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**VILLAGE OF LAKE VILLA
PLAN COMMISSION– AGENDA
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025
VILLAGE HALL, 65 CEDAR AVENUE
7:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. **Approval:** Minutes of the December 19, 2024 Plan Commission Meeting
4. **Public Hearing:** Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Downtown Vision Plan (Cedar Avenue)
5. Public Comment
6. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities, are required to contact Village Hall at (847) 356-6100 promptly to allow the Village to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

The Village of Lake Villa
 Plan Commission Meeting
DRAFT Proceedings of the December 19, 2024
 Plan Commission / Village Board Joint Meeting – Village Hall
 65 Cedar Avenue, Lake Villa, IL 60046

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A Meeting of the Plan Commission of the Village of Lake Villa was held on December 19, 2024, at the Village Hall, 65 Cedar Ave., and was called to order at 7:00 pm by and Chairman Kressner.

Present:	Commissioners: Jake Cramond, Tracy Lucas, Lee Filas, Steve Smart, Craig Kressner, Jerry Coia
Absent:	None
Also Present:	Assistant to the Village Administrator Jake Litz; Village Attorney Rebecca Alexopoulos; Village Planner Scott Goldstein; Michael Blue, Teska

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

3. REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Kressner asked for a motion to approve the November 19, 2024 Plan Commission meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Coia made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smart. The motion carried (6-0).

4. Discussion: Zoning Audit Follow-up

Michael Blue from Teska Associates provided an update on the zoning audit conversations from previous Plan Commission meetings. He provided the rationale for the audit of the zoning ordinance and he overviewed the findings from the zoning ordinance. He stated the goals for development and regulation in the Village of Lake Villa based on the comprehensive plan. He overviewed issues in several chapters of the zoning ordinances including definitions, zones and regulations, supplementary regulations, nonconformities, zoning requirements, administration and review process, and planned development and other development regulations. Mr. Blue then outlined several policy considerations.

When reviewing the development review process, the Plan Commission concurred that prior to having a project come before them, they prefer having as many facts as possible prior to any type of review/hearing. Additionally, Chairman Kressner stated that understanding how far any project is deviating from the standards prior to a review/hearing is crucial to the process. The group discussed placing deviation caps on certain elements of the Planned Unit Development process. They concurred that certain standards around this process would assist the Commission. Design guidelines were discussed by the Plan Commission as well.

5. Approval: 2025 Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Dates

Jake Litz, Assistant to the Village Administrator overviewed the 2025 Plan Commission meeting dates.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to approve the 2025 Plan Commission meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smart. The motion carried 6-0.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

7. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business Chairman Kressner asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Coia made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Filas. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jacob Litz, Assistant to the Village Administrator



DATE: February 3, 2025

TO: Chairman Craig Kressner and Members of the Plan Commission

FROM: Michael Strong, Village Administrator

CC: Jake Litz, Assistant to the Village Administrator
Scott Goldstein, Teska Associates

RE: Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Downtown Vision Plan (Cedar Avenue)

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to present a proposed amendment to the Village's Comprehensive Plan. This amendment incorporates, by reference, the recently drafted Downtown Vision Plan. The Plan outlines a strategic framework to foster a more vibrant and connected downtown, based on extensive public engagement and analysis.

Background

The Downtown Vision Plan was developed through a collaborative process involving residents, stakeholders, elected officials and Village staff to address key opportunities for revitalizing our downtown area. The Plan builds upon existing strengths and identifies actionable strategies for enhancing connectivity, public spaces, and redevelopment opportunities.

Key elements of the Downtown Vision Plan include:

- **Walkability and Connectivity:** Strategies to strengthen pedestrian infrastructure and improve accessibility within the downtown corridor along Cedar Avenue.
- **Public Space Enhancements:** Proposed improvements to the Lehmann Park to increase usability, aesthetics, and community engagement.
- **Redevelopment Concept:** A concept plan for the redevelopment of 209 Cedar Avenue, an approximate 60,000-square-foot vacant parcel in the downtown core, envisioning a mix of uses that aligns with the Village's economic and community goals.

