



West Gateway Subarea Plan



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The West Gateway subarea in St. Charles includes both tremendous opportunities and significant challenges for the City of St. Charles. Located in the southwestern portion of the community, the subarea's primary focus is Randall Road, where some of the City's best opportunities for economic development exist along the corridor, however their successful implementation will not necessarily be easy. St. Charles was one of the first communities to take advantage of Randall Road as an economic development engine, however, much of this initial development is now obsolete due to changing consumer taste and more contemporary development in neighboring communities. Realizing the full potential of the Randall Road Corridor will entail repositioning and redevelopment of existing uses, which is often more complicated than green-field development. This subarea plan sets forth a framework that will help the City make the most of a diverse range of uses, lot configurations and development character on Randall Road, understanding that achieving all of the goals and objectives will require cooperation with property owners and community support.

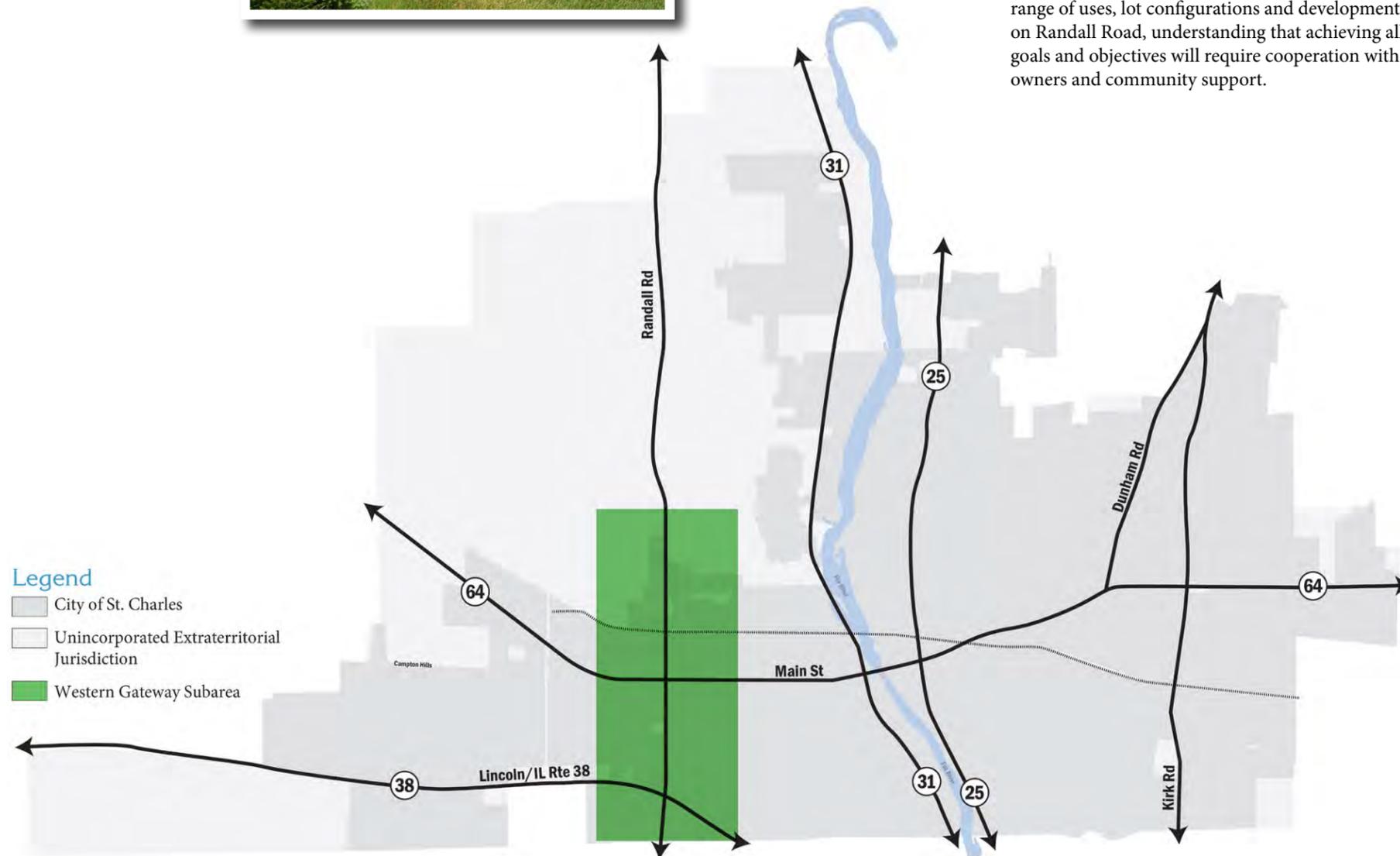
Subarea Goals

The West Gateway subarea provides unique opportunities within a specific context of a corridor capable of competing with other commercial areas of the City, including Downtown. These opportunities and goals are not meant to create competition with Downtown; rather, they strive to complement each other. The overall vision for the subarea includes the following elements:

- » An economically competitive corridor that capitalizes on its unique advantages and regional position and complements downtown.
- » Redevelopment and repositioning to include the next generation of regional development and services.
- » An attractive environment that is distinguishable from adjacent communities and respectful of surrounding neighborhoods.
