EXISTING CONDITIONS & ISSUES SUMMARY

VILLAGE OF HOMER GLEN, ILLINOIS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT - FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY
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Since its inception, Homer Glen has placed premium value on protection of its natural environment, high quality of life, and unique community character. While these values continue today, changes in the regional and national economies, as well as changing expectations of residents over the past decade, have brought new challenges that require reconsideration of past policies and practices to guide Village growth over the next 20 years.

This document summarizes the existing conditions and issues that characterize Homer Glen today and provide guidance for the future. Based on thorough analysis of various data sources, as well as issues and opportunities identified by numerous stakeholders via various community engagement activities, the findings contained herein provide a high-level perspective of the various topics that will comprise the core elements of the Comprehensive Plan Update, as illustrated in the graphic in Figure 1.1.

The findings in this summary inform next steps in the Comprehensive Plan process. In particular, the issues and opportunities identified herein will guide the preparation of long-range strategies that advance the Housing and Retail Market Analyses, Utilities and Infrastructure Plan, and Subarea Concept Plans in Phase 5, as well as the core plan elements in Phase 6.

TIMELINE

The current planning process to update the Village’s Comprehensive Plan takes its place along the community’s history of planning. Since its incorporation in 2001, Homer Glen has taken a proactive approach to planning strategically for the future.
The Village strives to “control its own destiny” by gaining greater control of its infrastructure through ownership or partnership with neighboring communities that results in a plan for stable and affordable utilities, sustainable infrastructure, and a strategic approach to serve a growing community.

Even though Homer Glen’s population has stabilized, the Village continues to prepare for development, particularly adding to the burgeoning Bell Road corridor and pursuing opportunities along 159th Street and near the I-355 interchanges.

The Village must also brace for new challenges and take advantage of rising opportunities, as summarized in the nine planning issues on the right and next page. These issues will guide the Comprehensive Planning process and provide a foundation for drafting strategies and concepts in the next phases of the process.

Even as its population has stabilized over the past decade, Homer Glen will experience growth, even at a moderate rate. Development at key opportunity sites, particularly along major road corridors, shall be rooted in market realities, as described in the Market Analysis in Chapter 8. Development should also reflect Homer Glen’s competitive advantages, including its superior access to I-355, infrastructure improvements along 159th Street, burgeoning Bell Road corridor, and potential to leverage its rural heritage to boost agribusiness and agritourism. All growth strategies will respect Homer Glen’s identity as a steward of open space and the natural environment.

Everyone deserves to find a home that meets their specific needs, budget, and life stage. From single parents, seniors, and Millennials to multi-generational families, empty nesters, and single-income households, all should have options and not have to settle for less or move away from a community in which they wish to live. Housing strategies will explore ways to diversify Homer Glen’s housing stock without compromising the Village’s long-held identity as a single-family residential community. While the Future Land Use Plan will play a critical role in defining the distribution of a diversified housing stock, updated Design and Development Guidelines will ensure new housing types reflect Homer Glen’s expectations for high quality design.
One key priority is to carry forward the reasons that drove Homer Glen’s initial incorporation as a Village, including the preservation of the farming community, natural areas, and local history.

The community needs to sensibly utilize its substantial amount of developable land to simultaneously advance economic development and maintain Homer Glen’s identity.

Whether internally by residents or externally by visitors, prospective homebuyers, or new businesses, the perspective that people have of Homer Glen is in need of a refresh.

There are segments of the community that have a fear of change in Homer Glen, particularly spurred by concerns over the potential loss of open space and long-held identity as a unique place that proactively protects its natural surroundings.

Homer Glen has long prided itself on its stewardship of its natural environment, open spaces, and agricultural land, which has helped Homer Glen stand out as a unique community in the Chicago region. The Comprehensive Plan Update will explore strategies to ensure this rural heritage will remain a core piece of Homer Glen’s identity. Existing farms and related businesses like Big R may add to a local agribusiness economy. Places like Bengtson’s Pumpkin Farm, Konous Corn Maze, and nearby Farmington Lake form a strong foundation for agritourism that attract visitors. Expansion of the local trail system, including equestrian amenities, also present opportunities to further preserve and showcase Homer Glen’s plethora of open spaces and natural areas.

Very few communities in the Chicago region have the bounty of open land that holds the potential for development like Homer Glen. While the Village has experienced varying levels of development before since (and prior to) its incorporation, it has continually placed a high premium on preserving the natural environment and open spaces that define the community. This balance will be key to ensure the “blank canvas” afforded by the Village’s open lands will be filled with development that strategically optimizes placement of land uses, while adhering to Dark Skies and conservation design principles, and conserving natural features. The Comprehensive Plan Update will provide a sensible plan to ensure an appropriate balance of development and preservation.

A refresh of the perspective that people have of Homer Glen does not mean a change in its core values, particularly those that underlie the Village’s slogan: Community and Nature in Harmony. Rather, the view that people have of Homer Glen should continually adjust as expectations change. Residents can take pride in a modernized image. A refreshed image can also attract visitors to find out what’s new in Homer Glen. Emerging businesses may find Homer Glen to be an ideal place to set up shop. Whether they are new stores, offices, or industrial uses, these enterprises would help expand the Village’s tax base. Homebuyers would also benefit from a refreshed image, particularly one driven by a diversified and modernized housing stock.

When it comes to establishing municipal policies, Homer Glen is a trailblazer. A year after incorporation, the Village enacted a record 16 state grant recipients to prepare a Green Vision Plan. In 2006, the Village adopted its Conservation Design Ordinance, which was lauded as one of the strongest such policies in the country. In 2007, the Village enacted its renowned Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, which helps preserve Dark Skies. While these policies support Homer Glen’s slogan, the Village should ensure they are supportive of future growth strategies without hindering development or sacrificing Homer Glen’s hallmark stewardship of the natural environment.

Encouraging growth and development and preserving the Village’s identity as a steward of preservation does not have to be an either/or proposition. A sensible approach to planning for Homer Glen’s future can accomplish both goals without compromising either one. One of the primary intents of the Comprehensive Plan Update is to chart a practical framework of strategies to advance growth and development, while maintaining Homer Glen’s trademark consciousness towards preservation. In addition to careful land use planning, updates to the design and development guidelines and Conservation Design Ordinance will help transform fear into support.
Vision Statement

We envision Homer Glen as a welcoming, engaged community, where balanced growth provides a mix of rural character, business vitality, nature areas, and interconnected, walkable neighborhoods.
Since the project launch in May 2019, community engagement has been a prominent component of the project to engage residents, business and property owners, Village staff and officials, and other stakeholders. At this stage of the project, community engagement has primarily focused on obtaining input on Homer Glen today and aspirations for the future. This feedback will form a solid foundation of community thoughts, ideas, and concerns to inform the preparation of long-range planning strategies to guide sensible growth and development in Homer Glen.

As summarized on the graphic on the left, the project has obtained a multitude of community input through a multi-pronged approach to its Community Engagement Strategy. The graphic also indicates a few activities that will be conducted over the next few months, which accentuates the ongoing nature of the project’s strategic approach to community engagement.

