



VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

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February 10, 2000

TO: President Canafax and Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Chairman Rowell and Members of the Plan Commission

SUBJECT: WEST VILLAGE CENTER PLAN

The Plan Commission is pleased to present to you the West Village Center Plan. The Plan, which was created with input from property owners as well as tenants, includes the properties bounded by Green Bay Road, Central Avenue, Wilmette Avenue and Park Avenue. Uses in the Plan area include the Post Office, Library, Mid-Central Printing, a restaurant, numerous offices and retail uses and Wilmette Ford. The Plan was developed to provide a concept for future re-development and should be adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. It is hoped that fulfillment of the Plan will encourage uses and designs that integrate this area into the Village Center.

The Plan Commission began to discuss this project in April of 1999 and held a public hearing on September 19, 1999. Notice was sent to all property owners, business owners and residents in the immediate area and was also advertised in the Wilmette Life. (Copies of the meeting notices are attached) The public meeting was well attended and generated discussion about parking, traffic circulation, the general business climate in Wilmette and future development of the area. (Please see attached meeting minutes) Representatives from the Library were present and expressed their desire to work on a joint parking structure with the Village and Post Office. After this hearing, the Commission took these comments and developed the subject Plan.

Attached are hand drawn renderings that former Chairman Schneider completed for the plan. The Commission would like drawings similar to these to be professionally rendered and included in the published Plan. If the Village Board agrees, staff and the Plan Commission will investigate the cost of such renderings and will report back to the Village Board.

We look forward to hearing your comments.

West Village Center Block Plan

Wilmette in Brief

Wilmette is located five miles north of Chicago on the western shore of Lake Michigan. This area of Illinois is commonly referred to as the North Shore. The North Shore is comprised of several older Chicago suburbs characterized by their proximity to Lake Michigan, historical residential neighborhoods, and pedestrian-friendly downtowns. Wilmette benefits from adjacency to the Edens Expressway, the Metra railroad tracks, and the northernmost stop on the elevated rail line.

Wilmette has several commercial areas, both neighborhood and regional in scope. The Village Center of Wilmette is the community's core. It is a pedestrian friendly environment with stores, restaurants, services, and the majority of the Village's institutional uses: the Village Hall, the Post Office, and the Library. Unfortunately, the Metra railroad tracks that run along the east side of Green Bay Road bisect the Village Center. Visually and physically, the tracks create a prohibitive boundary for Wilmette's residents and visitors to travel from the east to the west side of the downtown.

Because of Wilmette's quality schools, parks, historical neighborhoods, and transportation options, it is a desirable community to live in, especially for families. Throughout the economically successful 1990s, the Village's commercial and residential neighborhoods have seen a high rate of re-development. In the Village Center and its environs there have been several large-scale mixed-use re-developments including The Optima Center and The Verona, as well as several new townhomes developments.

Because of the possibility of additional re-development in the Village Center, the Board of Trustees asked the Plan Commission to study this important area and develop, with the input of the business and property owners whose livelihood depends upon a successful Wilmette, scenarios to shape the Village's decisions in the coming decade. The Planned Unit Development approval process permits a high deal of creativity on the part of the Village and the developer in the design phase of any project pursued through the process. The purpose of this document is to use the information provided by the relevant stakeholders to shape future development, remodeling, and zoning decisions. It is realized that re-development of the Plan area may occur on a parcel by parcel basis or as a grouping of parcels.

The development of this Plan should not be construed as an indication that the Village will use any form of eminent domain to bring out the actualization of the Plan. The purpose is to be prepared if and when re-development occurs on this important block in Wilmette's West Village Center.

Area Boundaries

The area referred to as the West Village Center is on the west side of Green Bay Road. Its other boundaries consist of Central Avenue on the north, Park Avenue on the west, and Wilmette Avenue on the south. Please see Diagram 1.1, Plan Boundaries.

Present Uses and Layout

The block currently consists of a mix of public and private uses. The west half includes the Library and the Post Office with shared surface parking in between. The Village owns part of the parking area. A public alley, accessible from Wilmette Avenue, Central Avenue, and the parking lot off of Park Avenue, bisects the block. There are utilities in this alley, including a 42-inch sewer pipe buried nine feet below the alley. Please refer to Diagram 1.2, Current Uses. The east half of the block is divided into six parcels and the use is primarily ground floor retail and service establishments.

The area is considered part of the Village Center, but straddles several zoning categories: VC, R2, and GC1. (See Diagram 1.3, Zoning Districts) The VC, Village Center Business District, was created to maintain and promote a mix of commercial and institutional uses in the Village Center which provide goods and services for the Village as a whole as well as for the convenience of residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Its purpose is also to accommodate limited multi-family housing and congregate care facilities. With the exception of the property at 1221 – 1225 Central Avenue, the east half of the block between Green Bay Road and the alley is located within the VC zoning district. First floor uses on the block include a car dealership, pet store, plant store, barber shop, hair salon, camera store, restaurant, antique store, bicycle shop, and real estate office. Second floor uses on the block include residential and general office uses.

The three-tenant commercial property located at 1221-1225 Central Avenue is located within the GC1, General Commercial Business District. The purpose of this district is to provide a location for higher-volume and higher-intensity commercial uses that provide employment and revenues for the Village. Uses in the building include a car rental facility that uses the adjoining parking lot for car storage, an office, and a printing establishment. A breakdown of the square footages of existing buildings and lots east of the alley is contained in Diagram 1.4.

All of the properties located between the alley and Park Avenue are located within the R2, Townhouse Residence district. This district was established to promote and maintain the development of single-family detached and attached housing and limited public and institutional uses that are compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood. Uses in this district include the Wilmette Public Library, the Wilmette Post Office and a Village controlled parking lot. The Library building is approximately 50,201 square feet and is situated on a parcel of 57,361 square feet. The Library is served by a 51 car surface parking lot. The Village owned parking lot is located directly north of the Library's parking lot and is approximately 24,000 square feet in size with 61 parking spaces. Directly north of the Village's parking lot is the Post

Office's parking lot and property. The Post Office lot is approximately 36,000 square feet with a building of approximately 6,100 square feet. The three different parking lots are accessed via five curb cuts on Park Avenue and three cuts on the alley.

A map of present building location and layout for the entire block is show in Diagram 1.3.

History

The Plan area developed in the late 1800s as one of the earliest commercial districts of Wilmette. Although there were businesses along Ridge Road just as early, that neighborhood was really part of Gross Point at that time. Because the train station was originally located on the west side of the tracks, a commercial section on Green Bay Road was started alongside it with businesses including general stores, a laundry, and a post office. The building where the Wilmette Bike Shop is located housed a general store or the post office prior to 1900, and then John Millen's hardware store from approximately 1900 to 1922. It was finally occupied by its current tenant in the mid-1903s. The library was built in 1904. Wilmette's first fire station was on Central Avenue, just east of the present post office. It was constructed around 1894 and remained there until about 1915. During the same time, houses were built on the block between Green Bay Road and Park on Wilmette Avenue's north side, and one still remains, directly east of the public alley.

The west side of the Village Center still serves Wilmette in many of the same ways it has for the last century. It still has commercial and institutional uses and functions as part of the Village Center. Because of the importance of Wilmette's history, this Plan will continue to preserve the functions of this block while maintaining the property owners' right to utilize their property in ways beneficial to them and the Village.

Future Vision

As properties are redeveloped or remodeled, the Village should promote uses and designs that further incorporate this block into the pedestrian-friendly Village Center. Ultimately, commercial and retail uses on the ground floor with offices or residential situated above them will create a courtyard around underground public parking and open space. The Village's streetscape improvements should be applied to a network of pedestrian walkways that connect the businesses and institutions on the block to one another. Access to the courtyard should be provided through an opening on Green Bay Road that would link, visually and spatially, this area to the rest of the Village Center across the railroad tracks. By maintaining the institutional uses on the west side of the block, a buffer area will continue to protect the residential character of the west side of Park Avenue.

Ideal Mix of Uses

The ground floor of properties on Green Bay Road, and along the east parts of Central and Wilmette Avenues, should consist of retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses. These types of uses strengthen the tax base of the Village while promoting pedestrian traffic

during the day and night. Both the 1986 Comprehensive Plan and the 1995 Village Center Study point to the importance of maintaining and promoting Wilmette's pedestrian-oriented retail areas. If the Village chooses to provide incentives for these types of uses, it should ensure that the design of the commercial spaces is desirable for potential tenants. The necessity for good retail is especially strong along Green Bay Road, where there is currently a large tax revenue generating entity. For these reasons, the Village should not encourage first floor residential uses, except for entranceways. Even if residential units or common spaces were located at the rear of properties, residents could close off the rear of sites by fencing or vegetation decreasing the open courtyard feel the Village should promote over the course of re-development.

The Village should consider providing incentives through the PUD process to help attract desirable uses that are not currently served in the Village Center.

The second and third floors should consist of office, personal service, and residential uses. Multi-family residential uses above first floor commercial should be encouraged because of the proximity to institutional and transportation services, as well as the shopping and entertainment opportunities that exist in the Village Center. Office uses should also be encouraged because an increase of people in downtown Wilmette provides additional foot traffic during the lunch hour, and well as increased use of the Village's business and services.

