

RIVERSIDE TOD SUPPORTIVE ZONING CODE UPDATE
VIRTUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

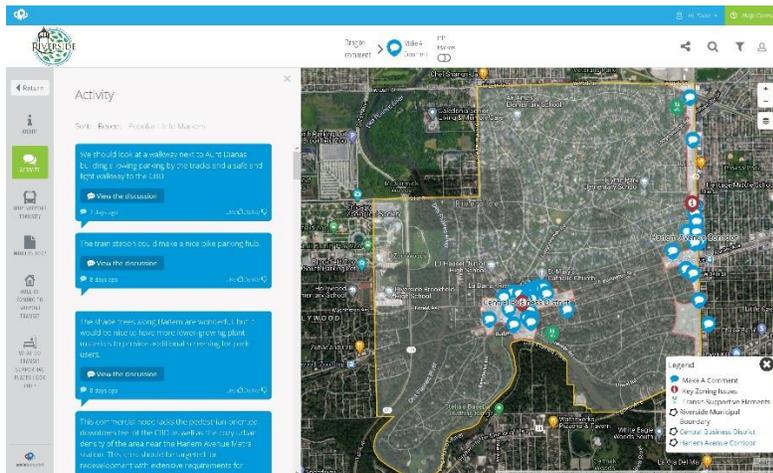
PURPOSE

The Village of Riverside hosted a Virtual Public Workshop for the Village’s Zoning Code Update focusing on making the Central Business District (CBD) and Harlem Avenue more walkable and supportive of transit. The web-based workshop ran from October 12, 2020, through November 2, 2020, with the intent to gather input from residents, businesses, property owners, community leaders, and other stakeholders on the role of zoning in supporting walkability and transit in two of Riverside’s most prominent areas. In addition to providing comments, participants were able to provide upvotes (▲) or downvotes (▼) for comments with which they agreed or disagreed, respectively.

Workshop Link:

<https://egretandox.mysocialpinpoint.com/riversidezoning#/>

The following summary breaks down the comments by the two focus areas: (1) Central Business District; and (3) Harlem Avenue



45

TOTAL COMMENTS

17

UPVOTES / DOWNVOTES ON OTHER PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

511

TOTAL SITE VISITS

193

UNIQUE USERS (i.e., PARTICIPANTS WHO VISITED THE SITE, REGARDLESS IF THEY LEFT A COMMENT OR NOT)

10

UNIQUE STAKEHOLDERS (i.e., PARTICIPANTS WHO LEFT A COMMENT AND/OR UPVOTE / DOWNVOTE)