The graphics on the next few pages highlight interactions and key takeaways from some of the community engagement activities conducted so far, including HomerFest (June 22-23, 2019) and the Public Open House (June 26, 2019).
Project website

Outreach activities like HomerFest (see next page) and the Public Open House (see page 8) provided opportunities for the community to share their thoughts and ideas regarding the future of Homer Glen. The Consultant Team continues to work with Village staff to find other opportunities to engage the community.

The project website provides an ongoing option for community feedback. Many ideas have already been shared via the website and direct engagement with the Consultant Team, including those highlighted below and on the right.
In the mold of Homer Glen’s popular and emerging “Chalk It Up” community event, the Consultant Team used a set of chalkboards to collect thoughts and ideas from community members attending HomerFest.

One chalkboard asked:

“I would like to see _____ in Homer Glen.”

The other chalkboard asked:

“Use a phrase to describe Homer Glen.”

People of all ages provided their ideas, with some sharing anecdotes behind their responses.

Results are summarized on the right and in the photos below.

“I would like to see _____ in Homer Glen.”
- Lake water
- Park district (x3)
- Pool
- Splash pad in Heritage Park
- More trees in Heritage Park
- Play activities (under age 10)
- More family events
- Boardwalk in pond in park
- Mariano’s
- Andy’s frozen custard
- Portillos (x2)
- Business sponsored park equipment
- More sidewalks: Cedar and 151st
- Affordable housing for single parents
- Indoor pool (good for seniors)

“Use a phrase to describe Homer Glen.”
- Close to everything yet so far
- High taxes
- Quiet area
- Friendly
Designed in an open house format, the first public meeting for the comprehensive plan process provided an informal setting for community members to learn more about the project, review and comment on a series of exhibits, and interact with the Consultant Team.

Findings from the exhibit comments are summarized below.

**NEIGHBORHOODS MAP**
Using a Subdivisions Map, participants used green and red pins to indicate neighborhoods they like and dislike, respectively.

**LIKED**
- BARBALIC
- BLACKROCK ESTATES
- OLD OAK ESTATES
- GOODINGS GROVE
- WOODBINE
- CEDAR GLEN
- STONEBRIDGE WOODS
- HIDDEN VALLEY EST.
- DE BOER WOODS

**DISLIKED**
- LEMONT FARMS
- 167TH/CEDAR (NE)
- 143RD/BELL (SW)

**POTENTIAL SUBAREAS**
Using a map of the potential subareas, participants shared ideas for how they would like to see the subareas develop. Some ideas include:

- NO INDUSTRIAL
- BUSINESS PARK OKAY
- CORPORATE OFFICES
- DOWNTOWN AREA
- HOTEL
- HIGHER ED/COLLEGE
- SPORTS FIELDS
- KEEP AGRICULTURE

**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**
Using a summary of comments received so far from the project website, participants added their own thoughts and ideas.

- COMMUNITY POOL
- DOWNTOWN AREA
- MORE LOCAL EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT
- KID-FRIENDLY PARKS
- MORE LARGE LOTS
- BALANCED GROWTH W/ NATURE
- BIKE TRAILS & SIDEWALKS
- SPLASH PAD
- ICE SKATING RINK
- SENIOR ACTIVITIES
- SENIOR TRANSPORT
- PARK DISTRICT
- SOLUTION TO HIGH TAXES AND WATER RATES

**CORE ISSUES**
Using a summary list of preliminary core issues, participants indicated which ones they agree, disagree, or are neutral:

- UTILITIES INFRASTR. PLAN
- DIVERSE HOUSING STOCK
- HINDERING VILLAGE CODES
- BLANK CANVAS FOR DEV.
- MODERNIZED IDENTITY
- MODERNIZED IDENTITY
- EXPANDED TAX BASE
- RURAL HERITAGE

**TRANSPORTATION MAP**
Using a map showing existing roads and trails, participants shared ideas and concerns:

- MORE TRAILS
- SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- EQUESTRIAN LOOP
- TRUCK CONCERNS
- INTERSECTION SAFETY
- WILDLIFE EASEMENTS
- HELIPAD TO GOOSE ISLAND

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Even before incorporation in 2001, Homer Glen has long prided itself as a community that strongly emphasizes the preservation of its natural environment, large residential lots, serene pastoral atmosphere, and a distinct patchwork of neighborhoods that each hold their own identity and appeal. This perspective is reflected in the Village’s slogan:

“Community and Nature in Harmony”

It is also represented by the actions of the Homer Glen community, from its lauded lighting code and environmentally-conscious Conservation Design Ordinance to its 2018 recognition as a Tree City USA community and commitment to advancing Dark Skies principles.

The Village’s slogan is not just a tagline; it is a way of life and conscious approach to community planning. Just as this approach guided the Village’s 2018-21 Strategic Plan, it will also serve as the foundation that reinforces the long-range strategies for growth and development that will define the Comprehensive Plan Update.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This chapter summarizes Homer Glen’s demographic profile, particularly focusing on the Village’s population, race and ethnicity, age, and education. This profile provides an overview of demographic trends since the Village’s incorporation, as well as lends insights into how the Village’s demographic makeup may be impacted by or influence strategic growth and development over time.

Additional socioeconomic data is presented in the Housing and Market Analyses in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively.
**Demographic Data Sources:** U.S. Census; American Fact Finder; American Community Survey; 2005 Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan

Population of age 45+ has increased the most since 2000. This is reflected in Homer Glen’s median age, which increased to 44.9 in 2017 after some stability in the 42-43-year range in the 2000s. Notably, the median age in Homer Glen has historically been 7 years or greater than Will County, which may be an indicator of different variables, including:

- Long-time Homer Glen and Township residents tend to stay in the community
- Homer Glen may not align with the characteristics that Millennials and other young adults seek in a place to find a home
- Recent senior living developments in Homer Glen offer seniors attractive housing options

Homer Glen is a well-educated community. Almost 75% of residents age 25–74 (2017) have some college experience or an associate’s degree, with about 43% having a bachelor’s degree or higher. This compares to 67% (some college) and 36% (bachelor’s degree or higher) for all of Will County.

This level of educational attainment points to the potential for the Village to attract businesses that require greater skill levels. The employment by industry data table below supports this potential, particularly with some high skilled industries either increasing to demonstrate growth or decreasing to show room for improvement.

A diversified tax base with professional offices, healthcare, and high skilled industrial would align well with Homer Glen’s well-educated workforce.
Homer Glen has historically developed as a predominantly single-family residential community. While a majority of neighborhoods share the single-family unit type, they each reflect varying characteristics -- such as lot size, internal street network, architecture, natural features, and local amenities -- that define each neighborhood’s identity and attraction to current residents and potential homebuyers alike.

Over time, Homer Glen has experienced significant changes in its land use composition. Although single-family homes continue to define the Village as the prominent land use, modest residential development and growth as a newly incorporated community spurred commercial development along Bell Road, 143rd Street, and 159th Street. The increase in rooftops also introduced more parks, access to services, new healthcare facilities, and expansion of municipal services to adequately serve a growing Village.

