



Chicago Metropolitan  
Agency for Planning

**DRAFT**

# Prairie Path and Taft Avenue Corridor Plan

VILLAGE OF  
HILLSIDE





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# Introduction



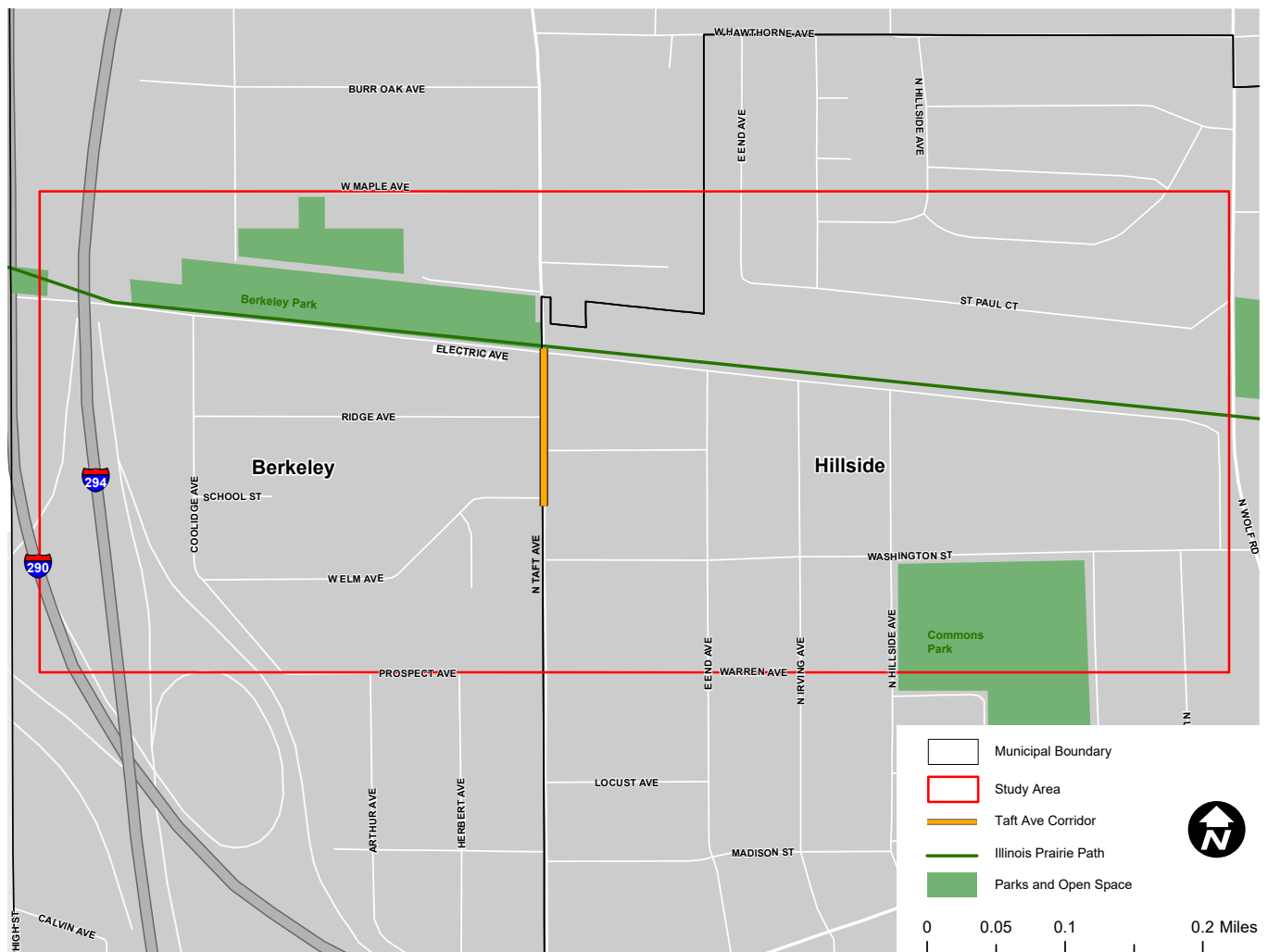
The Illinois Prairie Path is a 60 mile heavily used trail that brings visitors through Berkeley, Hillside, and other communities.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) worked with the Village of Berkeley, the Village of Hillside, and the Berkeley Park District to create a shared vision for the Prairie Path and Taft Avenue Corridor.

# Project Background

The Prairie Path and Taft Avenue Corridor Plan aims to improve and increase biking and getting around along and around the Path, attract businesses to the area, and beautify the parks and open space.

## Study Area Map



# Planning Process

Existing Conditions Analysis



Community Engagement



Key Recommendations

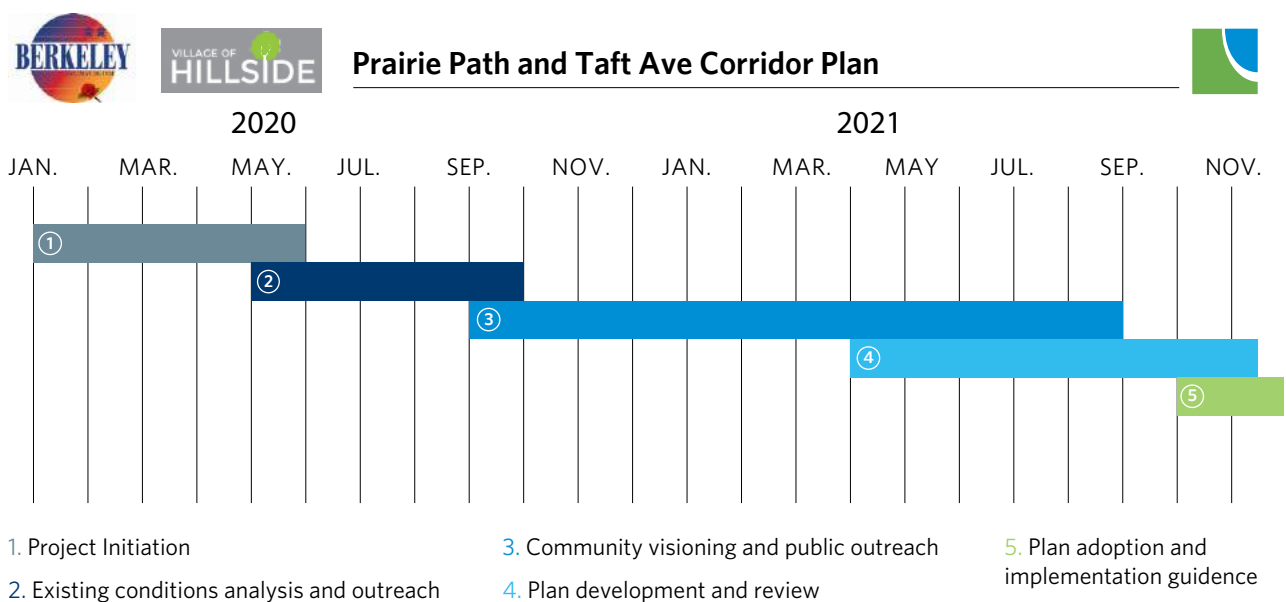


Plan Development



Implementation

Ongoing





# Study Area Demographics

Understanding who lives and works in the study area provided context for the plan, and analyzing the demographic make up of the community helped the project team develop recommendations that fit the context of the study area.