The Library and Post Office are expected to remain in their current locations. The Village is fortunate to have these institutional uses in close proximity to stores and restaurants, giving Wilmette residents the opportunity to complete errands within a centralized location that does not require the use of an automobile. The Post Office has explored the possibility of moving into a larger space in Wilmette, but has been unable to acquire one. The opportunity to share parking with the Village, which is discussed later, might aid the Post Office in an expansion to the south where its current parking is located.

Physical Layout: The goal of future re-developments and remodelings should be to maintain the current mix of institutional uses on the west side of the property, serving as a buffer for the residential areas to the west, with retail and mixed-uses on the east side. The physical buildings should leave a courtyard in the center that accommodates parking, open space, and pedestrian walkways. Access, in the form of an opening or a through-building breezeway, should be provided to allow pedestrians to see and reach the courtyard from the east part of the Village Center and vice versa.

Zoning: The Planned Unit Development process can only be utilized for properties located within the same zoning district. Depending on the desires of the owners of the properties located in the GC1 zoning district, the Village should allow the rezoning of certain sites to permit the utilization of the PUD process. The rezoning could provide potential benefits to the goals of the Village and the Plan if re-development of the north end of the block was sought for several properties.

Access to Village Center and Other Pedestrian Walkways: To create a pedestrian friendly environment within the interior of the block, safe pedestrian walkways need to be provided that connect the institutional uses to the business uses, as well as the interior of the block to Green Bay Road. Walkways could be placed adjacent to the alley and around the perimeter of any parking facilities.

A physical connection between Green Bay Road and the interior courtyard could be provided through an open-air walkway or through a breezeway as used in the Optima Center. This connection would give users of the Library, Post Office and Village parking on the west side of the block better access to Green Bay Road businesses, and the rest of the Village Center.

Floor Area: The VC Zoning Districts permits a floor area of 3.0, and utilization of the PUD process could permit floor area as high as 3.6 of lot area. As shown in Diagram 1.4, the commercial uses on the east side of the subject block currently have an average floor area of .5. Full development of this area could result in a substantial increase in the size and bulk of buildings located there. The Village should only allow a floor area bonus above 3.0 under very limited circumstances when the potential for benefit to the Village is quite high.

Height: Through the PUD process, there is the potential for a building to have a fourth floor. Because of the desire to create a pedestrian environment, the Village should not encourage the addition of a fourth floor without consideration of the streetscape. A concern exists of creating a "canyon" effect on Green Bay Road of tall buildings looming over a narrow sidewalk. One way to combat this effect would be to require upper stories of four floor buildings to be stepped-back, or to require other design modifications to reduce the perceived bulk.

One-story buildings are not as desirable as multi-story properties, because of the lost opportunity to combine retail with office or residential uses. Additionally, a two-story, or greater, building is consistent with the traditional look of the rest of the Village Center.

Setbacks: If properties are redeveloped along Green Bay Road, they should be encouraged to set the physical building back an additional five feet from the front property line. Over time, this will increase the width of the sidewalk, which is currently too narrow to be enjoyed easily by pedestrians. In exchange for the five-foot front yard setback, buildings could be granted an additional five-foot encroachment into the 25 foot required rear yard setback in the VC zoning district.

Parking: Having safe, ample, and efficient parking throughout Wilmette's commercial areas is important to provide access and convenience for users of the Village Center who do not live within walking distance of the shops and services provided there. However, parking should not be made such of a priority that it is

given more consideration than the urban design elements important to the creation of a thriving commercial area. A below-grade parking deck between the Library and the Post office parking lots would achieve both of these goals. It would increase the number of parking spaces available for all the uses on the block, while creating an opportunity for open space. This idea is supported by the Post Office, Library, and private business owners. If sufficient underground parking spaces can be created, the Village could lease or share extra spaces with developers as an incentive for other improvements.

In addition to an underground parking deck, the Village should promote an integration of the three existing parking lots belonging to the Library, the Village, and the Post Office. Benefits include the elimination of curb cuts along Park Avenue, and increased space for walkways and landscaping.

Any large-scale developments elsewhere on the block will need to examine below-grade parking to meet the requirements of the Zoning District. However, the Village should be flexible in requiring specific numbers of parking spots because of the site's proximity to transportation and other public services. Additionally, uses on the block may be able to share parking with one another (i.e. an office using visitor-parking spots for a residential use during the day).

Another means of providing additional parking would be to permit parking spaces to enter directly onto the alley, a condition currently prohibited by the Zoning Ordinance, but utilized in the Burmeister Parking Lot.

Open Space: By creating a below-grade parking deck or integrating the three institutional parking lots on the west side of the lot, there could be an opportunity to create open space that the Village should pursue. A small park or green space could complement the pedestrian walkways and give a focal point to the "courtyard" environment being sought out in conjunction with the re-development of the block.

Utilities: The Village should investigate relocating and/or burying the existing utilities to allow more flexibility in the re-development of specific parcels and to improve the appearance of the block.

Character and Appearance: Re-developments and remodelings should maintain the Village Center's pedestrian scale and traditional look. Specific design guidelines should be created for the Plan Area to assist architects and developers in designing projects that are easily integrated into Wilmette's existing appearance. The use of materials and styles similar to those elsewhere in the Village Center would assist in establishing a visual link across Green Bay Road. The Village's Streetscape Plan should be applied to the exterior streets of the Plan Area, as well as the interior alley and walkways.

When the PUD process is utilized, the Village will have a unique opportunity to shape the appearance of the building to ensure that new construction will be sympathetic to the

appearance of Wilmette's traditional commercial buildings. When existing buildings are remodeled, they will be encouraged to remove any facades or features not originally part of the structure. The Village should investigate reenacting the Façade Rebate Program to promote the restoration of structures in the Plan Area.

Design Guidelines: The use of specific design guidelines can promote the desired appearance for commercial properties as they are constructed or remodeled. Many of Wilmette's residents, business people, and officials have often stated that they would like to see a continuation of Wilmette's "traditional" downtown look and feel. "Traditional" is hard to define for many people, especially when the Village Center commercial buildings date from different periods and are constructed of different materials. Design Guidelines could turn "traditional" into a specific set of standards that ensure consistency while still allowing developers and property owners to design their building to their satisfaction. For example:

Materials: Only natural materials should be permitted on all exterior facades of a structure (i.e. wood, brick, stone, and terra cotta). Use of synthetic or pre-cast materials would be limited.

Windows and Doors: Windows and doors may be utilized to cover no less than 10% of rear and side facades, no more than 75% of a first floor front façade, and no more than 40% of each façade besides the primary first floor storefront. Glass must be clear in appearance and may not be tinted.

Articulation: While the first two floors of a building may align with one another, additional floors should be stepped back. In lieu of a setback, a pitched roof should be provided. Visual interest should also be provided through the use of window and door trim, quoins, bands of different materials, parapets, and awnings.

Style: Styles should draw from the themes present in some of the older buildings currently located in the Village Center, such as the Tudor style commercial properties located at the northeast corner of 12th Street and Central Avenue, or the 1920's yellow brick building at the southwest corner of Central and 11th Street.