Today, Homer Glen continues to face the prospect of continued growth and development, even at a moderate yet manageable pace. The extension of I-355 along the Village’s western edge serves as a major driver for commercial and employment-generating development, both today and into the future. As described in the Market Analysis in Chapter 8, the Village and local market is able to support more development, which will provide more goods, services, and amenities within Homer Glen.

The community takes a strong stance that recognizes the importance of sensible growth and development to minimize impacts on the environment and the natural areas that distinctly define Homer Glen.

This chapter takes stock of Homer Glen’s existing land use, underlying zoning, development considerations, and a set of planning subareas that hold the greatest potential to support future development.
EXISTING LAND USE

The map in Figure 4.1 shows the land uses that presently comprise Homer Glen. The chart below summarizes the percent composition of major land use types.

Of all land uses in Homer Glen, single family residential makes up the majority of land at 47.2%, which reflects the Village’s historical development pattern. Using the same categories as the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, single family residential includes four sub-categories: rural, estate, low density, and moderate density. Multi-family residential, such as condos and apartments, comprises 3.6%, which points to the potential for greater housing diversity in Homer Glen.

Just as single family residential primarily characterizes Homer Glen’s land use composition, green space -- particularly in the form of parks, recreation, open space, and agriculture -- defines the Village’s second most prominent land use coverage at 39.9%.

Commercial and industrial uses comprise 3.0% and 0.2%, respectively. Both categories are likely to increase as the Village prepares for growth and development, particularly commercial growth along major roads like Bell Road and 159th Street, as well as office or industrial uses near I-355 and other prime development areas.
**ZONING**

Based on the Village’s 2019 Zoning Map, existing land use in Homer Glen is generally consistent with the Village’s underlying zoning designations. This consistency is primarily due to the fact that the current zoning designations closely reflect the existing land use. While this approach helps bring land use and zoning in closer alignment, it also leads to spot zoning and creates the potential for conflicts in the future.

Updating the zoning ordinance and map is typically one of the most common recommendations that results from a comprehensive plan process. This will certainly be the case for Homer Glen, particularly as growth and development strategies impact future land use recommendations, which will be prepared in Phase 6.

For the purposes of this report, some notable zoning issues that should be addressed are highlighted below.

**DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

One of the primary roles of the Comprehensive Plan Update will be to serve as a guide for Village officials to assess future development proposals. The Future Land Use Plan will be the most influential plan component in this regard, indicating the optimal land uses for properties across the entire Village. In addition, the Conceptual Subarea Plans (see the next page for details; to be prepared in Phase 5) will illustrate how the Village envisions the general development of specific areas around Homer Glen.

In addition to existing land uses and underlying zoning, the following aspects are important to take into consideration as the Village continues to grow and develop:

**NOTABLE ZONING ISSUES**

Old Oak Country Club is currently zoned C-6 Commercial Recreational. However, if the golf course were to be redeveloped, the C-6 designation places limitations on future development potential. Old Oak is also the only property zoned C-6, so this designation would be eliminated unless other properties eventually get rezoned C-6. It may be worth considering whether a separate and limited C-6 district -- which is an example of spot zoning -- is needed rather than making a golf course permissible in another, more prevalent district(s).

As its name indicates, the P-1 Government Buildings and Public Schools zoning district is currently designated for its namesake uses. However, only the Village and Homer Township municipal buildings along 151st Street have this designation. None of the schools are zoned P-1. While this is a relatively easy map change, this is another example of spot zoning that could be addressed by making these public/institutional uses permissible in other, more prevalent district(s).

While Homer Glen has historically developed as a predominantly residential community, the current set of zoning districts has 13 residential zones. There are also six commercial zones. In some sense, this poses the opportunity to consolidate certain zones to streamline the number of residential and commercial districts. However, this would require more in-depth study, which may be a recommendation of this plan.
**PLANNING SUBAREAS**

The map in Figure 4.2 illustrates a set of proposed planning subareas to focus growth and development. At this point in the planning process, the planning subareas shown on the map are conceptual in nature and will be refined in Phase 5 of the project.

**PRIMARY SUBAREAS**

These five subareas offer the greatest potential for future development in Homer Glen. Detailed concept plans and strategies will be prepared for these subareas in Phase 5.

- 143rd/LEMONT
- 159th/I-355
- CEDAR/BRUCE
- 159th/HIDDEN VALLEY
- 159th/BELL

**TYPOLOGY AREAS**

Holding potential for development on a smaller scale, these areas will serve as typologies for similar development approaches on other unidentified sites that may be viable around the Village.

- ARCHER AVE CORRIDOR
- EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- EMPLOYMENT CENTER
- RESIDENTIAL SITE
- DEVELOPMENT SITE

**SITE UNDER STUDY**

- POTENTIAL REGIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX

**COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

- CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF BELL ROAD CORRIDOR

**FIGURE 4.2**

PLANNING SUBAREAS MAP
Stewardship of the natural environment, sensible approaches to growth, and commitment to Dark Skies are some of the core characteristics that define Homer Glen and separate it from the other municipalities across the Chicago region.

At the same time, it is the Village’s network of community facilities and assets that form a solid foundation upon which residents, businesses, and organizations can access resources, services, and opportunities that enable them to thrive.

This chapter summarizes the various community facilities and assets that make Homer Glen work. In addition, this chapter focuses on issues and opportunities that will be taken into consideration in later phases of the Comprehensive Plan Update process, at which point strategies will be prepared to help guide future growth and development in Homer Glen.
VILLAGE FACILITIES

Located on a central civic campus along 151st Street, Village Hall is the primary municipal facility serving the community. All municipal services and Village officials generally operate out of Village Hall, which is an adaptive reuse of the former golf course clubhouse.

In addition to the offices of the Mayor, Board of Trustees, and Village Clerk, Village Hall is home to the following departments: Administration, Building, Development Services, Economic Development, Finance, Road District, Planning and Zoning, and Public Services and Safety.

The type and level of services has generally served Homer Glen well since its incorporation in 2001. However, there is growing interest within the community to establish a Parks Department or District. The former would impact the Village’s fiscal and staffing structure, while the latter would be a taxing body.
The Mayor’s 2019 State of the Village Address indicates that the Village is financially stable, including an excellent AA+ S&P bond rating accentuating a “strong capacity to meet all financial commitments.” As Homer Glen prepares for growth and development, it stands to reason that sales tax revenue and development fees will increase, which should continue to bolster the Village’s capacity to provide high quality services to the community.

However, the Village should continue to monitor how growth and development may impact the efficiency of services and potential to expand, add, or contract out certain aspects, such as a new Parks Department. The Village does well in this regard through its exemplar financial reporting and annual State of the Village address, as well as the implementation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan.

**TOWNSHIP FACILITIES**

Homer Township is a proactive agency providing a variety of services and facilities from which the Homer Glen community benefits. The Township’s core facilities are located next to Village Hall on the central civic campus, including the Homer Township Administration Center, Road District, and Public Library. Township services include: property assessments, senior services, parks and open space, roads, and general assistance, such as social security, disability, and temporary assistance for people in need.

One of the Township’s 11 parks -- Town Center Park, which includes Kevin Killmer Field -- is located on the civic campus. The other 10 parks are located throughout Homer Glen. Homer Township administers an open space program covering about 50 acres. In addition, the Township manages conservation easements in Wedgewood Highlands, Morris Park, and Trantina Park.

