



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

MINUTES

Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force

Monday, July 25

11:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

Dan Lewis, Legislative Liaison at the IL Department of Natural Resources and the point-person for administrative support for this Task Force, began the meeting shortly after 11:00 AM by confirming that there was a quorum present. All but Representative Dan McConchie (who later joined shortly after the meeting began) and Lake County Board Member Marah Altenberg were present. Doug Ower was present, temporarily replacing Sam Beard as the representative from Livable Lake County, and Openlands Senior Counsel Stacy Meyers later informed the body and co-chairs that she will be leaving Openlands soon and will find a replacement.

Co-Chair and Senator Melinda Bush ran the meeting and began by asking if there were edits to the May meeting minutes, which had been posted to the task force's webpage on the IDNR website. Hearing no edits or comments, Hawthorn Woods Mayor Dominick DiMaggio motioned to approve of the minutes. The motion was seconded and subsequently approved unanimously.

Senator Bush reminded the body that today's meeting would feature presentations from each of the four mayors on the Task Force: Grayslake Mayor Rhett Taylor, Mundelein Mayor Steve Lentz, Long Grove Mayor Bill Jacob, and Mayor DiMaggio. These presentations would highlight the specific interests of each of the four communities along the IL-53 expansion land corridor. After the presentations, there would be time for questions and discussion.

Senator Bush gave the floor to Mayor Taylor, who gave a brief presentation (**attached**) about the desires of his Village, Grayslake. The Mayor highlighted that Grayslake has a particular interest in protecting wetlands and woodland areas and maintaining open spaces. He supports a greenway corridor, but he would like the land to stay in the ownership of IDOT, in the event that there is a need or desire for the development of a highway. Mayor Taylor also emphasized that the Village would like to see provisions avoiding the seizure of private property through eminent domain in any plans, as there are large portions of the corridor area that still remain in private landowners' hands. Mayor Taylor communicated his goal of being a supportive partner to other municipalities and their planning processes. He ended his presentation by pointing out that the focus of the Task Force is IL-53 and not any State-owned land or plans for the IL-120 bypass. The Village would like any land associated with the latter project to not be used in this IL-53 alternative use project.

Senator Bush thanked Mayor Taylor and gave the floor to Mayor Lentz, who gave a brief presentation (**attached**) about the interests of the Village of Mundelein. Mayor Lentz showed the body the portion of the proposed corridor within his municipality and similar to Mayor Taylor's remarks, recommended that IDOT retain ownership of the land. He explained that times and needs may change and therefore flexibility was important to the Village. Mayor Lentz proposed that IDOT lease the land for the interim use of a trail system connecting green space and athletic fields. The Mayor expressed his concerns about mitigating future traffic congestion and accommodating commercial development.

Senator Bush thanked Mayor Lentz and gave the floor to Mayor Jacob, who gave a brief presentation (**attached**) about the priorities of the Village of Long Grove. Mayor Jacob showed the current zoning and future planning proposals for the region within the Village's comprehensive plan. The Mayor explained that his views run counter to those of the prior two presenters; he believes the number one priority is putting an end to any potential future of a road through Long Grove and the other communities and instead focusing on protecting and preserving environmentally sensitive areas. Mayor Jacob emphasized transit, proposing that a trail and greenway could be used for walking, biking, and golf carts and that a commuter train station along CNR tracks in North Long Grove could more greatly increase connectivity and mobility in the region.

Senator Bush thanked Mayor Jacob and gave the floor to Mayor DiMaggio, who have a brief oral presentation about the wishes of the Village of Hawthorn Woods. The Mayor expanded on Mayor Jacob's thought about the importance of making considerations to the environmentally sensitive areas and making green space the number one priority. He explained that a road extension would cut through the heart of his Village and be deadly to the community's character.

Senator Bush thanked Mayor DiMaggio and reiterated the purpose of the Task Force by reading the duties of the body as laid out in the resolution that created it. She emphasized that the resolution specifically states that the Task Force is to make a recommendation as to the alternative use of the land, which would presumably exclude the building of a highway/road. Senator Bush then opened the meeting up to questions and discussion.