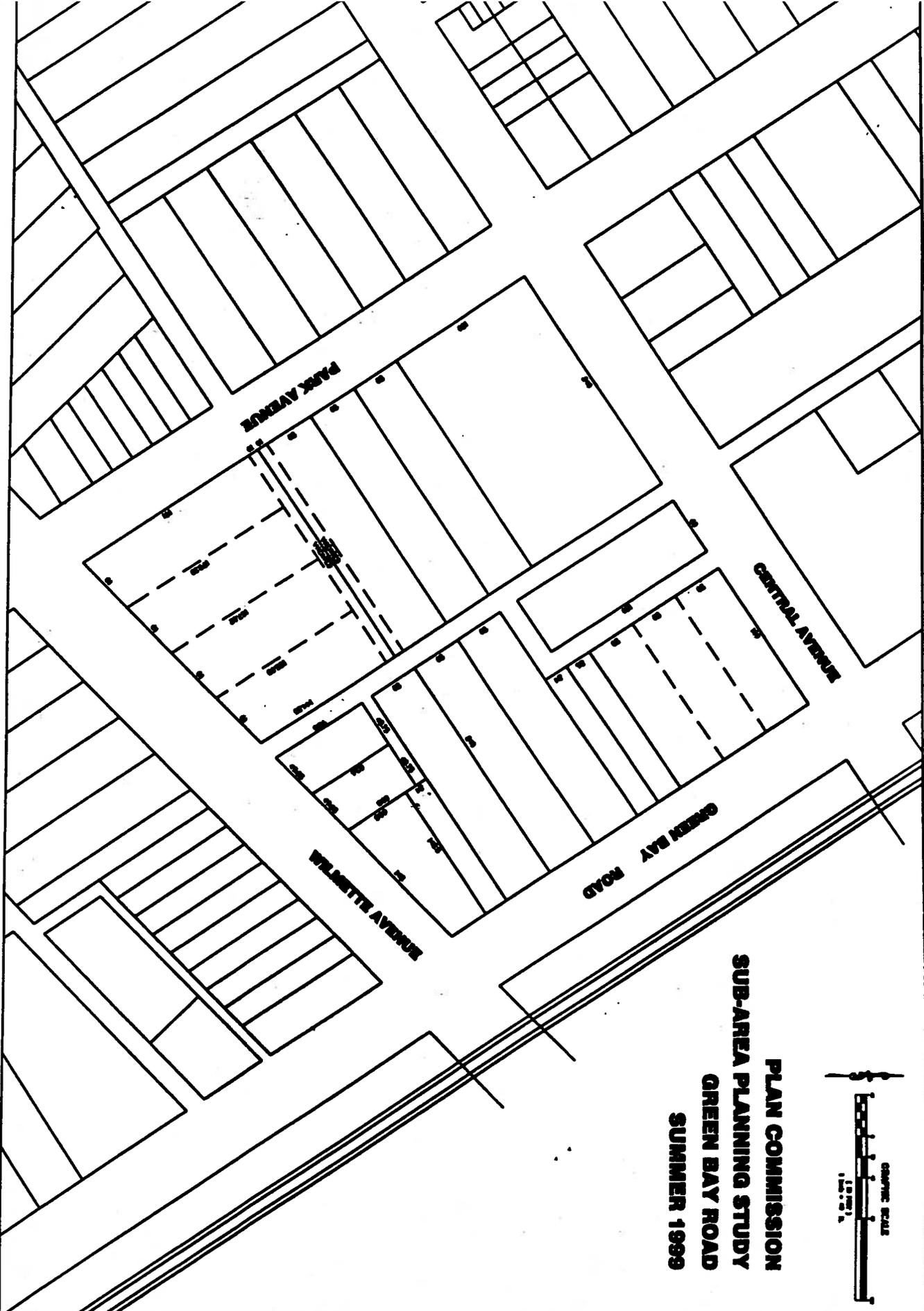
Orientation: To promote the use of businesses via the courtyard and parking located there, businesses should develop "two faces" one oriented towards the public street and one oriented in towards the parking. The traditional design of a front and back should be discouraged

Signs: A variety of signage styles should be promoted, including pedestrian-friendly projecting signs and awnings. Businesses should be encouraged to erect signs on the rears of their building, while also making their backdoors more accessible to customers. This process was utilized due to necessity during the reconstruction of Green Bay Road, but should be continued.

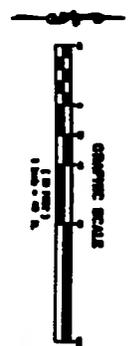
Streetscape: The Village of Wilmette streetscape plan should be implemented on public and private property, whenever possible, to visually link West Village Center across Green Bay Road. Planters, street trees, lighting, benches, and the Village's signature sidewalks could be implemented on Central Avenue, Park Avenue, Wilmette Avenue, along the alley, or around any created open space.

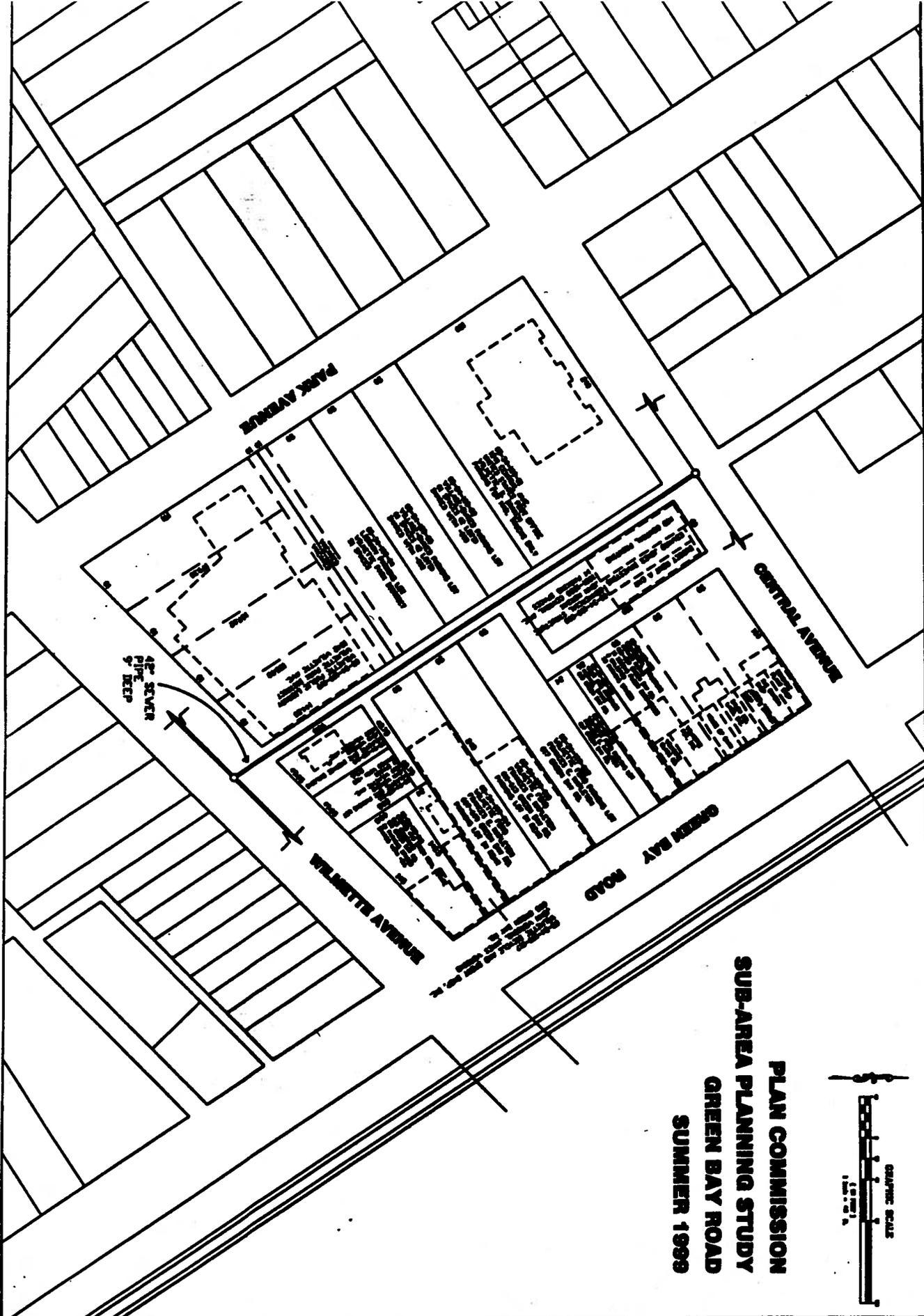
Opportunities Through Re-development

The re-development of the Plan Area will provide the Village's best opportunity to integrate the east and west sides of the Village Center. The Planned Unit Development process, with its opportunities for creativity and compromise, should be used to bring out the vision stated within this Plan.