Proposed Amendment

The amendment would formally incorporate the Downtown Vision Plan by reference into the Village's Comprehensive Plan, recognizing it as a part of the Village's Official Plan. This approach ensures that the vision and strategies outlined in the Downtown Vision Plan are recognized as guiding principles for future development, infrastructure investments, and policy decisions in and around Cedar Avenue.

Village's Comprehensive Plan Alignment

Chapter 4 – Land Use Goals and Strategies

2. **Enhance the tax base and reduce the tax burden on residents by supporting fiscally sound growth and development.**

2.1 Promote new development on vacant land within the Village that is fiscally sound and provides benefits to the local economy and tax base.

4. Pursue development and redevelopment projects that in the aggregate will support vital services including quality public schools.

4.1 Implement the Lake Villa Downtown Plan to reinvest in the downtown by focusing on Cedar Ave., redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial properties between the Metra Station and Milwaukee Ave. (Rte. 83), and transition properties along Grand Ave. (Rte. 132) to commercial or mixed-use.

Chapter 6 – Open Space, Recreation, and Community Facilities Goals and Strategies

1. Protect Lake Villa’s natural resources and open space for recreation and community use.

1.1 Ensure that all Village parks are well-maintained and meet current and future needs of Lake Villa residents and visitors.

2. Leverage open space, lakes and forest preserves to attract recreation, events, and economic development.

2.4 The Village desires to plan for and install new parks equipment and facilities that would meet NRPA Standards

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Plan Commission hold a Public Hearing and consider the Downtown Vision Plan, as drafted, for incorporation into the Village’s Official Plan. As the Plan Commission considers

1. Does the Downtown Vision Plan align with the existing goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and does it reflect the community’s long-term vision for downtown development?
2. Do the proposed strategies to enhance walkability and pedestrian connectivity within the downtown corridor adequately address current gaps and barriers?
3. Are the proposed improvements to Lehmann Park appropriate for enhancing community use while balancing environmental preservation and accessibility?
4. Does the redevelopment concept for the 209 Cedar Avenue parcel provide an appropriate mix of uses and design elements to support a vibrant and economically sustainable downtown core?
5. What potential challenges might arise during the implementation of the Vision Plan, and how should the Village prioritize strategies to maximize positive community impact and efficient resource allocation?

Attachments:

- Public Hearing Notice
- Draft Downtown Vision Plan



Village of Lake Villa Downtown Vision Plan



Acknowledgments

Thanks to the residents, business owners, developers and real estate professionals, Village trustees and staff, and other community members who participated in the development of this vision through interviews and the community survey.

From September 19 to October 21, 2024, we held 25 interviews with community members, and had 143 survey responses, 73 comments on the Social Pinpoint map, and 59 comments across 3 Facebook posts.

Special thanks to the steering committee for reviewing the reports, analysis, and early draft of this Downtown Vision:

- Mike Strong | Village Manager
- Scott Bartlett | Village Trustee
- Jake Cramond | PCZBA
- Tracy Lucas | PCZBA
- Junior Martinez | Downtown Business Owner
- Don DeBello | Downtown Business Owner
- Robert Frank | Real Estate Professional
- Katie Burau | First American Bank

Downtown Vision prepared for the Village of Lake Villa, Illinois
by Better City LLC & Teska Associates



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The Vision for Downtown

At the turn of the century when Downtown Lake Villa sprang up next to the Wisconsin Central Railroad's new station it was a bustling hub of activity. Visitors to Ernst Lehman's Lake Villa Hotel dined in its many restaurants and shopped in its quaint shops.

The Vision for Lake Villa's downtown is to recreate the dynamism of its early years and make it the cultural and entertainment hub of the Village. Similar to how other historic downtowns in the area have experienced renaissances, the key will be to preserving the historical charm of the buildings while creating a friendly, vibrant ambiance with outstanding retail and restaurant options and compelling community events.

This Vision Plan outlines the next steps to continue Downtown's revitalization.

