Route 60 Entrance Corridor - A Vision for the Future

The Vision
A vibrant Corridor welcoming people into the City of Lake Forest from the west. The Route 60 Entrance Corridor extends from I-94 (the Illinois Tollway), to the railroad underpass located just to the east of Academy Drive. The Corridor is a hub of activity with a unique mix of uses; a world class corporate office park, supporting hospitality and commercial development, a variety of housing types that attract those who work nearby, educational uses, parks and open spaces, a City services facility and the headquarters for a nationally known sports team.

East of the Entrance Corridor, Route 60 continues another mile facilitating access to locations throughout the City including Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital, the Waukegan Road Business District, Lake Forest High School West Campus, parks and athletic fields, residential neighborhoods and the Central Business District. Route 60 is a multi-lane, higher speed, State thoroughfare however, the character is identifiable as Lake Forest with landscape dominant streetscapes, well designed buildings, quality maintenance, open spaces and attention to detail.

The signature development in the Entrance Corridor is Conway Park, a first-class corporate office park, and the nearby office buildings located just to the south. These offices are home to nationally recognized pharma, packaging, insurance and other businesses. Conway Park is a vitally important economic engine for the City. Assuring that the Route 60 Entrance Corridor and Conway Park and the surrounding area remain attractive to existing and new businesses, organizations, and institutions, is of critical importance to the City’s tax base. Land uses within the Corridor are those that offer amenities to corporate executives, employees, residents, visitors and those just passing through; increasing the vitality and marketability of the office park long into the future. Well-designed restaurants, hotels, small-scale retail and service businesses are visible at the gateway to the community, well-screened from nearby residential development and consistent with the character found throughout Lake Forest. A diversity of housing products are available to meet the needs of young professionals, including employees of the office park and families of various types and individuals of all ages.

The Corridor is active with walkers and bikers, employees, residents and visitors during the week and on weekends. Open spaces and landscaped setbacks
integrate well with the higher density uses in the Corridor creating a complementary balance, one that is uniquely Lake Forest. Bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails are provided to facilitate movement within the Corridor and linkages are in place to the regional trail system, nearby neighborhoods and parks, the Metra train station and the Waukegan Road Business District integrating the Corridor into the larger community.

The Route 60 Entrance Corridor is welcoming, distinctive and uniquely Lake Forest.

**Strategies to Get There**

**Land Use**

1. **Ensure that Conway Park remains a first-class office park; a globally competitive location for top-tier businesses, organizations and institutions.**
   
a. Provide a mix of amenities such as: restaurants, hotels, a specialty inn, conference center, business center, event venue, research/educational centers, day care, a mix of residential options particularly those designed to attract employees of the office park, open space, gathering areas and pedestrian connections.
   
b. Encourage restaurants of various types; casual and higher end, at various price points, full-service, coffee shops, take out, cafes and catering businesses.

   c. Identify small-scale retail and service businesses that are needed to meet the daily needs of employees and residents in the area; businesses that provide a unique, high-quality experience.

   d. Explore, support and encourage transportation options including transit connections with the train stations, bus shelters, accommodations for ride sharing, and trails for bicycles and pedestrians.

   e. Enact flexible parking standards in response to changes in the use of individual vehicles over time and consider areas that may no longer be needed for parking as opportunities to bring amenities into the area to support the offices.

   f. Update signage standards to provide for visibility of hospitality and commercial uses, easy identification of buildings and to facilitate wayfinding while remaining true to good design principles and the character of the community.

   g. On an ongoing basis, make decisions and take actions to ensure that the economic value and property tax base of Conway Park is preserved and enhanced.
2. Identify opportunity areas, areas with development or redevelopment potential, and establish clear direction on development expectations and preferences.
   a. Identify preferred and permitted uses for each opportunity area considering compatibility and synergy with adjacent uses and with uses in the larger area with a focus on the long term economic health and vitality of Conway Office Park and the surrounding office uses, and the Entrance Corridor as a whole.
   b. Ensure that new retail and business uses complement, rather than compete with, the Central Business District and the Waukegan Road Business District.
   c. Incorporate development parameters and performance standards into the Zoning Code to provide direction on design aspects including, but not limited to, relationships of buildings to the streetscape, setbacks, transition/buffer areas between different uses, ingress/egress, tree preservation, sustainable elements, and building form/orientation/height.
   d. Streamline processes for preferred uses, site plans and architectural design that fully meet established development parameters.
   e. Consider incentives in various forms to achieve and support preferred uses.

