



Memorandum No. 1

**Conditions Inventory, Public Input
and
Issues and Opportunities Summary**



VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
and
BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR PLAN



DRAFT

HNTB URBAN DESIGN + PLANNING
In Association With: GOODMAN WILLIAMS GROUP

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| A. Need for an Updated Plan | 1 |
| B. The Planning Process | 1 |
| C. A Special Note on the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea | 3 |
| D. Organization of the Report | 5 |
| II. PHYSICAL PLANNING CONTEXT | 6 |
| A. Locational Framework | 6 |
| B. Existing Land Use and Conditions | 6 |
| C. Transit, Circulation and Parking | 12 |
| 1. <i>Transit Facilities and Services</i> | 12 |
| 2. <i>Traffic Access and Circulation</i> | 17 |
| 3. <i>Parking</i> | 19 |
| D. Urban Design | 20 |
| 1. <i>BNSF Railroad Corridor</i> | 21 |
| 2. <i>Neighborhood Commercial Areas</i> | 23 |
| 3. <i>Community Visual Preferences</i> | 24 |
| E. Community Facilities and Resources | 26 |
| 1. <i>Educational Facilities</i> | 26 |
| 2. <i>Municipal Facilities</i> | 29 |
| 3. <i>Recreational and Open Space Facilities and Resources</i> | 31 |
| 4. <i>Historic and Architectural Resources</i> | 32 |
| 5. <i>Other Community Resources</i> | 33 |
| III. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT | 35 |
| A. Previous Planning Policies | 35 |
| B. Development Regulations | 36 |
| C. Economic Development | 42 |
| 1. <i>Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Program</i> | 42 |
| 2. <i>Business Development Organizations</i> | 43 |
| 3. <i>Economic Development Tools</i> | 43 |
| IV. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES | 45 |
| A. Market Conditions – Key Findings and Synthesis | 45 |
| B. Issues and Opportunities Summary | 47 |
| 1. <i>Summary of Community-Wide Planning Issues</i> | 47 |
| 2. <i>Summary of Community-Wide Planning Opportunities</i> | 48 |
| 3. <i>Summary of BNSF Railroad Corridor Planning Issues</i> | 49 |
| 4. <i>Summary of BNSF Railroad Corridor Planning Opportunities</i> | 50 |
| APPENDIX | A- 1 |
| A. Steering Committee Membership List | A- 1 |
| B. Key Person Interview and Focus Group List | A- 2 |
| C. Public Input Meeting Summaries | A- 4 |
| D. Key Person Interview Summary | A-11 |
| E. Focus Group Summaries | A-13 |
| F. Visual Preference Survey- Preliminary Results Summary | A-14 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1: | Vicinity Map | 2 |
| 2: | BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Boundary | 4 |
| 3a: | Existing Land Use North of 47 th Street | 7 |
| 3b: | Existing Land Use South of 47 th Street | 8 |
| 4: | BNSF Railroad Corridor Existing Land Use | 9 |
| 5: | Transit, Access and Circulation | 13 |
| 6: | Streetscape and Urban Design Features | 22 |
| 7a: | Community Facilities North of 47 th Street | 27 |
| 7b: | Community Facilities South of 47 th Street | 28 |
| 8a: | Existing Zoning North of 47 th Street | 37 |
| 8b: | Existing Zoning South of 47 th Street | 38 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1: | Existing Land Use Distribution | 12 |
| 2: | Weekday Boardings Over Time – Metra BNSF Line | 15 |
| 3: | Average Daily Ridership – Pace Bus Routes | 16 |
| 4: | Average Daily Traffic Counts | 18 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The Village of La Grange, Illinois has initiated an update of its Comprehensive Plan. This background summary report is the first major element of the update process. The Comprehensive Plan is the Village's official policy guide to future land use and development and conservation within the community, and also provides guidance with regard to transportation and community facilities. The update process will address these issues from a Village-wide perspective, while also placing emphasis on land use, transportation and urban design issues within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

It is important to emphasize that a Comprehensive Plan is a *policy guide*. Unlike other Village codes and ordinances which are adopted as enforceable law, a Comprehensive Plan is an advisory tool to be consulted and considered by the Plan Commission and Village Board and other officials when land use changes and capital facilities are proposed. It is long-range in orientation and intended to express general community aspirations. Yet, it is specific enough to guide day-to-day activities of the Plan Commission, Village Board and Village Administration.

A. NEED FOR AN UPDATED PLAN

The Village of La Grange was incorporated in 1879. Commuter rail service had begun several years earlier. F. D. Cossitt, the Village's founder, named the community for his hometown in Tennessee. The Village is predominantly residential in character, with a thriving commercial district concentrated along La Grange Road at the BNSF Railroad and vibrant and attractive institutions and open spaces located throughout the community. *Figure 1: Vicinity Map* indicates the Village of La Grange along with surrounding communities and regional access routes.

The Village's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1970. A more detailed plan that addressed the Central Business District and surrounding areas was adopted in 1986 and served as the basis for a very successful tax increment finance district enacted in the same year. As useful as they once were, the passage of time has rendered these documents largely obsolete. In fact, many of the major recommendations contained within these existing plans have been implemented and they no longer provide effective development policy guidance.