Downtown Revitalization:

- Visual Identity
- Street Reconfiguration
- Parking & Wayfinding
- Business Recruitment
- Downtown Community Events

Site Developments:

- 209 Mixed-Use Development
- Lehmann Park
- Railroad Ave to Lake Ave Crossing

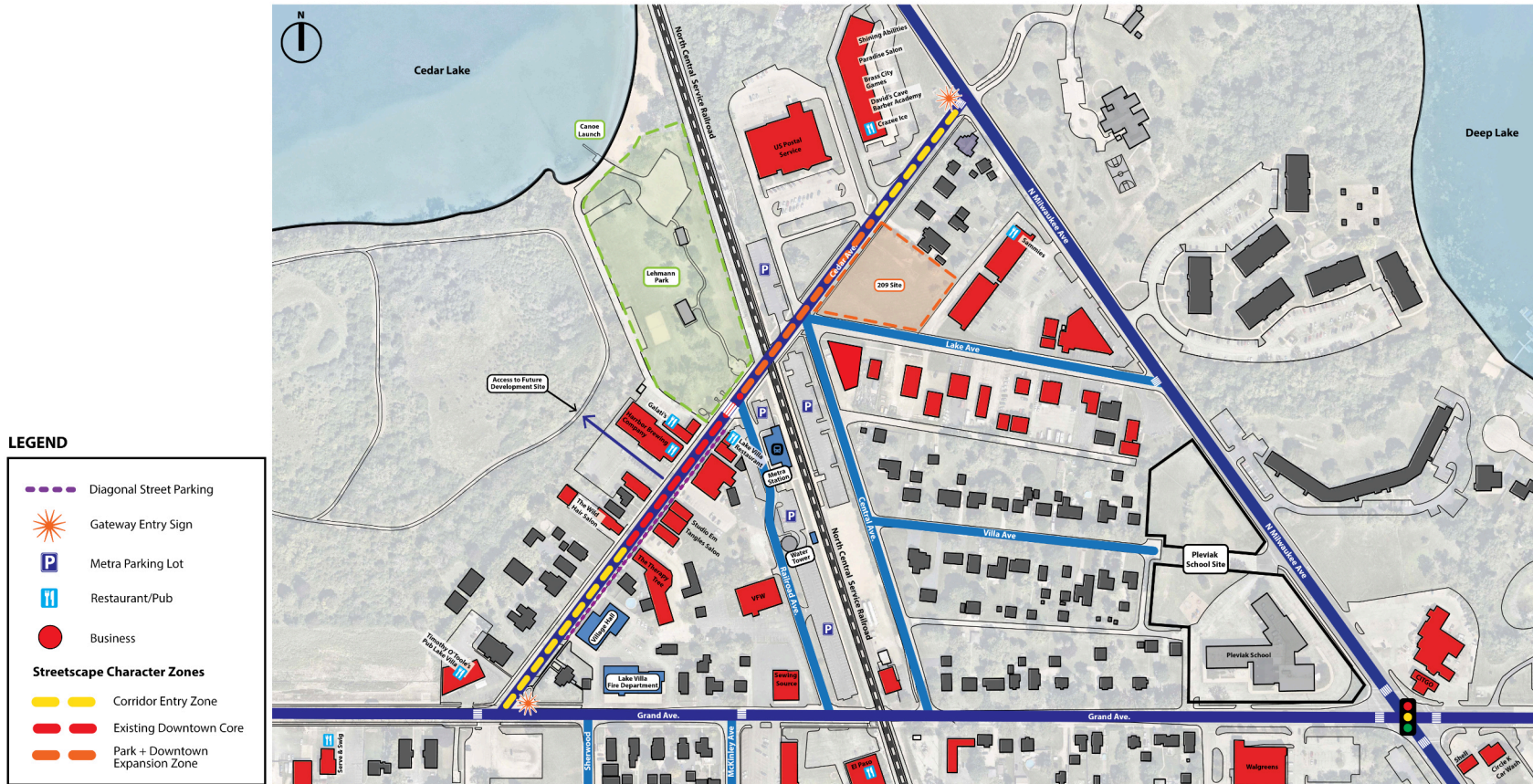


Downtown Lake Villa



Downtown Lake Villa

DOWNTOWN LAKE VILLA | EXISTING CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES MAP



Village of Lake Villa
Urban Design Concepts
 January 13, 2025

The Downtown Triangle, bounded by Cedar Avenue, the Milwaukee Avenue, and Grand Avenue, defines the larger Lake Villa downtown area.