Located along Bell Road, Founders Crossing is a 31-unit affordable senior independent living facility that was built via referendum with a bond and has room for expansion. The site also includes a healing garden.

Despite providing a range of services and facilities, Homer Township has some mandates that remain unfunded. However, officials do not currently see a need to consolidate services with the Village. As Homer Glen prepare for growth and development, there will be opportunities to assess the Township’s capacity to provide adequate services and maintain or expand its facilities.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

Public safety in Homer Glen is comprised of police, fire, and emergency services. The Village currently contracts police services out to Will County Sheriff’s Office, which continues to be a strong partnership. While there is no indication that this arrangement will change, it will be worth monitoring as the Village experiences further growth, as it may create the potential for expanded police services beyond what the Will County Sheriff’s Office may be able to provide.

Fire and emergency services are provided by four fire protection districts: (1) Homer Township Fire Protection District; (2) Northwest Homer Fire Protection District; (3) New Lenox Fire Protection District; and (4) Mokena Fire Protection District. Homer Township and Northwest Homer FPDs cover a majority of the Village.

Village growth will play a critical role in the capacity for the FPDs to provide adequate fire protection services. This capacity is complicated by recent reductions in staffing and infrastructure at some of the FPDs, which will be further accentuated by future Village growth and the availability of funding to bring staffing and infrastructure up to sufficient levels. Community growth and water rates are two primary determinants to assess facility expansion. Growth and development may also impact FPD response times, which will be a determining factor to add new stations to keep response times low.
HEALTHCARE

Homer Glen has experienced some growth in healthcare facilities within village limits, including Loyola Center for Health, Silver Cross Health, and the Dialysis Care Center. In addition, Victorian Village offers rehab and memory care services. In addition, even though it is not a traditional healthcare facility, Shady Oaks Camp is a well-regarded recreational camp for children and adults with disabilities.

These healthcare facilities provide accessible services within Homer Glen for Village residents, particularly a senior population that has experienced the most growth (48.3%) of any age cohort from 2000–2017. It also helps that Homer Glen has a growing slate of senior living options, including Victorian Village, Marian Village, Meadows at Marian Village, and Founders Crossing. The proposed Four Seasons of New Lenox will be another option located just beyond Homer Glen’s southern boundary.

As highlighted in the Market Analysis in Chapter 8, healthcare may be a potential growth industry in Homer Glen, particularly fueled by a mix of a growing senior population, new senior housing options, and concentration of existing healthcare facilities. While Homer Glen is home to small medical offices, there is potential to add additional offices or facilities, particularly in a business park environment.

HISTORIC SITES

Will County recognizes four historic sites in Homer Glen: (1) Austin-Welter Barn; (2) Benjamin F. Russell House; (3) John Lane Monument; and (4) Tilsy-Konow Barn. Will County identifies several settlements, cemeteries, and farmsteads across Homer Township in its 2002 Rural Historic Structural Survey. These sites are shown on the map in Figure 5.1.

The Village should continue to work with Will County to identify other historic sites and, if eligible, designate them as official County landmarks. Some sites also have the potential to be considered for eligibility for listing on the National Register for Historic Places.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Homer Glen is home to a variety of religious institutions, including several churches and Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago. Shri Ganesha Gayathri Temple is also located just beyond Homer Glen’s western boundary in neighboring Lockport. Homer Glen should continue to be a welcoming community for all religious institutions.
SCHOOLS

The Village is primarily covered by two school districts: Homer Community Consolidated School District #33C and Will County School District #92. Homer CCSD #33C manages five schools (grades K-8) in Homer Glen, while Will County SD #92 operates two schools (grades 2-3 and 6-8). High school students from Homer Glen primarily attend school in Lockport Township High School District #205 in neighboring Lockport. District #205 covers all of Homer Township.

At present, local schools adequately serve Homer Glen’s school-aged population, particularly as the Village’s population has generally stabilized over the past decade. While there are no specific plans for school expansions, the school districts have acquired properties to meet these potential needs (see Figure 5.2).
One recommendation from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was exploring the potential to open a new high school. According to the 2005 plan’s vision statement, this new high school was envisioned to be established by 2012, which clearly has not come to pass yet. It still remains a possibility, as does the potential to expand or add new K-8 schools, provided that population growth warrants such actions.

There is also potential to provide more childcare facilities, particularly as parents add their names to wait lists even before their children are born. While childcare facilities are often provided by for-profit businesses, the school districts may also be able to step in with solutions, such as the recent expansion of the pre-K program at Young Elementary School.

When the Future Land Use Plan is prepared in Phase 6, school projections will be calculated to provide insights into the potential growth in the school-age population and impacts on local school enrollment capacities.

To support economic development in Homer Glen, it may be worth considering the potential for middle and high schools to collaborate with local employers to identify job skills that will be needed for an evolving economy and workforce. This may also create opportunities for vocational training, internships, externships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing.

PARKS
Homer Glen is served by a network of parks that cover about 303 acres. Of the 20 parks in Homer Glen, nine are maintained by the Village and 11 by Homer Township. The map in Figure 5.3 illustrates the parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces that characterize Homer Glen.

About one-third of the total park space in Homer Glen is comprised of Heritage Park, which covers 103 acres adjacent to Village Hall. Once fully constructed, Heritage Park will provide a variety of recreational facilities, trails, community gathering spaces, and interaction with the natural environment that defines Homer Glen. In January 2019, the Village Board approved designs for future phases to Heritage Park, opening the potential for more recreational opportunities and natural areas in Homer Glen.

As noted earlier, community interest continues to grow to establish a Parks Department or District. Discussion will be ongoing, particularly as Homer Glen prepares for development, which would create a greater need for more park space to serve a growing population.

There is also concern in the community that parks are not equitably distributed across the Village. Some neighborhoods, particularly older subdivisions, have no park space within close proximity. The Village’s 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides guidance for the addition of new parks, recreational facilities, and open space in Homer Glen, particularly stating the national standard of 11 acres of parks per 1,000 residents. However, the Parks and Recreation Committee maintains an internal prioritization system that specifies areas for new parks based on population density.

Similar to school enrollment projections, the Future Land Use Plan that will be prepared in Phase 6 will provide guidance to determine the amount and location of future parks based on future residential land uses. The Comprehensive Plan recommendations will also assess how the Village’s Park Donation and Conservation Design Ordinances may play a role in the allocation of parks and green spaces.
RECREATION

Homer Glen is served by a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. Many of the parks in Homer Glen provide athletic fields and recreational amenities like trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, and fishing ponds.

Non-public entities also offer recreational opportunities. Old Oak Country Club is the only golf course in Homer Glen. Refresh Pilates and Wellness Studio, T-Time Golf Range, MPX Elite Fitness, and CrossFit Homer Glen are other examples of private entities providing sports and recreational opportunities.

There is a general sense that community members are willing to pay for certain recreational programs and access to facilities. This is partly driven by the growth of private entities providing programs and facilities to serve the diverse recreational needs of families and individuals.
While the market will help fill any gaps in recreational opportunities to serve local residents, the potential for a Parks Department or District may also play a role in adding new programs and facilities.

