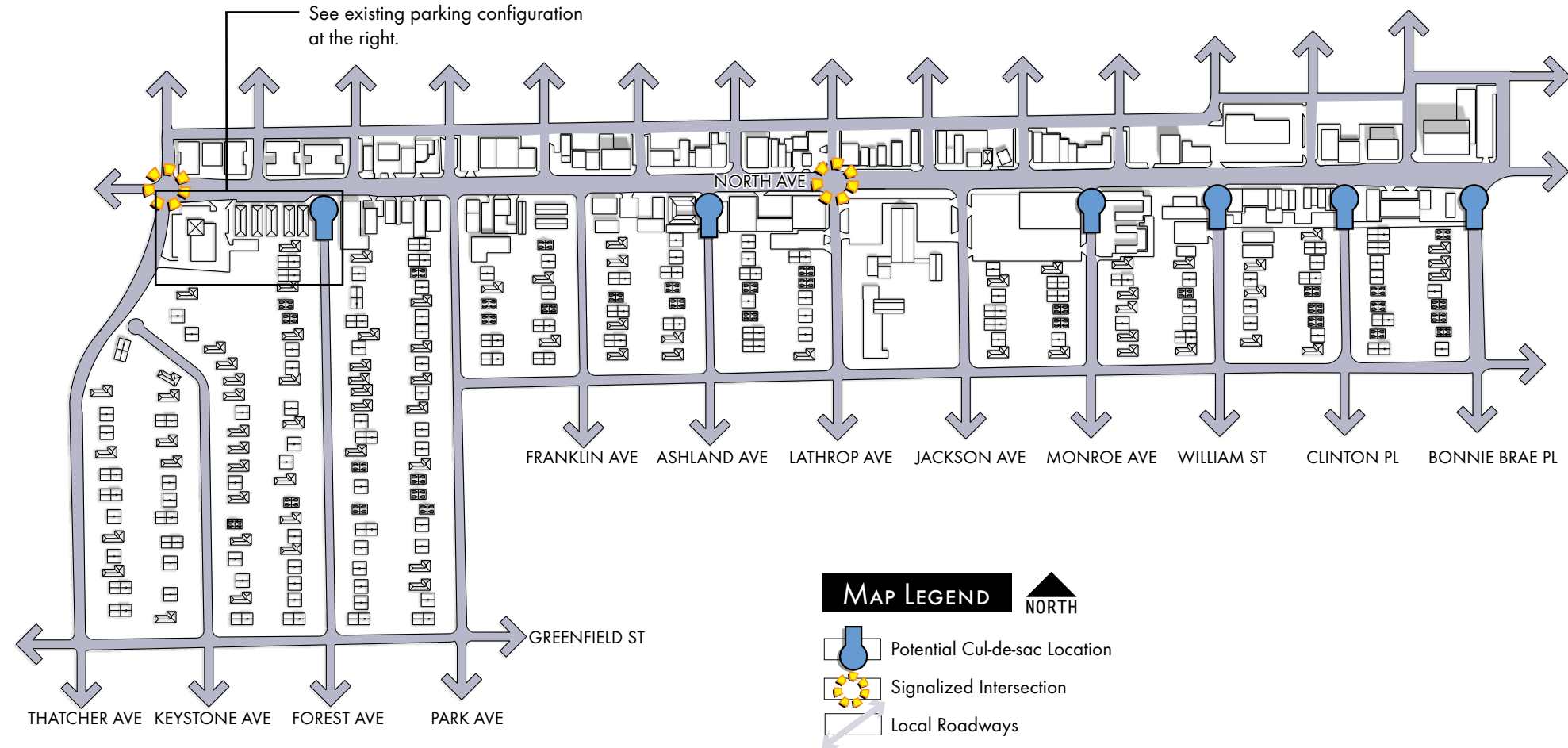
In addition to the Community Outreach activities summarized in this section, several one-on-one confidential, Key Person Interviews were conducted with local business owners, property owners, service providers, institution representatives, developers, commercial brokers, residential brokers, and other key stakeholders. These interviews provided significant insight into many of the issues and opportunities within the corridors from the perspective of those most involved.

CUL-DE-SAC AND PARKING CONFIGURATION OPTIONS

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The cul-de-sac and parking configuration options identified for the North Avenue corridor are recommended to improve the safety and efficiency of traffic flow along North Avenue, while increasing parking availability for existing land uses and providing redevelopment incentives. Roads designated at potential cul-de-sac locations are primarily used as residential streets that do not accommodate a significant amount of through traffic, and the benefits of creating a cul-de-sac outweigh and impacts of traffic movement they may cause.