Midwest Sustainability Group Executive Director Barbara Klipp expressed her disappointed with Mayor Taylor for his desire for IDOT to keep the land and thereby shutting the door to an agency like IDNR taking the land. She stated that she will be taking this issue to the Grayslake Village Board. Barbara also questioned why Mayors Taylor and Lentz signed a September 2019 letter (**attached**) addressed to Governor Pritzker that pushed for a greenway trail if they still desire to have a road extension there instead. Stacy Meyers found the letter and shared her screen so that members of the Task Force could see it. Mayor Taylor responded by saying that he wants to keep all options open but that he has some questions about land acquisition and transferring. Dan Lewis said that he will be looking into this. Mayor Lentz repeated that he wants flexibility but is not opposed to a trail; for him, the issue is ownership, not use.

Stacy Meyers concurred with Barbara, expressing her confusion with the presentations of the first two mayors in the context of the 2019 letter they signed, which emphasizes taking the opportunity (the end of the road expansion project) to preserve and protect our environment. She argued that finding alternative uses for the land such as a greenway would be legacy-building and cutting-edge of

the communities, while a road would be detrimental to them.

Allison Wilmes, a resident of Mundelein, stated that she agreed with Barbara and Stacy and communicated her desire for the Task Force to recommend a permanent solution in the form of a greenway, in order to protect the environment, assist with flood management, and increase the quality of life.

Lake County Board Member John Wasik asked if the resolution directed the Task Force to speak with land owners about acquiring more land for the corridor. Senator Bush stated that it does not. John then stated that he would like to see a greenway on the expansion land and would like to find ways to use the land for stormwater management as well. Barbara recalled a presentation by Lake County Stormwater Management at a previous meeting and pointed out that they recommended stormwater mitigation efforts at the same IL-53/IL-120 bypass area south of Grayslake that Mayor Taylor suggested could be used for development.

State Representative Daniel Didech commented that there were a great many stakeholders and strong opinions on this Task Force and this issue, but that in order for us to be successful, we all have to compromise a little. He believes that we all want the same thing: an environmentally-friendly, beneficial corridor.

Senator Bush remarked on how that, while there are disagreements over the *ownership* of the land, there seems to be agreement that a greenway should be the *use* of said land. She stated that the resolution does not require that the recommendation/report submitted to the General Assembly lay out who owns the land, but rather what the best alternative uses might be. Stacy suggested that Openlands staff draft a vision statement in the form of a resolution stating that the Task Force is in favor of a greenway.

Seeing no further discussion and nearing the end of the meeting, Senator Bush called for any additional public comments. Long Grove Village Trustee and environmentalist Rita O'Connor spoke up, expressing her concerns for the future and stressing that this is an opportunity of a lifetime to have a pristine area that can put Long Grove and Lake County on the map and tie communities together.

After no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes by Dan Lewis, IDNR
dan.p.lewis@illinois.gov