The focus of the current revitalization effort and Vision Plan is the historic district along Cedar Avenue from the Post Office to the Therapy Tree.

As this Vision Plan is implemented, the Village will conduct additional visioning and planning for the remainder of the Downtown Triangle.

Downtown Revitalization

Visual Identity

Charming & Historic

Restoring the historic charm of Downtown while welcoming new developments will require architectural design standard – for example, using brick façades and vintage signage.

Improvements to the streetscape and existing building facades will amplify Cedar Avenue’s identity and brand, and set the stage for it to become a thriving social hub.

Improvements could include:

Building Façades:

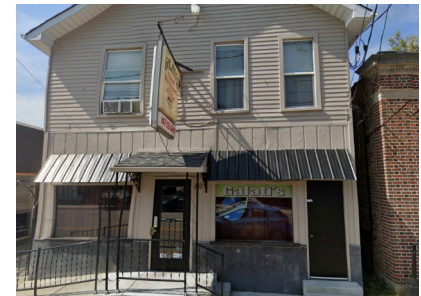
- Through education and incentives, work with business owners to improve the appearance of downtown through maintenance, historically-accurate awnings and decorative elements

Streetscape:

- Add new benches, planters, and vintage signage
- Bury the power lines or relocate them behind the buildings

Downtown Identity:

- Create a Downtown brand and promote through consistent, collaborative marketing campaigns with the Village of Lake Villa, the LCRRRR Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown businesses



Street Reconfiguration

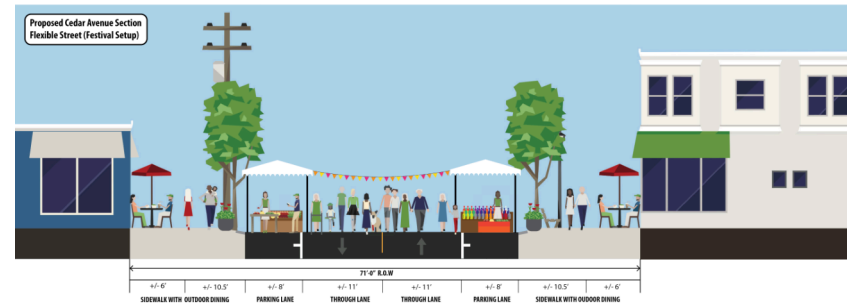
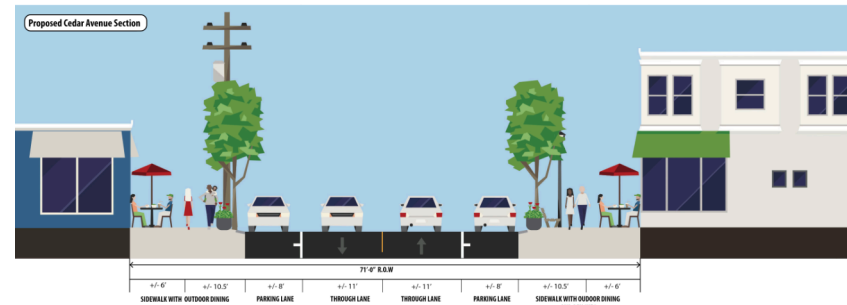
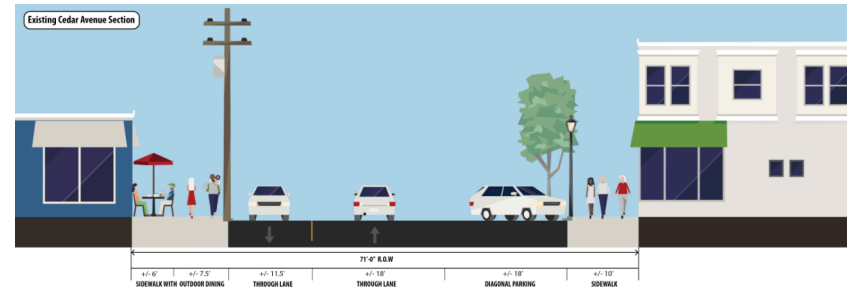
Dynamic Public Space

