



MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

Prepared for: **Naperville City Council**

By: City Manager's office

12/4/2025

A. MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

Source:

1. Allison Laff, AICP,
Deputy Director, TED

Subject:

ULI 5th Avenue Final Report

Action:

FYI

2. Darrell Blenniss,
Director of Water Utilities

DuPage Water Commission
WaterLink Project and Related
Community Impacts

FYI

CITY OF NAPERVILLE

DATE: December 4, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Douglas Krieger, City Manager
Jennifer Loudon, Director TED

FROM: Allison Laff, AICP, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: ULI 5th Avenue Final Report

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to share the release of ULI's report "Redevelopment Strategies for a Vibrant Station Area: 5th Avenue, Naperville, Illinois".

BACKGROUND:

Based on direction received from City Council on September 17th and November 19, 2024, staff prepared and submitted an Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP) application to receive comprehensive and strategic advice for the 5th Avenue Study Area. Per their website, "ULI is the oldest and largest network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land use experts in the world... The Urban Land Institute has a long history of providing unbiased, practical ideas and best practices on land use and sustainable development".

In late February 2025, the City was notified that its application had been selected by ULI. The required TAP Agreement was executed by both the City and ULI on March 7, 2025 and on June 10-11, 2025, the Technical Assistance Panel for 5th Avenue was held - a total of 111 stakeholders participated.

ULI presented their TAP recommendations for 5th Avenue at a public meeting on September 10, 2025 and noted that a final report would be available in fall 2025.

DISCUSSION:

At this time, ULI Chicago's final report outlining their recommendations to transform the 5th Avenue Study Area is now available (attached). This report is also linked on the City's 5th Avenue Property webpage www.naperville.il.us/5thAvenueProperty.

On December 4th, ULI additionally issued a press release (attached) regarding the final report and sent an email with the report link to the stakeholder list that received the invite for the September public presentation.

RECOMMENDATION: Please include in the December 4, 2025 Manager's Memorandum.



NAPERVILLE

Redevelopment Strategies
for a Vibrant Station Area

5th AVENUE | NAPERVILLE, IL



Chicago

JUNE
2025

Technical Assistance Panel
REPORT



ULI

WHERE THE FUTURE IS BUILT

CONNECT. INSPIRE. LEAD.

The Urban Land Institute (ULI), is the oldest and largest network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land use experts in the world. ULI is its members. Through our members' dedication to the mission and their shared expertise, the Institute has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice.

Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region, with members in 80 countries. ULI Chicago, one of the largest District Councils of the Urban Land Institute, has over 1,300 members in the Chicago area. Learn more at chicago.uli.org. Follow ULI Chicago on Twitter and LinkedIn.

ULI MISSION

**Shape the future of
the built environment
for transformative impact
in communities worldwide.**

The Naperville 5th Avenue TAP took place on June 10-11, 2025 in Naperville, Illinois.

© 2025 URBAN LAND INSTITUTE CHICAGO
1700 W. Irving Park Road
Suite 208
Chicago, IL 60613

All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of the whole or any part of the contents of this publication without written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

Unless otherwise mentioned, all photo credits belong to ULI Chicago.

ON THE COVER: NAPERVILLE METRA STATION

PHOTO CREDIT: CITY OF NAPERVILLE

ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

For more than 75 years, ULI members have delivered change in our cities through ULI's Advisory Services. Whether it be the devastation of disaster, food access and healthy design, or a shortage of housing choices, Advisory Services panels have offered unbiased and independent solutions to the most complex problems facing communities.

Through this program, ULI members integrate into communities dealing with a wide array of real estate and land use challenges to provide unbiased, expert advice and specific recommendations for improvement. Members link together with local leaders to draft a plan to revive, rethink, and restore communities around the globe to ultimately enact change and improve the lives of the people who live there.

Panels bring together the best and brightest from ULI's diverse membership – developers, planners, financiers, market analysts, economists, architects, designers, and public officials – to provide practical solutions and objective advice not available from any other source.

We thank all who volunteered their skills, time, and energy to create a more authentic blueprint for change, identified communities facing urban development and land use challenges, and supported panels through philanthropic giving. Your commitment and dedication have delivered the holistic, creative solutions cities need today. Thank you for being a part of this transformative journey. Together, we shape the future of our cities.

Learn more at americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/.

ULI Advisory Services: Chicago District Council Programs

ULI Chicago's technical assistance program draws from its local membership base to offer objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers. Our technical assistance program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to address a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions.

The two-day Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) is the most popular format for employing ULI member expertise. An additional local offering is the Development Dialogue, which offers a shorter, half-day format suitable for more specific, targeted development problems.

ULI Chicago panelists are land use professionals, selected carefully for their knowledge and skills so that the panel is uniquely positioned to address the challenges at hand and provide in-depth, project-specific, and pragmatic recommendations. The intimate, focused, and collaborative format of ULI panels encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

Learn more at chicago.uli.org.

Distinct from an Advisory Services panel, a TAP leverages local expertise through a half-day to two-day process.

SUPPORTERS

ULI Chicago gratefully acknowledges its sponsors, whose support is critical to local ULI initiatives:

PLATINUM

Chicago Title Insurance Company
J.P. Morgan

GOLD

Associated Bank
Bank of America
BMO
Bucksbaum Properties
Crown Community Development
DLA Piper LLP (US)
Gould & Ratner LLP
JLL
McShane Construction Company
Related Midwest

SILVER

Avison Young
CBRE
CIBC
Colliers
East Lake Management & Development Corporation
Riverside Investment & Development Company
Teska Associates
Wintrust

BRONZE

Baker Barrios Architects
Blue Vista Capital Management, LLC
Byline Bank
Chicago Architecture Center
Deloitte
FOCUS
Gensler
KWILL Merchant Advisors
OKW Architects, Inc.
Perform Properties
SB Friedman Development Advisors

CONTENTS

Introduction	6
The Technical Assistance Panel	8
Scope of Work	9
Panel Discoveries	10
Takeaways from Community Conversations	10
Opportunities and Challenges	12
Panel Recommendations	14
Key Redevelopment Steps	14
Thematic Concepts	18
Next Steps	22
Participants	23

INTRODUCTION

City of Naperville, home to more than 150,000 residents, is located 28 miles west of Chicago. With beautiful tree-lined streets, acclaimed schools, a scenic riverwalk weaving through the thriving downtown, and easy access to jobs in downtown Chicago and the I-88 corridor, Naperville is a great place to live. Not surprisingly, Niche.com ranked Naperville as the “Best City to Live in America” two years in a row, and the “Best City to Raise a Family in America” for the last five years.