The information below summarizes key demographic facts about the residents of both Berkeley and Hillside in the study area.



Median Age



Total Households



38%

Some College



Average Household



High School Graduate



23%

Bachelor's/Graduate Degree

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020



A photograph of two women walking away from the camera on a paved path in a park. The woman on the left is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with the number '10' in white and dark pants. The woman on the right is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and black leggings. They are walking on a paved path that curves to the right. The path is bordered by green grass on the left and right. In the background, there are many green trees and a clear sky. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden light and long shadows on the path. The title 'Community Engagement' is overlaid in blue text on the top left of the image.

# Community Engagement

The project team worked hard to learn more about the challenges and opportunities of the study area to make sure that any recommendations considered reflect what we heard. The team spoke with a wide range of residents, business owners and Path users to ensure all voices had an opportunity to provide input.

The following pages highlight what we learned.



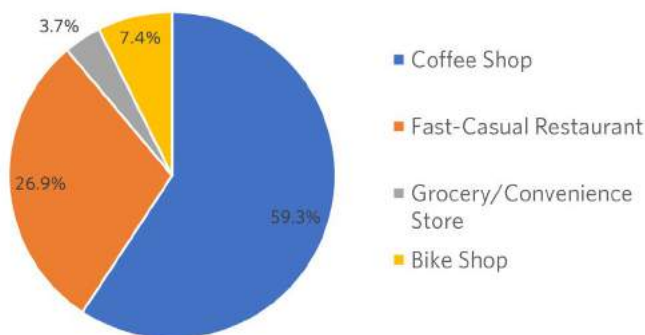
# Community Engagement Summary

Throughout the planning process, we learned from more than **150 people** through interviews, steering committee meetings, surveys, comments, conversations at community events, and ideas submitted through a project website.

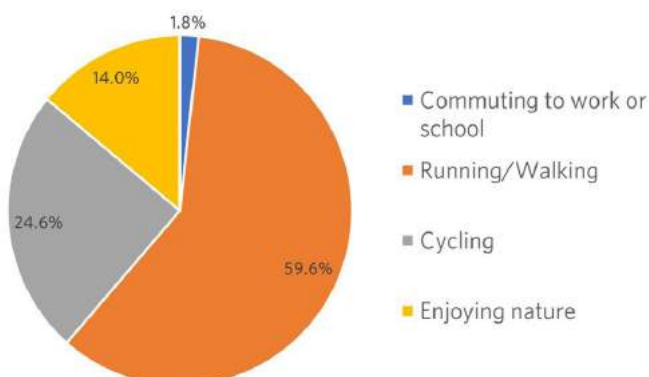
The next three pages summarize input received.



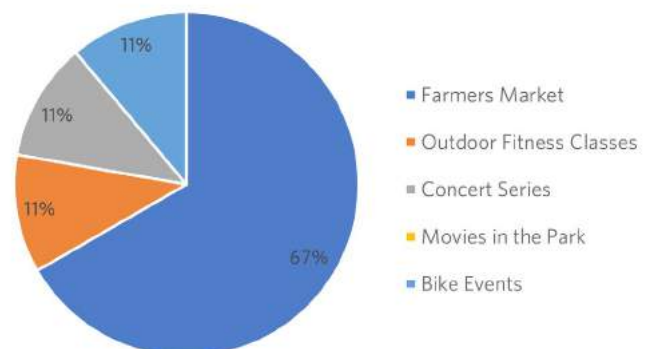
**What type of businesses and services would you like to see along the Taft Avenue Corridor?**



**How do you primarily use the Prairie Path?**



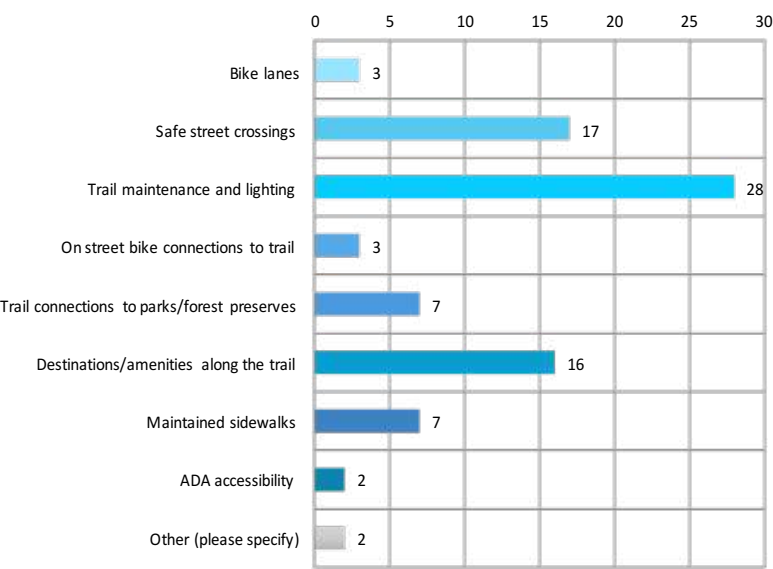
**What type of programming would you like to see in the study area?**





# Community Engagement Summary

What is most important to you regarding bicycling and getting around in the study area?

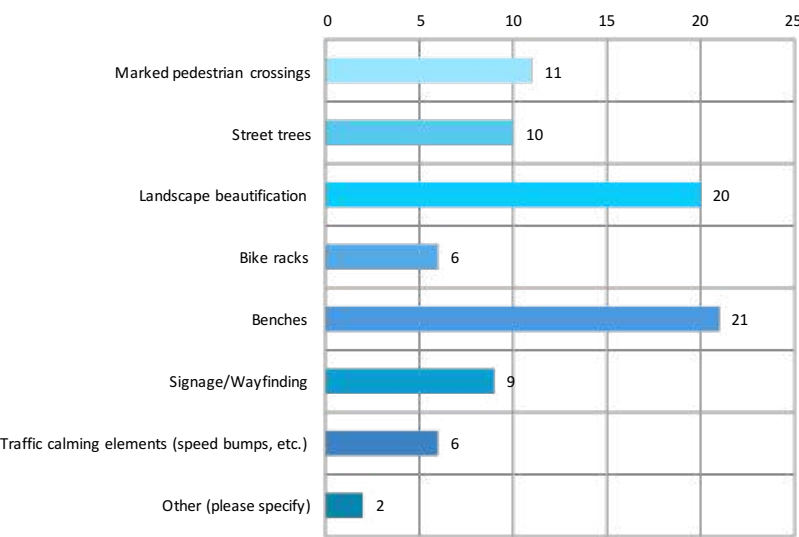


Most survey takers identified **lighting and trail maintenance** as the key to improving biking and getting around in the study area.



Survey results showed that **benches and landscape beautification** were regarded as the most important streetscape improvements.

What is most important to you regarding streetscape improvements in the study area?