Roads that have not been designated as potential cul-de-sac locations serve as important through streets in the Village. Most have a viaduct at the south end, or do not align with a street on the north side of North Avenue in Elmwood Park.



EXISTING PARKING

Above is a rendering of the existing conditions and parking availability for the multi-family housing at the southwest corner of North Avenue and Forest Avenue. Total, there are 49 parking spaces available for residents. While some parking is provided adjacent to the CVS parking lot, approximately 30 parking spaces have direct access to North Avenue, forcing residents to back out onto a major arterial street.

The above rendering illustrates the dangers and lack of appeal the current parking configuration has. The Plan recommends that the Village work closely with property owners to improve and enhance the existing parking configuration to provide a more attractive streetscape along North Avenue, as well as to improve the safety and efficiency of traffic flow in the area. Potential parking configurations may include "cul-de-sac"-ing Forest Avenue and/or relocating some or all of the parking spaces into a better configuration while improving the parking situation for residents. A close working relationship between the Village and the residents is essential to successfully address the current conditions.

7201 - 7265 W Lake
Use - Commercial (Retail)
Zoning - ORIC
Comp Plan - Corridor Commercial
Height - 1 stories
Age - 6 years

500 - 600 N Harlem
Use - Park
Zoning - PRI
Comp Plan - Park/Open Space/Private recreation
Height - 1 story



CENTRAL AVENUE TO QUICK AVENUE

The southwest corner of Lake Street and Harlem Avenue is occupied by River Forest Town Center, a 150,000 square foot shopping center that opened in 2002. Across the street, on the northwest corner of the intersection, the Cook County Forest Preserve maintains its headquarters and a park that stretches north to Quick Avenue. The park's amenities include a baseball field, bus shelter, and several tennis courts operated by the Oak Park Tennis Club. Also located on the Forest Preserve District's property is the historic Cummings Memorial.

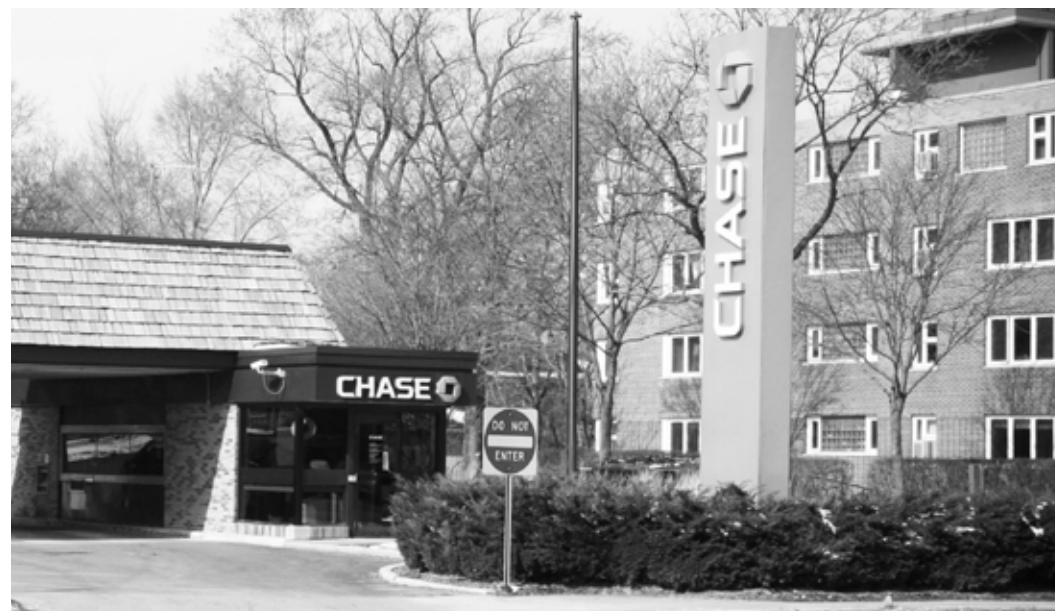
Urban Design / Landscaping

While the majority of the center is located away from the street, a bank and a couple of eateries with outdoor seating occupy the corner. Landscaping is minimal at the corner and is limited to a row of young trees planted in a landscaped strip that surrounds the adjoining parking lot. Several pedestrian-scale light posts and several trees separate pedestrians on the sidewalk from Lake Street and Harlem Avenue traffic. The park to the north is comprised of a mix of open space areas and stands of mature trees. Trees run along the length of the park along the Harlem Avenue sidewalk. Overall streetscape amenities and appearance are strong at this corner.

Traffic Flow / Parking

Parking for visitors to the shopping center is provided by a large surface lot located between the main shopping center and a pair of outlot buildings. Access to the center is provided by one-way entry and exit along Lake Street and Harlem as well as a pair of drives from Bonnie Brae Place to the west. Visitors to the park and tennis club utilize a mid-block drive from Bonnie Brae Place to access a small surface parking lot.