The Village recently commissioned a study to assess the potential to establish a regional sports complex along 151st Street and south of the civic campus. In addition to providing athletic fields for local and regional teams, there is potential for spinoff economic development, such as hotels, restaurants, and shops.

OPEN SPACE
In addition to parks, Homer Glen is partly defined by its preservation of open space throughout the community. Natural areas maintained by the Forest Preserve District of Will County comprise the majority of open space in Homer Glen. Parts or all of the following four natural areas traverse through Homer Glen:

1. Fiddyment Creek Preserve
2. Hadley Valley Natural Areas
3. Messenger Woods Natural Preserve
4. Messenger Marsh

While not all 2,087 acres of Forest Preserve area are within Homer Glen, this is still a significant amount of natural area within close proximity to the Village.

Homer Township also manages about 50 acres of open space, including three sites in Homer Glen: Trantina Park open space, Homer Glen Marsh in the Erin Hills subdivision, and the former Welter Farm site, which is now home to the Township’s Founders Crossing senior living site.

In addition to specifically designated open spaces like forest preserves and natural areas, other passive open spaces like wooded areas, creek greenways, vacant parcels, and agricultural land add to Homer Glen’s prominent cache of open space that underly its identity.

EQUESTRIAN CULTURE
As part of its pastoral character, equestrian culture plays a unique role in defining Homer Glen. From horse trails and signage to private stables and boarding farms, Homer Glen is distinct in that it attracts people who value horses. As the Village prepares for growth, the community should nurture the local equestrian culture by providing a connected network of horse-friendly trails and resources that support stables, farms, and horse owners.

AGRITOURISM & AGRIBUSINESS
Given its serene, pastoral character and preservation of open space, Homer Glen is an ideal community to build up a market for agritourism and agribusiness. Establishments like Bengtson’s Pumpkin Farm, Konows Corn Maze, and the various horse stables already form a solid framework for agritourism. Operating farms and businesses like Big R also support a market for agribusiness.

Agritourism and agribusiness also help each other, with the potential to transform defunct barns and farm properties into restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and special event venues like Farmington Lake just outside Homer Glen in neighboring Mokena. In some ways, it is a creative approach to adaptive reuse and sustainability:

“The greenest building is the one that already exists.”

- Richard Moe, National Trust for Historic Preservation
The transportation network is a critical component of the well being of Homer Glen residents, viability of local businesses, and attraction of visitors. The network connects workers to jobs, patrons to businesses, students to schools, families to community amenities, and people in general to opportunities that enrich their lives. As Homer Glen prepares for the future, the Village must ensure its transportation network can handle a growing community, increased traffic from more development, and potential to expand facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

ROADWAY NETWORK
The roadway hierarchy that defines Homer Glen’s transportation network is illustrated on the map in Figure 6.1. Recent and ongoing roadway projects on Bell Road, 143rd Street, 159th Street, and Cedar Road are aimed at improving access and mobility along these major corridors. Roadway improvements also support the Village’s economic development efforts to attract new businesses, improve access to existing ones, and create space for trails.

TRUCK ROUTES
As shown in Figure 6.1, the Village designates eight truck routes. Archer Avenue, 143rd Street, Bell Road, and 159th Street are assigned for 40-ton trucks. Gougar Road, Lemont Road, Parker Road, 151st Street, 163rd Street are earmarked for 7-ton trucks. The designation of truck routes will be important as the Village manages growth and development, particularly the potential for more industrial uses — whether in Homer Glen or neighboring Lockport and New Lenox — along the I-355 Corridor.

TRAILS
Homer Glen is presently served by about 12 miles of public multi-use trails, which can accommodate a range of users from bicyclists and pedestrians to joggers and...
horse riders. Heritage Park will add 5 miles of new trails once completed. Figure 6.1 shows existing and potential trails. The Village’s 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends that current and planned trails should connect local parks and regional trails. This includes filling gaps in the trail network and expanding equestrian facilities.

**TRANSIT**

Transit service in Homer Glen is limited, with Pace Bus Route #832 being the only transit line within the Village’s municipal limits. Operating between Orland Park and Joliet, the #832 bus traverses along 159th Street in Homer Glen; however, there is only one designated bus stop at the Parker Road intersection. Pace offers ADA-accessible paratransit service to disabled and senior residents in Central Will County who schedule a ride in advance.

Metra commuter rail service is available nearby; however, no stations are located in Homer Glen. The nearest Metra stations are located in neighboring municipalities, as shown in Figure 6.1.

As the Village continues to manage growth and development, transit service will be a critical component to monitor to provide greater commuting and mobility options to residents, employees, and visitors. Transit access is also an amenity that often attracts Millennials and young families.
Homer Glen is primarily residential with 94.1% of the housing stock as single-family subdivisions (US Census, ACS 2017). As summarized in the top bar chart in Figure 7.1, single-family lots are generally set on lots approximately a third of an acre to several acres in size. Many of the housing units are owner-occupied in Homer Glen, with the median home value almost 1.5 times the value of the median home price in Will County, as illustrated in the infographic in Figure 7.1.

Homeowners tend to stay in the community, with about 60% having moved into their current home over within the past 30 years. During the stakeholder meetings, the Consultant Team heard concerns over the lack of diversity of housing types to foster a ‘diverse cradle to grave’ population and variety of amenity types.

“This is an opportunity to learn from surrounding municipalities that only built large lot homes without townhomes that are a more affordable option.”

– Stakeholder Focus Groups, 6/25/19
EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Homer Glen’s large lots allow for larger single-family homes, and the housing stock largely consists of 3-4 bedrooms homes (80.5%). A majority of the homes, 71%, were built 20 to 50 years ago (US Census, ACS 2017). The current zoning code requires that all exterior finishes consist of “either stone or brick material covering 100% of the aggregate total area of all first floor or story exterior walls, exclusive of doors, windows, and associated trim” and “no plywood, vinyl, or aluminum siding shall be used on any new structure in the residential districts,” which promotes only a more expensive housing type to be built.

Additionally, the code only allows for individuals related by blood, adoption, or marriage to reside in accessory dwelling units (ADU). ADUs are a potentially more affordable housing type, but the current Homer Glen policy is restrictive in this regard.

The strategies that will be prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Update will explore recommendations to review and potentially update Village policies that impact the makeup of Homer Glen’s housing stock. In particular, updated housing policies should focus on diversifying the housing stock to meet varying needs, price points, and life stages, while also maintaining the community’s expectations for high quality design, conservation of open space, and respect for the natural environment.

EXISTING HOUSEHOLDS

Just as Homer Glen’s population has stabilized since 2010, so has the amount of households in the community, increasing by only 4.1% from 2010 (8,068 households) to 2017 (8,397), as shown in the bar chart in Figure 7.2. That is a significant difference compared to previous decades, including 1990-2000 (45.8% increase) and 2000-2010 (19.0% increase), which saw similar rises in total population.