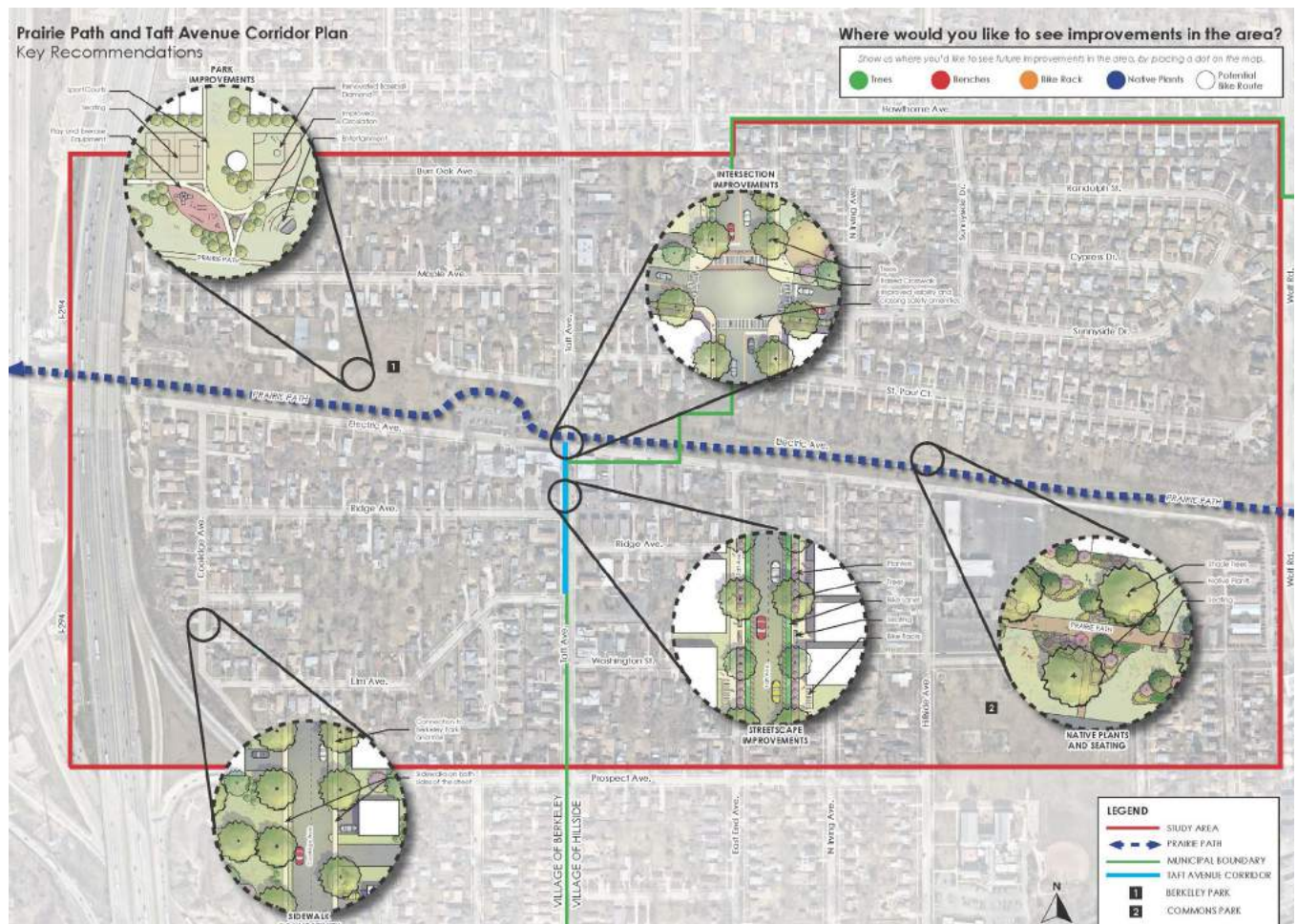
# Community Engagement Ideas

Other ideas submitted through the project engagement page included:

1. Better lighting along the Prairie Path
2. More native plants and gardens along the Prairie Path
3. A coffee shop on Taft Avenue that can serve trail users and residents
4. Better sidewalks, nicer signs, awnings, benches, and trees along Taft Avenue
5. Better bike connections to the Metra station
6. More diverse programming at Berkeley Park and Hillside Commons
7. More trees along the Prairie Path

The community's input was crucial to the development of the plan's recommendations. In order to narrow down some of the ideas that were submitted by community members, we used additional surveys and the below mapping activity to help prioritize improvements.

## Key Recommendations Map Exercise



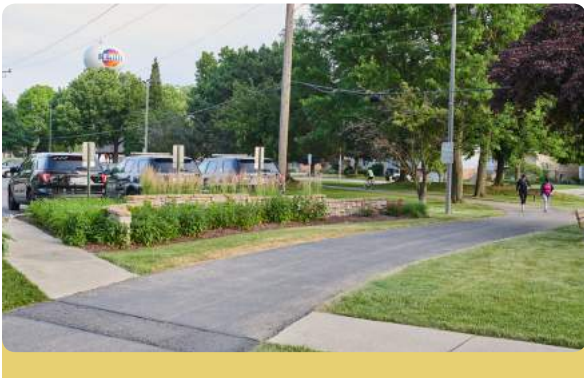


# Plan Focus Areas

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## Economic Development



## Transportation



## Placemaking



## Natural Resources



# Economic Development

In order to prosper economically, the Taft Avenue corridor needs a mix of housing, offices, shops, and restaurants. The corridor also needs access to skilled workers. Opportunities for these types of businesses are influenced by trends within Berkeley, Hillside, and the larger sub-regional and regional markets.

The following section provides an overview of this larger context to ensure that the Plan reflects market realities.

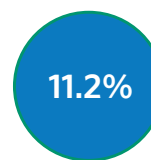
## Study Area Economic Data



2,571  
2020  
Population



\$29,299  
2020 Per Capita  
Income



Unemployment  
Rate



214  
Total  
Employees



\$62,400  
2020 Median  
Household  
Income



23  
Total  
Businesses

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020



# Economic Development

## Key Takeaways

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- The study area has a **low retail vacancy rate** compared to Berkeley and Hillside as a whole, as well as the larger Melrose Park area submarket, but very little retail currently exists along the Taft Avenue corridor.
- Within a 5-minute drive of the intersection of Electric Avenue and Taft Avenue, retail demand outpaces supply by **\$170 million** in sales. This means that there are opportunities for neighborhood scale retail, including small restaurants.
- The Taft Avenue Corridor **faces competition** from larger nearby retail corridors, including Butterfield Road, St. Charles Road, and Wolf Road.
- Residents are interested in retail options that can **serve local customers and Prairie Path users**, such as a coffee shop or neighborhood cafe.
- Community members emphasized the need for better marketing of **existing businesses**.