AS IT IS DEVELOPED AND EXISTS TODAY, THE HARLEM AVENUE
CORRIDOR IN RIVER FOREST IS NOT A "COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR"



Commercial service and multi-family residential uses at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and Oak Avenue.

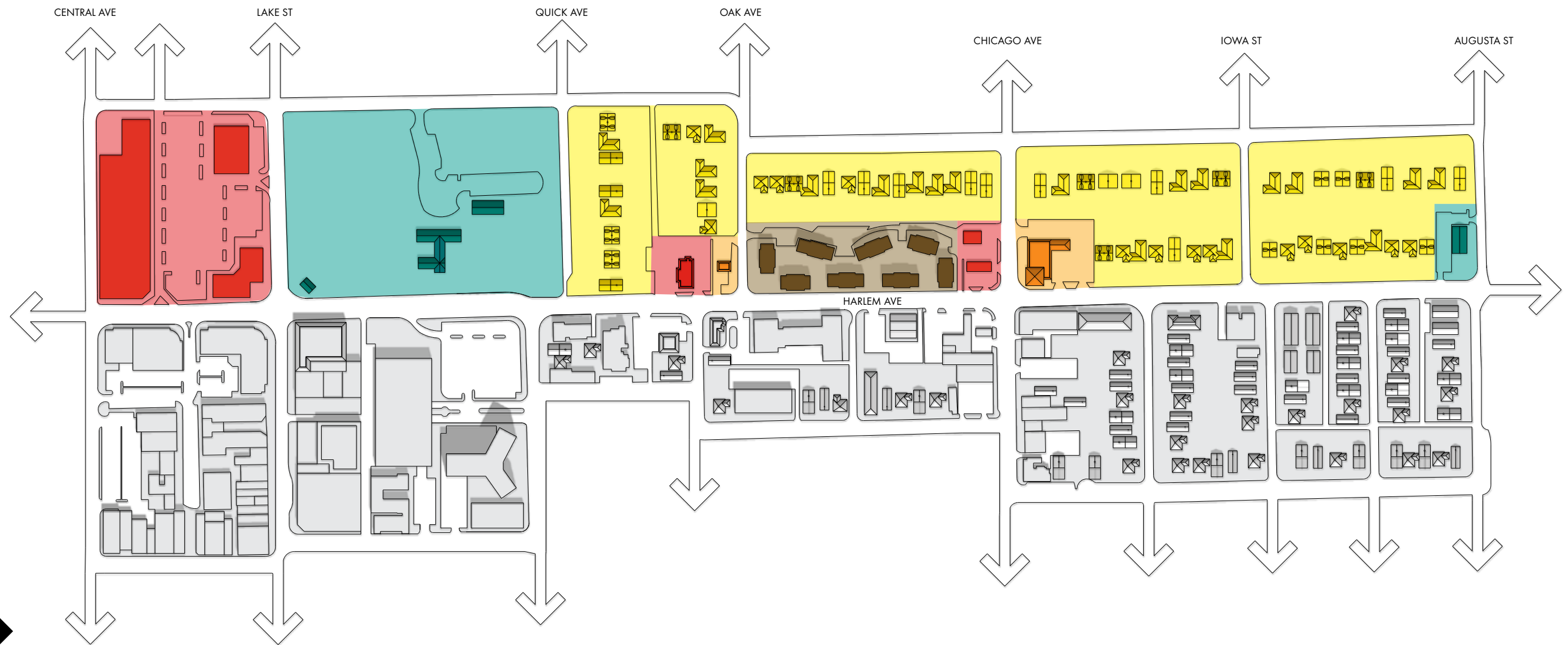


First Church of Christ - Small public/semi-public use along Harlem Avenue.

As it is developed and exists today, the Harlem Avenue Corridor in River Forest is not a "commercial corridor". The Land-Use Plan for the Corridor reflects the existing land use pattern. Commercial areas remain commercial, residential areas remain residential, and public/institutional/open space areas remain as well.

With the exception of the Town Center south of Lake Street, commercial areas along the corridor are very small and consist of neighborhood convenience type uses. On the other hand, the residential areas are quite large and numerous, as are the institutional uses along the corridor. Because of this, commercial redevelopment is made even more difficult than it is along the Village's other perimeter corridors. Any extensive expansion or creation of new commercial development along the corridor would be extremely challenging. It is for these reasons that the Plan does not recommend any changes to the existing land use pattern.