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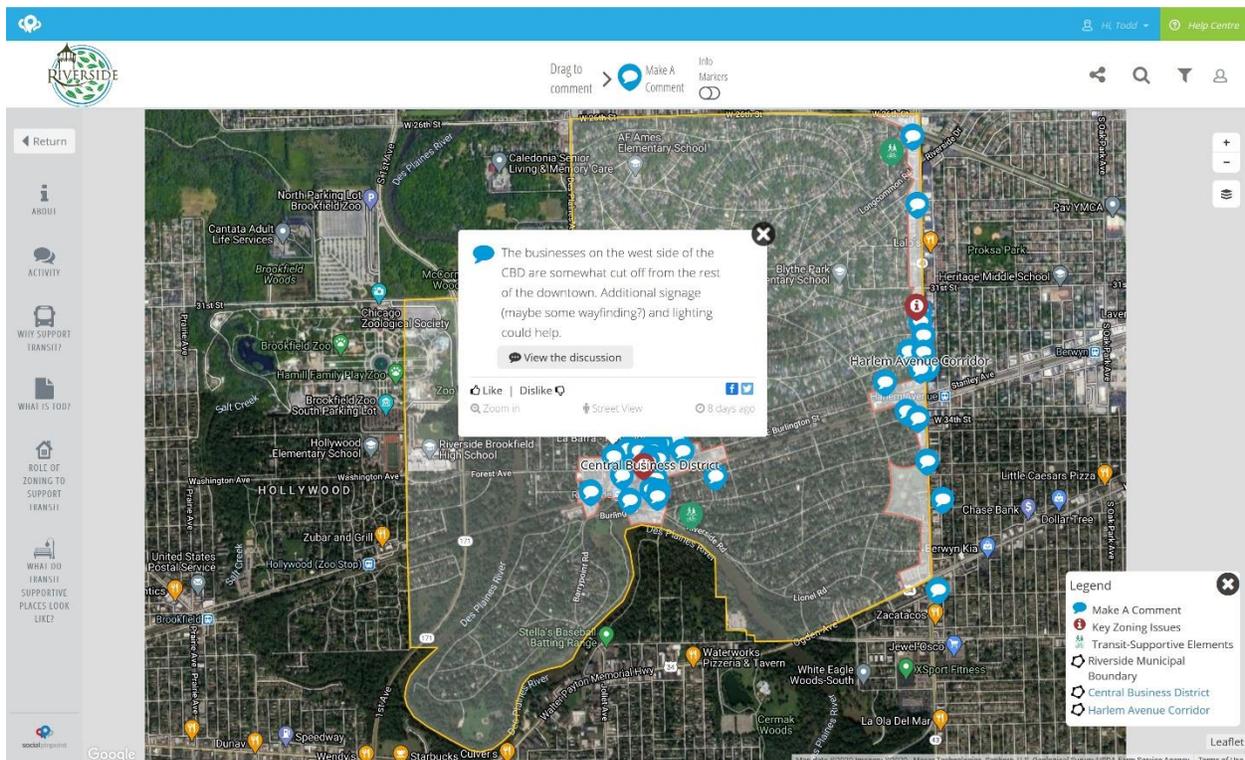


WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

COMMENTS ON THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

A majority of comments for the Central Business District (CBD) relate to the area along Burlington Street and east of Riverside Road. Comments regarding the CBD generally focused on the elements listed below (number of comment mentions in parentheses). Most comments have a zoning component, which can be addressed by this planning process. In addition, solutions or responses to certain comments have the capacity to enhance walkability and the transit-supportive nature of the CBD. Of particular note, building height was mentioned twice, with an appropriate height in the range of 3 to 5 stories.



FREQUENT COMMENTS

- **Parking:** (7 mentions) – Only one comment indicated the need to modify parking requirements (in this case: “reconsider parking requirements in the parking lot east of Riverside Foods”). Four comments relate to parking along the railroad, including the potential to add bike parking at the Metra station, provide parking along the tracks, and improve consistent signage along the tracks. Two other



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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comments relate to physical improvements to parking areas, including landscaping, public art, and green infrastructure.

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities:** (5 mentions) – Comments generally relate to maintaining a safe walking environment, whether through pavement repairs, lighting. A bike path connecting the CBD to Harlem Avenue was suggested. One participant even indicated that the CBD and Riverside overall is already fairly walkable and bikeable, with the drawback being a lack of bike parking. The need for more bike parking was mentioned multiple times.
- **Signs:** (4 mentions) – Signage was mentioned primarily as a means to improve wayfinding and add character to buildings. One participant suggested the potential to use signs as an incentive for ground-floor offices to provide window displays in exchange for additional signage.
- **Building Height:** (2 mentions) – Building height was only mentioned twice. One participant indicated 3 stories as appropriate for buildings in the B2 District, while another stated that 5 stories could work in the CBD, particularly in a mixed use format in the area east of the La Barra building.
- Other elements each receiving at least 2 mentions: **Lighting, Landscaping, Public Art/Murals**

ORIGINAL COMMENTS

*NOTE: Items marked in **bold italics** highlight elements that may be addressed via Zoning Code amendments.*