A redesign of Cedar Avenue would create a more dynamic, flexible space that is functional not only as a traffic thoroughfare but also accommodates events well. The changes are:

- Parallel parking on both sides of the street
- Raise the street level so that there is curbsless transitions to the sidewalks
- Bollards, planters and other natural barriers would provide separation from the road and sidewalks

Main streets that utilize these designs benefit from:

- The same number of parking spaces
- More equitable parking for businesses along both sides of the street
- Improved access for people with disabilities
- Less encroachment onto the sidewalks
- Enhanced pedestrian safety due to separation between sidewalks and moving traffic
- Increases sidewalk space for outdoor seating, landscaping, or other amenities
- Curbsless roads enhance the experience for festivals and events



Parking & Wayfinding

Welcoming & Navigable

Many residents and business owners cited lack of parking as an impediment to the growth of the Downtown. An objective analysis, however, reveals that the parking ratio (the number of parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial buildings) is higher along Cedar Avenue at 2.0 than downtown Antioch at 0.6 and downtown Grayslake at 1.6.

A vibrant, walkable, pedestrian-scale downtown, by design and definition, has higher density of uses and parking is less convenient. Businesses benefit because pedestrians spend 65% more than drivers ([FastCompany](#)).

The concerns about parking availability may be more a matter of perception than fact. The reality is that there is abundant available parking that is very close to Cedar Avenue. It is only 277 feet from the Metra parking lot to Cedar Avenue — compared to the 950 feet one needs to walk to get milk in Walmart.

Clearer indications of where free public parking is available and creating more inviting, clearly demarcated pathways will change the perceptions around the availability of parking.

Specific improvements could include:

- **Wayfinding:** Clear, visible signage to direct visitors to free public parking lots and spaces at the Metra station
- **Pathways:** Create clearly-delineated, well-lit, highly-visible walkways between the parking lots and Cedar Avenue
- **Event Parking:** Designate and advertise Metra lots for events



Businesses Recruitment

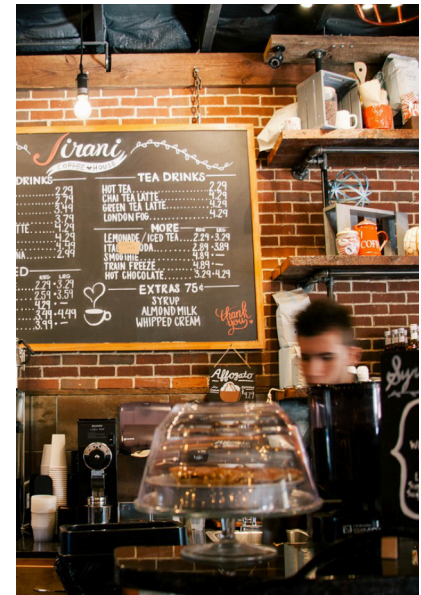
Desired Restaurants & Shops

During interviews, residents and business owners were asked which types of businesses they thought would be successful in Downtown. The most frequently cited responses were evaluated based on the number of competitors within the trade area of Downtown.

Locally-owned, non-chain businesses are the best fit for Downtown. The establishments should be destinations for socializing and recreation, attracting both residents and visitors from surrounding towns. Adding a diverse mix of businesses that offer new experiences and shopping alternatives will increase foot traffic for existing businesses.