But you’d never guess any of this pulling into Naperville’s Metra commuter rail station located on 4th Avenue, just north of downtown. At this key gateway into the community, a tired brick station house sits surrounded by a sea of asphalt parking lots. Although convenient parking is essential for hundreds of Naperville residents who rely on Metra to get to their jobs, these parcels, comprising nearly 15 acres in the heart of Naperville, can serve much more than commuter parking.



CREDIT: CITY OF NAPERVILLE



Naperville residents enjoy a high quality-of-life characterized by quiet, residential streets (top) and amenities such as a scenic, public Riverwalk (top right) and a vibrant downtown (bottom right).



CREDIT: CITY OF NAPERVILLE

The City of Naperville owns or leases most of the surface parking lots and has long been interested in redeveloping them to create a vibrant, transit-oriented neighborhood. A 2009 study by the City for the 5th Avenue Study Area provided guidance for transportation improvements but did not include significant land-use recommendations.

More recently, in 2018, the City selected Ryan Companies through an RFP process to propose redevelopment options for the area. However, even after many months of meetings and various development alternatives, community consensus could not be achieved on a preferred development plan. The COVID-19 pandemic created additional uncertainties about the market demand for different uses, including

office and commuter parking. With no clear path forward, Naperville ended the process with Ryan Companies in Spring 2020.

Now, Naperville is ready to restart planning for the future of the 5th Avenue Study Area. It is exploring redevelopment to create a vibrant, mixed-use station area to better serve commuters, area residents, and the overall Naperville community.

"It's a space that needs to
become a Place"

*Naperville Mayor, Scott Wehrli, on the City's aspiration for the
future of the 5th Avenue Study Area*



The Naperville Metra Station on 4th Avenue is surrounded by a sea of City-controlled surface parking lots, which presents a unique opportunity to create a vibrant, transit-oriented neighborhood reflective of Naperville's high quality-of-life.

THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL

To ensure an unbiased perspective and a fresh start, the City of Naperville invited the Urban Land Institute's Chicago District Council (ULI Chicago) to conduct a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) for the 5th Avenue station area (Figure 1).

On June 10-11, ULI Chicago convened a volunteer panel of eight ULI members with expertise in different aspects of real estate development and design to answer the questions posed by the Naperville City Council (see Scope of Work). As part of the TAP, panelists reviewed extensive background materials, toured the study area, and met with nearly 125 area stakeholders including residents, business owners, civic and institutional leaders, and city representatives.

Using these key inputs and drawing on best practices and market realities, panelists worked collaboratively to prepare recommendations to guide the redevelopment of the 5th Avenue station area. The Panel's findings and recommendations are presented in this report.



ULI Chicago panelists toured the 5th Avenue Study Area with Naperville officials and staff.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Naperville City Council posed the following questions to ULI Chicago with the goal of identifying redevelopment opportunities for the 5th Avenue study area to realize economic, social and community benefits for the City of Naperville:

1. How can the study area be redeveloped to function as Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and what are the best practices for developing around transit centers? How can this redevelopment encourage regular transit users to occupy any new residential units, thereby decreasing overall on-site parking demand?
2. How can new development on the site address Naperville's known housing gaps, including missing middle, attainable and affordable housing, while meeting private development interests?
3. Other than new housing opportunities, what are the highest and best uses of the study area, or each sub portion of the study area?
4. What amenities and design features should be incorporated into the new development to maintain and enhance the neighborhood's unique character, and how can the study area provide additional or improved community amenities, including gathering spaces and event spaces?
5. What is the most effective way to move forward with a redevelopment strategy for the non-transit uses on the site?
 - For example, should parcels be offered separately or as one master lease/sale?
 - Should the City sell or lease redevelopment project sites?
 - Should there be a recommended or preferred order for the redevelopment of those sites?



Figure 1. 5th Avenue Study Area Map: City of Naperville owns or leases nearly 15 acres of land within the study area.

PANEL DISCOVERIES

Touring the study area and interviewing nearly 125 area stakeholders, including residents and City officials, provided the ULI Chicago Panel with greater insights into the community's concerns and aspirations for the future of 5th Avenue. Key findings based on these conversations and the panel's assessment of opportunities and challenges, are presented in this section.

Takeaways from Community Conversations

Key Community Concerns

Past Planning Process. The 2018-2020 planning process with Ryan Companies that did not result in a successful development proposal was widely perceived as lacking transparency. Stakeholders expressed reservations with awarding the entire project to a single developer, and in the absence of well-defined development goals and parameters set by the City, found the process being driven by Ryan Companies rather than by Naperville.

Height and Density, Neighborhood Character. Much of the 5th Avenue study area is surrounded by well-established single-family residential. This makes height and density of any new development a key concern, especially for area residents. During the earlier planning process, building heights and density proposed by Ryan Companies were higher than what many community members preferred, which made it hard to reach consensus on a preferred development alternative.

Stakeholders also expressed a preference for more usable open space in the study area and development that results in a neighborhood-scale destination rather than a "second downtown."

Commuter Parking and Traffic Congestion. The Naperville Metra station is amongst the busiest in the entire Chicagoland Metra commuter rail system. In 2024, when train ridership was still well below pre-COVID 2019 levels, more than 2,300 weekday boardings were recorded at the station. Naperville residents who are accustomed to parking in the surface lots to ride the Metra, can view multi-level garages as more time-consuming to navigate and therefore less desirable.

Additionally, during rush hour, large number of commuters entering/exiting parking lots can create significant traffic congestion in the area and a safety hazard for drivers and pedestrians. Improving traffic flow and safety was identified as a key priority for future developments.

School Capacity. Some stakeholders expressed concern that attracting new residential development in the 5th Avenue study area would generate new students, putting a strain on neighborhood elementary and middle schools that are already running near capacity.