3. Plan for a range of housing types in the Corridor designed consistent with the quality and character of Lake Forest.
   a. Encourage residential housing types that appeal to a range of buyers and renters, in particular, encourage housing products that appeal to employees needed to support the businesses in the office park reducing commute times and traffic congestion.
   b. Encourage flexible housing products that can be adapted over time to meet the needs of empty-nesters, young families, seniors, young and mid-career professionals, recent transfers and short-term employees or residents.
   c. Discourage age-restricted housing at highly visible sites that provide the opportunity, in the short term or longer term, to meet the need for commercial development and housing to support the office park recognizing that such opportunities are very limited in the Corridor.
   d. Consider the Route 60 Corridor as an "entry point" for future long-term residents by providing housing options that allow people to experience Lake Forest and as a result, decide to stay long term.
   e. Promote residential development including moderate and high end multi-family housing to enhance the vitality of the Corridor and the its attractiveness to new office park tenants, restaurants and small scale retail uses.
   f. Locate housing with easy access to restaurants, retail and service businesses in the area.
4. **Provide opportunities for destination uses.**
   a. Consider properly scaled destination uses such as a performing arts center, museum, conference center, event venue, recreation facilities and unique open spaces if private funding or alternate funding is available for construction and to support ongoing operations and maintenance.

**Entrance Gateway**

5. **Establish the Route 60 Entrance Corridor as the west gateway to the City of Lake Forest.**
   a. Consider elements that create a sense of place, a sense of arrival at or near the intersection of Route 60, Field Drive and Saunders Road.
   b. Consider entrance elements of an appropriate scale recognizing the width of Route 60 and traffic speeds.
   c. Consider entrance elements that are in keeping with the character and quality of Lake Forest in an effort to more fully integrate the Route 60 Entrance Corridor into the larger community. Recall some of the most treasured and recognized features of the City at the gateway entrance. Avoid out of scale or contrived features.
   d. Consider design features as part of any new development at the west entrance to Lake Forest including one or more of the following: well-designed architectural elements, signage, open space, ponds, preservation of trees, landscaping and other appropriate features. Recognize the importance of first impressions for those entering Lake Forest.
   e. Maintain established setbacks except in opportunity areas where commercial uses are identified as preferred uses and development is proposed consistent with established development parameters. Reduce setbacks for commercial developments that feature restaurants, retail or hospitality uses and provide public amenities such as active or passive open space, gathering areas and pedestrian connections to off site locations.
   f. Recognize that reducing the setbacks is a necessary tradeoff to achieve preferred commercial uses and amenities in the limited area available at the west end of the Entrance Corridor.
   g. Maintain an appropriate transition from corporate office and commercial uses at the west end of the Corridor, to moderate density residential and ultimately to single family residential and open space as the Corridor extends to the east. Consider the use of landscape buffers, berms, building orientation, open space and tree preservation areas to provide appropriate transitions between uses to minimize the impacts of noise, light, activity and traffic from commercial uses on adjacent residential uses.
h. Encourage activity in and near the gateway by offering amenities that enhance Conway Park and the surrounding neighborhoods including walking/bicycle paths, connections to and through the Corridor, gathering spaces, open spaces, events and programming.

i. Establish high standards for design, materials, functionality and sustainability for all elements within the gateway area.

j. Extend the median in Route 60 to the east to unify and enhance the area with sensitivity to impacts on traffic flows.

Transportation – Vehicles, Pedestrians, Bicycles

6. Create a connected network of new and existing multi-use paths.
   a. Complete the “missing link” from Academy Drive to the Tollway bridge to the west to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to established and planned local and regional pathways.
   b. Plan for connections from Route 60 to areas to the south and southeast and from Townline Park to the east.
   c. Provide amenities along pedestrian and bicycle paths; drinking fountains, natural features, benches, resting places and other amenities.
   d. Locate paths a safe distance from roadways to provide a comfortable and pleasant experience for users while also allowing for visibility of activity along the Corridor bringing it alive.

7. Improve pedestrian/bicycle crossings, increase visibility, pedestrian/bicyclists comfort, enhance safety and provide easy access to amenities in the area.
   a. Work with IDOT to explore opportunities to improve visibility and the safety of pedestrian crossings and ideally, to create a more comfortable pedestrian crossing experience.
   b. Consider bridges or underpasses to provide connections across Route 60 (north/south) and across the railroad tracks from Townline Park to the east.
   c. Design traffic calming measures to prevent excessive speeds beyond the posted speed limit including enhancing and extending the median, maintaining visually interesting landscaping along the streetscape, and implementing safety improvements at intersections for all users.