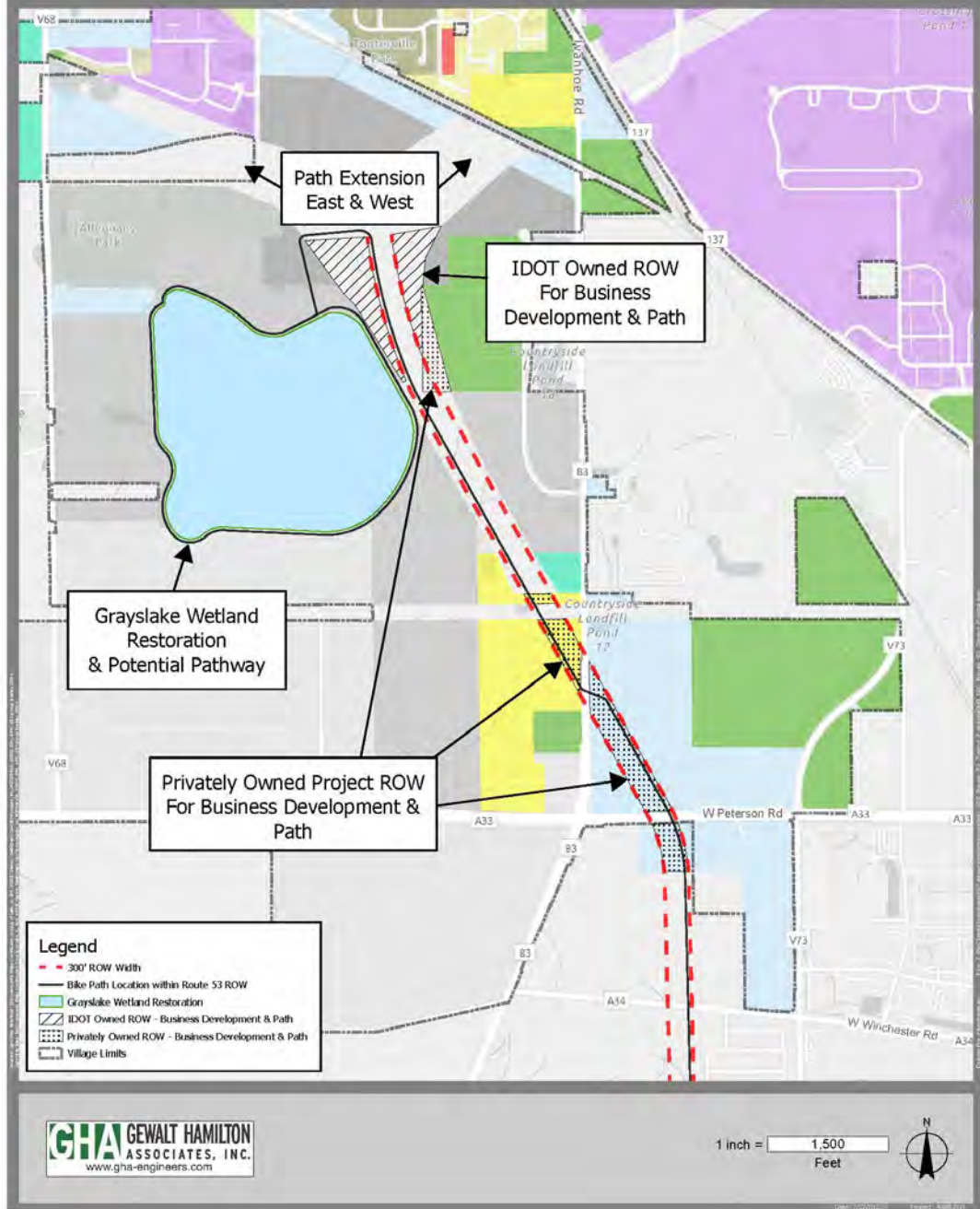
Route 53 Corridor Concept Planning General Feedback

- ◇ Grayslake could support greenway/trails in the Route 53 corridor
- ◇ Grayslake suggests that any concept plan include protections for any sensitive wetland/woodland areas (once inventoried)
 - ◇ Includes Grayslake wetland restoration area which could be a destination
- ◇ In Grayslake this would include:
 - ◇ Properties along the west side of Route 83
 - ◇ Properties near Peterson Road and Route 83 intersection