Reinvestment and redevelopment within the Central Business District over the last decade has raised redevelopment pressures on both commercial and residential properties. The beginning of significant "teardown" single family residential redevelopment is also impacting several residential areas of the Village. For all of these reasons, the Village has undertaken the development of an updated Comprehensive Plan that will take into account the changed conditions in and around the Village and provide effective policy guidance into the future.

B. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The update of the Comprehensive Plan is being guided by a Steering Committee comprised of Village staff and officials, representatives of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra and Pace, and key community stakeholders and leaders (refer to the Appendix for a complete list of Steering Committee members). The planning process is being facilitated by HNTB, a Chicago based urban planning and design firm. HNTB is assisted by Goodman Williams Group for demographic and market assessment considerations.

FIGURE 1
VICINITY MAP



Forest Preserve

This report culminates the first major step in the Comprehensive Plan process, summarizing the results of background research on existing community conditions, and a series of public input opportunities. After review and discussion of the contents of this report and materials prepared by Goodman Williams Group with the Steering Committee and interested members of the public, the consulting team will develop preliminary planning goals and objectives and physical planning concepts for both the Village as a whole and the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Planning precedents from similar “transit-oriented” communities will also be researched. The alternative plan concepts and precedents will be reviewed and discussed by the Steering Committee, and presented to interested members of the public for review and comment. The Steering Committee will select a preferred concept (for both the BNSF corridor and the community as a whole) and authorize the consulting team to prepare a complete draft Comprehensive Plan.

After review and approval of the draft Comprehensive Plan by the Steering Committee and the community, it will be forwarded to the Plan Commission for review and comment at a Public Hearing. After refinement based upon Plan Commission and public comments, the final Comprehensive Plan will be sent to the Village Board with a recommendation for adoption. Once adopted by the Village Board, the Comprehensive Plan becomes the *policy guide* for the Village with regard to land use and development issues.

Community Involvement To Date

Several meetings have been held to date to solicit input regarding general planning issues and opportunities within the Village, including the following:

- Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting, September 11, 2003
- La Grange Business Association Monthly Meeting, September 11, 2003
- Community Workshop 1, October 7, 2003
- Community Workshop 2, October 20, 2003
- Key Person Interviews, November 3 and 4, 2003
- Focus Groups, November 5, 2003

Comments received during all meetings held to date have been recorded and summarized for future reference by the Steering Committee and consulting team. Complete summaries of comments received during the aforementioned meetings are included in the Appendix of this report. The main “issues and opportunities” identified during the meetings are also included in the final section of the report.

C. A SPECIAL NOTE ON THE BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR SUBAREA

References are made throughout this report to the “BNSF Railroad Corridor.” *Figure 2: BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Boundary* provides a graphic representation of the general area encompassed by the Corridor. This area of the Village has been identified for particular emphasis within the planning process, due to its importance to the quality of life for all Village residents, the presence of several key transportation modes within the area, and the likelihood of significant private sector redevelopment pressure in the coming years due to proximity to commuter rail and the Village’s retail and service core. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra and Pace will provide representatives to engage in discussions with the Steering Committee at appropriate point in the process with regard to the BNSF Railroad Corridor, in order to ensure that physical planning recommendations and planning policies do not conflict with the operational requirements of transit providers in the area.

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report includes four main sections, as follows:

The **Physical Planning Context** section describes: the locational framework of the Village; existing land use and conditions; transit, circulation and parking facilities; streetscape and urban design amenities and preferences; and community facilities and resources.

The **Planning Policy Context** section provides a background summary of relevant pre-existing planning policies, a description of current development regulations, and a discussion of economic development programs and tools.

The **Issues and Opportunities** section summarizes the consulting team's preliminary analysis of the key planning issues the Plan must address, and the key opportunities the Plan can build upon, based upon the background research and input summarized elsewhere in the report.

The **Appendix** contains several important pieces of information, This includes identification of the Project Steering Committee guiding the work of the process. It also includes a list of Key Person Interview and Focus Group invitees, summaries of all meetings, and the preliminary result of a Visual Preference Survey conducted during the Community Workshops.

Note that this report should be reviewed together with the preliminary market analysis released concurrently by Goodman Williams Group. The market analysis contains a general socioeconomic and demographic overview of the Village, a preliminary analysis of the competitive position of the Village with regard to commercial and residential development trends, and the preliminary results of a downtown shopper intercept survey.

2. PHYSICAL PLANNING CONTEXT

A. LOCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Vicinity Map (included in the previous section), establishes the regional context within which the Village of La Grange is located. The Village benefits from excellent regional access via major expressways, along with significant recreational amenities within close proximity provided by the Cook County Forest Preserve District. These beneficial aspects of the Village are discussed in more detail in later sections of this report.

The Village is surrounded on all sides by stable communities, including the predominantly residential communities of Western Springs, La Grange Park and Brookfield to the west, north and east; and Countryside and Hodgkins to the south. Oak Brook, a major commercial area and secondary employment center, is also conveniently accessed from the Village.