# Recommendation

Priority: Near-Term

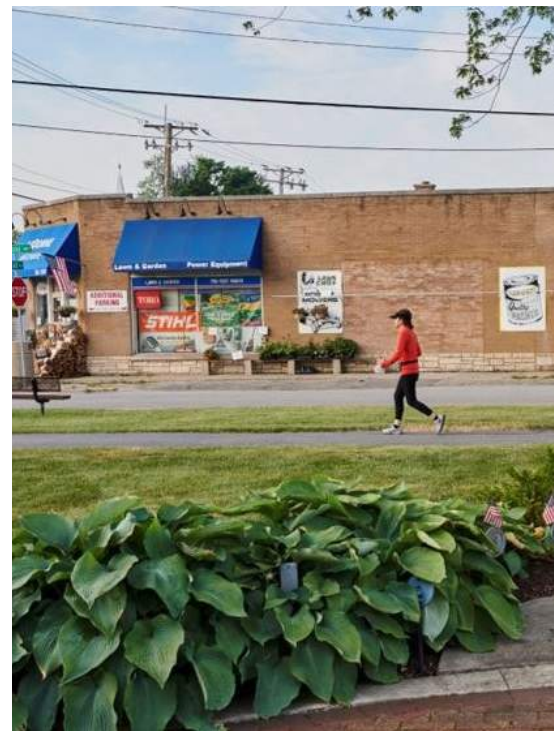
## Use proximity of Prairie Path to attract customers to the Taft Avenue corridor.

The Prairie Path attracts bicyclists and pedestrians from other parts of the region. Berkeley and Hillside should capitalize on this unique asset by using signage at key locations along the trail to draw visitors to the Taft Avenue corridor, and organizing events that promote businesses on Taft Avenue.

**Partner** with the Illinois Prairie Path to organize community rides and bike-themed events that bring visitors to the Villages of Berkeley and Hillside. Consider local business sponsorship opportunities to promote Taft Avenue businesses to event participants.

**Coordinate** wayfinding signage in high-traffic areas along the trail in both communities to draw path users to the Taft Avenue corridor. All signage should have a streamlined and uniform look to help create a sense of place.

**Market** businesses along Taft Ave through community events and programming outlined in the placemaking recommendation.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	TIF District, Business Improvement District, Fundraising campaigns
Potential Partners	Resources
Illinois Prairie Path, Hillside and Berkeley Park Districts	<i>The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure</i>



# Recommendation

**Priority: Ongoing**

## Support existing businesses along Taft Avenue.

Supporting long-standing anchor businesses in the area, such as LeDonne Hardware, can help sustain prosperity and the local economy. The Villages should collaborate on a shared brand and/or marketing campaign for the Taft Avenue Corridor to ensure the area has the same look and feel on both sides of the street, and it is an equitable partnership with the two communities.

**Create** a brand for the Taft Avenue Corridor and market the area to potential developers and consumers as a downtown neighborhood retail and services district.

**Explore** creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District or Business Improvement District (BID) along Taft Avenue to have a funding source that supports area businesses and incentivizes new development. The CMAP Local Incentives Guide is a great resource for evaluating incentives options.

**Explore** creating a joint Façade Improvement Program along Taft Avenue to improve the look of existing businesses and vacant storefronts along both sides of Taft Avenue.

**Organize** joint promotional campaigns for businesses along Taft Avenue. This could include collective web and print promotional materials that can increase the advertising reach of existing businesses.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	TIF District, Business Improvement District
Potential Partners	Resources
Existing businesses, Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	Cook County Small Business Assistance, Economic Development Administration, <i>CMAP Local Development Incentives Guide</i>

# Recommendation

Priority: Mid-Term

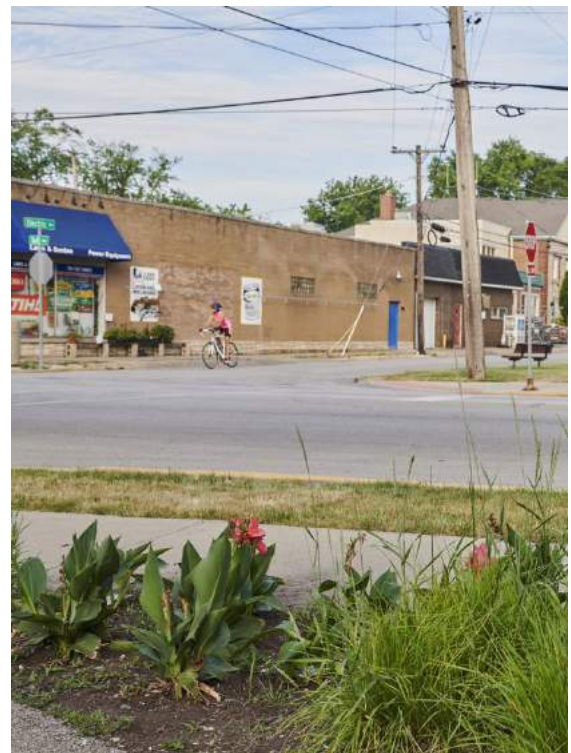
## Attract neighborhood scale retail to Taft Avenue and explore mixed-use opportunities on Village-owned parcels.

Since Taft Avenue faces competition from larger retail corridors, Berkeley and Hillside should focus on attracting neighborhood scale retail. The parcels of land and buildings each Village owns along Taft Avenue should be the near-term priority sites to attract mixed-use development with retail and housing. Developing these Village-owned parcels can bring additional customers and workers to the corridor and contribute to its economic vitality.

**Market** available land suitable for redevelopment on the Berkeley and Hillside websites. Information posted on the websites should include parcel size, zoning designation, desired use, and contact information.

**Engage** a panel of development experts to showcase available redevelopment sites in the study area, solicit guidance on what type(s) of development is feasible, and what incentives may work best to attract development.

**Evaluate** the use of potential economic development incentives to attract neighborhood scale retail to the corridor. These could include a potential Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district or Business Improvement District (BID), as well as Cook County's property tax incentives and available COVID-19 stimulus funding.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	TIF District, Business Improvement District, Development Incentives
Potential Partners	Resources
CMAP, Urban Land Institute (ULI)	CMAP Local Development Incentives Guide, Illinois Tax Increment Association, Business Improvement District



# Transportation

A robust transportation connection to the study area, and safer ways to bike and get around are essential for attracting residents and visitors to the Illinois Prairie Path and the Taft Avenue corridor.

The following section provides an overview of the study area's existing transportation options and suggests ways to improve access and use of the area transportation options.



# Transportation Overview

## Pace Bus and Metra Service

Pace bus routes are located to the north, south, and east of the study area. These include routes along St. Charles Road, Butterfield Road, Wolf Road, as well as I-88, I-290, and I-294.

The Berkeley Metra station offers connections to downtown Chicago and the western suburbs via the Union Pacific West Line.

## Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

Between 2010 and 2016 there were two crashes involving a bicyclist at the intersection of Electric Avenue and Taft Avenue.

Most streets in the study area have sidewalks on both sides. Two segments of Electric Avenue and Coolidge Avenue do not have a sidewalk.

## Sidewalk network in the Study Area



## Average Daily Traffic Counts (ADTs)

Electric Avenue: 1,150

Taft Avenue: 5,000





# Transportation

## Key Takeaways

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- The study area is **well served by transit**. The Union Pacific West Metra line and several Pace bus routes connect the area to surrounding communities and Chicago.
- Overall, the study area has **good sidewalk coverage**.
- Traffic is **relatively low** along Electric Avenue and Taft Avenue compared to other major roads in the area.
- Residents are interested in **more bike connections** between the Prairie Path, Metra station, and nearby residential areas.