8. Plan for the separation of traffic related to office and commercial uses from adjacent residential neighborhoods and appropriate emergency access.
   a. Encourage termination of Amberley Court with a cul-de-sac or other feature to prevent commercial cut-through traffic on residential streets while respecting the preserved open space.
   b. Provide for secondary emergency access for residential neighborhoods, Lake Forest Academy and Conway Park.
9. **Enhance mobility, through balanced land-use development, transportation improvements and increased transit options.**
   a. Plan for roadway, intersection and signal improvements that balance the benefits of interconnected streets without increasing cut-through traffic in residential areas.
   b. Update parking requirements to encourage use of alternative modes of transportation and the use of sustainable practices, methods and materials.
   c. Support efforts to expand transit options including efficient bus shuttles, bus shelters, bus pull off areas and improved train service including schedule changes and express trains.
Land Use Designation Descriptions

Office
Primary uses in this area include Corporate, single user and multi-tenant office campuses.

➢ Multi-story office buildings of varying sizes and amenity buildings and uses to support the offices and employees are appropriate including hotels, conference centers, research and educational facilities.
➢ Creation of a hub of similar business types is encouraged along with diversity in businesses.
➢ On site parking is provided for each office building however, opportunities for shared parking and reduced parking capacity should be explored as transportation modes evolve. Green approaches to parking lots are encouraged.
➢ If parking demands decrease in the future, the opportunity for developing small areas of existing parking lots with a limited number of outbuildings or building additions to support restaurants or other support services should be considered.
➢ Sites should be enhanced with high quality, sustainable landscaping and outdoor areas for employees.
➢ Lighting and signage throughout the office park should facilitate way finding while limiting off site impacts, visual clutter and commercialization of the office park.

Hospitality/Office/ Retail /Housing
Uses in these areas are intended to support and enhance the office park by providing needed and desired amenities and housing options that will be attractive to employees. In addition, uses in these areas are intended to provide goods, small scale retail, business services, specialty foods and dining options for residents in the area, the larger community, and to draw people into the community from surrounding areas. Uses in these areas are intended to support weekday as well as weekend activities.

➢ Hotels and restaurants of varying types are a high priority in these areas.
➢ Small scale retail, specialty food and service businesses, conference centers, event venues and research and training centers are appropriate.
➢ Residential options for professionals and employees working in Conway Park and other nearby locations should be provided. Housing units should be designed to fill gaps in the City’s housing market including high-end apartments and should not be age-restricted.
Development in these areas is intended to provide options for people to live, work, eat, shop and recreate in the area, without the need to commute long distances.

These areas are intended to be integrated and synergistic with other uses in the Entrance Corridor and the surrounding areas.

**Residential – Moderate Density**

These areas are located in between office and commercial uses and nearby single family neighborhoods. They are also located along higher speed roadways and as a result, offer the opportunity for moderate density housing developments. Some moderate density neighborhoods in and around the Route 60 Entrance Corridor are well established while other parcels offer the opportunity for additional development. A variety of housing types are appropriate, both ownership and rentals, at various price points. Development concepts should preserve natural resources, open space and provide high quality architectural design. Moderate density residential should support the housing needs of Lake Forest residents, people who work in Lake Forest, and newcomers to the area with the target groups ranging from young professionals and families, to empty-nesters and seniors. Appropriate housing types in these areas include:

- Attached single-family homes, townhomes and row homes.
- Multifamily buildings including condominiums and apartments.

**Residential – Low Density**

Several low density residential neighborhoods, comprised of single family detached, clustered and attached housing, are well established along the Entrance Corridor, on interior parcels, away from the Route 60 thoroughfare. Some opportunities exist for additional developments of this type. Site design should strive to protect and preserve natural resources, wooded areas and wetlands and offer active and passive open space. Architectural design should be consistent with the City's established design guidelines with high quality detailing and materials. Various single-family options should be offered to respond to the changing housing market. Homes with different layouts, of varying sizes and desired amenities should be offered to meet a range of housing needs and to attract younger households to Lake Forest and to meet the needs and desires of empty nesters wanting to stay or move into the community. Appropriate low density housing types include:

- Clustered housing to preserve common open space
- Mid-size to larger single-family lots
- Estate homes
Mixed Use/Transitional/Open Space
This is an opportunity area. Consideration should be given to maximizing the open space and preserving the most significant natural areas by planning for the future of the area as a whole. Access is a challenge for this area. If funding and interest exists, this area presents an interesting opportunity for a destination use, a use that would fulfill a currently unmet community need or interest. Transitional residential or office uses are also appropriate in this area once appropriate access to the area is available. Uses in this area should appropriately bridge the different densities to the east and west. Appropriate uses include:

- Open space/natural areas.
- Transitional residential at appropriate densities and with safe access.
- Extension of office use from Conway Park, on a smaller scale, and oriented to the Route 60 frontage.
- Community destination uses or other unique uses determined to be of benefit to the community.