- » A multi-use area that provides a balance in and ease of access between residential, commercial, and retail activities.

Subarea Objectives

- » Improvement of the appearance of the Randall Road Corridor and the identity of the St. Charles community through installation of streetscaping, wayfinding, and gateway elements.
- » Enhancement of the character of both existing and new development through on-site landscaping, attractive building design and materials, and more consistent signage regulation.
- » Improved mobility and access throughout the corridor, including between adjacent development sites or blocks.
- » Comprehensive bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access through infrastructure and technology improvements.
- » Preservation of surrounding neighborhoods through the use of screening and buffering from commercial development.
- » Redevelopment of the St. Charles Mall site with activities and a character that complement Randall Road and maintain an appropriate relationship with adjacent neighborhoods.
- » Creation of market-responsive development parcels that can accommodate projects of an appropriate scale and phasing over time.
- » A transitioning land use pattern that is supportive of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Randall Road.
- » Achieve balance by promoting connections between the Downtown and the West Gateway area without competing with the Downtown.



Randall Road Connectivity Comparison

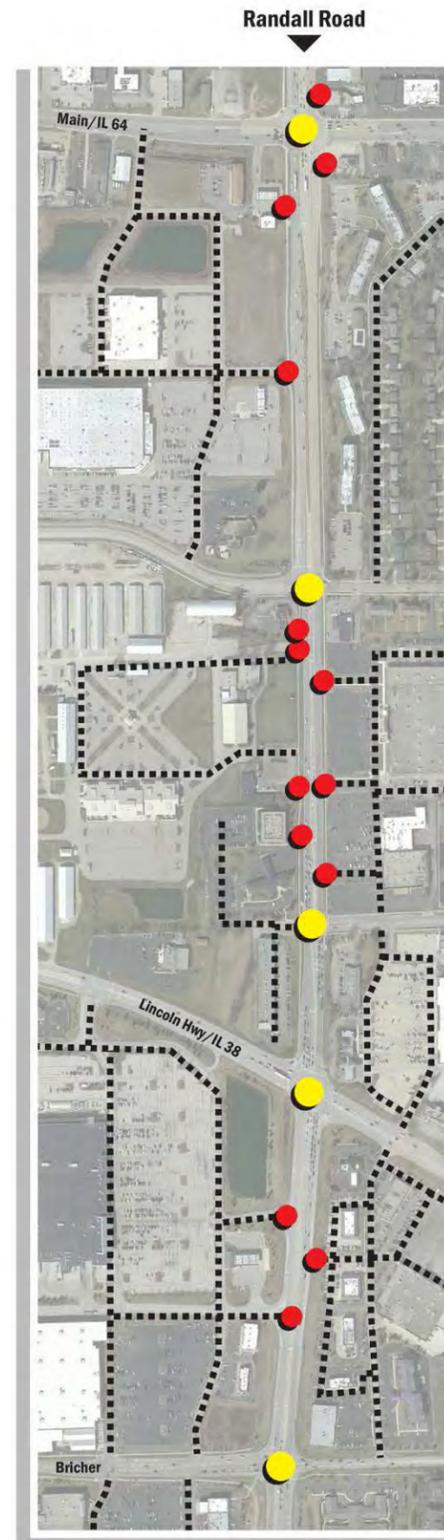
Over the course of the last 20 years, the Randall Road Corridor has blossomed into a regional commercial center with almost every national retailer present along the corridor. The City of St. Charles was among the first to develop along Randall Road, in more recent years neighboring communities have followed suit. A review of the different development patterns along the corridor reveals a contrast between the development pattern in St. Charles, which can be characterized as piecemeal and uncoordinated and other communities which are better coordinated and connected.