Vision and Goals

Naperville's vision for the 5th Avenue Study Area, as expressed by the City's leadership is to create a "Place" from a "space." City officials view it as an opportunity to create a vibrant gateway into Naperville and a new neighborhood destination for residents, commuters, and visitors with new public infrastructure and amenities. Additionally, the development, while best serving current and future generations of Naperville residents, should be fiscally responsible in the long term.

The panel found community stakeholders to be largely aligned with this overall vision; their primary goals for future development in the station area include:

Land Use

- Diversity of housing options to serve different lifestyles and income levels
- Neighborhood-focused commercial that can also serve commuters
- Improved Children's Museum facility to better serve current and future needs

Public Amenities/ Infrastructure

- Green/open space for gathering and community events
- Improved access, connectivity, and safety for pedestrians and cars
- Improved stormwater management
- Prioritizing environmental sustainability in building and infrastructure design



Community stakeholders gathered for a roundtable discussion with ULI Chicago panelists to share their concerns and aspirations for the future of the 5th Avenue study area.

Panel's Assessment of Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Highly Desirable Location. The 5th Avenue study area is located in the heart of Naperville, one of the most sought-after residential communities in the Chicago metropolitan area. In addition to excellent commuter rail access to downtown Chicago, 5th Avenue is only half a mile north of downtown Naperville, which is well-known for its wide range of shopping, dining, and entertainment venues. North Central College and the Ogden Avenue commercial corridor are close by, adding to the area's development appeal.

Additionally, the study area is established as a desirable location for multi-family residential – loft conversions in the former Kroehler manufacturing building and the more recent Ellsworth Station apartments, are both popular residential options.

City Ownership. The City of Naperville controls nearly 15 acres of developable land in the study area, much of which is currently being used as surface commuter

parking (Figure 1). With ownership of most of the land, the City can guide the development timeline and determine appropriate development typologies, including use-mix and density. In addition, Naperville has the ability to select qualified developers best positioned to realize its vision for each site.

Flexible Commuter Parking. In January 2024, Naperville moved away from longer-term commuter parking permits tied to specific parking spots to daily fee-based parking, available on a first-come first-serve basis. This new system allows more flexibility in reorganizing commuter parking to free up land for new development.

Additionally, the Route 59 Metra station, which has ample parking, is now within the same fare zone as the Naperville station enhancing its appeal for commuters.



Commuters wait to board the train to downtown Chicago at the Naperville station, one of the busiest stations in the entire Metra commuter rail system.



The "5th Avenue Station" development, located just east of the Metra station, is an adaptive reuse of the former Kroehler manufacturing building containing loft apartments and ground-level commercial.

CREDIT: CITY OF NAPERVILLE

CREDIT: CITY OF NAPERVILLE

Challenges

Surrounding Single-Family Neighborhoods. The study area is surrounded by mostly single-family residences, and some worry that new multi-story development might disrupt the neighborhood character. Future developments will have to balance concerns around density and height with financial feasibility to deliver high-quality context-sensitive developments.

Shifting Commuter Parking Demand. To free up land for development, some commuter parking will have to move from surface lots into parking structures, which are expensive to build. Commuters should also be encouraged to park at the Route 59 station to reduce overall parking demand at the Naperville station.

To allow future developments to be financially viable, it will be critical to right-size structured parking and not over-build.

According to Naperville's estimates, average mid-week parking occupancy for April through October 2024 was 76%. But commuting patterns are continuing to evolve since the COVID-19 pandemic, making it difficult to predict how parking demand will change in the future.

Necessary Infrastructure Improvements.

Infrastructure improvements to address issues such as traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, and localized flooding, which could be exacerbated by new development, will add to the cost of redeveloping the study area parcels. If any sites are found to require environmental remediation, additional costs would apply.

CREDIT: CITY OF NAPERVILLE



Downtown Naperville is an exciting destination with a mix of shopping, dining, and entertainment venues that cater to wide range of people, including younger workers and households.



The Water Street mixed-use district, with a boutique hotel, office, restaurants, and public spaces, was developed as a public private partnership supported by Naperville's first TIF district.

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The 5th Avenue study area presents a tremendous opportunity for the City of Naperville to transform acres of uninspiring parking lots into a vibrant new neighborhood, enhancing residents' quality of life and visitor experience. The panel believes that a collaborative and bold, yet incremental approach, can help Naperville successfully navigate evolving market conditions and attract development that serves community needs, is context sensitive, and fiscally responsible. The Panel's recommendations to guide the redevelopment process are presented in this section.

Key Redevelopment Steps

1. Create a Development Master Plan

The City of Naperville should start by creating a Development Master Plan for the 5th Avenue study area to establish a vision for the future and a development framework to help bring it to fruition.

Planning Process

To instill public confidence in the planning process, the panel recommends that Naperville hire a third-party consultant, rather than a potential future developer, to prepare the development master plan. Robust public engagement, with opportunities for residents and other stakeholders to explore development trade-offs and provide input, should be an integral part of the planning process.

Plan Elements

Shared Vision and Goals. The 5th Avenue Development Master Plan should articulate a clear vision for the future, shaped both by city leadership and the community. This shared vision should help establish priorities such as attainable housing for working families, promoting sustainable building practices, and fostering civic pride and connection. This will provide the framework necessary for guiding and evaluating development projects.

Development Guidelines. For each developable site, the Master Plan should define preferred mix of uses

and height, density, and building character, making it easier for developers to propose projects aligned with the community's requirements. At the same time, the guidelines should be flexible enough to allow developers to respond to changing market conditions without impacting financial viability of their projects.

Public Infrastructure Improvements. The Plan should outline the public infrastructure improvements needed to support redevelopment within the study area. These may include enhancing existing or creating new open spaces, implementing traffic calming measures, and strengthening stormwater management systems. A traffic study should be conducted to anticipate potential impacts of new development and recommend strategies to mitigate them. A wayfinding plan should be prepared to make the area easier to navigate and create a distinctive character, enhancing overall user experience.