- D1. We should look at a walkway next to Aunt Dianas building ***allowing parking by the tracks*** and a ***safe and light walkway to the CBD*** [▲0|▼0]
- D2. The ***pavers*** that were put in a few years ago are ***pretty bumpy***. It's ***hard to walk on*** for people with balance issues or with walkers. [▲0|▼1]
- D3. ***B2 Building Heights***. I think that ***3 stories is appropriate***. [▲0|▼2]
- D4. ***Building facades in B1 & B2***. Village should ***mandate exterior elevations/facades that are varied, textured, interesting***, with insets (like doorways that provide small alcoves), protrusions (cornices, brows, built-out archways, etc.), varied textures (affirmatively allow metal, wood, etc. on exteriors; textured brick superior to modern flat, orange bricks); brick patterning. ***Consider allowing 2nd stories that overhang walks. Use point system to get some such features in new projects.*** [▲0|▼0]
- D5. ***There isn't much of a sense of connection between the CBD and Harlem***. One solution to this could be a ***bike path running along the former railroad siding on the north side of the BNSF***. While such a bike path may involve areas outside the scope of the project, nonetheless ***zoning could prepare for such a development*** if desired such as requiring that rear fencing include a gate (so tenants have access) and so on. [▲1|▼0]



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

- D6. *Add a traffic light with turn signals on Burlington and Longcommon* by la barra restaurant. Too many cars don't wait their turn at the stop sign. [▲1|▼3]
- D7. I think that the *CBD and Riverside in general already is very walkable and bike able* (despite the absence of bike lanes, the *low vehicle usage of the streets makes biking relatively safe and appealing*). The only exception is the *absence of places to park and secure their bicycles*: for people to bike to the CBD or Harlem Avenue and utilize retail, there must be ubiquitous *bike racks* and even some *small bike corrals*. [▲2|▼0]
- D8. Given current trends, I think *five stories would work here*. We have few areas for redevelopment, and a *mixed-use building with multiple facades would be great*. [▲1|▼0]
- D9. *Housing for aging-in-place, close to shops and restaurants as well as the train station*, would be ideal here. [▲1|▼0]
- D10. *Reconsider parking requirements [parking lot east of Riverside Foods]*. [▲1|▼0]
- D11. There are *a number of office-type uses in the CBD that appear uninviting*. Perhaps businesses could be *offered additional signage in exchange for providing some sort of window display*. [▲0|▼0]
- D12. This *[Metra station parking lot]* is an *attractive parking lot*, as far as parking lots go. [▲0|▼0]
- D13. All of the *parking along the railroad tracks could use improved, consistent signage* to help customers understand where and when they can park. [▲0|▼0]
- D14. The buildings at *30 & 40 E. Burlington are visual dead spaces*. They *could use additional landscaping, signage, anything to add a little character*. [▲0|▼0]
- D15. The *outdoor dining here [La Barra Restaurant] is a nice element of street activity*. [▲0|▼0]
- D16. The *businesses on the west side of the CBD are somewhat cut off from the rest of the downtown*. *Additional signage* (maybe some wayfinding?) *and lighting could help*. [▲0|▼0]
- D17. This *parking lot [east of First American Bank]* is probably necessary to support the surrounding businesses, but it *could use additional landscaping and/or public art* to make it more attractive. [▲0|▼0]
- D18. The *train station* could make a *nice bike parking hub*. [▲0|▼0]
- D19. This *[Chew Chew] building* has a *great mix of awning, projecting, and wall signs*. [▲0|▼0]
- D20. When this *parking lot [Village Hall]* is redone, it *should use green infrastructure* construction methods and be *reconfigured to provide additional green space*. [▲0|▼0]
- D21. There are *so many curb cuts on this side of the street [Burlington Street]*! Pedestrians must constantly be on the lookout for cars coming in and out of all the driveways. [▲0|▼0]
- D22. The *east wall of Riverside Foods* would be a *great place for a mural*. [▲0|▼0]