Legend

-  Internal Circulation/Cross Access
-  Driveway/Curb Cut
-  Street Intersection



In South Elgin, development utilizes driving aisles and internal access streets that parallel Randall Road. Building frontage and setbacks are consistent, and there is ease of circulation between sites, despite variable patterns of buildings and parking areas along the corridor.



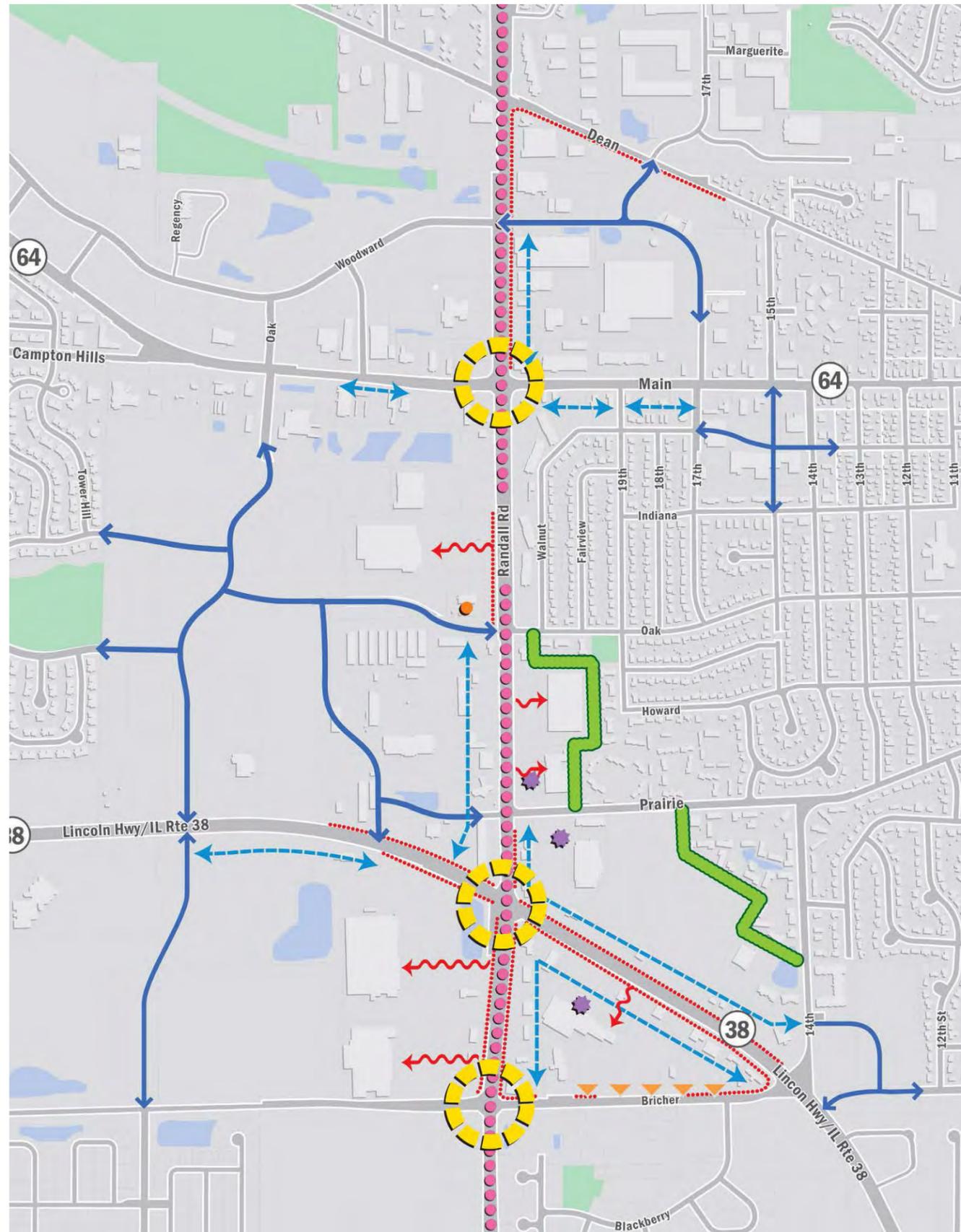
In St. Charles, interspersed parcels have varying depth (140' to 1,100') and width and there appears to be little coordination in its subdivision or long-range vision. With this development pattern it is difficult to establish consistent development typology or circulation patterns between lots. As a result, access to adjacent lots often requires use of Randall Road and cross access is almost non-existent.