The business that were rated highest were:

- **Upscale Restaurants:** Restaurants offering high quality food and service
- **Coffee Shop**
- **Specialty Food and Beverage:** Ice Cream, Bakery, Candy Store, Soda Shop, Boba Tea, Smoothie, Bagel, etc.
- **Artisanal Retail**
- **Fitness & Activities:** Gym, Yoga Studio



Events

Create Vitality

Events on Cedar Avenue are a valuable way to increase awareness of the Downtown, drive foot traffic, and support local businesses. Thoughtfully planned, Village-scaled events can showcase the Downtown’s unique offerings, foster community connections, and boost sales through collaborations with merchants on promotions or event-specific deals. Events create opportunities for residents and visitors to explore the area and engage with its unique offerings.

Expanding the event calendar with events tailored to the character of the area can consistently attract visitors, establish Cedar Avenue as a vibrant hub for shopping, dining, and entertainment, and maintain a steady stream of activity year-round.

Events could include:

- **Pop-Up Markets:** Featuring local artisans, farmers, and vendors
- **Live Music Nights:** Small-scale performances from local bands or solo artists
- **Art Walks:** Showcasing the work of local artists in businesses and outdoor spaces
- **Mini Parades:** Intended to draw niche audiences and be more small-scale than holiday parades, such as a pet parade, a kids-on-wheels parade, and other themed parades
- **Scavenger Hunts:** A fun way for participants to explore local shops and landmarks, and can be an event that runs for an extended time, such as a full week or month
- **Fun Runs:** Host a 5k that starts and ends on Cedar Avenue, and can be sponsored by local nonprofits or businesses to raise funds for local causes



Photo courtesy of Kimmie Rocha



Photo courtesy of the Port Townsend Main Street Program



Photo courtesy of the EtchRock Blog

Site-Specific Enhancements

Target sites for development and redevelopment to support the Downtown Vision include:

- 209 Mixed-Use Development
- Lehmann Park
- Railroad Ave to Lake Ave Crossing

209 Mixed-Use Development

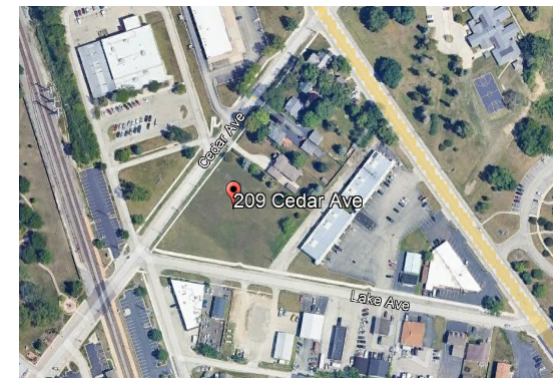
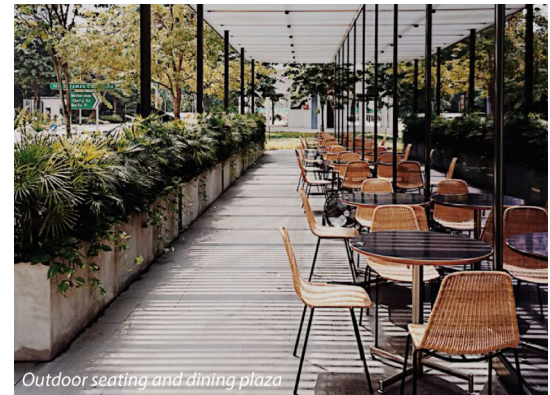
The 209 Cedar Avenue Site will be a showcase project and the catalyst for reimagining and rebranding Downtown Lake Villa. This Village-owned site is a greenfield development opportunity and has an ideal location — adjacent to Downtown, the Metra Station, Lehmann Park, and Cedar Lake.

This site is envisioned with 10,000 square feet of commercial space and 60 residential units. The design will be consistent with the character of the historical buildings along Cedar Avenue and will create a cohesive, consistent look and feel.

The commercial space includes the full ground floor frontage along Cedar Avenue and an upper floor event space. The design aims to create a welcoming atmosphere that integrates with the downtown area, featuring surface treatments and vertical elements to enhance aesthetics.

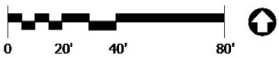
The end cap anchor space is envisioned as a restaurant, which provides both the rooftop dining deck and an outdoor dining patio on the corner of Cedar Avenue and Lake Avenue.