The infographic in Figure 7.2 also indicates that the 2017 average household size in Homer Glen (2.90) is slightly lower than Will County (2.99). However, in comparison to neighboring communities, Homer Glen is higher than Lemont, Lockport, and Orland Park and lower than Mokena and New Lenox.
Non-family households in Homer Glen are disproportionately burdened with higher housing costs. They are also more likely to be occupied by a renter than a homeowner. Despite non-family households comprising one-fifth of the households (86.4% of them live alone), only 2.2% of the housing stock have 0 to 1-bedrooms, and only 9% are 2-bedroom homes, as shown in the pie charts in Figure 7.3. As a result, the larger existing housing types with 3-4 bedrooms disproportionately serve the potential housing needs of smaller household sizes.

A majority of the Homer Glen households are family households, but only 32.4% have one or more children under the age of 18 years old. The average family size is 3.28 and the average non-family household 1.16 persons. Almost one-fifth of the households are non-family households, of which 55.2% are living alone and over the age of 65 years. This is an opportunity to provide housing options for a population that wants to age in place. This will require additional analysis and may be a recommendation of this plan.

Given that most of the homeowners moved into their homes 10–30 years ago and Homer Glen has 46.3% of households with one or more people 60 years and over, it is likely that the housing stock needs to plan for an aging demographic. If homeowners would like to remain in their homes, this presents the opportunity to adopt a more lenient accessory unit ordinance to be adopted that encourages intergenerational living.
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
EXISTING CONDITIONS & ISSUES SUMMARY

Align zoning, approval processes, building codes, and inspections to generate more housing options.

Create accessible housing that meets the region's current and future demographics.

Reform state and federal regulations that negatively affect development of diverse housing types.

CMAP targets households to not pay more than 45% of income on transportation and housing costs combined. The collected data concluded that the median income households in Homer Glen exceeded that target range of 45%, median incomes. Moreover, about 45% of those households pay 45% on housing alone, as well as 24% on transportation costs, totaling 69% in combined costs (CMAP, ON TO 2050, 2019).

Future strategies will focus on providing a diversity of housing at affordable price points and transportation options, such as greater access to transit, that ensure households pay less than 45% of income on combined housing and transportation costs.

Regional Initiatives

CMAP ON TO 2050: The regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) released their ON TO 2050 plan in late 2018. The plan builds off the GO TO 2040 Plan and included three strategies relating to community and housing, as highlighted on the right.

Local Initiatives

Homer Glen, Lemont, Lockport, New Lenox, Orland Park:
Homer Glen’s zoning allows for accessory housing, but few accessory units currently exist. Accessory housing affords the aging population of residents -- age 62 and over -- to obtain an additional income and ability to remain in their single-family residential homes (§220-821 Homer Glen Zoning Ordinance, Accessory Housing). Homer Glen’s current zoning code supports maintaining a predominately single-family and larger lot housing typology.

Surrounding municipalities have permitted the provision of more diverse housing types, such as multi-units. Multi-unit housing makes living units more accessible to smaller families and millennials looking to move back into their hometown, particularly those who aren’t able to afford 3- to 4-bedroom homes. As shown in Figure 7.5, Homer Glen has the highest number of 1-unit detached homes compared to other surrounding communities, and the second highest median home value.

Orland Park is known for being a regional hub for jobs and housing. Additionally, Orland Park has one of the more diverse housing markets with over 20% of its housing consisting of two or more units (ACS, 2017).

Homes with two or less bedrooms comprise 33.6% and 33.0% of the housing stock in Orland Park and Lockport, respectively, as compared to 11.6% in Homer Glen 11.6%. These are potentially smaller homes for smaller households, such as retirees looking to downsize or younger individuals looking to become a new homeowner.

Lemont has a historic downtown and a larger mix of housing types and housing age that predates the homes in Homer Glen.

New Lenox has a comparable median home value to that of Homer Glen, but 10.6% of New Lenox’s housing has two or more units, almost double Homer Glen’s 5.6%.

FIGURE 7.5
MEDIAN HOME VALUES & % OF 1-UNIT DETACHED HOUSING, 2017
Homer Glen is home to a variety of nationally recognized and locally owned businesses, and only 22 miles away from Downtown Chicago, as shown in Figure 8.1. The Village’s primary commercial corridors are along 143rd Street and 159th Street connected via the north-south arterial, Bell Road, and via interchanges on I-355. Additionally, the I-355 freeway conveniently connects to I-55 and I-80. As shown in Figure 8.1, a staggering 6.9 million people residents live within a one-hour drive-time radius of Homer Glen, which provides access to one of the largest labor sheds in the country.

Stakeholder focus groups were held to gather local business owners’ input. Key concerns of the business owners include: absence of approval for business developments; impact of road improvements on attracting new businesses and hindering business access; right of way challenges on 159th Street; lack of ordinance updates; absence of a downtown; lack of affordable housing types; development not being incentivized leading to bad reputation; conservation design ordinance; and a diverse housing stock.
INDUSTRIES & MAJOR EMPLOYERS

There is no one dominant industry servicing Homer Glen; rather, multiple industries serve the business market. As shown illustrated in Figures 8.3 and 8.4, construction leads with 13.4%, other services including automotive was second with 11.4%, and healthcare comprised of 10.7% of industries in Homer Glen.

Healthcare services is the third largest industry sector but the largest employer sector, providing 25.7% of the jobs in Homer Glen. Silver Cross Health Center alone employs over 500, and over 300 jobs are devoted to assisted care services for seniors. In addition, Homer Glen is served by: two continuing care facilities at Victorian Village and Marian Village, one nursing care facility at Rest Haven Illiana Christian Convalescent Home, and Loyola Center for Health.

Retail Trade is another large employer with 54 businesses identified as of the last estimates and new businesses added regularly, especially along the major retail corridors of 143rd Street, 159th Street, and Bell Road. Homer Glen’s top major retail employers are: Meijer (250-300 employees, depending on the season); Home Depot (130 employees); Menards (130 employees); and Jewel-Osco (100 employees).

Of the 74 construction firms in Homer Glen, Alps Construction (45 employees), GT Mechanical (27 employees), and Avalanche Inc. (20 employees) lead the pack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>TOP INDUSTRY SECTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>13.4% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANUFACTURING</td>
<td>1.8% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETAIL TRADE</td>
<td>9.8% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATIONAL SERVICES</td>
<td>2.5% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTHCARE</td>
<td>10.7% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOMMODATION &amp; FOOD/DRINK</td>
<td>7.4% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER SERVICES</td>
<td>11.4% OF BUSINESSES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Data Sources: U.S. Census, American Fact Finder; American Community Survey; 2005 Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan
RETAIL CORRIDORS

As shown in Figure 8.4, Homer Glen’s main retail corridors are along 159th Street and 143rd Street, connected by the Bell Road corridor that runs north to south. There is also a minor arterial along 151st Street.

Chain retail stores (e.g., Home Depot, Meijer, Taco Bell, Speedway, Jewel-Osco, Menards, Dollar Tree, O’Reilly, etc.) and locally owned businesses (e.g., Total Flooring, Tazza Italian Ristorante, Purple Onion, etc.) are located along these corridors. There are several available sites along the corridors for potential developments ranging as small as 1.5 acres up to 59.5 acres. During the stakeholder focus groups, Homer Glen business owners noted the lack of a pharmacy like CVS or Walgreens, although the latter has a store at the intersection of 143rd Street and Will Cook Road in Orland Park.

