

TOWN CENTER

In an effort to revitalize Itasca's Central Business area, a Town Center Concept was proposed in the General Development Plan Report adopted in 1977. The basic features of the concept included refining the role of the central area in order that it may serve as a consolidated focal point for the numerous services and activities needed by Village residents as well as enhance the character and identity of the community.

The Town Center, as originally delineated, included the area between Center Street on the north, Oak Street on the west, Elm Street on the east, then west along the south railroad right-of-way of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway to I-90, then south along the east right-of-way of I-90 to an extension of Valley Road to the west, then meandering north and along the south side of Spring Brook east to join with Line Street, south along the alley between Maple and Walnut Streets to Bloomingdale Road to Irving Park Road, then north along Elm Street to Center Street, thus closing the delineated Town Center area.

A large amount of this area is identified as Greenbelt area or, in fact, the area includes Spring Brook Nature Center and the Itasca Park District Water Park which are not the kinds of land use included in a Town Center.

The existing land use survey, taken in 1974 and included in the background studies for planning as part of the General Development Plan Report, has taken on many changes with businesses closing and/or relocating, such as handcrafts/clock repair, savings and loan, etc. The core of the Town Center was a transitional commercial district.

The Town Center, as delineated, is large for a community of approximately 7,000 residents, with shopping center areas located in an adjacent community and regional shopping centers within easy driving distance from the Village. A large discount facility is proposed to be constructed across Irving Park Road from the existing shopping center in the City of Wood Dale which is adjacent to the east corporate limit of Itasca.

The area along Irving Park Road is not a major part of the Town Center because it is disconnected by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway tracks and is a strip shopping area. The commercial area along Irving Park Road should be required to conform with established setbacks, building orientation, landscaping and signs which are compatible with the character established by the bank building, the Village Hall, the train station and the medical clinic. Pedestrian amenities should be provided along both sides of Irving Park Road. Curb cuts into Irving Park Road should be consolidated as should parking areas in the rear yards of the commercial uses.

Irving Park Road bisects the Village in an east-west direction and, thus, is the front yard entrance to this community. Therefore, the end results should be a boulevard like appearance along this principal road. The large front yard setbacks with uniform signs and abundant landscaping as well as various pedestrian amenities should create a very

aesthetically pleasing environment. To further enhance this character, it is recommended that any future plans for widening Irving Park Road include a landscaped median strip. Provisions could be made for three lanes with a turning lane at major intersections or for four full lanes, dependent upon established needs. In either case, the landscaped median strip would create a more visually pleasing effect, reducing the impact of the barrier created by three or four lanes of pavement. Such a median strip would also aid in pedestrian access.

Banks are sometimes used as anchors in a small business area, but, in Itasca, the bank is located between two public areas: that of the Village Hall on the east including the small passive park area and the community complex on the west including the fire station and museum. This orientation of a business area does not lend itself to any walk-in trade; in fact, it is just the opposite, because any customers have to depend on the automobile and the need for off-street parking.

The Town Center actually acts like a small rail center in providing commuter rail service by Metra. A large parking area which is utilized by commuters restricts any future development. Metra acquired additional land to develop a parking area for approximately eighty-four (84) parking stalls located south of the railroad tracks and east of First Street. Metra acquired the former lumber yard on west Irving Park Road and ultimately it will include additional off-street parking. This will further separate the west part of the Town Center from the principal part of the area.

In the recent past, the Town Center was reduced by including multiple family residential which further reduced the size of the Town Center for business development.

The suburban community railroad station is being identified as the anchor to the Town Center. Acquiring the off-street parking sites which are necessary for serving the commuter uses is also reducing the possibility of providing retail uses making up the Town Center. As an anchor, this can create walk-in trade by the desires of the commuter that, on the way to the station or on their way home, a purchase is made.

In a station summary conducted by Metra on October 30, 1991, there were 497 boarding passengers from Itasca and 519 alighting from the train in Itasca. This transcribes into many people circulating in the Town Center.

EXISTING PARKING IN THE TOWN CENTER

The Town Center is located, in part, between Center Street on the north, Orchard Street on the south, Oak Street on the west, and Elm Street on the east. The off-street parking was field surveyed and evaluated in this part of the Town Center to determine if the parking requirements are met. (See TABLE 11).

Many of the older buildings of which some have received a face lift in compliance with the Historical District requirements do not meet the parking standards as shown on TABLE 11. When there are new uses created, the off-street parking will have to comply with existing codes and ordinances.

COMMENTS ON PARKING

The following comments are based on observations during the field survey:

1. No parallel off-street parking on either the east or west side of Walnut Street are striped between Orchard and Center Streets.

Parking requirements posted on both sides of Walnut Street permit two-hour on-street parking between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

2. In some areas in the Town Center, on-street parking is permitted on the unimproved right-of-way.
3. Private off-street parking areas should be striped. In many areas it is difficult to estimate the parking stalls when not striped.
4. Some off-street parking areas in the rear yards of businesses have stacked cars. This gives rise to problems in case of emergency fire coverage. Having to remove automobiles that are stacked during an emergency creates delays in fire protection in waiting to relocate such cars.
5. On the northeast corner of Orchard and Maple Streets exists a conflict between signs that either prohibit parking or permit parking.

This is the area for the pick-up of passengers by the PACE bus.

It also states no parking within 20 feet from the corner. There appears to be a parking area within the 20 feet to the corner. This translates into problems with the bus trying to pick up passengers because the bus cannot reach the curb safely.

TABLE 11
EXISTING PARKING IN THE TOWN CENTER

BLDG. ⁵⁷ No.	STREET	USES / FLOORS		ESTIMATED ^{55, 57} PARKING ⁵⁶ SQ. FT. OF BLDG.		REQUIRED (ESTIMATED)	EXISTING PARKING STALLS
		1	2			TOTAL	
201	Walnut St.	Retail	3 DU's	Ret. 1925		9.6	
				DU's 1925		7.5	17.0
207	Walnut St.	Offices	2 DU's	Ofc. 1800		5.5	
				DU's 1800		2.0	7.0
209	Walnut St.	Retail	1 DU	Ret. 2380		11.9	
				DU's 2380		2.5	15.0
219	Walnut St.	Retail				20.0	14.0
		Vacant					
221	Walnut St.	Retail		250		1.0	
223	Walnut St.	Retail	1 DU	Ret. 1500		7.5	
				DU's 1500		2.5	10.0
227	Walnut St.	Office		875		3.3	4.0
226	Elm St.	S.F.				3.0	2.0
216-218 Elm St.			Residential				
214-212 Elm St.			Planned				
117-119 Elm St.			Dev.				
107-109 Elm St.		"					
101-103 Orchard St.		Offices	2 DU's				11.0
105-107 Orchard St.							2.0 H.C. 13.0
210-216 Walnut St.		Retail					
222	Walnut St.	Retail		4,000			20.0
115	Orchard St.	Offices	Offices	3,500			21.0
							2.0 H.C. 23.0
125	Orchard St.	Offices	Offices	3,500			8.0
							1.0 H.C. 9.0
114	Center St.	2 DU's					5.0
116	Center St.	2 DU's					5.0
109-111	Orchard St.	Offices	2 DU's				No Parking

⁵⁵Includes Dwelling Units/2nd Floor

⁵⁶Zoning Ordinance Requirements

⁵⁷Historic District Map (Floor Area scaled from individual building footprints)

⁵⁸Parking area being improved