Outdoor public plaza spaces, vertical design features, lighting, and landscaping should appear as an extension of the downtown streetscape, providing continuity between the east and west sides of the railroad tracks.





NOTE: RELOCATE OVERHEAD UTILITIES. EXTEND DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE TREATMENTS, INCLUDING LIGHTING, LANDSCAPING AND DECORATIVE PAVING ACROSS THE RAILROAD TRACKS.



- 1st Floor Commercial/Restaurant along Cedar Ave: 10,000 SF, includes rooftop dining deck & upper floor event space
- 2nd – 4th Floor Residential: 20DU/Floor @3 Stories = 60 DU Total (Average Unit Size: 950 SF)
- Total Surface Parking & On Street Parking: 120 cars
- Residential Parking: 75 cars (1.25/DU)
- Commercial Parking: 45 cars (4.5/1,000)

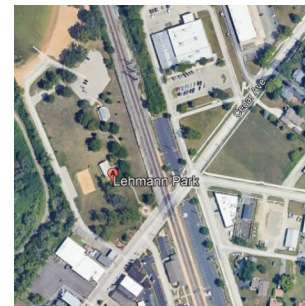
Lehmann Park

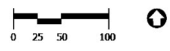
Lehmann Park currently provides functional recreational features, such as a picnic shelter, bathroom building, Cedar Lake beach + pier, and public parking. Lehmann Park can become a vital part of the Downtown Lake Villa experience and create an inviting, iconic connection between shopping and dining and Cedar Lake recreation.

The vision is for Lehmann Park to create a cohesive and engaging community space that blends recreation, nature, and appealing gathering places and event venues.

Key features of the reimagined Lehmann Park include:

- Performance shelter and amphitheater seating, framed by the backdrop of Cedar Lake, with a grass field behind the seating area allowing children to play while parents enjoy performances
- Redesigned parking to accommodate more vehicles
- Clustered athletic court area for basketball, tennis, and volleyball
- Nature based play, naturalized plantings, and creek bed, set back from the street and near athletic courts
- Gathering places and a redesigned and memorial area with expanded connections to Downtown along Cedar Avenue
- New concessions stand, paddle board rental shack, and fishing dock



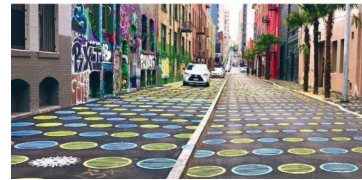


Metra Parking Endcap

Transforming the endcap area of the Metra parking into an inviting open space will establish a visual and perceptive connection between the 209 Site and the historic Downtown.

By prioritizing pedestrian-friendly design, the area can be reimagined with seating, landscaping, and pathways that encourage foot traffic while creating a welcoming public gathering spot. Thoughtful placement of greenery and benches will soften the transition from parking to pedestrian areas, tying the space into the aesthetic and historic charm of Cedar Avenue while fostering connectivity and community engagement.

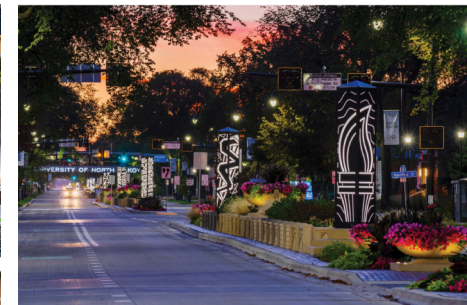
Although building development near the Metra crossing is restricted, vertical markers can serve as a creative solution to visually link the areas on either side of the tracks. These markers — such as decorative poles or art pieces — can reflect the character of the surrounding architecture while providing a sense of continuity and identity. Positioned strategically, they can draw the eye across the tracks, enhancing cohesion between the 209 Site and Cedar Avenue and reinforcing the area's sense of place without disrupting the functional constraints of the crossing.



Enhanced Roadway & Pedestrian Spaces



Temporary Plaza for Events



Vertical Gateway Features



Conduct Streetscape Test