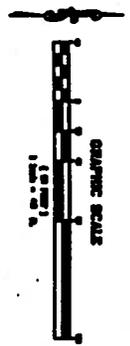


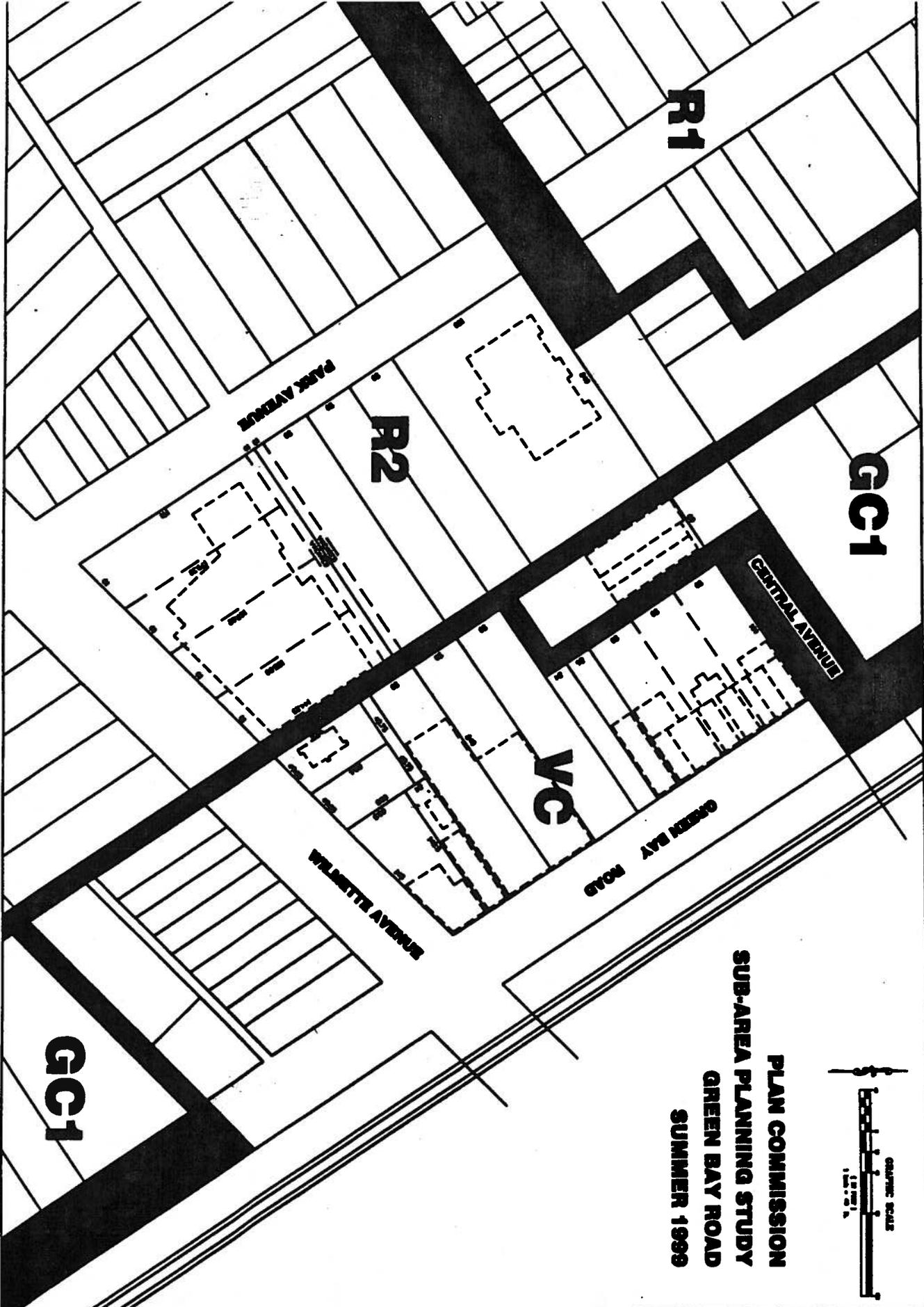
**PLAN COMMISSION
SUB-AREA PLANNING STUDY
GREEN BAY ROAD
SUMMER 1999**





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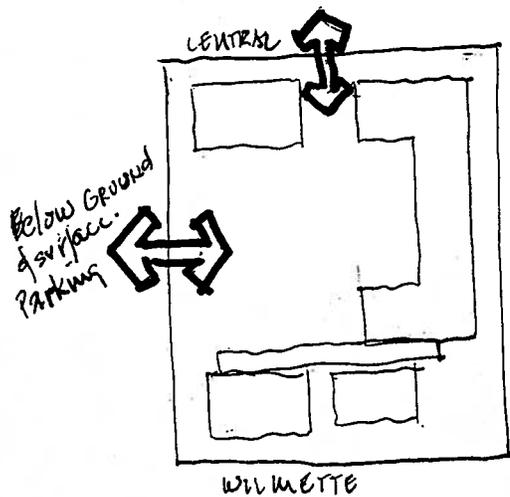
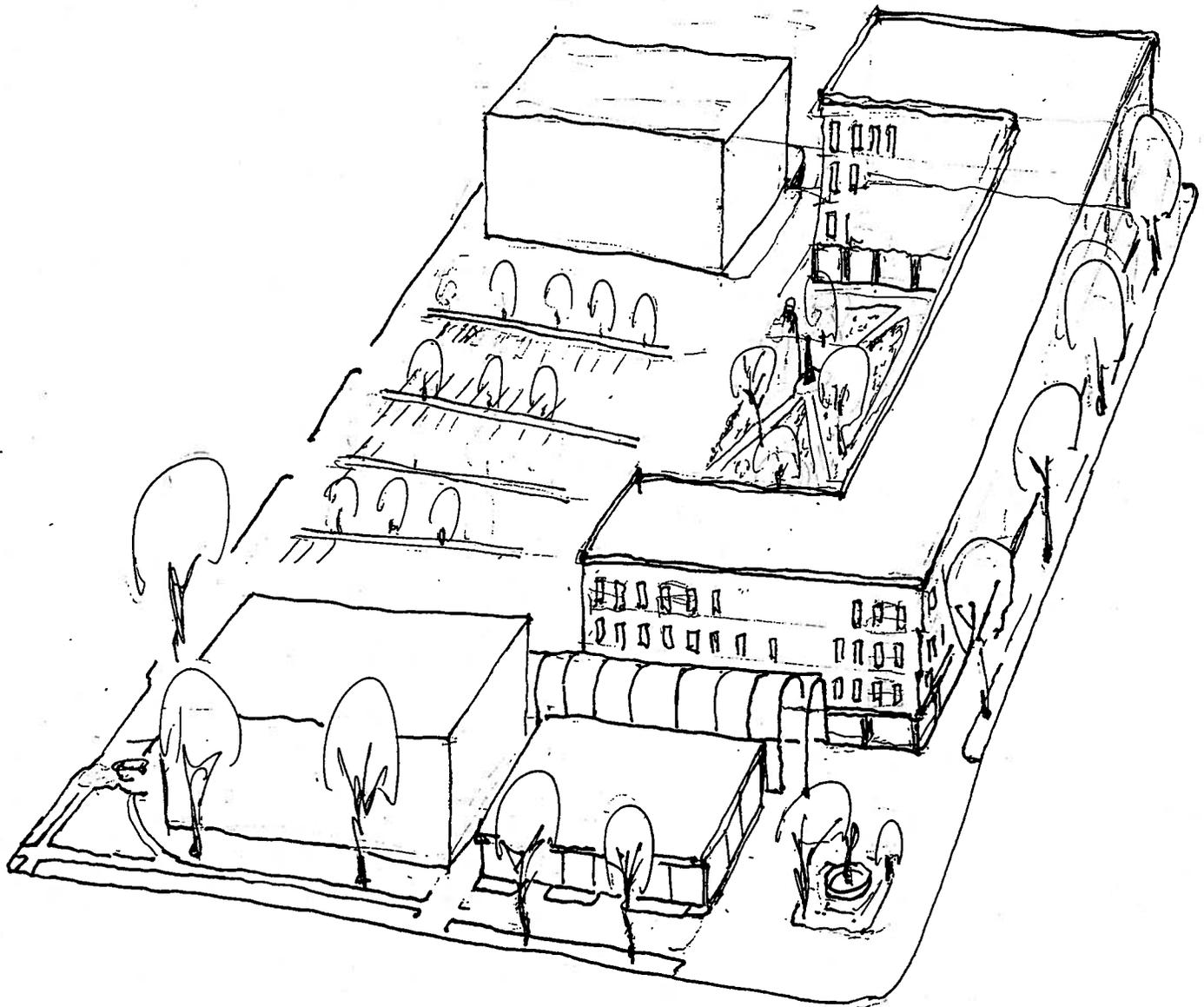
**PLAN COMMISSION
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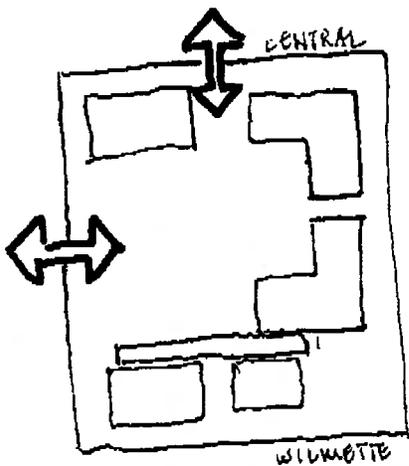
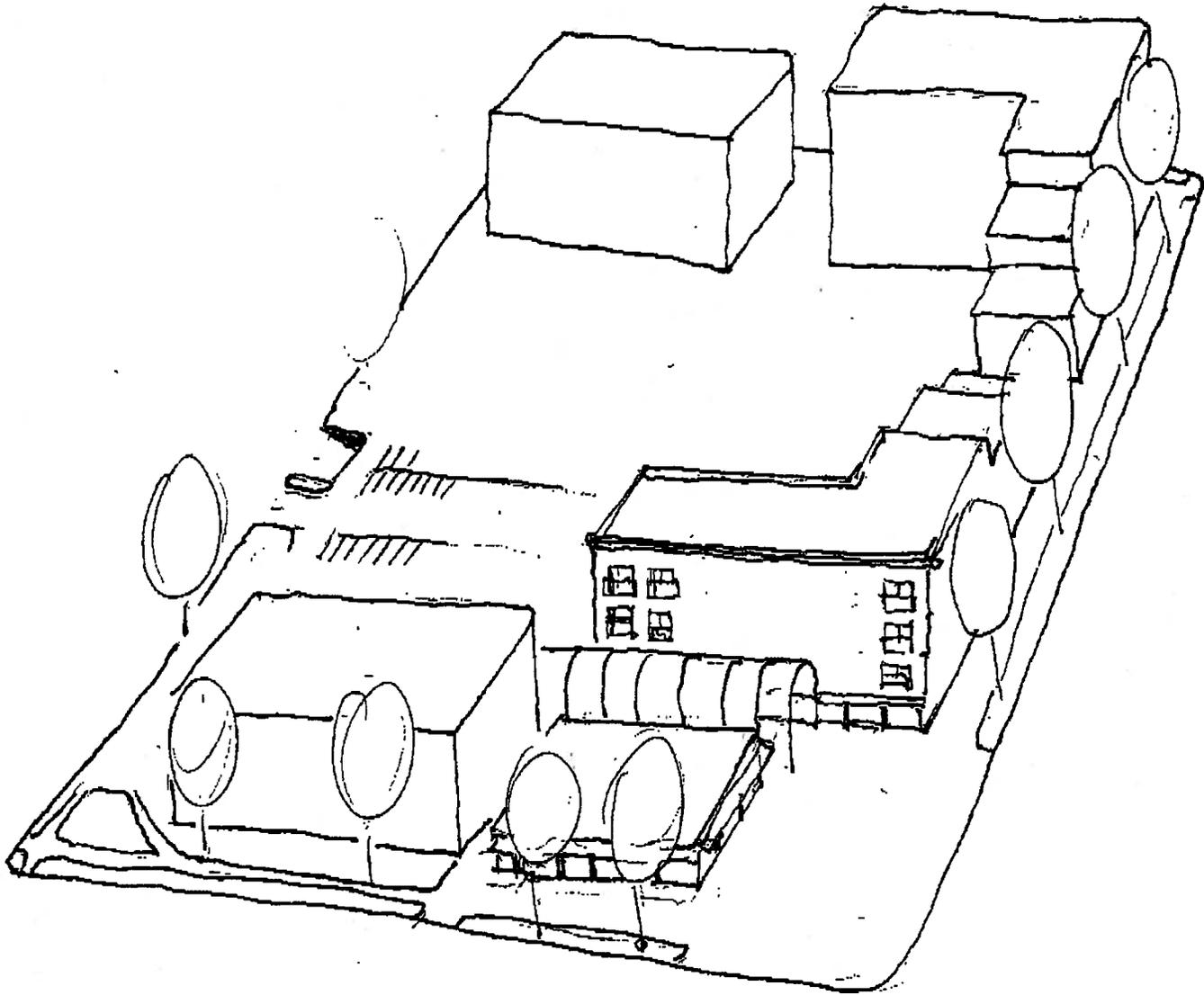