*Aerial view of the Prairie Path looking east/southeast*



# Recommendation

Priority: Mid-Term

## Provide bike connections throughout both Villages and make it easier to bike to the Metra station.

The close proximity of the Metra station to the study area is a major asset, and the Villages should explore improved bike connections to the station. Using signage and residential streets to provide better bike access to the train station can help attract Prairie Path users from outside the community. Additionally, providing bike connections throughout Berkeley and Hillside is an important component of making the area safe for bicyclists, especially Prairie Path users.

**Crowdsource** preferred/frequently used bike routes to the Berkeley Metra Station and other destinations throughout both Villages.

**Create** a Berkeley and Hillside version of the [Chicago Mellow Bike Map](#) to highlight low-traffic, quiet bike routes to the Metra station and other destinations in and around the Villages.

**Use** traffic calming techniques, such as speed bumps and road markings, on designated bike routes to improve safety and comfort for bicyclists.

**Develop** long-term planning strategies for the Metra station area as well as major corridors throughout both Villages. This should include **exploring** adding bike lanes to Taft Avenue and/or surrounding streets, and creating a designated route to the Metra station.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	CMAQ, TAP, Invest in Cook
Potential Partners	Resources
Illinois Prairie Path, Metra, Neighboring communities	<i>Chicago Mellow Bike Map,</i> <i>CMAP Engagement HQ project page,</i> <i>Crowdsourcing Prioritized Bike Routes</i>



# Recommendation

*Priority: Near-Term*

## Ensure sidewalk connectivity to Berkeley Park and the Prairie Path from nearby residential areas.

Most streets in the study area have a sidewalk on both sides; however, Coolidge Avenue in Berkeley does not have a sidewalk, nor does the south side section of Electric Avenue east of Coolidge. The Village should prioritize this area for future sidewalk improvements, as it would provide easier and safer access to the Prairie Path and Berkeley Park for nearby residents.

**Install** a sidewalk on both sides of Coolidge Avenue and on Electric Avenue east of Coolidge to improve access to the Prairie Path and Taft Avenue corridor. The length of both sides of Coolidge Avenue is about 3,000 linear feet, and the section of Electric Avenue without a sidewalk east of Coolidge measures about 700 linear feet. These potential sidewalk segments would cost the Village approximately \$50,000.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Village of Berkeley	CMAQ, Invest in Cook, ITEP
Potential Partners	Resources
Berkeley Public Works	Wheaton Program for New Sidewalks, Lockport Sidewalk Replacement Program, Oak Lawn Sidewalk Program

# Recommendation

Priority: Near-Term

## Improve visibility and safety at the Taft Avenue and Prairie Path intersection.

While data shows very few accidents at this location in the past 10 years, some residents do not feel safe crossing this intersection and would like to see improvements that increase safety and visibility for people trying to cross Taft Avenue.

**Consider** working with IDOT on a Jurisdictional Transfer of Taft Avenue so the Villages of Berkeley and Hillside assume ownership and control of the road, especially in the downtown area.

**Explore** aligning the Praire Path on both sides of Taft Avenue to make it safer for path users to cross the street.

**Enhance** the Taft Avenue and Prairie Path crossing with a raised crosswalk or other markings to alert cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians of the intersection.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	Invest in Cook, Surface Transportation Program, TAP
Potential Partners	Resources
IDOT, Berkeley and Hillside Public Works	IDOT Highway Jurisdiction Guidelines, CMAP Complete Streets Treatments



## Ensure both Berkeley and Hillside have ADA Transition Plans.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990, yet accessibility for pedestrians with disabilities remains low in many places in our region. The regulations for implementing Title II of the ADA require local public agencies with more than 50 employees to develop an ADA transition plan within three years of the law’s enactment.

A transition plan is a planning document that identifies all barriers to access in publicly-owned streets and buildings, and develops a strategy for the removal of those barriers (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, Metropolitan Planning Council, March 2021).

**Develop** an ADA transition plan in both Berkeley and Hillside to identify barriers to equitable access throughout both communities.



Lead implementers		Funding Sources	
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside		TBD	
Potential Partners		Resources	
CMAP		Where The Sidewalk Ends	

# Placemaking

As a regional trail, the Prairie Path has the potential to bring visitors to Berkeley Park, Hillside, and the Taft Avenue corridor. The Villages should capitalize on the unique assets of the area to attract more people to the Prairie Path and Taft Avenue corridor.

Residents are interested in seeing safety and visual improvements along Taft Avenue, and want to see more diverse programming in the study area.

The following section outlines potential improvements to the Prairie Path and Taft Avenue.



# Placemaking

## *Key Takeaways*

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- Berkeley Park and the Prairie Path have the potential to **attract residents and visitors** to the Taft Ave corridor.
- The Taft Ave corridor could benefit from **streetscape improvements** that make the area more attractive.
- Community members emphasized the need for **improved lighting** along the Prairie Path, and amenities such as benches and bike racks.
- Residents want to see more **diverse programming** in Berkeley Park.





# Recommendation

**Priority: Near-Term**

## Create a brand for the area.

Designate the Taft Avenue and Prairie Path area as a downtown area, the “Taft Avenue District” or similar name to illustrate that both Villages are making efforts to improve the area, give it a cohesive look and feel, and attract more people.

**Explore** creating a joint façade improvement program in partnership to improve the look of existing businesses and vacant storefronts along both sides of Taft Avenue.

**Funding** for façade improvements, district signage, and other branding could be derived from local budgets, a designated Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, Business Improvement District (BID), fundraising campaigns, cost sharing with existing businesses, or any combination of these funding sources.

**Collaboration** on this program is important to ensure that the Taft Ave corridor has the same look and feel on both sides of the street, and it is an equitable partnership between the two communities.

*Example of commercial branding in Woodstock, IL*



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	TIF District, BID, fundraising campaigns, cost sharing, general funds
Potential Partners	Resources
Existing businesses	Examples of facade improvement programs in: Westchester, Fox Lake, Morton Grove, and Plainfield



# Recommendation

*Priority: Ongoing*

## Improve streetscaping and the pedestrian experience along Taft Avenue.

More people will visit businesses along Taft Avenue if the Villages continue to maintain the sidewalks in good condition and add benches, bike racks, planter boxes, and street trees. The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside should coordinate these improvements to create a cohesive look to the area on both sides of Taft Avenue.

**Create** a more pleasant experience for people getting around the corridor by adding street trees, planter boxes, benches, and bike racks in strategic locations.

**Coordinate** Taft Avenue streetscape improvements to create a cohesive look on both sides of the street.

**Ensure** that sidewalks are well maintained and are accessible to people who use wheelchairs and other assistance devices for mobility.