Development Phasing. The Panel recommends phasing development of the study area parcels rather than undertaking all improvements at once. This approach provides greater flexibility to adapt future phases to evolving market conditions. For instance, in the initial phase, the City could retain some surface parking lots rather than incurring the significant upfront cost of replacing all commuter spaces with structured parking. As post-pandemic commuting and parking patterns become clearer, the City will be better positioned to determine how much commuter parking can be reduced and to design subsequent phases accordingly.

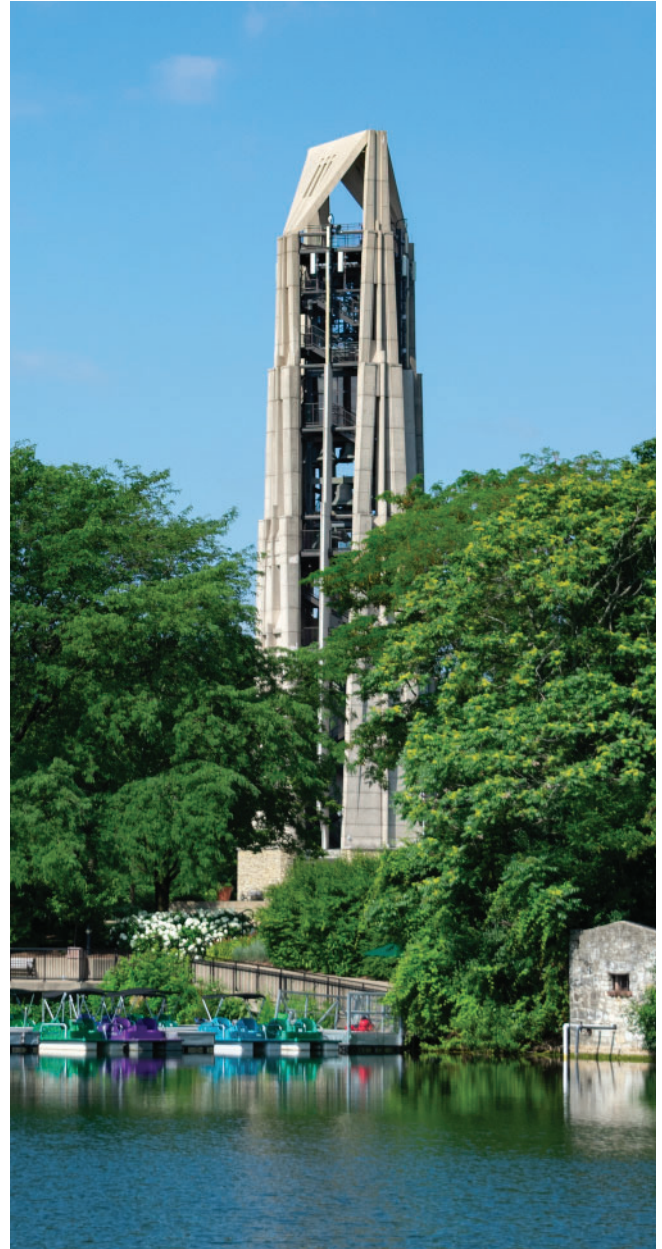
2. Create a Transparent Developer Solicitation Process

The panel recommends selecting developers for different projects or phases outlined in the Development Master Plan by a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process. This competitive process will allow Naperville to select developers with the most relevant expertise and design ideas in best alignment with the Master Plan, for each project.

3. Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

Redeveloping the 5th Avenue study area will require significant financial investments to construct structured parking and a range of necessary infrastructure improvements including potential site remediation, streetscaping, traffic calming, and stormwater management. These public improvements are not likely to be financeable by private developments alone; a public-private partnership will be needed. To do so, the panel recommends establishing a TIF district.

Prioritizing private developments such as multi-family apartments in early phases can help generate enough TIF increment to fund desired public improvements. Naperville should conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a TIF district in the study area, including identifying potential TIF district boundaries.



The iconic Millennium Carillon, at the base of the Riverwalk's Rotary Hill, was built through community support and donations.

Right-sizing Commuter Parking

Right-sizing commuter parking in the study area can play a key role in managing future development costs. With hybrid work schedules continuing to be popular, 80% of the current commuter parking capacity in the study area may be sufficient in the future. However, to develop data-based estimates for future commuter parking, Naperville should partner with Metra to analyze ridership patterns, projections, and parking capacity at both Naperville stations – 5th Avenue and Route 59.

Thematic Concepts for the Development Master Plan

Development strategies should be tailored to each site's unique opportunities and constraints. For instance, higher-density development may be most appropriate for parcels along Washington Street, a primary north-south thoroughfare. In contrast, parcels on the eastern side, which are closer to single-family neighborhoods, are better suited for lower density uses.

The panel has identified four distinct clusters of parcels or subareas, with recommendations for development density, land-use mix, infrastructure improvements, and phasing. These recommendations are illustrated in Figure 2 below and Figure 3 (Pages 18 & 20). It is important to note that these concepts are preliminary. They are intended to guide the creation of a comprehensive development master plan, which will ultimately serve as Naperville's official framework for redeveloping the 5th Avenue Study Area.