Business owners and community members cited concerns over the lack of downtown in Homer Glen, which were mentioned by several individuals during the Open House and Stakeholder focus groups. Surrounding markets, such as New Lenox immediately south of Homer Glen, attract visitors with summer concerts and holiday events, despite also lacking a traditional downtown. The recent opening of...
Heritage Park and the potential to expand the Village Center concept along 151st Street present opportunities to create large community gathering spaces without the benefit of a true downtown.

Orland Park utilizes banners to draw in visitors to their community events and storefronts. Homer Glen is actively updating the infrastructure to support more businesses along 143rd Street and 159th Street and to improve the existing corridors mobility. These infrastructure updates and available development sites could be an opportunity to provide Homer Glen with additional central gathering spaces and could help build tax revenue.

**Retail Leakage-Surplus Analysis**

As shown in Figure 8.5, Homer Glen is experiencing an incredibly high percentage of retail leakage in comparison to other towns throughout the Chicagoland area. The Village is only experiencing a surplus in four types of retail: (1) Grocery Stores; (2) Building Materials and Supplies Dealers; (3) Special Food Services; and (4) Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores. Every other major retail industry group is experiencing leakage to neighboring towns in the region.

**Figure 8.5**

*2017 Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Group*
Homer Glen is experiencing 100% leakage in seven industry groups: (1) Book, Periodical, and Music Stores; (2) Department Stores; (3) Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses; (4) Other Motor Vehicle Dealers; (5) Shoe Stores; (6) Specialty Food Stores; and (7) Vending Machine Operators. Most of these industry groups have been dominated by e-commerce, namely Amazon, which suggests that the leakage is less likely to be reversed by attracting new businesses in those industries. However, there is a strong case to be made for attracting development in certain sectors: Health & Office Supplies (97% leakage); Gas Stations (83% leakage); Personal Care Stores (73% leakage); and Restaurants (37% leakage).

The adopted general fund budget of Homer Glen for FY 2019-2020 is $9,522,029, with 36.8% of its revenue from sales tax. A total of 551 businesses are located in Homer Glen, but few are sales related. Additionally, Homer Glen has the lowest municipal sales tax in the area with no municipal property tax. Fiscal health relies on consumer spending and the tax base. Attracting new industries via business parks could increase the current tax base and retain consumer spending within Homer Glen.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

Below are key stats regarding retail surplus/leakage in Homer Glen.

- **4** RETAIL INDUSTRIES WITH SURPLUS
- **7** RETAIL INDUSTRIES WITH 100% LEAKAGE, MOSTLY IMPACTED BY E-COMMERCE
- **36.8%** PERCENTAGE OF FY2019-2020 REVENUE ATTRIBUTED TO SALES TAX

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**WORKFORCE**

The majority of Homer Glen’s local business workers do not live in Homer Glen; rather, residents of Homer Glen commute outside of the Village for work, as summarized in Figures 8.6 and 8.7. Many Homer Glen residents commute to Chicago for work. Only 775 individuals live and work in Homer Glen. Overall, about two-thirds (66.1%) of Homer Glen’s population are in the workforce (ACS, 2017). Homer Glen has a low unemployment rate of 4.5% compared to Will County.

Homer Glen would like to add business parks to increase the tax base, which would provide the Village with the opportunity to retain local workers who presently commute elsewhere.

With 9% of the Homer Glen population between the ages of 55-59 years old, roughly one out of 10 residents is approaching retirement age. Therefore, it is likely that another 9% of Homer Glen’s population will leave the workforce in the next 5-10 years. Currently, 25.2% of Homer Glen’s population is over 60 years of age, compared to Will County’s 17% (ACS, 2017). Homer Glen needs to plan for industries that support a retiring workforce and focus on retaining industries that cater to the evolving skillset of the younger workforce.

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**FIGURE 8.6**

**LABOR FORCE**

HOMER GLEN, 2010-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Homer Glen</th>
<th>Will County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

**EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION**

HOMER GLEN & WILL COUNTY, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Homer Glen</th>
<th>Will County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Professional</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Office</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TELECOMMUTING**

HOMER GLEN, 2010-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Increase in Amount of Homer Glen Workers Age 16+ Who Work at Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.5% TELECOMMUTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2.8% TELECOMMUTED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Data Sources: U.S. Census; American Fact Finder; American Community Survey; 2005 Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan

Menards is tied with Home Depot as the largest retail employer in Homer Glen.
**Employment Inflow–Outflow**

Out of the 12,560 residents in Homer Glen who are employed, only 775 live and work in the Village, as highlighted in Figure 8.7. The remaining 11,785 residents commute outside of Homer Glen for their job. Although 93.8% of Homer Glen’s residents work outside of the Village, Homer Glen attracts 82.1% of its 4,332 workers from outside of the Village.

**Household Income & Expenditures**

As summarized in Figure 8.8, the median income for Homer Glen in 2017 is $97,254, which is projected to grow to $105,250 by 2024. The Village’s median income is higher than that of Will County’s $80,782. The median household disposable income for Homer Glen and Will County is $73,778 and $61,843, respectively. It is estimated that residents of Homer Glen spend almost half of their income on housing and transportation alone (see Chapter 7), and almost 10% of household income is spent on dining out, alcohol consumption, and entertainment and recreation combined. The total sales per capita in Homer Glen was $14,004, which is in line with that of Will County’s $14,560. Some of the frequented chain restaurants by Homer Glen residents are outside of the municipal area, therefore consumer spending is outside of the Village’s tax area.

Almost all errands in Homer Glen require a car, but the Village has made strides to improve its bikeability. CMAP’s Community Data Snapshot rates Homer Glen a walk score of 14 out of 100 (www.walkscore.com, 2018). Chapter 9 will elaborate on the infrastructure projects such as bike path expansions in Homer Glen.

Demographic Data Sources: U.S. Census; American Fact Finder; American Community Survey; 2005 Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan; Esri, 2019; Illinois Department of Revenue, 2017.
Homer Glen has many current infrastructure improvement projects, as well as planning efforts for future ones, throughout the Village. Improvement projects include:

- Prioritizing arterials
- Improving roadway connectivity and safety
- Optimizing mobility networks

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS
Primary projects are located along the arterial corridors of Bell Road, 151st Street, and 159th Street, as well as 143rd Street. Much of the project funding was provided by IDOT, including $1.5 million alone for 151st Street and Bell Road, as well as federal dollars, grants, and local contributions from the Village and Homer Township. The map in Figure 9.1 depicts all major infrastructure projects planned for Homer Glen.