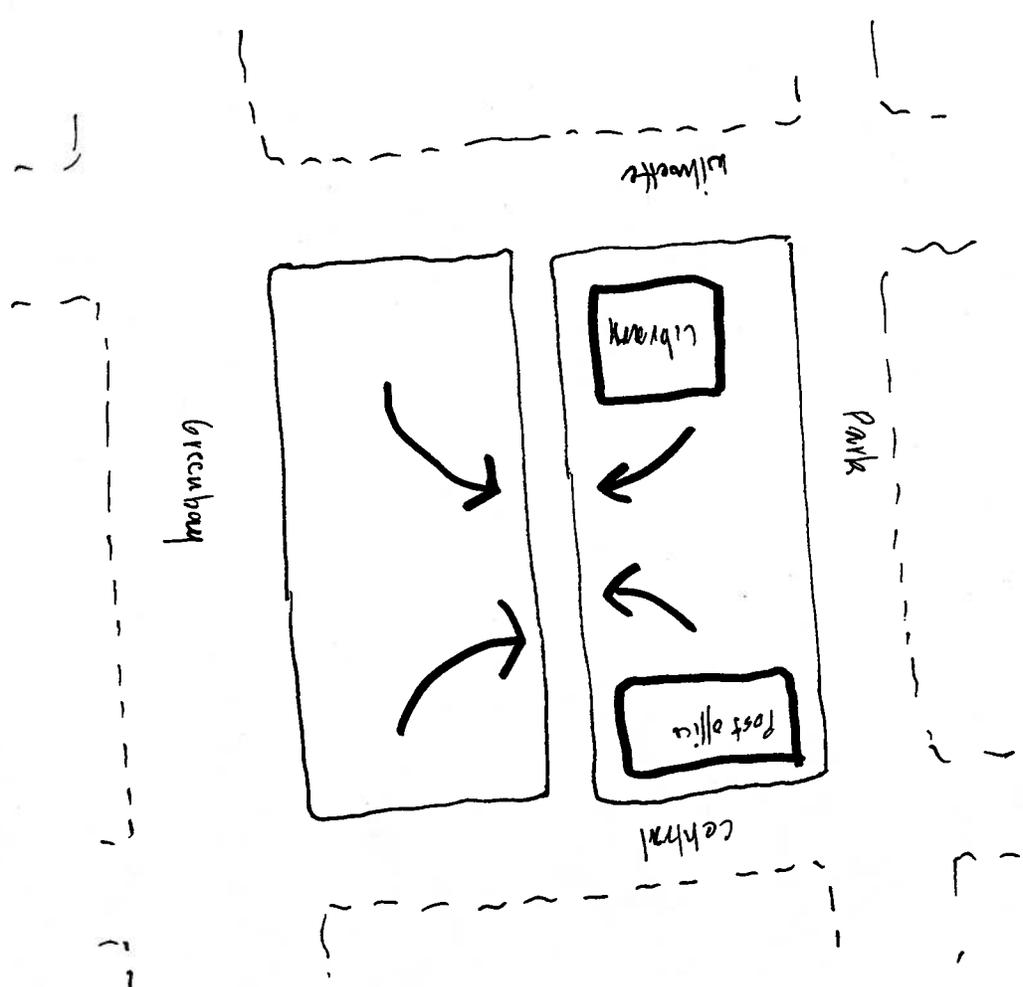
Building Square Footage, Lot Area and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Existing and Permitted

<u>Property</u>	<u>Building Square feet</u>	<u>Lot Area</u>	<u>Actual</u>		<u>Possible - PUD</u>	
			<u>FAR</u>	<u>SF - 3.0 FAR</u>	<u>SF - 3.6 FAR</u>	<u>SF - 3.6 FAR</u>
Wilmette Ford - 1st Floor	14,750					
2nd Floor	2,350					
Total	17,100	39,840	0.43	119,520		143,424
Karas - Corner of Central and Lake - 1st Floor	9,740					
2nd Floor	7,350					
Total	17,090	24,000	0.71	72,000		86,400
Wilmette Bike - 1st Floor	2,360					
2nd Floor	1,895					
Total (includes house off alley)	4,255	12,146	0.35	36,438		43,726
*Mid-Central	6,300	10,800	0.58	32,400		38,880
Corner of Wilmette and Lake - 1st Floor	2,475					
2nd Floor	2,105					
Total	4,580	7,731	0.59	23,193		27,832
West End Antiques	2,000	4,160	0.48	12,480		14,976
Public Alley	-	6,370	-	19,110		22,932
Total Building Area East of Public Alley	51,325		0.49	315,141		378,169
Total Land Area East of Public Alley		105,047				

* Based on "VC" zoning district
 PUD requires all properties to have same zoning districts







Approved November 18, 1999

Minutes of the Plan Commission meeting held on Thursday, September 16, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. in the Training Room, Wilmette Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091.

Members Present: Reinhard Schneider, Chairman
Ellen Falkof
Jay Rowell
Marcia Sullivan
Jake Young
Elizabeth Dunn

Members Absent: Vincent McBrien

Staff Present: John Adler, Director, Community Development
Barbara Hirsch, Secretary, Community Development

Guests Present: John Korzak - Owner of Mid-Central Printing
Ginger Korzak - Owner of Mid-Central Printing
Ed Sanders – Owner of Millen Hardware
Allan Versino - Owner of Wilmette Bicycle & Sport Shop
Ronald Rogers - President of Library Board
Ed Freeman – Belmont Village Representative
Michael Banks - Owner of West End Antiques
Jill Wine-Banks – Owner of West End Antiques
Arthur Karas – Owner of 629 Green Bay Road Building
D. LaCasse – Resident-711 Park
Joe Moss – Developer & Member of Comm. Adv. Council
W.A. Randolph – Resident-629 Park
Dean Pappas – Developer & Member of Streetscape Committee
Kathleen O’Laughlin – Library Board Member
Gary Litvin – Landtrack Inc. Representative

Minutes Prepared By: Barbara Hirsch

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 3, 1999 MEETING

Chairman Schneider asked for approval of the minutes from August 3, 1999. Jay Rowell made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ellen Falkoff. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. **DISCUSSION OF THE BLOCK BOUNDED BY GREEN BAY ROAD, WILMETTE, CENTRAL AND PARK.**

Chairman Schneider said the Board of Trustees in anticipation of future redevelopment of all or part of the block, asked The Plan Commission to look at and develop guidelines that could assist them when redevelopment would come before them. The plan Commission thought the best approach would be to hold a hearing like this to solicit as many views and opinions and put them together to help us develop a conceptual design, purely for visualization purposes. He emphasized that the Village has no specific plans in mind for any part of the property, the Board simply wanted not to be caught off guard as it had been in the past. Some of the parcels will probably be redeveloped in future years, so we wanted to get input from the owners, users, neighbors and other people from the community at large.

