



LEMONT DOWNTOWN PARKING + CIVIC SPACE STUDY

SUNSET SOIREE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Thanks to everyone who visited our Idea Booth to share innovative ideas and input on the Lemont Parking + Civic Space Study!

Event Date: August 5th | 5pm – 8pm



Stationed in Budnik Plaza, on a warm Thursday evening, the Idea Booth featured materials for folks to learn about the project and to share comments. The band was tuning up, outdoor cafes were bustling, and visitors were roaming Downtown Lemont's lively streets and sidewalks. Sunset-themed idea posters were pinned up, maps and exhibit boards were posted, comment sheets were rolled out, and plenty of sanitizer and wipes, of course. Especially as Illinois enters Phase 5 of its COVID-19 reopening plan, safer public places continue to be at the forefront of our minds. From jotting down and mapping ideas to conversation with residents, business owners and visitors, the team learned so much about what people viewed as important issues and key opportunities for the Downtown Parking + Civic Space Study.



A brief description about this project:

Project background: The Village of Lemont is working with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to develop a study that will evaluate the utilization of civic spaces, parking locations, and designations within Downtown Lemont. Established in 1836 and recognized as one of the oldest communities in northeastern Illinois, Downtown Lemont is characterized by limestone clad buildings and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. Today, Lemont continues to thrive as a mixed-use downtown, including homes, shops, restaurants, businesses, Metra station, and civic spaces. As Lemont continues to experience growth, the Downtown Study is an opportunity to evaluate existing land uses, parking supply and management, and opportunities for public placemaking.

Study Area: The project study area is generally Downtown Lemont, bounded by River Street to the north, Lockport Street to the west, Cass Street to the south, and Holmes Street to the east.