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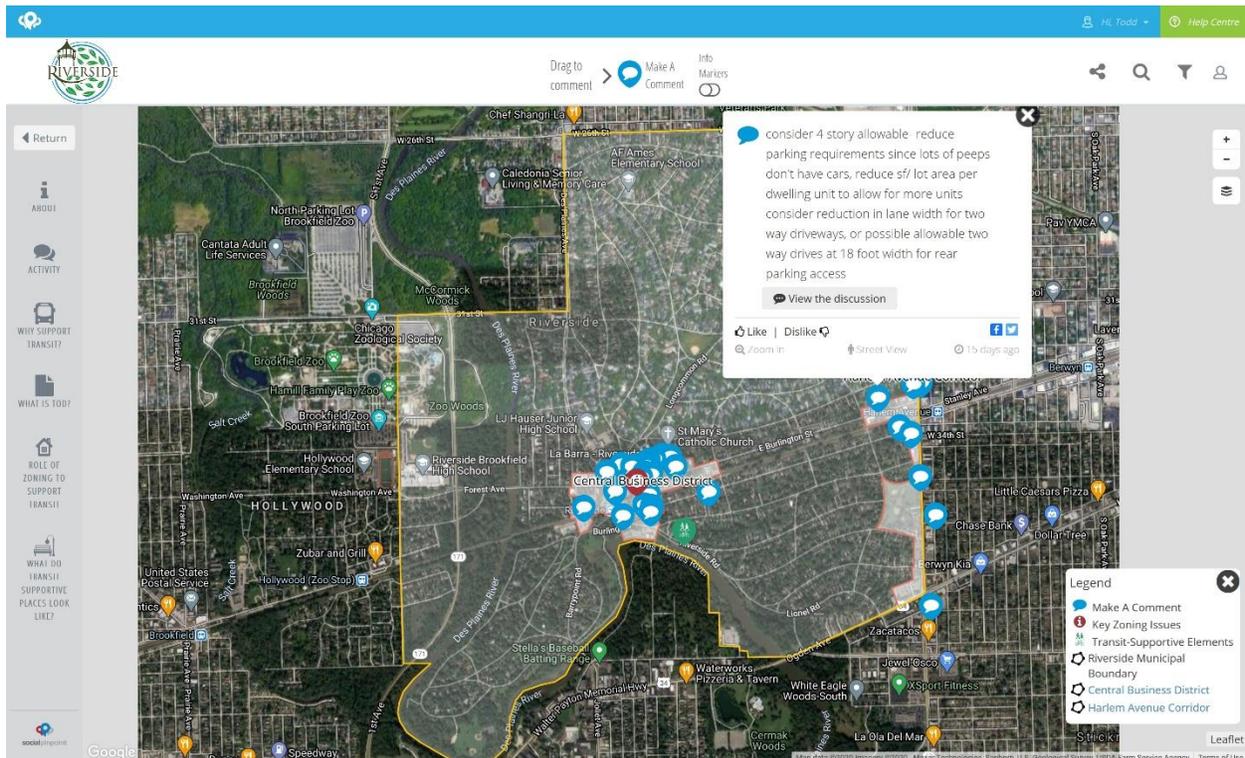


WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

COMMENTS ON HARLEM AVENUE

The comments for Harlem Avenue are dispersed along the entire corridor, with a significant concentration of comments north of the Burlington Street intersection, which is near the Harlem Avenue Metra Station in neighboring Berwyn. Comments regarding Harlem Avenue generally focused on the elements listed below (number of comment mentions in parentheses). Most comments have a zoning component, which can be addressed by this planning process. In addition, solutions or responses to certain comments have the capacity to enhance walkability and the transit-supportive nature of the Harlem Avenue Corridor. Of particular note, building height was mentioned five times, with an appropriate height of 4 stories (with one participant indicating the 5+ stories may be appropriate south of Burlington Street).





WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

FREQUENT COMMENTS

- **Parking:** (9 mentions) – Multiple comments about reducing the footprint of parking, including suggestions for reduced parking standards, elimination of parking requirements tied to dwelling units, metered street parking, and underground parking. Parking at the rear of buildings is supported, but some sites aren't deep or large enough to accommodate such an arrangement. One participant suggested making private parking lots open to the public (Bank of America example).
- **Signs:** (7 mentions) – Strong support for blade signs and signs with more character than box signs. Mixed feelings on illuminated and neon signs, particularly in commercial areas and along the railroad tracks as a means to attract the attention of Metra riders. However, two participants brought up the need for "attention-getting signs" along the railroad.
- **Building Height:** (5 mentions) – The recommended maximum building height for Harlem Avenue seems to be 4 stories, with one participant linking this height as an incentive for reduced parking. One participant suggested that 5+ stories may be appropriate south of Burlington Street.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities:** (5 mentions) – Comments primarily advocate for making Harlem Avenue more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. Suggested improvements include wider sidewalks, bike parking, and uses that generate foot traffic.
- **Ground Floor Uses:** (3 mentions) – Two comments recommend retail at the ground floor, while one comment doesn't preclude office, particularly as part of a live/work arrangement.
- **Architecture/Façades:** (3 mentions) – Comments generally support high quality design of developments along Harlem Avenue, including façade improvements.
- **Mixed Use:** (3 mentions) – Two comments in particular advocate for mixed use development as a way to "encourage walking to bus or train" and enhance the "walkable, accessible and usable nature of Harlem."
- **Yards/Setbacks:** (3 mentions) – These comments generally relate to the limited capacity for certain sites to provide space for parking, sidewalks, etc. One participant suggested bulk requirements for the B1-C District.
- Other elements each receiving at least 2 mentions: **Office Uses, Lighting, Fences/Buffers, Landscaping, Signs Facing the Railroad, Public Art/Murals**



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

ORIGINAL COMMENTS

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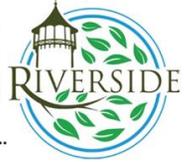
- H1. Any new *mixed use developments* along Harlem *should have attractive, plaza-like, landscaping in front to encourage walking to bus or train. Rear and/or underground parking* would help here. [▲0|▼0]
- H2. Riverside already has *more than enough mixed residence types* (a lot of housing that is not single-family). I do support *live/work arrangements* but I think that current zoning - and on the ground structures - already allows for that. *Co-working or office-sharing spaces* should be popularized. [▲0|▼0]
- H3. The *parking lot on Harlem and Burlington* used to be public and now it's *controlled by Bank of America*. I used to park there to go to the stores on Harlem avenue but now I have to park a half a block away. That parking lot *should be made available to Riverside residents again*. [▲0|▼0]
- H4. *Signage and illumination in B1-C and B1-TC*. Current sign and illumination *limits should be loosened. esp. on Harlem and Ogden, where buildings face other commercial areas*, Village should *allow large and brightly illuminated signs, neon, etc., that are visible to motorists* in the evening (which is long in winter); this also could *allow for more creativity*. Also, *if a building borders Harlem sidewalk, REQUIRE blade or projecting signs* so pedestrians AND motorists can easily ID businesses." [▲0|▼0]
- H5. *Parking in the B1 District*. Village should *allow underground parking at appropriately large buildings/lots*, e.g. the property at corner of *Harlem and Ogden* or at corner of *26th and Ogden*, this would allow for more buildable space. *While requiring parking behind buildings along Harlem, because space may be tight, allow 4 stories, meter street parking, make access points to rear parking lots obvious to motorists*. In connection with *rear lots, allow tall fencing rather than vegetated buffers*." [▲0|▼0]
- H6. *B1-C Bulk Requirements*, recommended changes: [▲0|▼0]
- Allow *4 stories* as Permitted Use
 - Don't require side yards*
 - Rear parking* important, but *unsure how to do this on many of these lots which are not deep*.
 - Reduce rear yard from 25' if parking still possible*.
 - Allow taller fencing* to serve as barrier at lot line *rather than vegetated buffers to allow for more buildable space*.
- H7. *Some properties* on Harlem look to be *far too small to encourage commercial redevelopment*, especially if one wishes to replace the narrow sidewalks on Harlem with something *more pedestrian friendly*. Property owners adjacent to these small commercial lots should be consulted to determine what they would consider acceptable if they were allowed to expand. [▲0|▼0]