### *Potential streetscape improvements along Taft Avenue*



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	For streetscape improvements: ITEP, Invest in Cook, CMAQ, TAP
Potential Partners	Resources
Existing businesses	Examples of streetscape improvements in: Villa Park and Lockport

# Recommendation

**Priority: Ongoing**

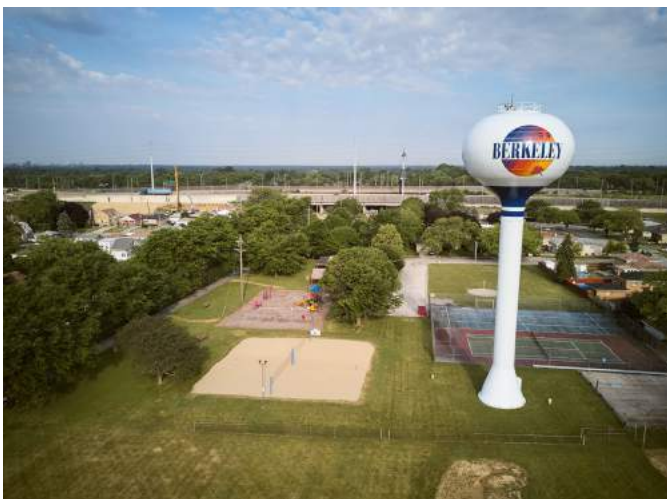
## Support community programming for all residents.

The diversity of Berkeley and Hillside is a major asset to both communities, and community events should reflect that diversity. Through the outreach process, residents expressed a desire for continued delivery of programs and events, such as concerts and community gardening events, and the addition of new events, like a farmers market or seasonal community fairs. The Villages should continue to work together on joint programming in the study area, building off the success of Autumn Fest in October 2021.

Continue to **Collaborate** on joint programming for Berkeley and Hillside residents. This could include cultural events that celebrate the diversity of both communities through food and music and give marketing opportunities to local businesses.

**Organize** a seasonal farmers market in Berkeley Park that can feature local vendors and give pop-up opportunities to small businesses.

**Advertise** community events to residents through social media, newsletters, flyers, and other local news outlets.



Lead implementers		Funding Sources	
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside		General funds, fundraising campaign	
Potential Partners		Resources	
The Berkeley and Hillside Park Districts		<i>Marketing the Market</i>	



# Recommendation

*Priority: Ongoing*

## Coordinate Prairie Path maintenance and improvements.

The Prairie Path is an important shared amenity for Berkeley and Hillside. Residents value this community asset and want to see more trail amenities and improvements. The [Berkeley 2020 - 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan](#) outlines a series of goals, objectives, and recommendations that can guide the decision making and strategic investments, and should be used as guidance for improvements along the Prairie Path in both Hillside and Berkeley.

**Ensure** that trail maintenance, such as snow and debris clearing, and any future trail upgrades are cohesive along the Prairie Path across both communities.

**Incorporate** benches, bike racks, native plantings, additional shade trees, and drinking fountains in strategic locations along the Prairie Path.

**Coordinate** and **Collaborate** on lighting and signage improvements along the Prairie Path to ensure improvements have a cohesive look across both communities.

### *Rendering of potential Prairie Path improvements*



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside, Berkeley and Hillside Park Districts	General funds, fundraising campaigns
Potential Partners	Resources
Illinois Prairie Path	<i>The Berkeley 2020-2025 Comprehensive Master Plan</i>

# Recommendation

*Priority: Ongoing*

## Expand the Story Walk program along the Prairie Path in Hillside, and continue to utilize the kiosks for additional stories, Path history/information, and to promote news and events.

Congratulations to Berkeley for installing the Story Walk signs along the Prairie Path in early 2021! These informational kiosks will not only attract users of all ages, but can also help trail users understand the history of Illinois' prairie landscape, the value of natural prairies, and learn about goings-on in the Villages.

**Partner** with the Berkeley and Hillside libraries to continue the Story Walk along the Prairie Path in Hillside to entice and encourage people of all ages to visit and read a deconstructed book along various parts of the trail.

**Utilize** Story Walk sign kiosks to provide information about Illinois' prairie plants, history of the Illinois Prairie Path, or to promote community events in both Villages.



Lead implementers		Funding Sources	
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside Park Districts		General fund, library funds Fundraising campaigns	
Potential Partners		Resources	
Berkeley and Hillside Libraries, Illinois Prairie Path		Let's Move Libraries	



# Natural Resources



Parks and open space contribute to community character, can reduce flooding, and improve air quality. Natural resources in the study area exist within a larger network of open space, and the Illinois Prairie Path connects study area visitors and residents to that larger network.

The following section outlines access to open space and tree canopy coverage in Berkeley and Hillside, as well as flood susceptibility in the study area.



# Parks and Open Space Overview

Parks and open space in the study area include Berkeley Park and Hillside Commons.

ON TO 2050 recommends at least four acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for communities like Berkeley and Hillside.

Overall, Hillside meets the recommended acres of park access per 1,000 residents, while Berkeley’s park access falls slightly below the recommended acreage. This presents opportunities to increase access to open space.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

## Park Access, 2013

Park Access, 2013	Berkeley	Hillside	Cook County	CMAAP Region
Accessible Park Acreage per 1,000 Residents	3.4	4.8	3.6	5.6

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning calculations of 2013 Land Use Inventory