Education
This area is appropriate for and developed with an academic campus with facilities serving students of varying ages. Academic buildings, athletic fields and facilities, student and faculty housing, administrative offices, outdoor gathering areas and open space are all appropriate in these areas. Cooperation and collaboration between the academic campuses and surrounding business districts, office uses and residential neighborhoods is expected. Close integration of the academic campuses with the overall community is valued, educational institutions are at the heart Lake Forest. Opportunities for incorporating or expanding community use of the campuses should be continually explored including opportunities to partner in various ways to support music, the arts, other cultural activities, conference and activity space.

Special Uses
Uses in these areas are unique and differ in character and in the types of facilities and activities associated with more standard use types. These areas are developed for the most part with only limited opportunity for expansion or development with additional uses. These areas are located in, or adjacent to sensitive natural areas; wetlands, woodlands and flood plain. Significant portions of these areas are publicly owned land. These areas are somewhat isolated from other uses given the unique activities that take place, the facilities needed to support the uses and the need for security. Appropriate uses include:
> Municipal facilities: administrative office buildings, fleet yards, maintenance facilities, public works support service areas and parking.
> Single user, private sports facilities and associated administrative offices, fields, practice facilities, conference rooms, media support areas, parking and exhibition and private event facilities.

**Open Space**
Throughout Lake Forest, the preservation of Open Space is a high priority and in some respects, sets the community apart from other communities. In the Route 60 Entrance Corridor, open spaces are plentiful and serve varying purposes; significant natural resources are preserved and both passive and active open spaces are offered. The open spaces in this area include properties in public and private ownership. The academic campuses, office park and residential developments all incorporate some level of open spaces. The open spaces support stormwater management in the area. Amenities are encouraged and should be tailored to each unique open space area and may include trails, gathering areas, water stations, picnic tables, parking, links to surrounding development and regional trails, way finding and informational signage.

**Opportunity Areas**

**Opportunity Area 1**
This area is located in Conway Park, one of the few undeveloped parcels. The potential for a hotel, restaurant and shared conference space in the office park was always envisioned. This site, with good visibility from the Tollway, is well suited to offer these types of amenities to the office park alone or in combination with an office building.

**Opportunity Area 2**
This area presents opportunity and challenges. The area has frontage on both the Lake Forest Academy owned lakes and Route 60 and abuts various uses; office, moderate density residential, low density residential and an educational campus. Visibility of the area and access to public rights-of-way is limited in part due to the long, narrow configuration of the area and the surrounding uses. Planning for the future of this area in a comprehensive manner should be a high priority. The area could accommodate a signature destination use, if private funding becomes available, or a well-designed residential product, small scale office use or an amenity to support the office park. All uses should incorporate significant open space and protect valuable natural resources. Access and extension of services to the area are a challenge and will require cooperation and creativity.

**Opportunity Area 3**
This area offers the single greatest opportunity to incorporate a destination commercial use into the Route 60 Entrance Corridor. The area has high visibility and its location adjacent to the office park and at the base of the off ramp from the Tollway is unparalleled. This area offers a unique opportunity to provide uses that over the long term will support and enhance the corporate office park, which is a vital economic engine for the City. Establishing and maintaining a buffer from new uses in this area from the adjacent residential development will be key while also providing access to goods, services and experiences “close to home” for residents in the area.

Consideration should be given to establishing a buffer along the east boundary of this area at the front end, or in advance of development of the site in cooperation with the adjacent multi-family residential development. The area presents the opportunity to create a well-designed landmark at the entrance to the City whether through all new construction to support a mix of one or more uses; hospitality, commercial and employee targeted housing, or through some combination of adaptive reuse of the existing historic residence and new construction. Uses that require high visibility and support the office park should be given priority for this one of a kind site. This area presents the sole opportunity to locate hospitality, restaurant and small scale retail in the Entrance Corridor.

**Opportunity Area 4**
This area offers development opportunities for uses that do not require high visibility along the Route 60 Entrance Corridor. Residential uses of various types, at moderate densities, are appropriate for this area. Sensitivity to natural resources, incorporation of open spaces and retaining or creating a buffer from the adjacent Tollway should all be priorities.

**Opportunity Area 5**
This area, currently planned for detached, single family homes, may merit further study in the future. The area may support increased residential density in the future or alternate housing types including, but not limited to, attached single family homes, townhomes or row homes. Compatibility with the adjacent single family residential to the east is important.