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

- H8. *LED lighting* is great for energy-saving, but the village should have a *restriction on Kelvin temperature* as other municipalities have done. For example, lighting visible to the public (including stairwells) should be generally restricted to under 3200K, especially if it is facing residential areas. [▲1|▼0]
- H9. *Live work* is a *good option for ground floor retail/ office* for some professional and artist/ design type professions [▲0|▼0]
- H10. *The NW corner building on Harlem & Addison is four stories, which suggests a minimum acceptable height along Harlem.* Some variation in this may be allowed, such as lower restrictions when residential properties are quite close to Harlem. Along the *south side of Burlington*, I would suggest the opposite and *allow for five stories or more*. For example, *if a structure incorporates a public [parking] garage on Harlem & Burlington, I would allow for additional height in the zoning.* [▲1|▼0]
- H11. *Elimination of parking requirements tied to dwelling units* is needed on the *existing small lot areas*, parking takes up a tonne of space [▲0|▼0]
- H12. Consider *4 story allowable- reduce parking requirements* since lots of peeps don't have cars, *reduce sf/ lot area per dwelling unit to allow for more units*, consider *reduction in lane width for two way driveways*, or *possible allowable two way drives at 18 foot width for rear parking access* [▲0|▼0]
- H13. Does the water table allow for *underground parking*? If so, this could be a *good solution for future Harlem Ave. developments.* [▲0|▼0]
- H14. *Blade signs* can be highly attractive and effective and should be allowed. However, *I don't believe neon signs should be allowed to face the Railroad* (or residential or mixed use properties for that matter), rather than *"attention-getting signage"* (which could increase visual clutter) *facing the Railroad, train riders might be intrigued* by large photo murals celebrating Riverside's past and present on the backs of participating buildings spanning from Harlem to the CBD." [▲0|▼0]
- H15. *Signage in B2 District. Blade signs:* unclear to me if they are effectively banned in B2 because they'd project into public ROW; if so, change this. *Neon signs:* allow on rear of buildings if rear faces Railroad or other commercial properties. *Encourage signage, murals, other attention-getting signage on rear of buildings facing Railroad."* [▲0|▼1]
- H16. To make Harlem more appealing to visit, I recommend: (for all of *B1-C*): *wide sidewalks (around 10 feet?); interesting and attractive building facades* (consider loosening zoning restrictions on facade materials so more creative designs can be used that use metal, wood, panels, etc.); *interesting establishments* essential and this could imply current landlords are not enticing tenants - why is this? what can Village do to change this? *Bike parking stations - more racks or even bike corrals."* [▲1|▼0]
- H17. As a driver, I avoid Harlem, especially between Burlington and Quincy, but extends from I-55 to Cermak. This is due to the *train tracks and, if northbound, left-turners*. Currently there are no businesses that I



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Last Revised: November 10, 2020

frequent on Harlem, with the exception of Minuteman/Amstar, which I access from within the village. [▲0|▼0]

H18. *Mixed use, ground floor retail, facade improvement, greenway (planters, trees)* would all *enhance the walkable, accessible and usable nature of Harlem*. [▲0|▼0]

H19. The unbroken runs of storefronts along Harlem make it actually quite pleasant to walk along. Some *minimal streetscape elements would be nice*, and it would be great to *replace the box signs* with designs that have a bit more character. [▲0|▼0]

H20. The *shade trees along Harlem are wonderful*, but it would be nice to have *more lower-growing plant materials to provide additional screening* for park users. [▲0|▼0]

H21. The *residential stretch of Harlem between Addison and Kent doesn't really feel like a "corridor,"* but I'm not sure that we would want to *encourage more pedestrian activity* here. [▲0|▼0]

H22. There is a *nice mix of businesses* here that I would never, ever notice if I didn't walk past them *on the way to the Metra station*. [▲0|▼0]

H23. This *commercial node [NW corner of Harlem Avenue and Longcommon Road] lacks the pedestrian-oriented downtown feel of the CBD as well as the cozy urban density of the area near the Harlem Avenue Metra station*. This area should be *targeted for redevelopment* with extensive requirements for landscaping and high-quality building design. [▲0|▼0]