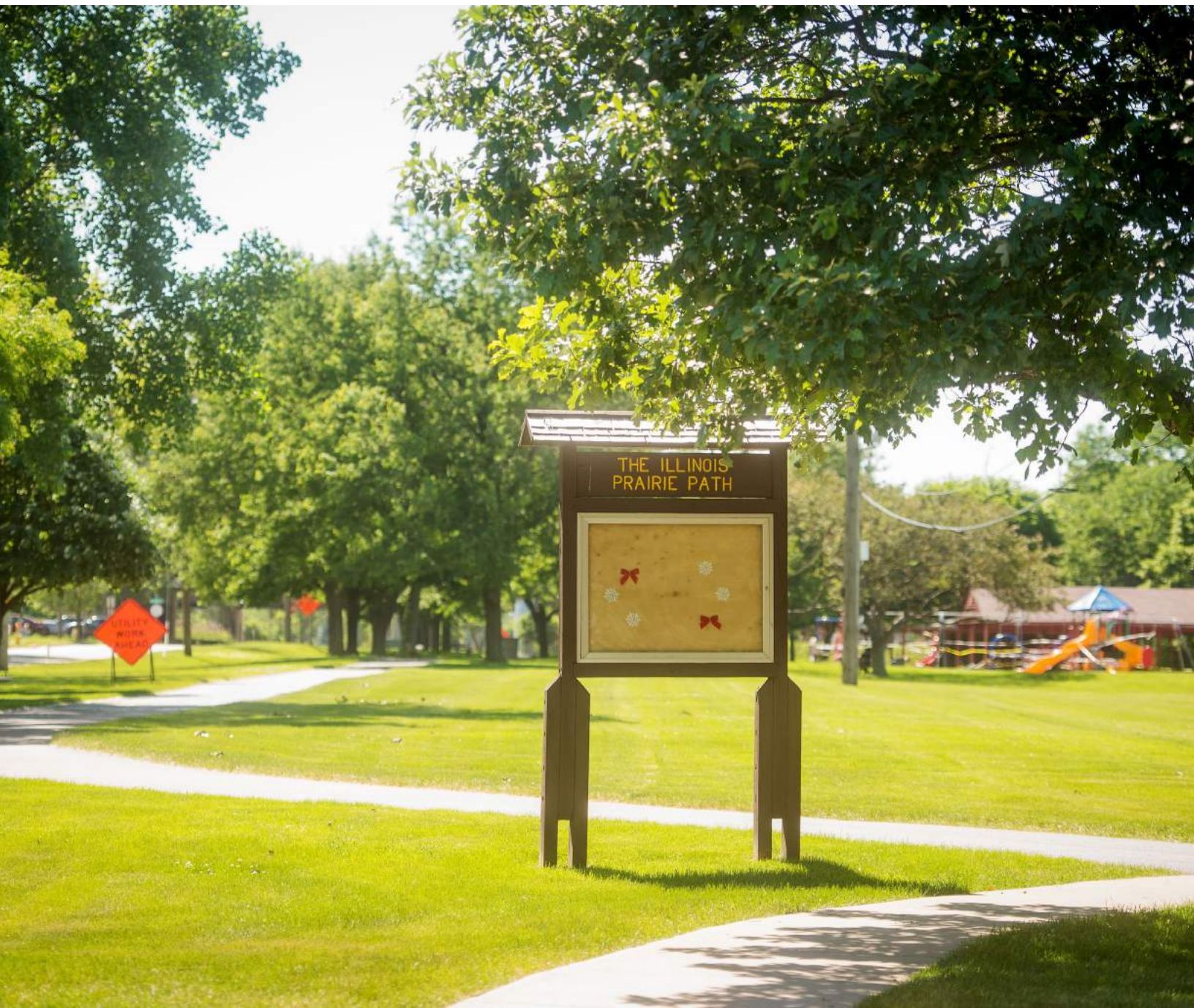


# Natural Resources

## *Key Takeaways*

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- There are **opportunities to increase and improve access to open space** for residents of the study area.
- The study area has **moderate flood susceptibility**.
- Residents want to see **more trees and native plants** along the Praire Path.





# Recommendation

**Priority: Mid-Term**

## Add trees along the Prairie Path and Taft Avenue corridor where possible.

Community members have pointed out that the lack of trees along Taft Avenue makes the corridor unpleasant, especially during hot summer months. To address this, Berkeley and Hillside should add trees along the corridor. Similarly, more trees along the Prairie Path, especially in areas east of Taft Avenue, would make the area more pleasant and .

**Select** trees that are native to the Chicago region, and consider tree species diversity, tree height and trunk width based on planting location.

**Consider** planting trees no larger than 2" in caliper (trunk width). Smaller trees are less costly, establish and adapt more quickly, and have a higher success rate than larger trees.

**Prioritize oak trees** which made up 60% of the region's tree canopy prior to development and provide important habitat for many species of animals and pollinators.



Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside	Chicago Region Trees Initiative Community Tree Planting Grant, fundraising/donations
Potential Partners	Resources
Berkeley Park District, Chicago Region Trees Initiative	The Morton Arboretum Plant Clinic, The Morton Arboretum Tree Selector



# Recommendation

Priority: Near-Term

## Incorporate native plants along the Prairie Path.

Despite the trail’s name, there is a lack of prairie plants along the path. Residents pitched the idea of incorporating native plants along the Prairie Path, which would not only beautify the trail, but also help mitigate potential stormwater runoff, and provide habitat for pollinators.

**Select** shorter [native plants](#) and plant them in locations along the trail that will not obstruct views for path users.

**Prioritize** locations that experience flooding when selecting areas for native plant gardens. Deep rooted native plants can help water filter into the ground slowly, [minimizing stormwater runoff](#).

**Engage** the Berkley Community Garden Club and members of the Illinois Prairie Path in a garden planting event.



Source: epd.org

Lead implementers		Funding Sources	
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside		IEPA green infrastructure grant opportunities, Openlands grants	
Potential Partners		Resources	
Illinois Prairie Path, Berkeley Community Garden Club		National Wildlife Federation ‘s Native Plant Finder	

# Recommendation

*Priority: Mid-Term*

## Evaluate the potential to increase community greenspace.

Although the area largely enjoys convenient access to open space amenities, Berkeley and Hillside should identify opportunities to create new and unique green spaces throughout the community. Additional green space would not only beautify the area, but also help with potential flooding issues. Community gardens also contribute to the area's natural resources, and many residents would like to see a community garden located in Berkeley Park or along the Prairie Path in a location that everyone can access.

**Identify** opportunities to incorporate community green space as part of future redevelopment projects in Berkeley and Hillside, especially near properties that experience flooding.

**Coordinate** with the Berkeley Community Garden Club to select a more prominent and permanent space for community gardens.



Lead implementers		Funding Sources	
The Villages of Berkeley and Hillside		TIF District, Business Improvement District	
Potential Partners		Resources	
Property owners, developers Berkeley Community Garden Club		Garden Clubs of Illinois	



# Recommendation

Priority: Ongoing

## Enhance Berkeley Park and recreational opportunities.

Many residents value the amenities of Berkeley Park and have expressed a desire for additional recreational opportunities. Berkeley and the Berkeley Park District should explore the possibility of incorporating outdoor fitness equipment or outdoor workout classes into park programming, as well as maintaining and enhancing current sports facilities. Equally important is the overall maintenance of Berkeley Park and its public facilities.

**Organize** summer outdoor workout classes for residents of all ages, especially seniors. These classes could not only improve the health and well being of residents, but also provide opportunities for residents to get to know each other.

**Engage** residents in maintaining Berkeley Park and Hillside Commons by organizing and marketing regular community-wide volunteer days, and other opportunities for residents to become stewards of the park.

**Consider** incorporating outdoor fitness equipment in Berkeley Park to provide exercise opportunities for residents and path users.



Source: Patch.com

Lead implementers	Funding Sources
The Village of Berkeley and Berkeley Park District	General fund, EDA ARPA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation grant
Potential Partners	Resources
Hillside Park District, local fitness studios	<i>The Berkeley 2020-2025 Comprehensive Master Plan</i>

# Implementation Strategy

The Prairie Path and Taft Avenue Corridor Plan is a living document that will take several years to fully implement. Because of this, the implementation strategy focuses on prioritizing recommendations that will have a significant and lasting impact on the study area. This includes actions that can be implemented in the near, mid, and long term.