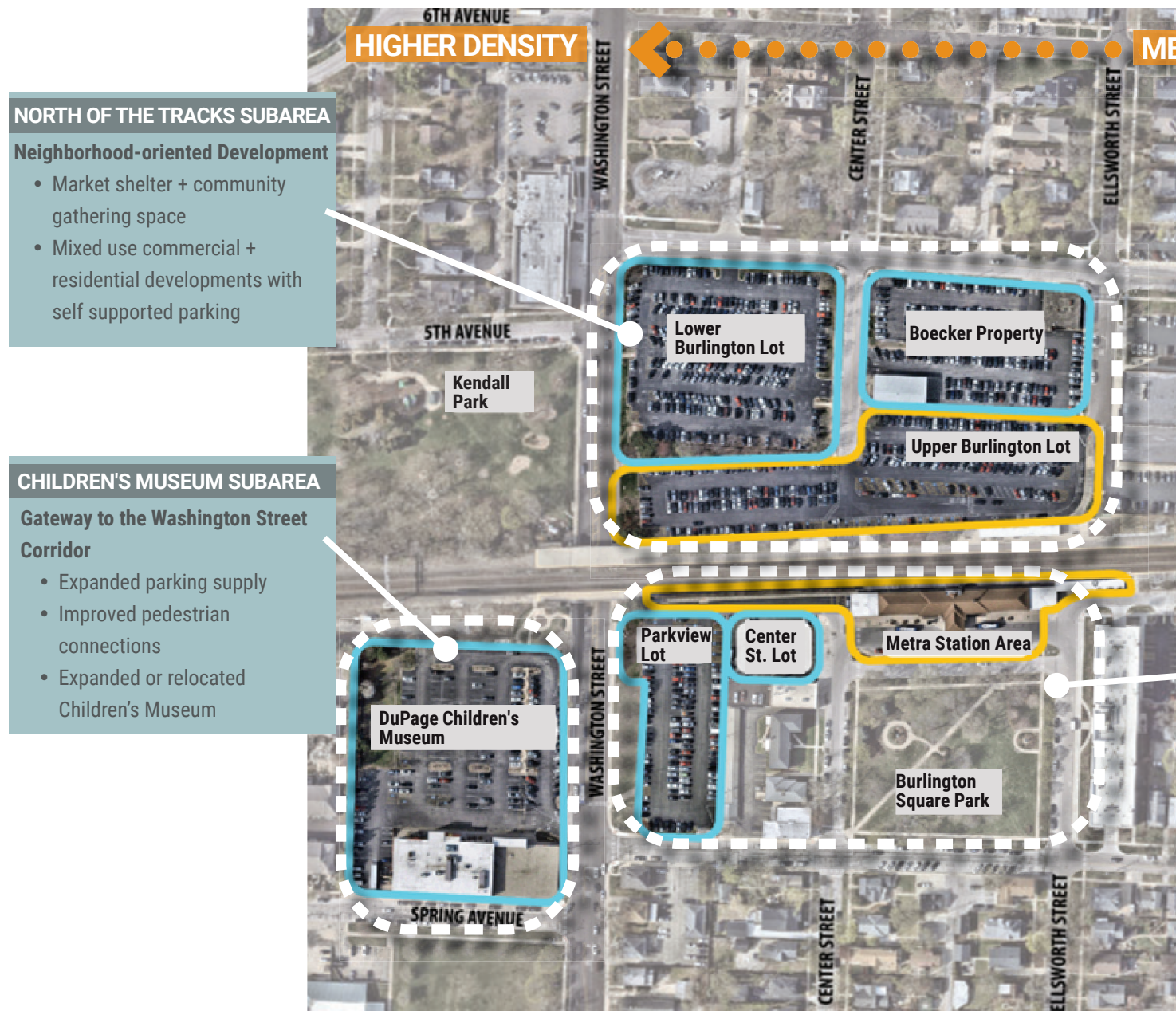


Figure 2. Proposed Subareas to Guide Strategic Redevelopment

MEDIUM DENSITY

LOWER DENSITY

KROEHLER LOT & WATER TOWER SUBAREA

Lower Density Residential

- Near term land bank for future commuter parking if/as needed
- Long term lower density residential



METRA STATION & BURLINGTON SQUARE PARK SUBAREA

Commuter + Neighborhood-oriented Development

- Station building + plaza area enhancements
- Mixed use retail + residential developments with self supported parking
- Park + roadway improvements to activate park and station area

Children's Museum Sub-Area

Located along Washington Street, a major north-south connector, this is a "gateway" site to the station area and downtown Naperville to the south. The panel recommends higher density development and taller building heights for this site.

Development Program

Project A. Consolidating parking in a new multi-level garage on this site would free up other existing surface parking areas for new uses. Currently, in addition to the children's museum building, the site has 200 parking spaces, 57 of which are designated for Metra commuters. A new five-story, 750 car parking garage could house nearly 600 commuter parking spaces with the rest reserved for museum use. A pedestrian exit from the garage could directly connect commuters to the train platform via the Washington Street overpass, helping minimize overall commute times.

The parking structure could also include new museum space (at the top levels) to better suit the museum's current and future programming needs. Alternatively, the museum could be relocated to a different site within the study area.



Figure 3a. Project A: Children's Museum Sub-Area

Note: Feasibility and best location for the proposed pedestrian underpass will need further analysis.

Public Infrastructure Improvements

- Improved sidewalks on Washington Street and a new pedestrian path and underpass similar to the former Cow Tunnel will enhance pedestrian connectivity from neighborhoods to the train station and downtown, reducing vehicular traffic.
- New underground stormwater storage at Kendall Park could help address localized flooding issues in the neighborhood.