Mr. Adler said there are three different zoning districts, which make up the parcel of land. They are the Village Center, which includes the Wilmette Bicycle Shop, Koenig & Strey all the way down to Sunshine Plants. There is a 60 x 180 foot property zoned GC1 which is where Mid-Central Printing and Budget Rent-a-Car are located. The big difference between Village Center and GC1 is offices, personal service establishments and printing facilities are allowed in that district on the first floor. West of the alley, there is the Post Office, Post Office parking lot, Village parking lot, the Library and their parking lot, all zoned R2. There is a public alley, which separates the two sides. The total property on the east side is approximately 105,000 square feet.

Chairman Schneider said he would like the owners to look at the larger picture and use their imagination as to what would be an ideal situation for this parcel of land. He stressed it is a very critical parcel of land.

Ed Freeman said his company is in the Assisted Living Care Business and they are looking at Chicagoland now. They have looked at the North Shore area as very strong, their studies show that part of this parcel of land would be ideal for a residential area.

Mr. Adler said the block now has a nice mix of businesses. The library representatives will talk on possible joint underground parking between the Post Office, Village and themselves.

An audience member asked why the Village does not believe that the uses on the west side will change.

Mr. Adler said the Post Office has looked for a larger space but has not been able to find one in the Village and the Library has done extensive work on their building so that is how we come to the assumption that the uses on the west side of the alley will not change much.

Dr. Ronald Rogers, President of the Wilmette Public Library Board of Trustees, read a statement regarding the parking situation between the Postal Service, the Village and themselves. They are currently working on a more detailed study regarding the previous recommendation of a two-level underground parking structure and all have indicated a willingness to share in the cost of an appropriate parking structure. (Dr. Rogers statement is on file at the Village.)

Chairman Schneider said from Dr. Rogers statement we can all conclude the west half of the block is permanent for now. Let us focus now on the east side of the block in terms of uses. Residential was mentioned as a useful component.

Mr. Banks asked if there is development of additional parking and it would be of some benefit to the business owners, would there be any cost to the business owners?

Mr. Adler said that it is expected that the Post Office, Village and the Library are going to have to pay their fair share in any type of development. The Post Office really needs to do this and there is only one way to do this and that is by an underground structure. There are design and study costs, which the Post Office has tentatively agreed to accept. I don't think that the Village is looking to the business owners to the east to participate in funding the lot. It may be that the spaces are leased as they are at other lots in the Village, thus helping to pay for a portion of the lot cost.

Dr. Rogers said the library pays the Village for 38 spaces in the Village owned portion of the lot so employees and patrons may use these. The remaining spaces are leased individually by post office employees but there have never been enough spaces to accommodate all the post employees.

Ms. O'Laughlin stated that the library primarily faces Park Avenue, it doesn't have particularly friendly access from the other directions and yet the Library generates a fair amount of pedestrian traffic and a lot of it is faced away from the east half of the block. It would seem that any redevelopment would be a benefit to the community if the lot parking were added to open up that pedestrian access. It would seem that merchandisers would want to build on that traffic. We cannot change the front door access but maybe we can change parking lot access to free up the traffic pattern, which is now directed away from Green Bay Rd.

Dr. Rogers said the current challenge is the southern half of the eastern portion of that is independent and not related to library use. The car dealership is not related to library use. Redevelopment of the eastern half may lead to significant change in the orientation. The other thing to take into account, is the Post Office entrance is on Central and for the Post Office to be directed more towards this area, you would have to get them to redesign their facilities.

Mr. Young asked Mr. Freeman about the attractiveness of the Green Bay site or were they thinking in more general terms about the North Shore.

Mr. Freeman said the North Shore is strong in what they look for. The orientation along Green Bay, being in the Village Center, is very positive for them. Their residents are not infirmed, they are mobile. They do shop, go to the library etc. A strong positive is they don't need parking, we have buses that take them to places.

Mr. Freeman noted that they have built multiple room; single units, studios or small one bedroom units. We are talking mid 70's through mid 80's and have some limitations. The building would probably have somewhere in the range of 90-100 units so approximately 90-100 people.

Ms. Falfkoff asked if people were aware of the parking behind the stores, she has recently discovered this due to the Green Bay Road construction. She didn't feel it was very visible or accessible.

Mr. Banks said that because of the work on Green Bay Road, they have made an effort to let all of their clients know of the parking in the back.

Mr. Moss asked how the Village would get to the ideal solution, the properties are privately owned.

Chairman Schneider again reiterated that the Village has no plans, but we all know that sooner or later this plot of land will probably be redeveloped. If the Village is presented with some type of variance for this property in the future, they would like some framework or guidelines under which they could evaluate the proposed so they are not caught off guard like they were with, for example, Optima.

Mr. Banks said Chairman Schneider mentioned that the Village was caught "flat-footed" in an endeavor, and asked him if he would please spell out what he was referring to.

Chairman Schneider said the Optima project on Central Avenue was what he was referring to, the appearance and the use of materials on the exterior. Also the relationship of the retail aspect and the relationship to other properties. Possibly, had they had some framework or guidelines to evaluate that parcel of land, it could have been guided in another direction.

Mrs. Wine-Banks asked why east of Green Bay Road is not part of the overall plan.

Mr. Adler said this is the first block that is being looked at. There are a lot of other properties in the Village Center east of Green Bay Road that probably could use the same sort of planning. Because of the auto dealership and the history we have with other auto dealerships, this is probably the largest piece of property that might turnover in the foreseeable future. The Plan Commission will be looking at other areas in the Village Center and also throughout the Village, where redevelopment might occur.

Mrs. Wine-Banks asked if the Village would want a plan for the entire downtown to connect the whole downtown. She said she thought it might be better to start with the bigger picture than selecting out one target area because the total picture may change how you view something. As property owners, we want to make sure our rights on resale are not restricted because you make a decision that will restrict the use of it in a way that will limit us.

Mr. Rowell said not too long ago, The Plan Commission did a Village Center study, which is the first step of what you talked about. We have already done that and now we are looking back over this again since the Jewel bought the Chevrolet Dealership and the development of Optima from the grocery store. What we are saying is that it is possible something new and beneficial to the Village may be developed.

Mrs. Korzak said she agrees with Mrs. Wine-Banks. It seems like if something has a plan it would be more valuable because right now it is said that Optima's retail is a failure. Are you thinking of more retail? If the Optima retail failed why consider more retail? You go to downtown Highland Park, there is failed retail all over the place. I think we need business services versus failed retail. People are not shopping in downtown areas for retail today, they go elsewhere.

Chairman Schneider said that is a good point and what kind of business services are you thinking of?

Mrs. Korzak responded printing and car rental services.

Mr. Adler said part of the failure of Optima's building, is that it was designed as a residential building that just so happened to have retail underneath. It was not designed to lease out for retail space. The developer designed the building he wanted. That is why the 54 units went very quickly, he designed it as a residential building. If you look at the Lyman-Sargeant building and how quickly that filled up and other vacant spaces that were in existing buildings, the Village Center is a viable retail location.

Mrs. Korzak said if you look at other communities where they have attempted to put in more retail, they have had a lot of failure. She said she could get data on that if the Commission is interested.

Chairman Schneider asked Mr. Moss to answer.

Mr. Moss said he would build a residential building and no retail. Optima only designed that building with retail on the groundfloor because they had to.

Mr. Adler said that is exactly what he was saying. Somebody who was interested in retail could have designed the building such as Mr. Moss designed his center with Joseph Banks, lamp store and Panera. It is very successful and has done a lot for the Greenleaf businesses.

Mr. Young asked why Mr. Moss thought no retail businesses should go on Green Bay Road.

Mr. Moss said he just has a feeling the Village Center Community needs more people living there. When you have a lot of people living there, they generate business for existing retail stores. Clearly, the Village has a parking problem. Why intensify the problem just like you did at Optima. If you developed more residential and less retail you would have more parking for the Post Office and Library.

Dr. Rogers said there is another reason you may want to expand beyond this block and that is effective Monday of this week, you have an empty bank building across the street from the block you are talking about. I think you also have to consider the Pioneer Press property redevelopment an unfinished story. That is a much more traumatic failure at this point than the Optima building, which is residentially successfully.

Mr. Adler said the bank building has been sold. Mr. Moss said a bank bought the building.

Chairman Schneider said what he is hearing is that residential is clearly number one, then business services.

Mr. Banks said he disagrees because a major player in our block isn't here, Napleton Ford, and Ms. Napleton informed him in no uncertain terms that she isn't moving.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said Green Bay is a major throughway for the entire North Shore.

Chairman Schneider asked if they were making a case for retail.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said absolutely, Green Bay Road is too busy a street for residential and it is a natural for retail. It could certainly be made more attractive, sign rules in Wilmette are ridiculous and there needs to be better sign rules, better landscaping, better sidewalks but it is definitely a good retail area.

Mr. Banks said he was in Hubbard Woods for 24 years. He did not understand why there would be a push for residential when Hubbard Woods has shown itself to be successful over a long period of time.