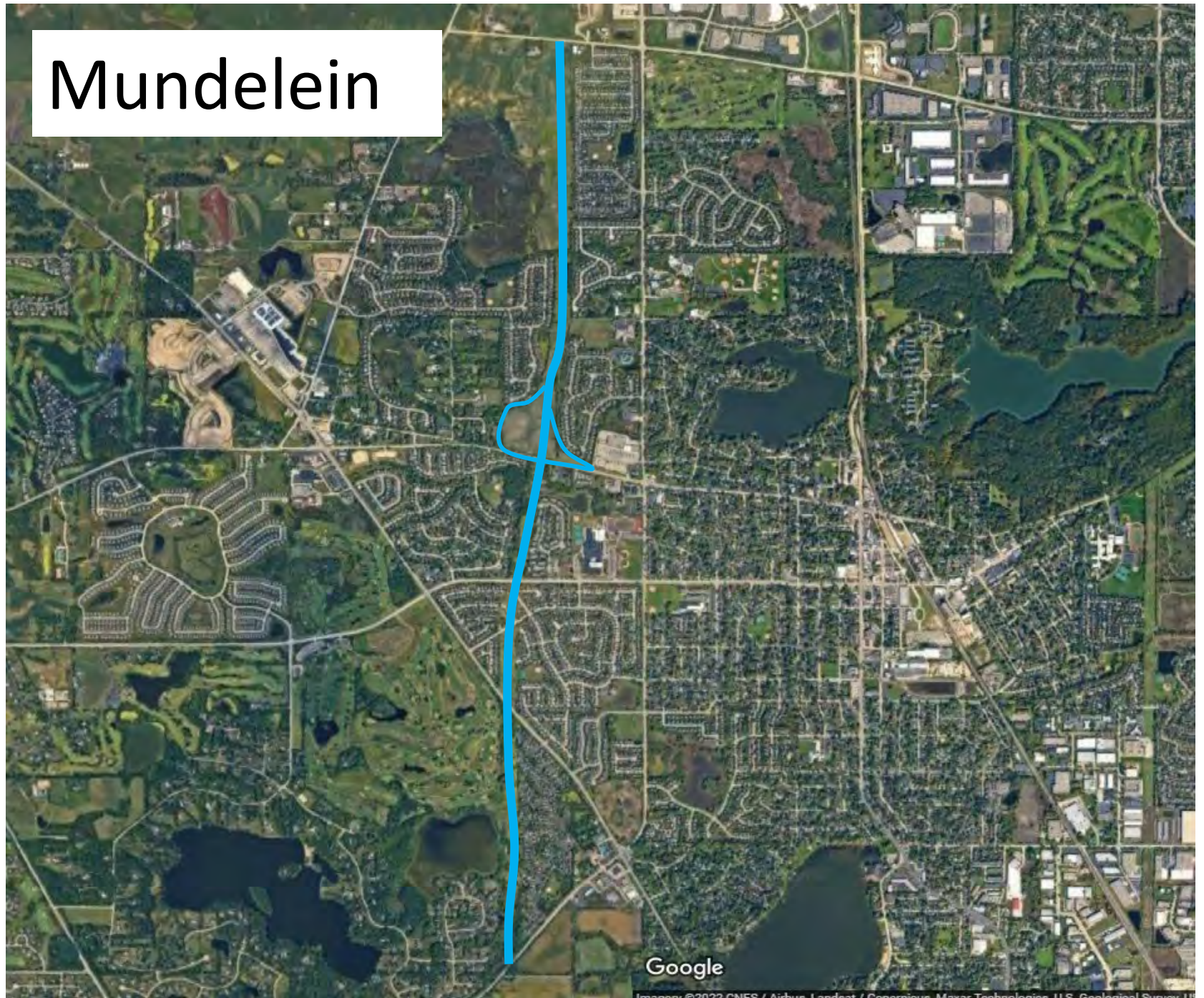
Route 53 Corridor Concept Planning General Feedback

- ◆ Grayslake is open to a greenway corridor in conjunction with IDOT's retention of the property in the event of a need for future traffic flow improvements
- ◆ If there are adjacent non-residential properties, Grayslake could support business uses at these locations while accommodating any greenway/trails
- ◆ Any plan should include provisions to avoid seizing private property through eminent domain
- ◆ Grayslake wants to be supportive of its neighboring municipalities and thus wants to ensure their visions and needs are accommodated in the planning process

Route 53 Corridor Concept Planning Feedback



Mundelein



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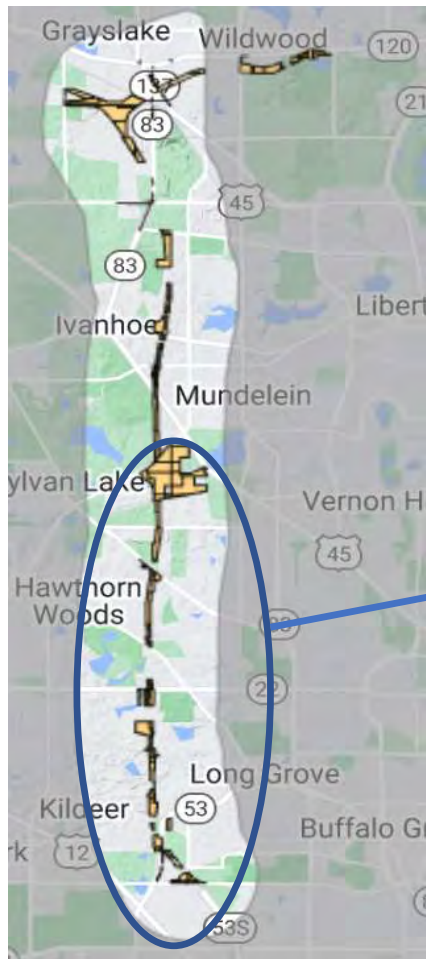
3. Mundelein supports our neighboring villages' vision for the land
 - Traffic needs to trails to commercial development
 - Ask IDOT to use or lease land to accommodate those visions

