

Downtown Huntley expansion touted during 2020 State of Huntley address

D-158 solar project to be finished by March

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In addition to the opening of numerous retail businesses and a new fire station, Huntley is looking to expand its downtown footprint by 66%, Village Manager Dave Johnson said during 2020's State of Huntley address.

One project pivotal to these downtown expansion plans is the redevelopment of the Catty property, 11117 S. Church St.

A proposal under discussion would feature 12,200 square feet for industrial event space; about 4,900 square feet for boutique lodging; 3,200 square feet for a cocktail bar; 1,630 square feet for a food and beverage tenant; 3,300 square feet for business incubation; 2,600 square feet for civic flex space; and 5,000 square feet for corporate office space.

Johnson said the village is in the very early stages of putting an agreement together for this development.

"I'll tell you it's not going to come cheap and it's not going to be easy, but this is a major expansion of our downtown," Johnson said.

After the site was acquired by the village, a facility assessment by Dewberry Architects laid out various development options to show possible costs. In one outcome, a developer could renovate the original building and demolish building additions south of it for \$5.8 million. In another, developers could demolish the building and all on-site structures and build a new two-story, 24,000-square-foot commercial/retail building for \$7.6 million.

This project would tie directly with Illinois' Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan approved earlier this year, which includes a \$275 million railway project establishing rail service between Chicago and Rockford with Huntley as one of the stops.

"This is big and it's part of the overall synergy that's going on in the downtown," Johnson said.

Other businesses expected to come in 2020 include More Brewing, Thorntons, Jewel-Osco, Starbucks. Despite numerous setbacks, Johnson said he also was optimistic that Huntley finally would see a Panera Bread on Route 47 and Kreutzer Road.

Following Johnson's presentation, Huntley District 158 Superintendent Scott Rowe highlighted a [major solar power project](#) across the district's three campuses that is expected to wrap up in March. The solar panel installation is expected to save the district \$4.2 million over the 20 years of the contract, and offset 12.3 million pounds of carbon emissions in the first year, according to the district's partner, ForeFront Power.

"We're using the power of the sun and shifting our energy from burning to learning," Rowe said.