Bent Tree Drive functions as a parallel route east of Randall Road in Geneva, while Merchants Drive (a dedicate road within the commercial site) provides a parallel route on the west. Parcels in Geneva have a consistent depth with logical connections between lots and blocks.



Though parcel depths vary from 225' to 900' in Batavia, parcels and sites are linked by continuous streets that provide easy access between developments and to surrounding residential areas. Several contiguous blocks can be accessed without using Randall Road.



West Gateway Improvement Plan

Gateway Intersections. This part of the City is referred to as the Western Gateway due largely to the fact that Randall Road averages more than 40,000 vehicles per day and is one of the busiest streets in all of Kane County. Serving as a gateway to St. Charles, the City should install gateway features at key points along the corridor to improve both its image and identity. Gateway features could consist of signage, landscaping, decorative lighting, and pedestrian amenities to attractively greet visitors and residents to the community.

Streetscaping. The Randall Road Corridor is one of the busiest streets in the City and plays a key role in shaping the perceptions of the community. Streetscaping enhancements along the corridor, including trees in the parkway, decorative street lights, attractive sidewalks, and wayfinding signs to community destinations would improve the appearance of the corridor and shape positive perceptions for people passing through the community. Streetscape elements along Randall Road should complement other streetscaping in the City, but reflect a unique local theme for the corridor.

Buffering. Buffering consisting of a mix of trees, berms, fences and landscaping should protect residential areas from the negative aspects of commercial uses. Consideration should also be given to parking lot lighting and security lighting to minimize light cast onto residential properties.

Parking Improvements. Several parking lots along the corridor were constructed prior to current City regulations which require perimeter and internal landscaping. The City should work with these property owners to improve these parking lots, retrofitting them with landscaped islands and perimeter screening to help conceal large parking fields, provide shade to reduce the heat island effect, and improve the appearance of these parking areas. Additionally, the City should consider the use of “parking maximums” instead of the traditional parking minimums to prevent retailers from building unnecessarily large parking lots along the corridor.

Sidewalk Gaps. Although the Randall Road corridor will likely continue to be an auto-oriented corridor, it should not neglect the pedestrian. In addition to being accessible by car, the corridor should be safe and welcoming to pedestrians. The City should ensure a complete pedestrian network exists within the Western Gateway, installing sidewalks in identified gaps. All sidewalks should be designed and located so that they provide a safe and comfortable environment and are adequately buffered from vehicular traffic. They should also include multi-use paths that can accommodate bicycle traffic where appropriate.

Sidewalk Connections. Sidewalks and paths should connect the front entrances of buildings to the sidewalk network within the public right-of-way and bus stops along the Randall Road corridor.