Mr. Versino, owner of Wilmette Sports Shop, said their location is one of the best in the Village and for them it is location, location, location. They have their own parking lot, if they need to they could tear down the house they own on Wilmette Avenue and make more parking but they don't feel that is necessary right now. He is satisfied with the way things are.

Ms. O'Laughlin said it seems to her that people like the mix that is there. The stores have their own niche; they are not like their neighbor and there is a good solid mix of retail that is relatively stable. It is the car dealership that is in the middle that she feels will change.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said the Village is speculating about the car dealership contrary to a conversation that would indicate the opposite.

Mr. Rowell said the Village speculated about the Chevrolet and Buick Dealerships and they are now a Jewel. The idea of something being fixed forever is probably not accurate. It is valuable for us to sort out what may happen in the future rather than to say "it is fixed and nothing will change."

Mrs. Wine-Banks said there is nothing wrong with planning for the future as long as you don't infringe on the rights of the property owners who are there now.

Mr. Rowell noted that the purpose of the meeting was to encourage development, and certainly not to infringe on a property owner's rights.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said by limiting future developments, you could infringe on our rights.

Mr. Adler said about 3 years ago, the Village did develop a plan unit development (PUD) process to make doing a development more flexible, allowing different uses and configurations. If it makes more sense for the building to go all the way to the rear, you don't have to prove a hardship to get a variation. There was a process created, that if somebody comes in with a good development and it makes sense, that would probably be agreed to by the Village and granted. That was done to try to bring about better developments and it makes the development process easier for somebody wishing to go through it.

Mr. Randolph lives at 629 Park Avenue. He favors a small population in that area rather than a large one. The two houses that were across the street from him now have parking spaces. Also, the street was re-adjusted so we have nowhere to park in front of our house. Now we have traffic from Green Bay Road running down that street. I would like to see us put back in R1, we are R2. I think the best development is the least development.

Chairman Schneider said one of the things Mr. Randolph is saying is that since you have residential to the west, the impact of traffic on Park Avenue needs to be considered.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said that if this develops into assisted-living, you will no longer have the small businesses that are here today that own those parcels of land and that have contributed so much to this community, these people that are sitting here could not afford to rent the space on the ground floor. Everyone would have to go elsewhere and that space would have to be made available to other people and someone would collect wonderful rents. You would lose the people who have been there.

Chairman Schneider said we have talked about the uses that would be compatible with this site.

Mr. Young asked what is upstairs now above the retailers? Mr. Karas said he has offices above his retail stores.

Chairman Schneider said the second item was parking needs and that involves access and traffic. If indeed the parking area is expanded between the Post Office and the Library, one of the considerations would be the traffic on Park.

Ms. Sullivan said if there was some redevelopment, you could have some common parking area in the center of the block that would unite the block and encourage people making one shopping trip to make another shopping trip. If you could have a common concept so that people thought they were shopping the area rather than just one business that could be good for all businesses. That would be a big design issue and I think it might work out nicely for individual businesses.

Mr. Moss said many times when you are thinking about development you are often driven by the parking needs. The other gentleman was talking about residential units, let's say an average of 800 feet. That 800 feet of retail requires 4 stalls, an 800 foot 1 bedroom apartment requires 1 stall. Suddenly, what is driving the kind of development you do is the parking needs. This is a critical thing. You have some very independent owners of property that seem to be going nowhere.

Chairman Schneider said, once again, this is simply a Planning exercise.

Mrs. Korzak said she thinks the whole Village should be looked at in terms of parking.

Chairman Schneider said we have done this, there was a parking study done four years ago. As a result of that study, we changed the zoning. We reduced the amount of parking required.

Mrs. Wine Banks said this area can't solve the Village parking issues.

Chairman Schneider said we wanted to solve this area's parking issue.

Mr. Adler said the Burmeister lot was built and constructed to help one area, the lot that was constructed where IHOP was, was built to help that area. We don't expect people who might work in the Optima Center Building to park here and walk. There is, in the Library and Post Office area, a huge need for parking and that is why parking is such an issue in this block.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said the concept of uniting the block with the parking would make sense if there was any center between uses, but right now, as you pointed out how diverse the businesses are, we are very unique mix. It is not likely someone is going to go from the bike store to an antique store. In the future it could be a very pretty thing to have nice parking and a coffee shop that united the whole thing. Unless you have control of each individual property and require that they be related, it doesn't matter if you have parking that would join them.

Mr. Adler said let's assume that someday someone offers the Napletons a lot of money, like what happened with the Jewel, and the Napletons decide to leave. Now there is an opportunity with the PUD process to help shape something that is good for all the remaining businesses. We have a very large site here that might present the opportunity to provide some of that "synergy" because it is a very big lot. You can't circulate in the vehicle sales lot unless you are going to walk across a parking lot that stores cars for sale. I think that is one big reason why we are here. We don't know what is going to happen but we didn't know that the Chevrolet and Buick dealerships were going to leave either.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said let's assume all the assumptions you have made are correct, how do you benefit the remaining owners without penalizing Napolten Ford by saying they don't have the right to have that property developed as the new buyers would like it because they have to conform with some plan.

Mr. Adler said the way that is done through the PUD process. The PUD process provides flexibility. There are benefits going through the PUD process that the Village may be able to utilize to affect a workable solution to help this neighborhood.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said she does not understand when Mr. Adler says that you can influence as opposed to impose on them. What if the person who is buying says I want to have another car dealer.

Mr. Adler says the Napletons may sell to another car dealer, we just don't know. We may be spinning our wheels but we may have someone interested enough who offers them enough money and then comes to the Village with a development plan. By right, we need to allow them a way to do something without having to go to our Plan Commission or Zoning Board and they do have the right to do that. What our hope is that through this process, we might develop a conceptual plan for developers to follow.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said by making a plan you are trying to force people as they sell individual units into a bigger plan.

Mr. Adler said you still have the right to build what the zoning allows you to. We can't take that from you. If you want to do something against the vision developed by the community, you have that right, just as Napleton Ford has the right to remove the dealership and put retail stores there or tear it down and leave it vacant. The Village isn't taking those rights, what the Village is saying is that you might be able to get more. Maybe they would say you could build a little bit higher because you are following this developed plan, sort of a bonus to what is currently permitted. The Village is not trying to take anything away; the intention is to try to formulate, if and when development happens, what is best for the community.

Chairman Schneider said if we have a pedestrian connection in that area, it could enhance the whole without taking any current business's rights away.

Mr. Moss asked if they were talking about changes to the Zoning Ordinance or just what is possible.

Mr. Adler said the consensus was the Zoning Ordinance should be changed to provide flexibility. The PUD process provides a lot of flexibility.

Ms. Falkof said that she could see all those businesses in that area as family businesses and maybe people would shop at more than one if the parking was better.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said if it could be made more attractive and more accessible, the difficulty you face is that because there are multiple owners, you can't really make a plan because it is going to be piecemeal, so it is really an academic exercise.

Ms. Falkof responded that as there are developments happening, this is something that has come up and maybe we can focus on that and have some give and take with the developer to help us achieve the goal to have better parking back there.

Chairman Schneider said there would be some room for agreement for shared parking and pedestrian connection, these are things to take into consideration.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said the Village has to question what could be done to make people aware that there is actually parking back there. The Village is so restrictive on signs that you virtually can't do anything about it. Maybe the Village ought to put up a sign saying there is parking back there.

Mr. Adler said those are private parking lots, so we would want to make sure that people who own those parking lots don't have any objection because people may assume they are being directed to a Village lot.

Mr. Young said if the amount of parking that might be developed were increased, then the amount of parking that you might like to have behind your own facility may be decreased and you or a future developer might be able to build a bigger foot print.

Dr. Rogers said that is what they tried to have in their discussion of parking issues. It is important to remember that if the parking issue for the Post Office and the Library were addressed, you would also relieve a lot of the parking pressure in that surrounding neighborhood because currently those postal employees have to park in the street. There are only eight spaces leased by postal employees and there are not many more spaces than that in their own lot. What we are talking about is trying to interest the Post Office in participating, which they now say they are willing to talk about, in a program that would get their vehicles below grade, their employee parking below grade and our employees below grade so you would have that entire surface level available for patrons of those as well as businesses in the area. There are all kinds of possibilities. You don't have to put any of the business owners on the east side of the alley at risk if you develop a parking facility that unifies and benefits the entire area. The challenge in accomplishing that is for us to motivate a federal bureaucracy to join us in addressing the need which is largely driven by their vehicles and their employees.

Chairman Schneider said that could be the first component of this. The layout should take into account what could happen on the east side.

Mrs. Wine-Banks asked if there was any thought of a multi-storied parking as part of the overall solution of the town of Wilmette's parking solution.

Chairman Schneider said the only thing he has heard is the Library/Post Office parking lot would have an underground level.

Dr. Rogers said he thought the total of all three lots was approximately 120 spaces. One of the alternatives that was evaluated was reconfiguring the existing lots as surface only. The safety of entrance and exit issues were addressed and the concerns about the alley and the need for access to the alley and the impact that has on traffic there, we had a net gain of 2 spaces. So that is why the parking consultant said a multi-level structure is the only solution that makes sense.