Village of



Bill Jacob
Village President

RT 53 / IDOT Parcels



Long Grove Zoning



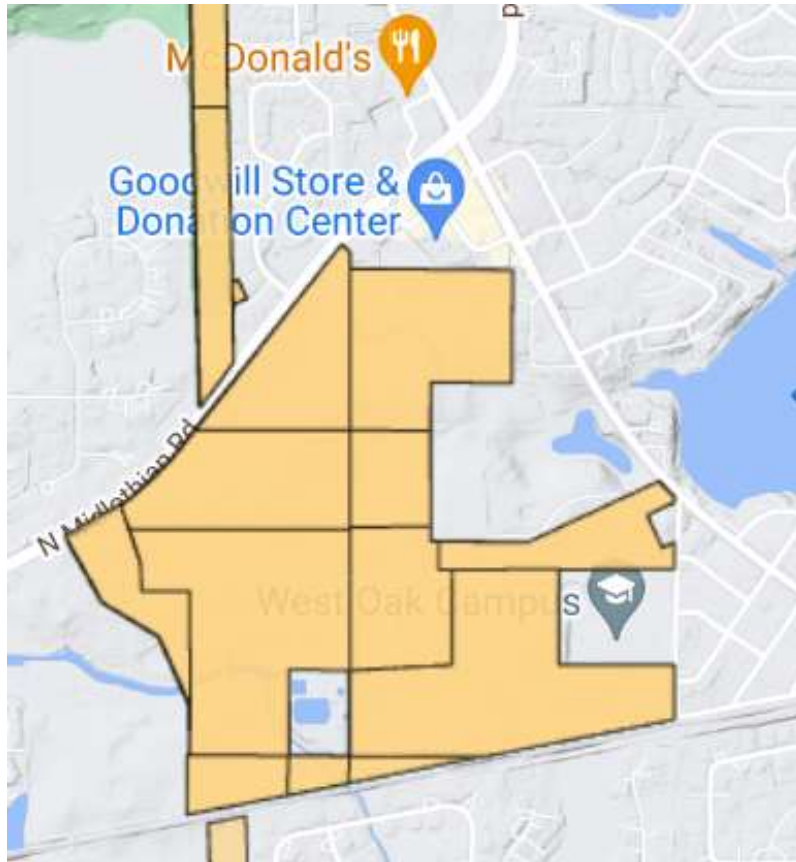
Comp Plan Sub Area



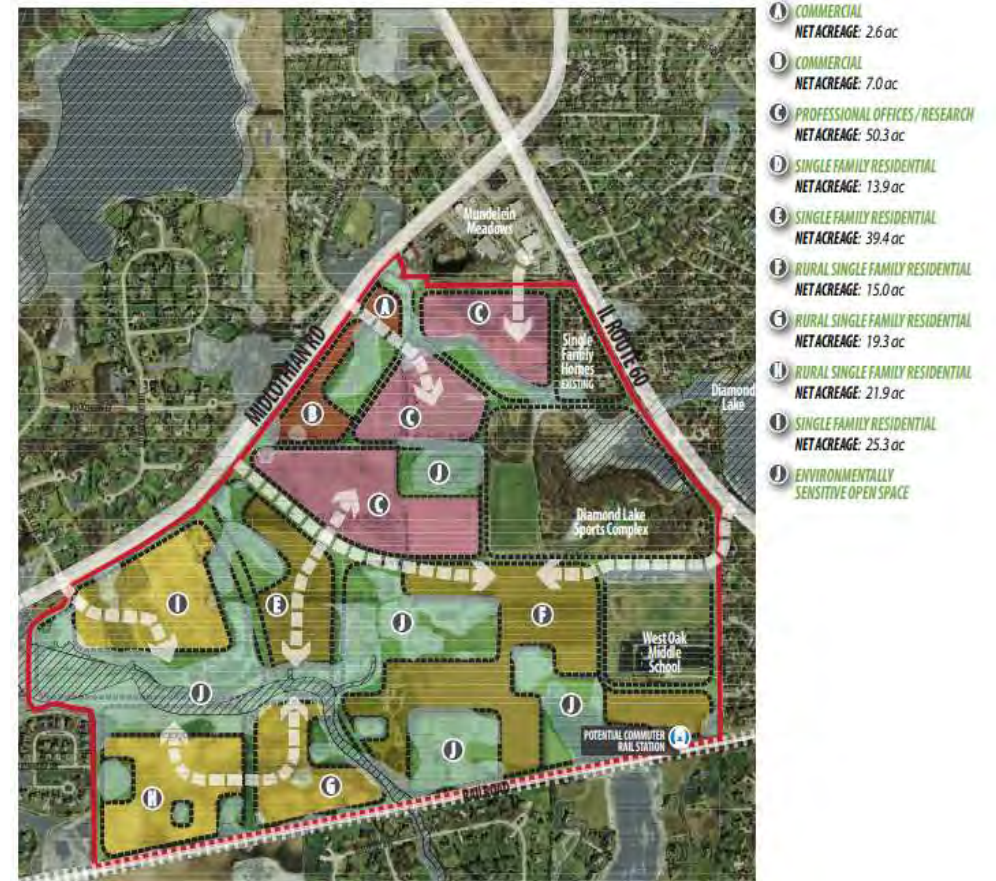
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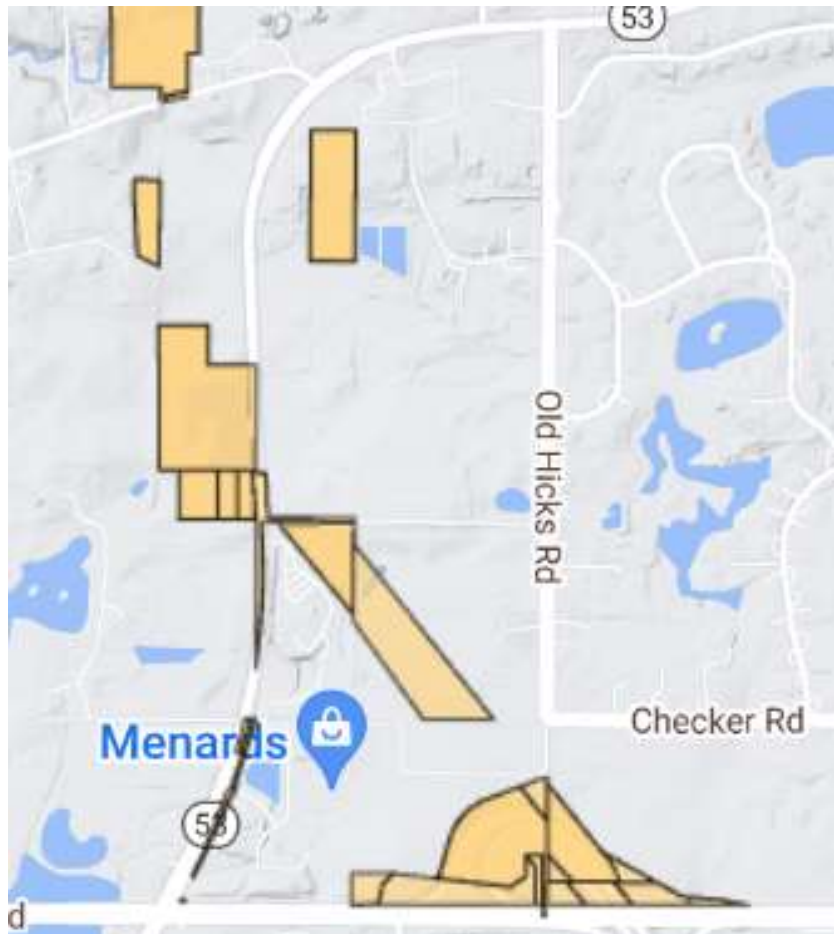
RT53 IDOT Parcels



Long Grove Comp Plan



RT53 IDOT Parcels



Long Grove Comp Plan



Long Grove Community Interest / Land Use



#1. Protecting as much as possible the Groves of Trees (our namesake), Wetlands & Natural Habitats.