Street Connections. A complete street network is important for efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians. Several streets stub into the County Fairground site in anticipation of future development. Should this property ever redevelop with other uses, it is important that the City ensure these connections are completed as well as other street connections identified in the framework plan. Extending or establishing local streets where appropriate will break up the large super-block development pattern and improve circulation along the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods for both vehicles and pedestrians and minimize traffic travelling along Randall Road. However, any proposed street connections should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that there are no significant impacts to existing neighborhoods. This should require a professional traffic impact study.

Bricher Orientation. Even though the Taco Bell is located along Bricher Road, it all but neglects the Bricher Road frontage in favor of higher vehicle counts along IL Route 38/ Lincoln Highway. The City should promote this area of the Western Gateway to develop as supporting commercial uses that do not necessarily need the high traffic counts IL Route 38 and Randall Road provide, and encourage uses that benefit from high traffic volumes, such as Taco Bell, to develop along these corridors instead.

Internal Cross Access. Provide internal cross access wherever possible between commercial properties, connecting independent and isolated commercial uses with one another. Depending on the existing development pattern of the subject properties, cross access could occur either in the front of or at the rear of the buildings, but should be focused on directly connecting adjacent parking areas which would permit customers to travel between businesses on a parallel network and eliminate unnecessary trips onto Randall Road or other major streets.

Catalyst Sites

Catalyst sites are those parcels where redevelopment could have a catalytic impact on the surrounding area. In the identification of catalyst sites, certain criteria are considered. Catalyst sites are determined based on the sites exhibiting some or all of the following characteristics: Underutilized buildings or land; Vacant buildings or land; Structural soundness of buildings; Size of property; Ownership (e.g., unified private ownership or City-owned); Visibility and access; Current zoning and adjacent zoning; and Surrounding land uses. Although the sites identified provide alternatives if a property is proposed for future redevelopment, it is not necessarily an interest by the City to acquire or redevelop the site. Listed below are catalyst sites identified in the Western Gateway.

Site A North of the Mercedes dealership there is a 3.4-acre “pad-ready” site that provides an easy development opportunity along Randall Road. Although the site could accommodate a number of commercial uses, it is removed from much of the retail activity in the corridor and opportunity for synergy with nearby uses is limited. The City should promote the site for a use that could complement the adjacent dealership, including another car dealership that could maximize the site’s tax generating ability.

Site B A vacant outlot exists in front of Harley-Davidson. The City should continue to support and encourage commercial uses that can capitalize on Randall Road traffic and complement adjacent uses with the understanding that the size and depths of these sites will limit the potential to more convenience type retail uses and/or restaurants.

Site C The Kane County Farm Bureau is an office use along a commercial corridor and creates no synergy or benefits to nearby commercial uses. Although the site is not currently annexed to the City, the City should work cooperatively with the agency to find a more suitable site in the community to allow the site to redevelop to a retail or restaurant use that could benefit from proximity to Costco and Randall Road.

Site D The Kane County Fairgrounds property is home to the annual Kane County Fair, and throughout the year hosts other events, including dog training, expos, and a flea market. The site is highly visible and with most of the activities internalized, does little to capitalize on high traffic counts and the commercial potential of Randall Road. The City should work cooperatively with the owners, encouraging them to explore either a) development of commercial uses along the Randall Road frontage; or b) relocation to another site in the County to facilitate the redevelopment of the entire site.

Site E At the intersection of Randall Road and Lincoln Highway is a strip center and Moose Lodge #1368. This site has great visibility but poor access and the current development fails to maximize the location’s potential. The City should encourage the property owners to consolidate their parcels to facilitate redevelopment of a larger magnitude that would maximize this location’s potential.

Site F Situated between the Meijer on Randall Road and the Kane County Government Center is a 55-acre site known as Bricher Commons. Portions of the site have excellent visibility and frontage to Lincoln Highway, however not all of the site can capitalize on the visibility and access that IL Route 38 provides. The northern areas of the site should develop with commercial uses fronting Lincoln Highway with either multifamily, single-family attached, or offices and commercial services, in the rear and interior of the site.