Mr. Young said the other issue around the parking and access to the parking lots is the use of the alley. Theoretically, could we make it one way and enhance the entrance. Maybe that would take some traffic off of Park in the future.

Dr. Rogers said the design that we evaluated, was a ramp on the Postal portion where their current parking lot is, east of their building going down a level. So the private parking could be gated and controlled with employee cards or some other means and the public level could be accessed off of Park primarily.

Mr. Young asked if the Post Office would come in off the alley.

Dr. Rogers said the Post Office would come in off of Central, their employees would come in off Central and our employees would come in off Central. So the lower level would be coming in off Central with a ramp adjacent to the alley. The surface level would be primarily off of Park. What we were aiming for was a complete separation of those two functions so you wouldn't have to deal with security issues and other matters by having unrestricted access to that lower level.

Mr. Young said what he was getting at was if he was a retailer on Green Bay Road and the traffic is coming in on the alley and I can somehow create an entrance to my store to the people who are driving in the alley, I can do that, I can't do that with people who are driving on Park unless I put a billboard.

Dr. Rogers said there is no reason why the Village couldn't address the alley differently.

Chairman Schneider said these are important issues to take into account to the overall solution. The next issue is density. Mr. Adler could talk a little bit about what could be permitted under the current zoning.

Mr. Adler said the handout people have should spell out what floor area is permitted by right and then through the Plan Unit Development procedure. He pointed out that a floor area ratio of 3.0 was permitted by right and 3.6 was permitted through the PUD process. To give you an idea, the Wilmette Ford property, without going through the PUD process, would be able to develop a total building, which includes first floor, second floor, and third floor, of 119,000 square feet. Through the PUD process that would go up to 143,000 square feet. There are a number of limitations, which I believe would preclude that from

happening, such as setbacks and parking. That is what is allowed on VC zoned property. There is no specific limitation on the number of residential dwelling units per acre.

Chairman Schneider said that is fairly straightforward and gives us a sense of what could be built. Another issue that relates to the discussion we had on parking, for example, is what should be, if any, the pedestrian linkage access. Right now, it seems to me that people don't walk too much. I am not sure a lot of people walk through the alley and the car lot to the retail shops. If you put a large parking facility here, you want to encourage people to park here and make use of all of these amenities. How do you connect this in such a way to make it comfortable and encourage people to go to the shops facing Green Bay Road. That is an issue and problem that we can define and consider. When we did the Comprehensive Plan and the Village Center study, we wanted to encourage more pedestrian traffic and so whatever we can do to get people out of the car and walking is an important component to the plan.

Mr. Adler said one of the comments that was made was that the east side and west side of Green Bay Road should be better linked and maybe this could be addressed in this Plan.

Chairman Schneider said they want to define the issues and get some experts to help solve in many alternative ways, the problems that are identified. All businesses face Green Bay Road and it is not a comfortable place to stroll with all the traffic. We are thinking of creating this central shared parking which will serve the Library and Post Office. We will have to take into account those businesses and make it a connector. Maybe we could have a common courtyard in back to get people off the street.

Mr. Banks said Hubbard Woods has been a steady growth area for the last 25 years. There has never been a problem in walking on Green Bay Road in the 24 years he was there. Everybody has been successful. It had nothing like that parking configuration, although nobody is against that parking configuration, probably. I don't see any "synergy" between the parking and the Green Bay businesses anymore than in Hubbard Woods, which is the area's most serious competitor.

Mr. Young asked where people park there.

Mr. Banks said they park on the street and in a Village lot. I don't think anybody here would disagree about more parking but I do not think the "synergy" between the parking and the businesses will be easy to develop.

Chairman Schneider said one thing that comes to his mind is that you have businesses on both side of the street in Hubbard Woods and this is a single row of businesses.

Mrs. Wine-Banks said if it is more attractive to walk if there is business on both sides then maybe the Village has to figure out some way for the railroad right-of-way to be creative. Maybe there could be small vendors on the east side creating a walking environment.

Chairman Schneider said safety is important here. One issue has always been to somehow make the east and west areas of the train tracks more pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Pappas is on the streetscape committee and helped with the conceptualizing of the Green Bay Road streetscape design. They were trying to get some of the design elements that are within the downtown to bleed across the street, all the way from the lighting to the trees to the pavers to make that as much a part of the Village Center as the east side of the tracks. He continued on saying that he felt Green Bay Road is a different road in Wilmette than it is in Hubbard Woods. He lives in that area and it is a totally different street. As far as Green Bay Road is concerned, we need to address it locally. It seems to be in Wilmette, a way to get from Point A to Point B. He liked some of the ideas in trying to develop that block of businesses, part of it is how do you get enough activity to really give a block vitality. The nice thing about this block is that the activity is there, in the form of the Library and Post Office, which generates a lot of foot traffic, as people are there already. The other nice thing about it, is that both of those things happen to be on the west side of that block, which is nice, you have already drawn a fair number of people onto the west side of the block. What Chairman Schneider is talking about is how to get that activity over to the east side of the block which is where the retail is and make that a pleasant journey. Alley's can be charming places.

Ms. Falkof said that anyone that has been to downtown Lake Forest knows, there are a lot of shops and little restaurants in alleys. It really can be a useable and pleasant area.

Ms. O'Laughlin asked about the utility poles in alley.

Dr. Rogers said you would have to deal with the utility issue in order to make the parking solution work. You also have to deal with the parking area of the car dealership. Any dressing up you do in the alley is limited by those factors. Chairman Schneider said the whole idea would be ultimately to have this area be a very active, comfortable complex. He said visual character and image would be important to carry over to this area and asked what typed of design element should be addressed?

Mr. Moss said the Village has a lot of red brick and pavers and a fair amount of limestone and also trees.

Chairman Schneider said he had read in a magazine where they had taken an existing block and explored alternatives. It does raise our imaginations. (He passed out pictures) In order to develop visual alternatives, we have to describe what we like.

Mrs. Korzak said speaking for Mid-Central Printing, we would like to redesign the front and back and get a little more style to it. The building across the street from his building was built in the 1950's. Actually our building was constructed to be multi-story. It needs more charm.

Mr. Young said one of the things he heard earlier was that on Green Bay Road, we don't necessarily have to do anything in order to provide an adequate environment for retailers. You could put a solid front of retail stores along Green Bay Road without extensive streetscape and you could do business there and that is OK.

Mr. Young asked if they needed open space or access through to the parking structure behind?

Mr. Banks felt that was a matter of opinion.

Mr. Pappas said it would be important to look across the street and he was thinking about the empty buildings across from the Post Office. That is certainly going to have an effect on this key block.

Chairman Schneider said he appreciated everyone who came and contributed their comments. They will put together a summary of this and maybe take the next step and try to put together an interesting design. It would help the Board to visualize all this could mean. He thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Rowell seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

1200 Wilmette Ave.
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

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TDD (847) 853-7634
EMAIL wilmette@wilmette.com

August 26, 1999

Dear Property Owner/Business Owner:

At the request of the Village Board, the Plan Commission will begin area-specific planning studies for key land parcels located in the Village. The purpose of these studies is to develop a vision that may influence the properties if they are redeveloped. Elements such as scale, appearance, design, use, and parking will be addressed.

The review process will include gathering input from business owners, building owners, the Chamber of Commerce and the community at large. Any discussion of development within the Village can only be enhanced by your participation in this process. **It is important to note that no specific redevelopment proposals are under consideration, at this time. Nor is it the purpose of this process to develop "fixed" plans for any particular parcel of property in the community.**

The first area to be reviewed is bounded by Green Bay Road to the east, Wilmette Avenue to the south, Central Avenue to the north and Park Avenue to the west. Please consult the attached map for the exact boundaries.

The first Plan Commission meeting to discuss this issue is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on **September 16, 1999** in the Second Floor Training Room at the Village Hall. Your comments are valuable. Please join us to discuss the possible alternatives for this area. If you have any questions, please contact me at 847-853-7528.

Sincerely,

John Adler
Director, Department of Community Development



VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

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MEETING NOTICE

The Wilmette Plan Commission will hold a public meeting on **Thursday, September 16, 1999, at 7:30 P.M.** in the **Second Floor Training Room** located in Village Hall, 2100 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois, to discuss a site specific planning study for the area bounded by Green Bay Road to the east, Wilmette Avenue to the south, Central Avenue to the north and Park Avenue to the west. Elements such as scale, appearance, design, use, and parking will be addressed.

It is important to note that no specific redevelopment proposals are under consideration, at this time. Nor is it the purpose of this process to develop "fixed" plans for any particular parcel of property in the community.

Public input is encouraged.

If you are a person with a disability and need special accommodations to participate in and/or attend a Village of Wilmette public meeting, please notify the Management Services Department at 251-2700 (TDD# 853-7634) as soon as possible.

If you have any questions prior to the meeting, please contact John Adler, staff liaison, at 847-853-7528.

Reinhard Schneider, Chairman
Ellen Falkof
Vincent McBrien

Jay Rowell
Marcia Sullivan
James Young

(Constituting the Plan Commission of the Village of Wilmette, Illinois)