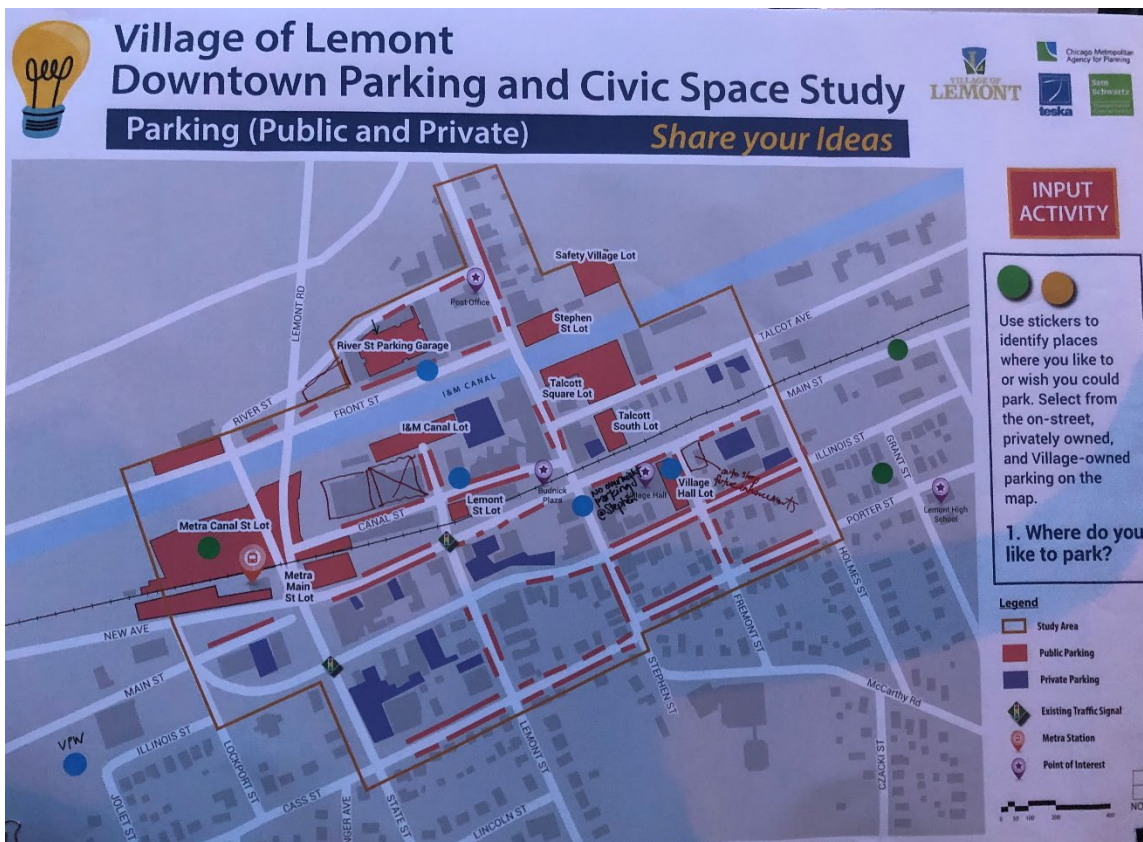


Planning + Design Team: There are four primary members of our design team and that starts with you! **(1)** Residents, business owners and stakeholders: you are the guiding element of this plan -- share what you want both in-person and online. Join in on the discussion and add your inputs to the [project mapping tool](#) today! **(2)** the Village of Lemont and CMAP. **(3)** Our steering committee, which is comprised of community partners, business owners and residents just like you! And lastly, **(4)** creative consultants – our team members include transportation planners, engineers, community planners, landscape architects and designers. We're excited to continue to work with the community to plan for Downtown Parking and Civic Space improvements in Lemont. Our team includes urban design and engagement specialists ([Teska Associates](#)), and transportation planners and engineers ([Sam Schwartz](#)).



What we heard.

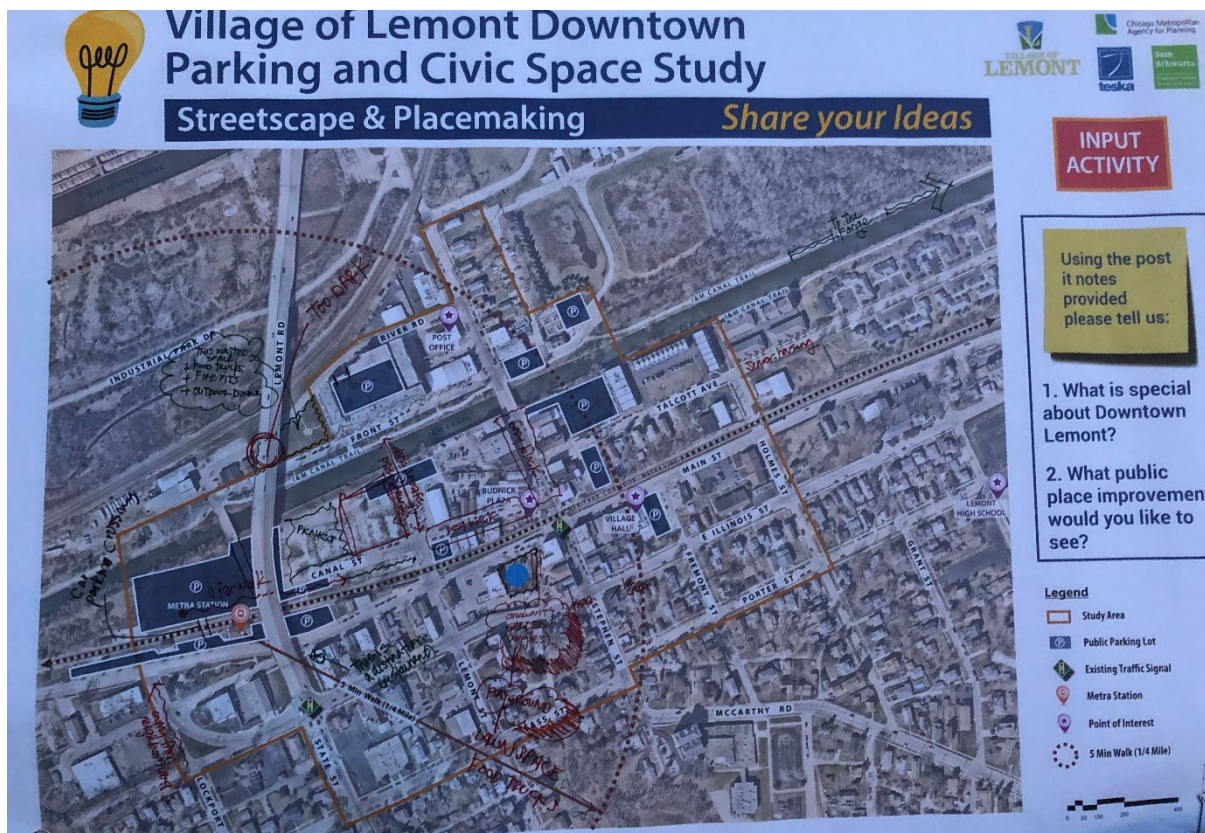
Parking and Circulation. When asked about how folks park and circulate throughout Downtown Lemont, the following comments were mentioned:



1. **Street Parking** is preferred and widely used. Most participants stated they can typically locate spaces on-street or drive around the core downtown streets until they find a space.
2. **The walk across the river to park not comfortable.** Several participants stated that the walk across the river is too long, that they felt uncomfortable or unsafe crossing the river, or that they were not aware how to get from the garage to key destinations.
3. **Off-street parking facilities within the downtown core are not easily identified by infrequent visitors.** Despite the presence of parking signage throughout the downtown area, many visitors stated they did not know which parking lots were publicly or privately available and stated interest in increasing, expanding, or enlarging the downtown's parking signage.
4. **The River Street Parking Garage** is a hidden resource. Many folks did not realize there was public parking in the garage and were unsure how to access and use it.
5. **The Metra Parking Lot** is used by some visitors; however, many were unaware that parking is available to non-commuters and/or felt the lot was too far away from Downtown destinations.

6. Newly developed shops and restaurants along Stephen Street are increasing parking demand south of the river, indicating there are opportunities to improve parking management strategies and policies in this area.
7. Some employees and property owners parking Parking enforcement is seldom enforced
8. Stephen Street has overnight parking restrictions for on-street parking south of Main Street. This is frustrating to the residents who live in the area and have no other access to parking.

Streetscape and Placemaking. When asked about how folks navigate public places and what they wish to see in Downtown Lemont, the following comments were mentioned:



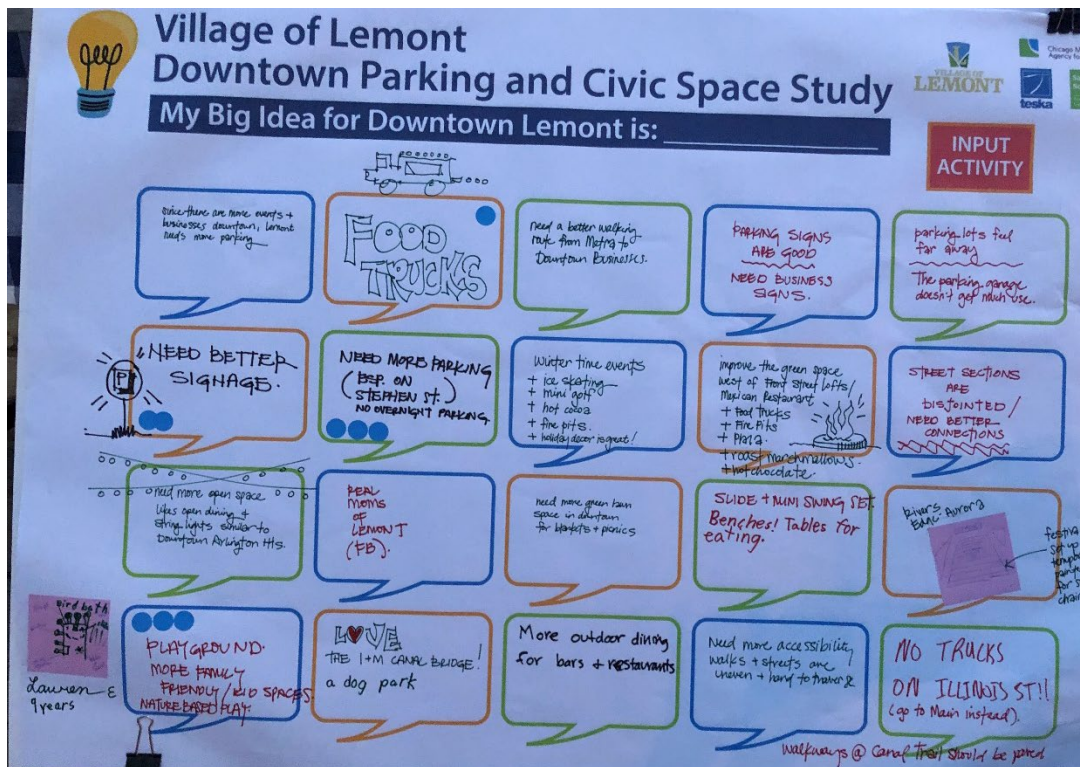
1. **Downtown is comprised of destination blocks;** however they are not well connected and feel disjointed. Participants are looking for better pedestrian linkages and a more 'circular' route throughout Downtown.
2. **Lemont Street and the pedestrian bridge over the I-M Canal** feels less safe than the other, livelier downtown blocks. It needs more lighting and aesthetic improvements.
3. **The Metra Station feels far away** from downtown. The walkways can benefit from lighting and other aesthetic improvements to make for a more interesting route.