Site G A stormwater detention pond of the Meijer development is located at the intersection of Lincoln Highway (IL Route 38) and Randall Road. The City should encourage Meijer to explore vaulting detention and/or reducing its parking lot to facilitate the development at this key intersection.

Site H The Jewel-Osco is an active grocery store providing nearby residents with access to daily necessities. Situated between the old St. Charles Mall site and Randall Road, the store is a neighborhood commercial use located on a regional commercial corridor. Through either a land-swap or incorporating the site into the larger redevelopment of the St. Charles Mall, the grocery use could be located further east with strong orientation to Lincoln Highway/IL 38, allowing the Randall Road frontage to develop more intensely, maximizing its location along the regional corridor.

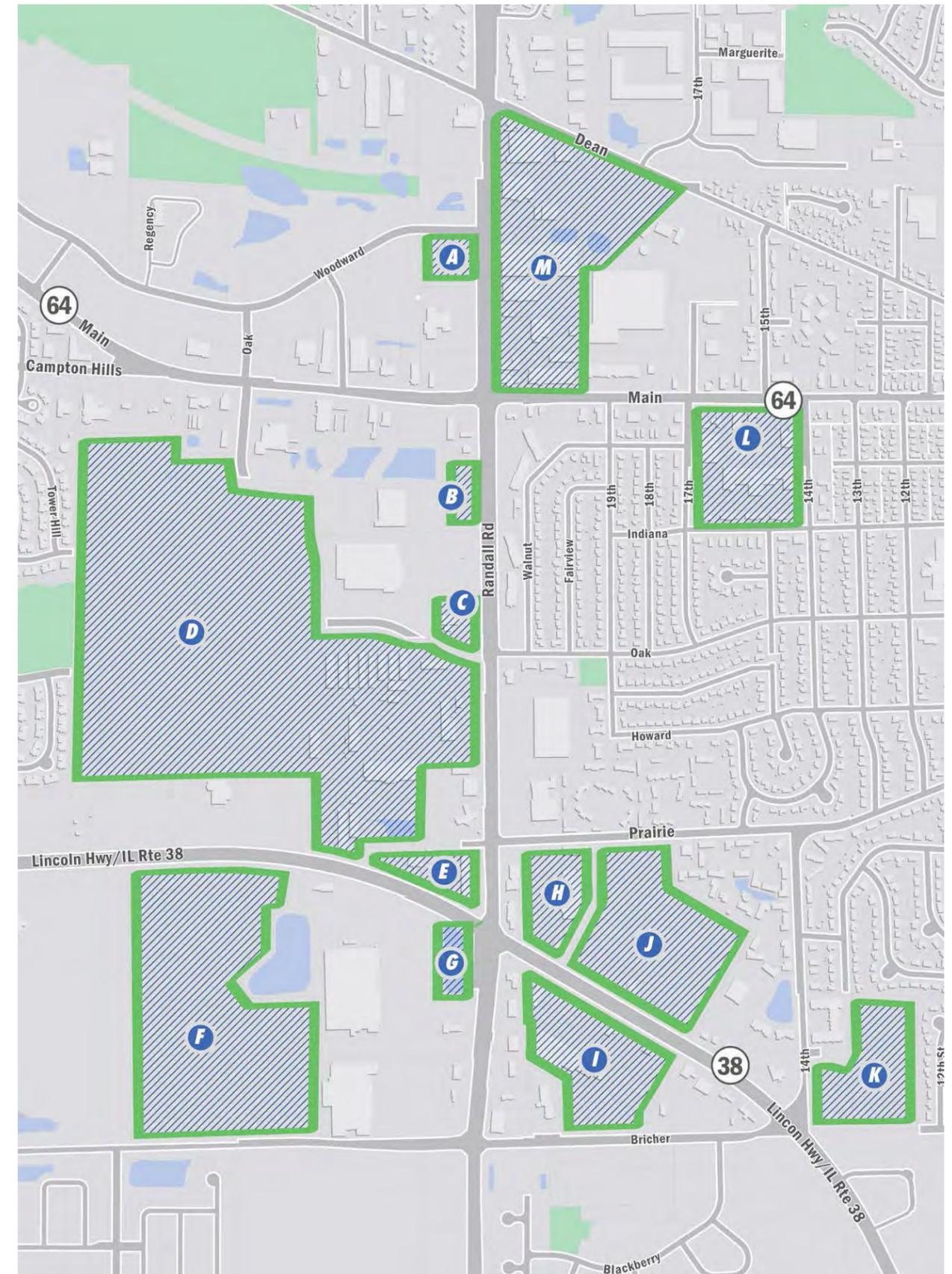
Site I The Tri-City Center is a neighborhood scaled shopping center with strong orientation to Lincoln Highway and limited visibility from Randall Road. The mall has struggled to stay competitive and is characterized by excessive vacancies. Redevelopment of the site should explore repositioning the site towards Randall Road, which averages 39,000 cars per day (Lincoln Highway averages only 17,000). Redevelopment of the site should also explore improving the site’s visibility and access to Randall Road by acquiring and eliminating some of the existing outlot buildings.