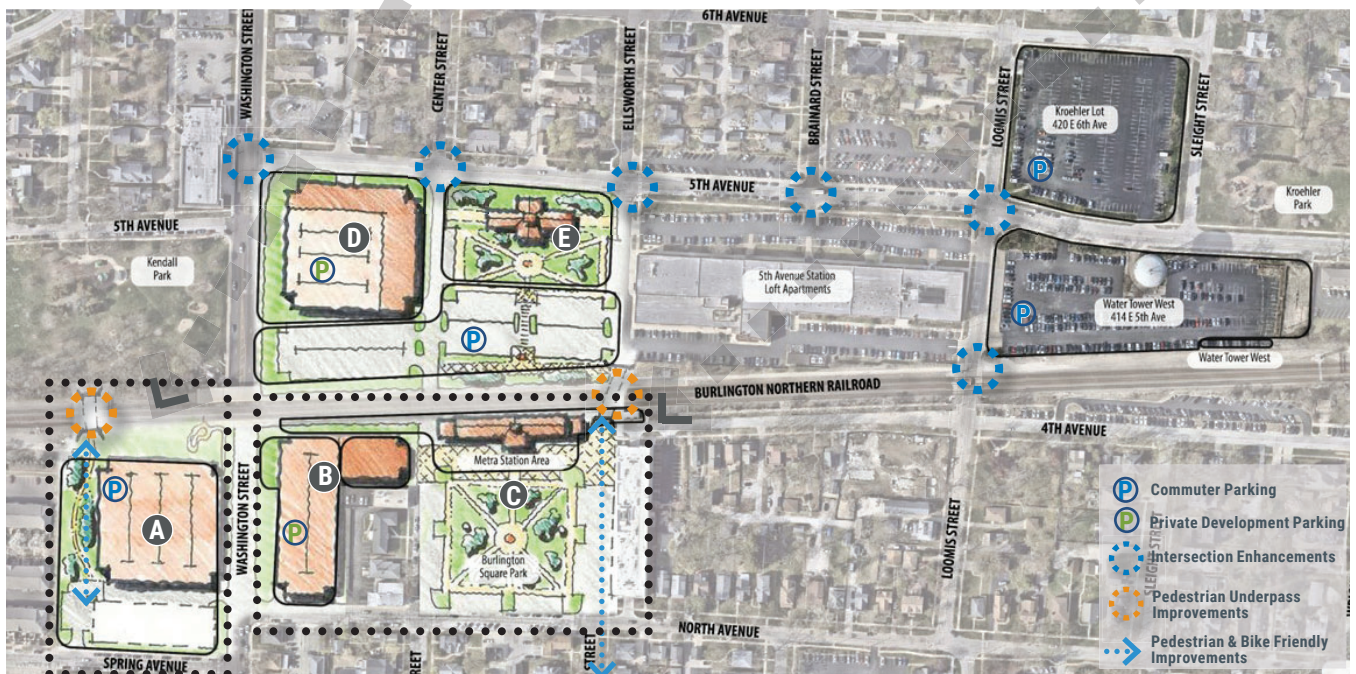


Figure 3. Phase 1 Redevelopment Concepts | Please read in conjunction with Page 19.

Metra Station and Burlington Square Park Sub-Area

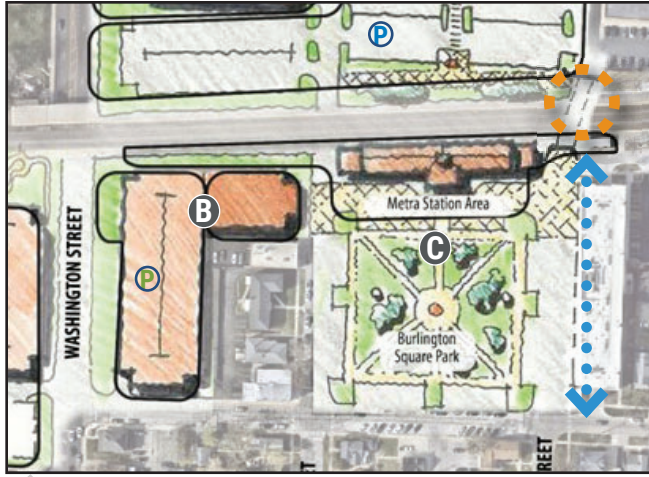


Figure 3b. Projects B & C: Metra Station & Burlington Park Sub-Area

Relocating commuter parking spaces from this sub-area (into a new parking structure at the Children's Museum site or elsewhere) will free up land for new neighborhood- and commuter-oriented mixed-use development.

Development Program

Project B. This site could be redeveloped as 4-6 story mixed-use building with residential apartments and neighborhood-oriented commercial uses such as a coffee shop, restaurants, gym, and medical offices.

Parking for the new residential and commercial uses should be provided on-site.

Project C. Landscaping around the Metra station could be updated with decorative planters, benches, and lighting to create a more welcoming environment. Special pavers could delineate bus drop-off and kiss-n-ride areas, enhancing both safety and visual appeal.

Burlington Square Park, located just south of the station, should be activated via community-focused programming. For example, movies in the park or musical performances will add to the vibrancy of the station area and create a stronger customer base for any new commercial uses.

As the area continues to redevelop, the station building can be updated to create a more distinctive, welcoming entryway into Naperville

Public Infrastructure Improvements

- Streetscape improvements to create a high-quality, low-stress pedestrian and bike environment on Ellsworth Street, including enhancing the pedestrian walkway under the tracks, could reduce overall auto-traffic in the neighborhood.

Increasing Housing Choice



"Porter," a new six-story mixed-use development in Oak Park, Illinois

New residential development in the 5th Avenue Study Area can increase housing choice for currently underserved demographics in Naperville with minimal or no impact on local schools. These could include:

- Young professionals working in I-88 corridor or commuting via Metra to downtown Chicago
- Seniors looking to downsize
- Smaller rental units could increase affordability for area workers currently priced-out
- Restricted affordable units could be created with incentives

Additionally, emphasizing context-sensitive design rather than strict height limits will allow developers to propose projects that are both financially viable and beneficial to the community.

North of the Tracks Sub-Area

Relocating commuter parking spaces from this sub-area (into a new parking structure) will open a similar opportunity to attract new mixed-use development and community gathering spaces north of the railroad tracks.

Development Program

Project D. This lot could be redeveloped with a 4-6 story mixed-use building with residential apartments and street-level commercial. Parking for residential and commercial uses could be provided in a new garage facing Washington Street. This site could also be an alternative for relocating the Children's Museum within a mixed-use development.

Project E. The panel recommends reimagining this site as a multi-purpose open space for hosting community events such as the popular weekly Naperville Famers' Market and food truck festivals as well as commuter parking. An architecturally distinctive, flexible shelter can allow the site to transition seamlessly from commuter parking in the daytime to event space in the evening and weekends, enhance usability, and add to the appeal of the station area.



Figure 3c. Projects D & E: North of the Tracks Sub-Area

The Upper Burlington lot, immediately north of the tracks, could be maintained as commuter parking but upgraded with new landscaping coordinated with the new community/ event space to the north.

Public Infrastructure Improvements

- Intersection enhancements along 5th Avenue, with traffic calming measures like special pavers and pedestrian bump-outs, can further enhance neighborhood safety and appeal.