#2. Providing a Greenspace for biking, walking path & even potentially golf carts.



#3. Preserving our underlying zoning including proposed land uses in our comprehensive plan.



#4. Potential commuter train station along CNR Tracks North Long Grove.

Lake County Elected Officials

September 27, 2019

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Office of the Governor
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Governor Pritzker:

As concerned State officials, Mayors and County elected representatives, we are writing to share our aspirations for the future of the 1,110 acres of land that the State of Illinois purchased over the past 40 years as part of the planning for the Route 53 Extension. With the termination of that project, these lands remain in public possession, and their fate will have a profound impact on the quality of life in Lake County – and particularly on the fabric of the communities in or near the Route 53 corridor that we represent.

It is in this spirit that we write to request a meeting with you or a representative of your administration to discuss a proposal to transform this land into a greenway trail and environmental sanctuary, as well as other Village-specific uses for this land. We believe this proposal affords the State of Illinois and local Lake County leaders a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to link our communities with a non-motorized recreational pathway, while also improving our state and local economies.

These lands embody some of the most scenic, ecologically valuable open spaces remaining in Illinois. They contain treasures as diverse as a thriving wetland complex that serves as a critical safeguard against flooding in the region, a majestic heron rookery, and countless acres brimming with delicate flora and fauna. In short, they represent an opportunity to protect one of the landscapes that give Lake County its distinctive identity and reward its residents with some of Illinois' best escapes to experience nature. We also see additional opportunities for land use that could be extensions of our communities.

We want to work with you and your designee to collaboratively develop a roadmap for transforming portions of this land into a greenway. By unleashing this potential for conservation, recreation, education, and preservation, Lake County, in concert with the State of Illinois, could parlay these lands into a public asset that preserves the aesthetics of our communities, protects against flooding and other costly environmental threats, enhances local property values, lures eco-tourism dollars, and provides spaces for our residents to savor nature, play, and spend quality time with family, friends, and neighbors.

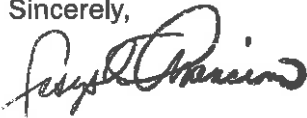
The first step toward seizing this opportunity begins with cooperation and collaboration between relevant state agencies (IDOT and the IDNR) and local Mayors, County, and State officials to develop a plan for highest and best use of this land to ensure that the public investment that was made over the decades to purchase these parcels culminates in a public space available for community health and enjoyment.

As our voices attest, this idea is resonating; but we view as a necessary first step, a meeting with you to further discuss this proposal. The results of a coordinated, collaborative approach will be a landmark achievement for our communities, for Lake County, and for the entire State of Illinois.

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Page 2
September 26, 2019

Please let us know your availability to meet to discuss our vision for this effort. We collectively appreciate your consideration of our request. Enclosed are maps highlighting the potential greenway corridor.

Sincerely,



Joseph Mancino
Mayor
Village of Hawthorn Woods



Daniel Didech
Illinois State Representative
District 59



Steve Lentz
Mayor
Village of Mundelein



Adam R. Didech
Lake County Board Member
District 20



Dale Sands
President
Village of Deer Park



Julie Simpson
Lake County Board Member
District 18



Nandia Black
President
Village of Kildeer



Jennifer Clark
Lake County Board Member
District 15



Thomas Poynton
Mayor
Village of Lake Zurich



Steve Carlson
Lake County Board Member
District 7



Bill Jacob
President
Village of Long Grove



Rhett Taylor
Mayor
Village of Grayslake



Mary Edly-Allen
Illinois State Representative
District 51



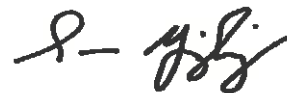
Sandy Hart
Lake County Board Chair
District 13



Jessica Vealitzek
Lake County Board Member
District 10



John Wasik
Lake County Board Member
District 6



Sam Yingling
Illinois State Representative
District 62



Dan McConchie
Illinois State Senator
District 26



PETERSON

Libertyville

Mundelein

Indian
Creek

Long Grove

LAKE COOK

Lake
Michigan

MIDLOTHIAN

LAKE
CO. CO.

COOK
CO. CO.

Miles
5

120

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22

53

90

290

12

59