4. **The Streetscape needs to have wider sidewalks.** Due to the elevations of businesses' doorways, the sidewalks are comprised of ramps and stairs. It is challenging to navigate the sidewalks with strollers and wheelchairs.
5. **Budnick Plaza has been livelier since the development of the adjacent restaurant** which occupies part of the plaza with outdoor tables and chairs.
6. **Downtown public spaces should provide year-round activities** including programmed winter events and family events.
7. **The green space located north of Front Street and below/east of the Lemont Rd bridge** should be a public gathering space. Programmatic ideas include food trucks, fire pits, outdoor dining, and ice skating.
8. **The planned open space to be located west of the planned Hardware Store redevelopment site, located north of Canal Street / east of the Lemont Rd bridge** should be a public plaza which also allows for picnicking.
9. **The open space located south of Main Street, west of Stephen Street should be a community gathering space.** Programmatic ideas include: community veggie gardens, nature based playground, lawn space, and food trucks.



Other great ideas. You wrote it... and doodled it too!

1. **Improved connectivity** is desired, including more attractive walking routes between parking lots, businesses, and active streetscape areas. Consider paving the walkways along the Canal Trail.
2. **The Metra parking lot and Front Street garage** feel far away and don't get much use.
3. **Wayfinding signage is attractive and functional.** Business signs are requested to help promote local shops and restaurants.
4. **More Parking** is needed to support downtown businesses, especially along Stephen Street, south of Main Street.
5. **Events are well loved**, and folks would like to see more of them, including Food Trucks Fests and Community Gatherings.
6. **Public places with seasonal events are desired** including: ice skating, mini golf, fire pits, overhead string lights, dog park, play spaces, open lawns, and picnicking. Lemont's holiday décor is well loved and should continue.
7. **Wider sidewalks are needed** for improved accessibility.
8. **More outdoor dining** is needed for bars and restaurants.
9. **Reconsider truck routes** and keep trucks off Illinois Street.
10. **Consider alternative festival setups** that accommodate more people





Missed the event? Want to tell us more? Two ways to get involved today!

1. Visit the [website](#)! There you can learn more about the project. Please be sure to ‘subscribe’ so that you can receive important announcements about upcoming events.
2. Provide your inputs to the [comment map](#)

Share this with your friends and neighbors – we’d love to hear from them too!

Stay tuned -- a neighborhood poll and public open house are in the works.

Thank you, Lemont!

Most importantly... thank you for supporting Downtown Lemont and taking the time to be a part of the Downtown Parking and Civic Space Study! We truly value your feedback and look forward to working with you to create a design that brings out the best of Downtown Lemont.

Cheers, The Planning + Design Team