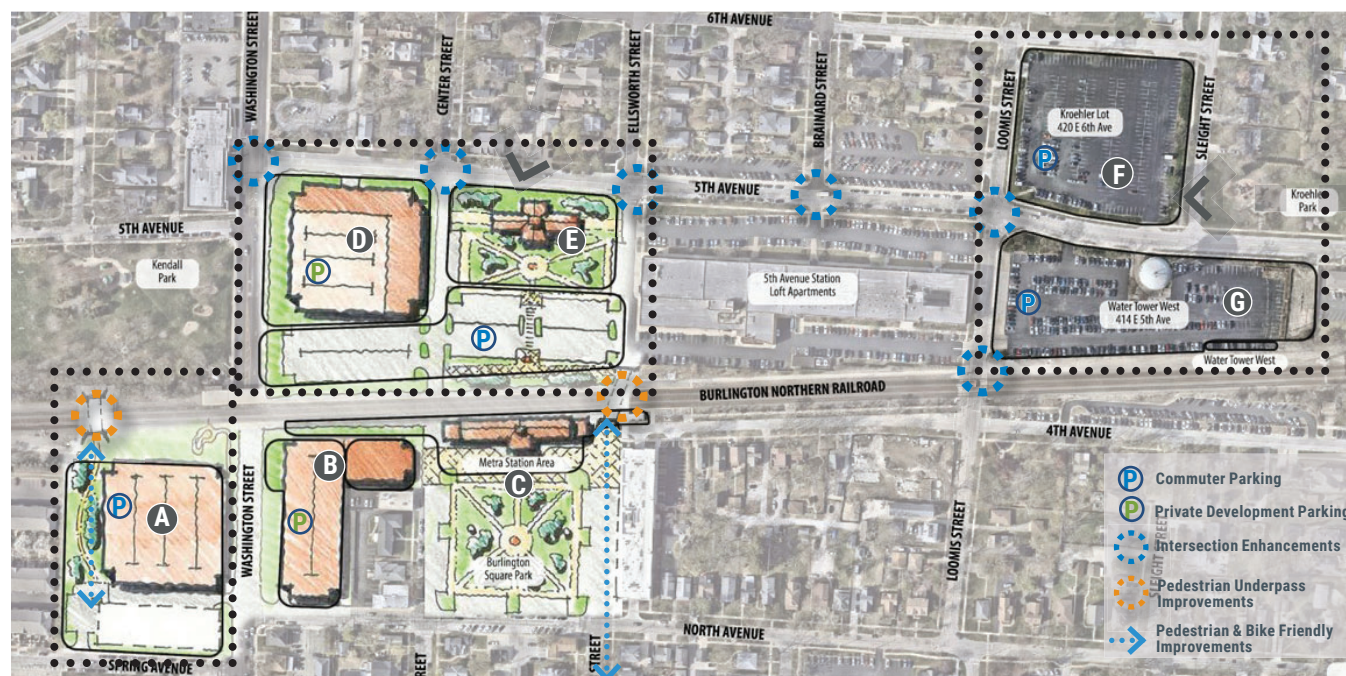


Figure 3. Phase 1 Redevelopment Concepts | Please read in conjunction with Page 21.

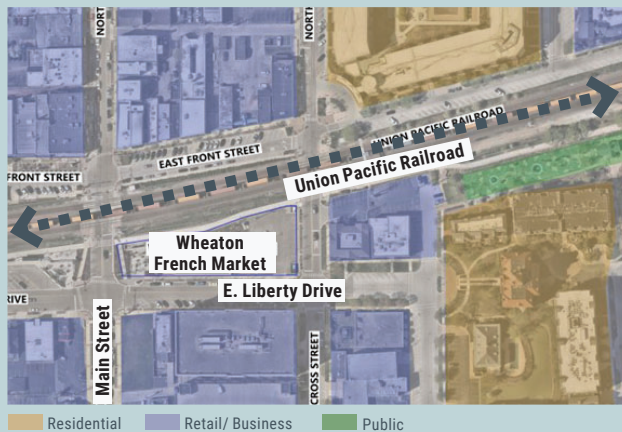
French Market, Wheaton, Illinois



CREDIT: CITY OF WHEATON



CREDIT: CITY OF WHEATON



The French Market Pavilion structure in downtown Wheaton, completed in 2023, has transformed the Metra commuter parking lot into a multi-use plaza in the heart of the city. Its flexible design allows it to be used as a parking lot during the day (top left) and community events, such as the popular French Market, on weekends (top right).

The pavilion was designed and built as part of a larger Downtown improvement project to upgrade utilities and create an inviting environment to draw both residents and visitors. Infrastructure enhancements included permeable pavers, native plantings, new street furniture, LED lighting, wider sidewalks, and designated outdoor dining areas.

Kroehler Lot and Water Tower Sub-Area



Figure 4. Phase 2 Redevelopment Concepts;
Projects F & G: Kroehler Lot & Water Tower Sub-Area

In the near term, or Phase 1, the panel recommends continuing to use these parcels for surface parking (Figure 3). Once other parcels are redeveloped, the demand for additional commuter parking and other uses will be easier to determine. The City could then program these parcels accordingly and redevelop them as "Phase 2."

Development Program

As illustrated in Figure 4, potential uses could include missing-middle residential such as townhomes or single-family homes with accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Structured public parking could be built on the water tower lot for commuters and visitors.

Public Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure upgrades should include traffic calming improvements at roadway intersections, similar to other 5th Avenue intersections.

NEXT STEPS

The City of Naperville should build on the momentum generated by the ULI Chicago TAP to foster community consensus on future of the 5th Avenue study area. During the TAP, community stakeholders shared many aspirations, including activated public spaces, walkable streets, preservation of neighborhood character, environmental sustainability, and diverse, attainable housing options. City officials should collaborate closely with community representatives to refine and prioritize these ideas, ensuring they effectively guide the creation of the Development Master Plan and eventually, the transformation of the 5th Avenue Study Area.

In addition, the City should begin laying the groundwork for public-private partnerships such as TIF, and estimating commuter parking demand through targeted transportation and parking studies.

These steps will provide Naperville with the tools needed to attract and support new development, helping turn the community's vision of a vibrant, transit-oriented neighborhood into reality.



CREDIT: PROPEL STUDIO ARCHITECTURE & MARSHALL STEEVES

Townhomes, such as the Heritage Place in downtown Naperville's historic district (left), or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in backyards of single-family homes (right), could replace surface parking on the Kroehler lot enhancing housing choice in Naperville.

PARTICIPANTS

PANEL MEMBERS

Jon Talty | *Panel Chair*

CEO | OKW Architects

Alan Barker

Principal, Residential Market Leader | Lamar Johnson Collaborative

Hal Francke

Partner | Meltzer, Purtill & Stelle LLC

Terry “Vic” Howell

Vice President, Development | FOCUS

Bill Loftus

Principal | SPACECO

Jodi Mariano

Vice President of Design | Teska Associates, Inc.