Site J This 30-acre site may represent the most significant redevelopment opportunity within the Randall Road corridor. Despite great potential, the opposition voiced by some members of the St. Charles community to the St. Charles Towne Centre proposal highlights the complexity and sensitivity of the site’s future development. Throughout the outreach process, residents voiced different ideas for the site, underscoring the fact that the community remains split on the best use of the site. On the following page, this Plan presents 3 different alternatives for the site’s redevelopment. It is important to note that the final development option should be market viable. Due to the significance and complexity of this site, any redevelopment proposal should be subject to the Planned Unit Development approval process.

Site K Known as the Anderson PUD, this 17-acre site is located at the intersection of Lincoln Highway and Bricher/14th. The southwest corner of this site is situated at a signalized intersection and is well suited for neighborhood commercial development. The remainder of the site should develop as a mix of residential densities, transitioning from higher densities on the south and west to lower densities compatible to the adjacent residential uses to the north and east.

Site L The Valley Shopping Center is outdated and struggling to compete with other commercial areas in the City. Its depth is inconsistent with other commercial sites along the Main Street Corridor and the site should consider partly reverting back to residential uses.

Site M This area of Randall Road can be best described as a fragmented mix of uses that fail to create any synergy among one another. The railroad that once divided this area has been abandoned, and the potential for Woodward Drive to connect across Randall Road to 17th Street and Dean Street would allow the property owners in this area to create a sizeable cohesive development. As a primary gateway site to the City of St. Charles, the site presents an opportunity for the City to maximize the potential of this key area along Randall Road.



St. Charles Mall (Site H, I and J) Redevelopment Alternatives



Regional Repositioning

This concept illustrates how the redevelopment area can be repositioned to better capitalize on Randall Road as a regional commercial corridor. By relocating both the Jewel-Osco, along with portions of the Tri-City Center to front Lincoln Highway, deeper development parcels can be created that front on Randall Road. These new lots would utilize existing Randall Road development as out lots, and could accommodate regional big-box development, however consideration should be given to taking some of this development offline to improve exposure and access to Randall Road. Other small-format development could be developed along the Lincoln Highway frontage to serve nearby residents and patrons from throughout the region traveling along or shopping within the Randall Road corridor.

Considerations

- » Can accommodate regional commercial development and big-box, as well as other regional uses such as entertainment, educational facilities, etc.
- » Preserves much of the existing out-lot development fronting on Randall Road
- » Represents no significant deviation from current Randall Road development pattern or function
- » Relocates local retail and services
- » Adds no unique character elements to Randall Road corridor
- » Competing with established retail areas on Randall Road
- » Will require additional assembly and/or cooperation with other property owners
- » Provides adequate parking, appropriately screened and landscaped to appear subtle and discreet from surrounding neighborhoods



West Neighborhood Center

This alternative concept preserves much of the existing development along Randall Road and recognizes the limited commercial potential of the mall site should this occur. The Tri-City Center remains, hopeful that the Mall site's redevelopment will foster more synergy along the corridor. The eastern portions of both the mall site and the Tri-City Center site would be redeveloped as a series of mixed use or multi-family/townhouse nodes that provide local retail and services along Lincoln Highway. Densities and housing types should be mindful of market viability, reflecting the need for more aging and affluent households. Both residential and commercial areas should feature attractive pedestrian environments as well as appropriate transitions to surrounding neighborhoods. Redevelopment should be sensitive to differences in building height to avoid harsh transitions.