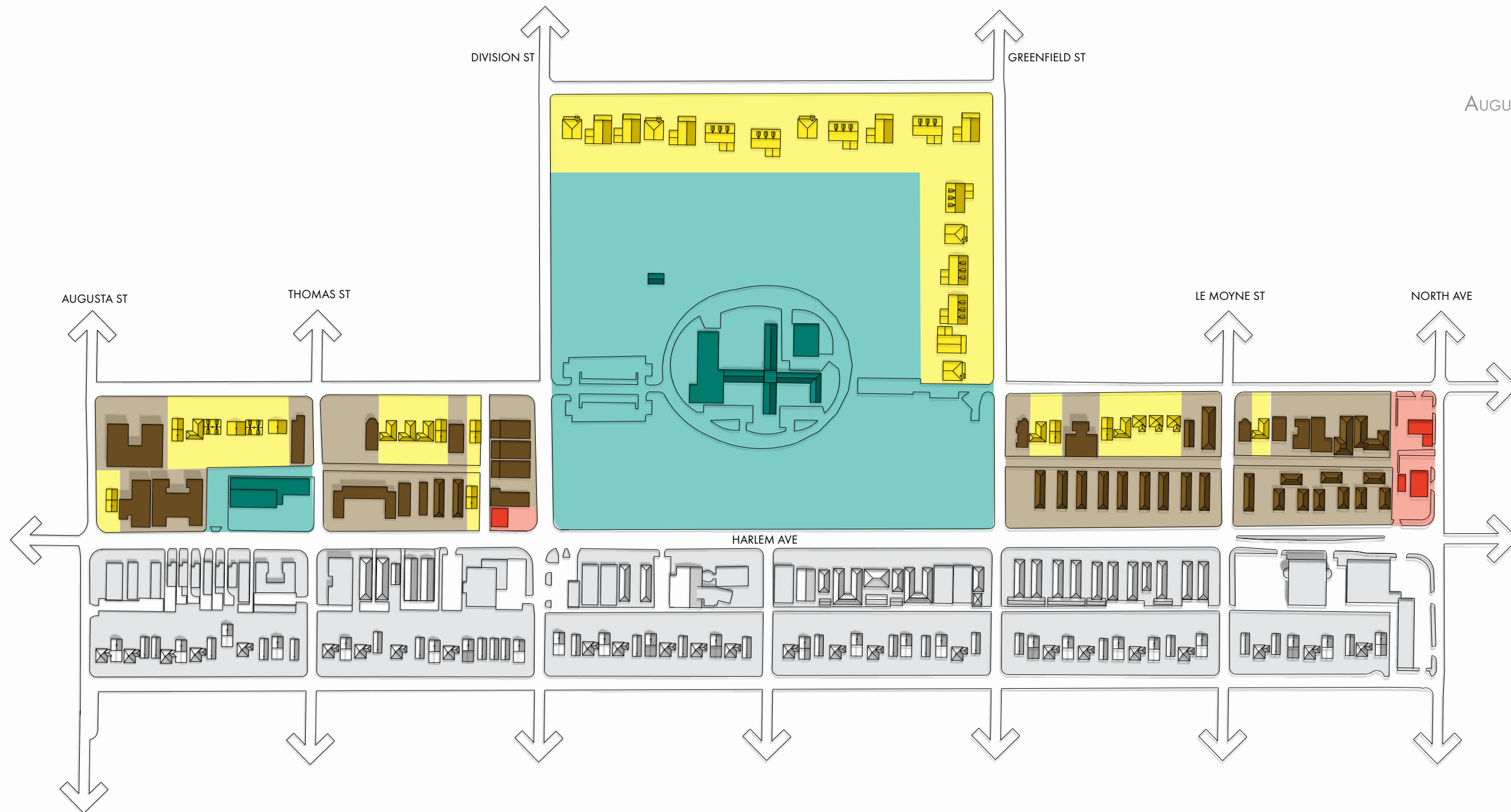
HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR
LAND USE PLAN
 CENTRAL AVENUE TO AUGUSTA STREET








LAND USE LEGEND

- Commercial/Retail** - Ground floor commercial uses. Preference is for retail and restaurant uses.
- Multi-Family Residential** - Townhomes and/or condominiums.
- Single-Family Residential** - Single-family detached residential.
- Public/Semi-Public** - Public facilities and institutions.
- Village of Oak Park**

HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR
LAND USE PLAN
 AUGUSTA STREET TO NORTH AVENUE



LAND USE LEGEND 

-  **Commercial/Retail** - Ground floor commercial uses. Preference is for retail and restaurant uses.
-  **Multi-Family Residential** - Townhomes and/or condominiums.
-  **Single-Family Residential** - Single-family detached residential.
-  **Public/Semi-Public** - Public facilities and institutions.
-  **Village of Oak Park**