Javier Millan

Principal | Kenig, Lindgren, O'Hara, Aboona (KLOA), Inc.

Matt Nix

Managing Partner | REVA Development Partners LLC

ULI CHICAGO

Cindy McSherry

Executive Director

Swasti Shah

Director of Community Engagement

Elizabeth Duffrin

Staff Writer

SPONSOR REPRESENTATIVES

City of Naperville

Scott Wehrli

Mayor

Doug Krieger

City Manager

Jennifer Loudon

Director

Transportation, Engineering and Development (TED) Department

Allison Laff

*Deputy Director, Planning & Development
TED Department*



Find this report and hundreds of others on Knowledge Finder,

the leading global resource of trends and best practices in real estate development and financing. Explore an ever-expanding library and find recommended content related to your interests, including reading lists, case studies, videos and webinars, books, and more.

knowledge.uli.org

ULI CHICAGO

1700 WEST IRVING PARK ROAD
SUITE 208
CHICAGO - IL 60613
773 | 549 | 4972
CHICAGO@ULI.ORG
WWW.CHICAGO.ULI.ORG



Chicago



For Immediate Release: Urban Land Institute Chicago Releases Report to Guide Redevelopment of Naperville's 5th Avenue Study Area

The [Urban Land Institute Chicago](#) (ULI Chicago), with support from the City of Naperville has released a report outlining recommendations to transform the 5th Avenue Study Area, centered around the Naperville Metra station, into a vibrant, new neighborhood. [Read the full report.](#)

For years, the City of Naperville has sought to redevelop the nearly 15 acres of surface parking lots surrounding its Metra station into a transit-oriented district to realize economic, social, and community benefits. At the invitation of the City of Naperville, [ULI Chicago convened a multi-disciplinary panel of real estate professionals](#) who collaborated over two days in June 2025 to prepare the report's recommendations. As part of their work, the ULI Panel reviewed extensive background materials, toured the study area, and met with more than 100 community stakeholders to better understand their priorities and aspirations for the Study Area's future.

The panel's recommendations establish a framework for redevelopment that reflects both the community's vision and market realities. The report outlines clear, actionable steps to build public consensus and trust, while setting the stage for attracting high-quality development and transforming 5th Avenue into a well-connected, welcoming neighborhood for residents, commuters, and visitors alike.

"The 5th Avenue Study Area presents a transformative opportunity in the heart of Naperville, one of the most desirable communities in the Chicago region," said Jon Talty, *ULI Chicago Panel Chair* and *CEO* of OKW Architects. "With a collaborative and bold, yet incremental approach, Naperville can navigate evolving market conditions to attract development that meets community needs, fits the local context, and remains fiscally responsible over the long term."

"I would like to thank all the members of the ULI Technical Assistance Panel for volunteering their professional expertise and time to evaluate the 5th Avenue study area this summer," said *City Manager* Doug Krieger. "The process was top-notch, and we are grateful to ULI."

[Read the full Naperville Technical Assistance Panel Report](#)

About ULI Chicago

[The Urban Land Institute](#) (ULI) is a global, member-driven organization dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission: shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI Chicago, a District Council of the Urban Land Institute, has over 1,300 members in the Chicago area representing all aspects of the real estate industry, including developers, investors, financiers, architects, engineers, planners, attorneys, public officials, and academics. ULI Chicago's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program allows local communities and government agencies an opportunity to access strategic advice from development experts that they could not obtain through any other process. Through its TAP program, ULI Chicago convenes a multidisciplinary team of ULI-members and partners to address complex land use challenges with creative, practical, and implementable solutions.

For more information, please contact

ULI Chicago

- Cindy McSherry, Executive Director, 773-549-4972, Cindy.McSherry@uli.org, or
- Swasti Shah, Director of Community Engagement, Swasti.shah@uli.org

City of Naperville

- Linda LaCloche, Naperville Director of Communications, 630-420-6034

CITY OF NAPERVILLE
MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 4, 2025

TO: Doug Krieger, City Manager

FROM: Darrell Blenniss, Director of Water Utilities

SUBJECT: DuPage Water Commission WaterLink Project and Related Community Impacts

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding the DuPage Water Commission (DWC) WaterLink Project and community impacts during construction.

BACKGROUND:

DWC is a regional supplier for Lake Michigan water serving many communities in DuPage and Will counties. DWC supplies water to Naperville.

The WaterLink project is a 30-mile water pipeline extension to provide Lake Michigan drinking water to the suburban communities of Montgomery, Oswego and Yorkville.

These communities are currently served with water from the Ironton-Galesville aquifer, which will be insufficient to provide water for their growing population.

DISCUSSION:

DWC has begun the first of seven pipeline packages. The first segment (3.3 miles) connects to the DWC distribution network in Naperville at Book Road and continues south to Frontier Sports Complex. This phase of the project will result in road and sidewalk closures.

Book Road Closure:

Beginning in early December, Book Road will be partially closed and only open to local traffic between 75th Street and Rickert Drive.

The intersection of Book Road and 75th Street will be open to traffic travelling east/west.

Book Road will be closed to all traffic between 75th Street and 83rd Street.

All closures are anticipated to last until the spring 2026.

Sidewalks Closed:

Sidewalks running parallel to Book Road between Rickert Drive and 75th Street will be temporarily closed for construction.

Future Phases:

The next phase (Main Line-East) of the project also passes through south Naperville and will impact traffic. More updates will be provided as the start date approaches.

Project Contact Information:

DWC has created a website and points of contact.

Members of the public can register and sign-up for construction updates.

More information is available from the resources listed below:

- Project Website: www.waterlinkpipeline.com
- Project Map: <https://www.waterlinkpipeline.com/project-map>
- Project Email: info@waterlinkpipeline.com
- Project Hotline: (630) 576-9997
- Subscribe to Updates: <https://www.waterlinkpipeline.com/#reachout>
- DuPage Water Commission Website: www.dpwc.org

RECOMMENDATION:

Please include this in the December 4, 2025 Manager's Memorandum.

Detour Map:

Book Road Detour Map