PRIORITIZING ARTERIALS
Currently, there are 19 available sites along 159th Street and seven near Bell Road and 151st Street (see the Retail Corridors Map in Figure 8.4 in Chapter 8). The prioritization of the Village to install higher volume utility hookups along the key commercial corridors like 159th Street will allow future businesses to more easily locate in Homer Glen. Additionally, the Village’s expansion of 159th Street for car and freight movement, as well as the enhancement of pedestrian and bike access, will benefit the vitality of Homer Glen’s commercial corridors.
**EXISTING CONDITIONS & ISSUES SUMMARY**

**143RD ST CORRIDOR**
Widening to 5-lane highway
- Phase 1 (Completed/May 2019)
- Phase 2 (late 2019)

**143RD ST & GOUGAR RD**
Industrial Park development with left/right turn signal lanes

**151ST ST CORRIDOR**
2-lane to 3-lane conversion with cross-section upgrades, funded by federal dollars

**159TH ST CORRIDOR**
Water main and sanitary sewer infrastructure project, new water hookups, 5-lane expansion

**BIKE PATHS**
Expansion of paths along 159th St. Trail
167th St. trail will connect to other trails, and potentially a path along 143rd St.

**CEedar RD**
Potential extension 143rd to 151st Streets

**TRAFFIC SIGNAL**
Potential traffic signal

**BELL RD CORRIDOR**
5-lane road expansion, including middle turn lane
- Phase 1: 0.5-mile gap piece (Completed/May 2019)
- Phase 2: right of way project, requires utilities (expected mid 2020), in partnership with IDOT

**LEMON RD**
Sanitary Sewer tied to Lockport (expected in the future)

**GAP AREA DEVELOPMENT**
Potential property development and utility service for Village’s “gap areas”

**FLYOVER BRIDGE**
Potential Caton Farm Flyover bridge

**PEDESTRIAN ACCESS**
Potential access along 159th, budget dependent
UTILITIES
Sewer and water are served by Illinois American Water Co., except for Fiddyment Creek sanitary sewer and the 159th Street water main. There is a total of 26 water lift stations in Homer Glen. Village utilities are mainly outsourced, which has led to issues with rights and access.

WATER SOURCING
The Village is concerned over the lack of water and electrical hookups and the need to expand utilities throughout the Village. There is a total of five (5) community water agencies for Village. This leads to an opportunity for the Village to acquire control and to build its own water main system.

ROADWAY CONNECTIVITY & SAFETY
The Village has noted the lack of north/south arterial connections. Much of the community connectivity is interrupted by subdivisions or disjointed arterials that are interrupted by lack of continued access. As noted on the map in Figure 9.1, potential extension of Cedar Road offers the potential for a new north/south connector segments between 143rd Street and Bruce Road.

MOBILITY NETWORKS
Development projects are already focused on improving and expanding connectivity of disjointed pedestrian access and bike trails. The 159th Street expansion is slated to include more bike facilities joining Will Cook Road to Gougar Road and eventually 167th Street trails. Additionally, the trail along 167th Street will connect to the Veteran Memorial Trail and the Will County Preserve. Having connected mobility networks is key for fostering multimodal access to community gathering spaces and key points across Homer Glen.

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY
There is a potential opportunity for the Village to enhance subdivision interconnectivity by increasing the number of north/south thoroughfares. Connectivity is interrupted by the number of disjointed subdivisions. Enhancing the overall connectivity of the Village lays the groundwork for a central gathering spaces that may be easily accessed by car, bike, and foot.
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Even before the Village was incorporated and the term “sustainability” became a staple in urban planning, Homer Glen has always placed a premium on putting nature first and ensuring growth and development respects the natural environment. This conscious approach to planning is reflected in the Village’s slogan:

“Community and Nature in Harmony”

Large lots, serene natural landscapes, preservation of agricultural land, active farms, and equestrian facilities all contribute to this distinct blend of a growing community that plans with nature. This chapter highlights other influential contributions to the attentive stewardship that Homer Glen places on creating a sustainable community.

**GREEN VISION**

As one of 16 communities in Illinois that received the 2002 Governor’s Green Communities Demonstration Grant, Homer Glen was able to “identify environmental challenges and plan for a sustainable future.” Figure 10.1 summarizes the key outcomes from Homer Glen’s Green Vision Plan, including a vision statement and six core goals.

**GREEN VISION STATEMENT**

“Homer Glen will be an attractive, distinctive, and environmentally sustainable community that protects its valuable water resources, natural landscapes, wildlife habitats, open spaces and agricultural settings essential to the well being and quality of life of Homer Glen residents.”

**GOALS**

(1) Maintain an attractive and distinctive community.
(2) Preserve natural resources, habitat, and wildlife.
(3) Protect and enhance open space.
(4) Promote a healthy parks and recreation system.
(5) Provide a coordinated transportation network.
(6) Promote and protect high quality water resources.
EMERALD NECKLACE
As part of the open space goal in Homer Glen’s Green Vision Plan, one objective was to “develop an interconnected greenway system -- an ‘Emerald Necklace’ -- that links open space throughout the Village.” Homer Glen has done well to establish a solid foundation for this Emerald Necklace, particularly with the current trail system generally traversing the Village’s perimeter. The graphic on the right highlights how the trail network, forest preserves, natural features, and agricultural land all comprise Homer Glen’s Emerald Necklace.

CONSERVATION DESIGN
Following the adoption of its first Comprehensive Plan in 2005, the Village enacted its Conservation Design Ordinance in 2006 to provide an innovative policy to support the protection of the natural environment and open space. At its initial adoption, the ordinance was viewed as one of the strongest such policies in the nation and is still positioned as the only ordinance in Illinois to require mandatory compliance by developers, with no incentives or bonuses afforded.

In general, the Conservation Design Ordinance requires 20% to 50% of new residential development of at least 10 acres to be set aside as permanent, dedicated, and publicly-owned open space. Cluster development is the typical approach utilized to maximize open space, which help to advance the Emerald Necklace concept. When adjacent properties can be strung together and connected via trails. Other benefits include protected wildlife corridors, scenic vistas, and less impervious surfaces, which lead to reduced flooding and improved recharge of groundwater aquifers.

Over time, however, the Conservation Design Ordinance is perceived as being overly restrictive, resulting in very little growth in new residential development in Homer Glen. While the ordinance maintains elements that should be retained, the Comprehensive Plan Update will explore potential amendments that the Village can explore to improve the ordinance and support sensible growth in the future.

TREE PRESERVATION
In addition to the Conservation Design Ordinance, the Village approved its Tree Preservation Ordinance in 2006, primarily to prevent new development from clear cutting of trees and provide incentives to save large, mature trees. Best management practices must be taken to protect trees identified for preservation. Homer Glen’s commitment to tree care and preservation led to the Village being recognized in 2018 as a Tree City USA. This recognition is a genuine reflection of Homer Glen’s stewardship of a sustainable community, which will be crucial as the Village plans for future growth.

DARK SKIES
Just as Homer Glen is a leader in conservation design and tree preservation, the Village is also renowned for its outdoor lighting ordinance, including recognition by the State of Illinois in 2008 and national attention for raising greater awareness to light pollution. By reducing the impacts of light pollution and preserving the importance of the night sky, Homer Glen is able to host stargazing events and recognized as one of the few cities across the nation as a Dark Sky Community. This commitment to dark skies will continue to play an influential role in guiding sensible growth in Homer Glen.

“Our commitment to minimizing light pollution in our community is a great asset and one that contributes to our quality of life. Once lost, we can never get it back, so thank you for your continuing efforts in protecting our environment.”
- Ken Lomasney, Homer Glen