Considerations

- » Preserves existing development commercial development
- » Creates the small opportunity for a unique "Main Street" environment
- » Provides the opportunity for new residential units creating a potential customer base for businesses
- » Does not take full advantage of the prominence of Randall Road as a regional commercial corridor
- » Tri-City revitalization may be dependent on the success of the Mall redevelopment
- » Does not require site assembly or participation of other property owners



Comprehensive Mixed Use Center

This alternative concept illustrates a redevelopment effort coordinated between both the old mall site and the Tri-City Center site. Randall Road remains fronted with existing shallow-lot retail, while Lincoln Highway/IL Route 38 consists of mixed use development. Interior portions of each block could accommodate a number of uses, while peripheral edges of the redevelopment area accommodate multi-family/townhouse development that transitions to surrounding neighborhoods. Redevelopment should be sensitive to differences in building height as to avoid inappropriate transitions. Open space establishes a framework throughout the site and provides a unique amenity.

Considerations

- » Offers the greatest potential to alter the character of the Randall Road and Lincoln Highway corridors
- » Integrates a variety of uses that may be more responsive to changing market trends
- » Provides the opportunity to fully integrate infrastructure and open space systems into development
- » Represents a comprehensive master planned development concept that can be difficult to effectively implement
- » Replaces a majority of the existing investment in the development area
- » Requires policy and regulatory changes to foster implementation
- » Will require additional assembly and/or cooperation with other property owners
- » Allows residential uses above commercial uses, but not stand-alone multi-family buildings
- » Promotes multi-family products and amenities that foster owner occupied units, such as covered parking, high quality finishes, integrated recreation, etc.

Concept Legend

- Regionally-Oriented Retail
- Locally-Oriented Retail
- Mixed Use
- Office/Secondary Commercial
- Single Family Attached/Multi-Family
- Integrated Open Space

Potential Redevelopment Models

Single Family Attached/Multi-Family



Local Retail



Mixed Use



Integrated Open Space



Regional Repositioning Alternative



Potential Improvements

- 1 Local retail with possible upper-story office (15,000 s.f. footprint)
- 2 Local retail with possible upper-story office (46,000 s.f. footprint)
- 3 Redevelopment of existing Meijer Detention for out-lot commercial (16,000 s.f. total)
- 4 Out-lot commercial development (7,700 s.f.)
- 5 Out-lot commercial development (10,000 s.f.)
- 6 Out-lot commercial development (8,000 s.f.)
- 7 Regional retail development (144,000 s.f.)
- 8 Local commercial development (20,000 s.f. total)
- 9 Stormwater detention area/open space buffer against residential properties
- 10 Local commercial development (65,000 s.f. total)
- 11 Local office/service development (18,000 s.f.)
- 12 Local commercial anchor (67,000 s.f.)
- 13 Existing out-lot development
- 14 Out-lot commercial development (6,400 s.f.)
- 15 Coordinated intersection and access between commercial centers
- 16 Existing out-lot development
- 17 Buildings removed to provide views and primary entry into regional shopping center
- 18 Existing commercial and hotel development
- 19 Regional retail development (105,000 s.f.)
- 20 Local commercial development (66,000 s.f. total)

This figure represents an illustrative development concept for Catalyst Sites E, G, H, I and J, and includes the former St. Charles Mall area. The concept is intended to illustrate one possible approach for redevelopment that satisfies the goals, objectives and guidelines as expressed in the St. Charles Comprehensive Plan. It is not intended to express action on behalf of the City to acquire and redevelop privately-held properties. The final format of redevelopment for this site will depend upon local property ownership, unforeseen site constraints, and market forces at the time of redevelopment.