In addition to prioritizing recommendations based on the implementation strategy, the Villages of Berkeley and Hillside and the Berkeley Park District should capitalize on opportunities that present themselves through the life of the plan. The below table shows recommendations that are prioritized for the near and mid terms, while the table on the next page depicts long term recommendations and ones that can be incrementally implemented on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation	Chapter	Near Term (1 Year)	Mid Term (2-5 Years)	Long Term (Ongoing)
Use proximity of Prairie Path to attract customers to the Taft Avenue corridor ( <i>page 14</i> ).	Economic Development	X		
Ensure sidewalk connectivity to Berkeley Park and Prairie Path from nearby residential areas ( <i>page 21</i> ).	Transportation	X		
Improve visibility and safety at the Taft Avenue and Prairie Path intersection ( <i>page 22</i> ).	Transportation	X		
Ensure both Berkeley and Hillside have ADA Transition Plans ( <i>page 23</i> ).	Transportation	X		
Create a brand for the area ( <i>page 26</i> ).	Placemaking	X		
Incorporate native plants along the Prairie Path ( <i>page 35</i> ).	Natural Resources	X		
Attract neighborhood scale retail to Taft Avenue and explore mixed-use opportunities on Village-owned parcels ( <i>page 16</i> ).	Economic Development		X	
Provide bike connections throughout both Villages and make it easier to bike to the Metra station ( <i>page 20</i> ).	Transportation		X	



# Implementation Strategy

Recommendation	Chapter	Near Term (1 Year)	Mid Term (2-5 Years)	Long Term (Ongoing)
Add trees along the Prairie Path and Taft Avenue corridor where possible ( <i>page 34</i> ).	Natural Resources		X	
Evaluate the potential to increase community greenspace ( <i>page 36</i> ).	Placemaking		X	
Support existing businesses along Taft Avenue ( <i>page 15</i> ).	Economic Development	X	X	X
Improve streetscaping and the pedestrian experience along Taft Avenue ( <i>page 27</i> ).	Placemaking	X	X	X
Support community programming for all residents ( <i>page 28</i> ).	Placemaking	X	X	X
Coordinate Prairie Path maintenance and improvements ( <i>page 29</i> ).	Placemaking	X	X	X
Expand the Story Walk program along the Prairie Path in Hillside, and continue to utilize the kiosks for additional stories, Path history and information, and to promote news and events ( <i>page 30</i> ).	Placemaking	X	X	X
Enhance Berkeley Park and recreational opportunities ( <i>page 37</i> ).	Natural Resources	X	X	X

# Resource Guide

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## Economic Development

### *Business Improvement District*

[https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/special\\_service\\_areassaprogram.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/special_service_areassaprogram.html)

### *Illinois Tax Increment Association*

<https://illinois-tif.com/>

### *The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure*

[www.advocacyadvance.org/the-economic-benefits-of-bicycle-infrastructure/](http://www.advocacyadvance.org/the-economic-benefits-of-bicycle-infrastructure/)

### *CMAP Local Development Incentives Guide*

[https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/1178653/CMAP\\_Local\\_IncentivesGuide\\_2020\\_Spreads.pdf/10a31022-0bd8-2806-0b14-1aecf3936a69?t=1614872090916](https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/1178653/CMAP_Local_IncentivesGuide_2020_Spreads.pdf/10a31022-0bd8-2806-0b14-1aecf3936a69?t=1614872090916)

### *Cook County Small Business Assistance*

<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/covid-19-recovery-small-business-assistance-program-0>

### *Urban Land Institute (ULI) Chicago*

<https://chicago.uli.org/>

### *Economic Development Administration (EDA) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation grant*

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=334748>

### *Study Area Retail Market Analysis Report (Click to open PDF)*

## Transportation

### *CMAP Public Engagement HQ Project Page*

<https://engage.cmap.illinois.gov/prairie-path-and-taft-avenue-corridor-plan>

### *Chicago Mellow Bike Map*

<https://mellowbikemap.com/>

### *Crowdsourcing Prioritized Bike Routes*

<https://trid.trb.org/view/1406655>

### *Invest in Cook County*

<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/investincook>

### *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)*

<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/strategic-investment/cmaq>



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## Transportation (continued)

### *CMAP Complete Streets Treatment*

<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/371771/complete+street+select+treatments+9+-raised+crosswalks+and+intersections.pdf/79c79311-8220-4143-8300-b4c7374c2476>

### *Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)*

<https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/funding-opportunities/ITEP>

### *Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)*

<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/strategic-investment/transportation-alternatives>

### *IDOT Highway Jurisdiction Guidelines*

<https://idot.illinois.gov/Assets/uploads/files/Transportation-System/Manuals-Guides-&-Handbooks/Highways/Local-Roads-and-Streets/Highway%20Jurisdiction%20Guidelines%20Booklet.pdf>

### *Wheaton Program for New Sidewalks*

<https://www.wheaton.il.us/828/Program-for-New-Sidewalks#:~:text=The%20City%20is%20working%20on,the%20walkability%20of%20our%20community.>

### *Lockport Sidewalk Replacement Program*

<http://cityoflockport.net/608/Sidewalk-Replacement-Program#:~:text=The%20program%20is%20100%25%20funded,in%20need%20of%20greatest%20repair>

### *Oak Lawn Sidewalk Program*

<https://www.oaklawn-il.gov/departments/public-works/streets/sidewalk-program#:~:text=The%20Village%20of%20Oak%20Lawn,in%20front%20of%20their%20home.&text=The%20sidewalk%20is%20also%20cut%20with%20a%20saw%20to%20prevent%20breakage>

### *Where The Sidewalk Ends*

[https://www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/ensemblemedia\\_mpc\\_adatransitionplanreport\\_compliant.pdf](https://www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/ensemblemedia_mpc_adatransitionplanreport_compliant.pdf)

### *Examples of streetscape improvements can be found in:*

- Village Park: <https://www.invillapark.com/466/Ardmore-Avenue-Streetscape-Project>
- Lockport: <http://cityoflockport.net/823/Downtown-Streetscape-Project-2021>

### *Let's Move Libraries*

<https://letsmovelibraries.org/>

# Resource Guide

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## Placemaking

*Marketing the Market*

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Consumers/FarmersMarkets/Documents/MarketingTheMarket.pdf>

*Berkeley Park District Comprehensive Master Plan*

<https://berkeleyparkdistrict.com/comprehensive-master-plan>

*Examples of facade improvement programs:*

- CMAP Facade Improvement Program Guide: [tinyurl.com/CMAPfacadeimpguide](https://tinyurl.com/CMAPfacadeimpguide)
- Morton Grove: [www.mortongroveil.org](http://www.mortongroveil.org)
- Fox Lake: <https://www.foxlake.org/300/Facade-Improvement-Program>
- Plainfield: [www.plainfieldil.gov](http://www.plainfieldil.gov)
- Westchester: <https://www.westchester-il.org/341/Facade-Improvement-Grant>

## Natural Resources

*The Morton Arboretum Plant Clinic*

<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/expert-advice/>

*The Morton Arboretum Tree Selector*

<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/trees-and-plants/#!>

*EPA green infrastructure grant opportunities*

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/grants-loans/water-financial-assistance/Pages/gigo.aspx>

*Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) and Community Tree Planning Grants*

<http://chicagorti.org/>

*CRTI Community Tree Planting Grants*

<http://chicagorti.org/CommunityGrant#:~:text=The%20Chicago%20Region%20Trees%20Initiative,healthier%2C%20more%20diverse%20regional%20forest.&text=Spring%20planting%20applications%20are%20due%20October%2031%20the%20year%20before%20the%20planting.>

*Illinois Native Plants*

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/Forestry/Documents/NativePlantPollinatorChart.pdf>

*EDA ARPA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation grant*

<https://eda.gov/arpa/travel-tourism/>