B. EXISTING LAND USE AND CONDITIONS

This section of the report describes the current pattern of land-uses within the Village along with a discussion of related building and environmental conditions. *Figure 3a: Existing Land Use North of 47th Street*, *Figure 3b: Existing Land Use South of 47th Street* and *Figure 4: BNSF Railroad Corridor Existing Land Use* provide graphic descriptions of current land use patterns. *Figure 4* provides a greater level of detail within the Central and West End Business Districts, indicating the breakdown of uses within mixed-use buildings and identifying surface parking.

Existing Land Use

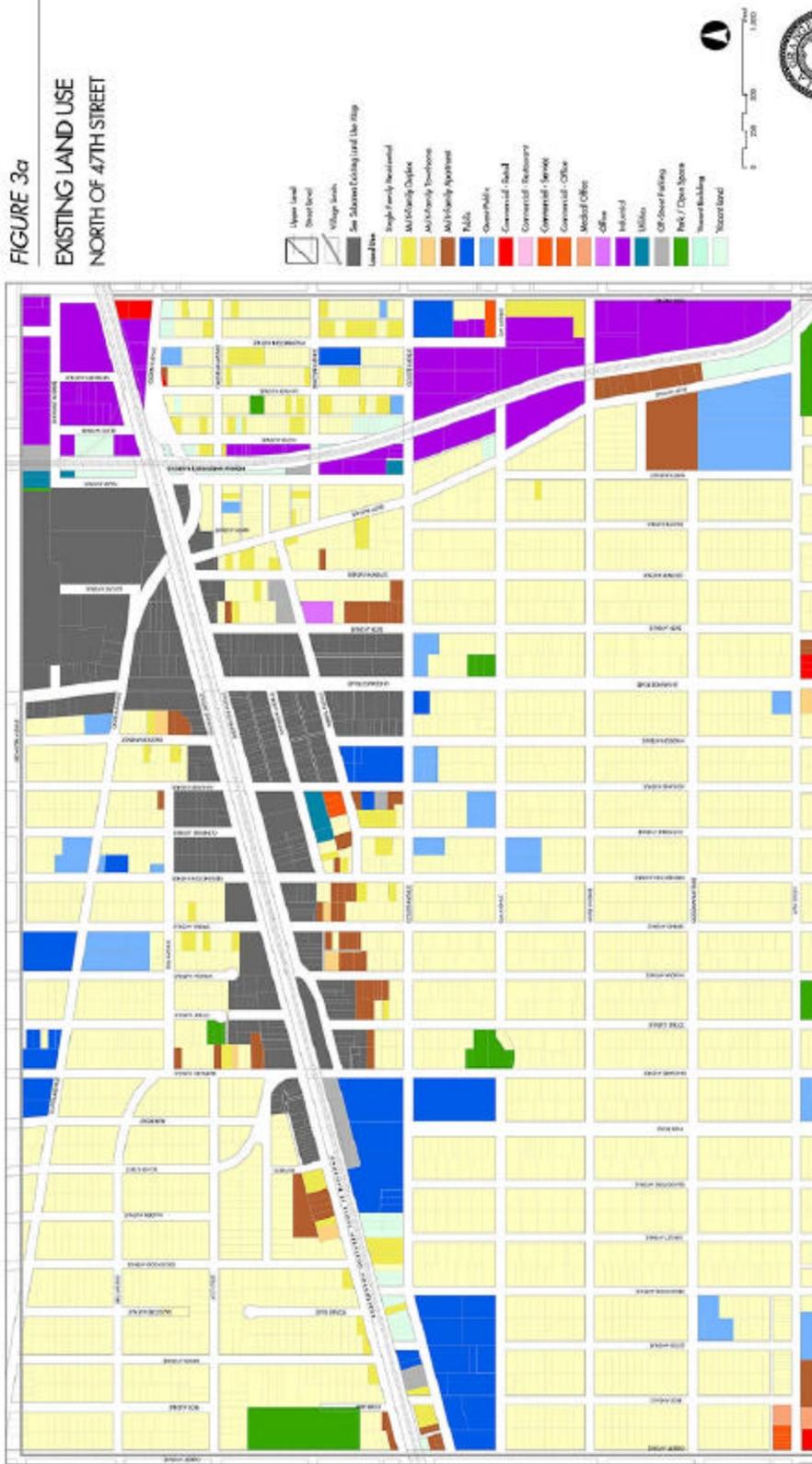
To determine the type and location of land uses currently existing within the Village of La Grange, field surveys were conducted in September and October 2003. Land uses observed at the time of the surveys were recorded and mapped. Existing land use is a strong determinant of future land use patterns. This up-to-date land use representation of how land is used in the Village will facilitate future analysis of policy alternatives.

La Grange's existing land use areas are briefly described below:

Single Family Residential: This category includes detached single family homes. A majority of the Village consists of single family residential neighborhoods. The age, size and architectural style of homes within these neighborhoods varies; generally speaking, homes dating from the turn of the century to the early 1900s are found in the neighborhoods north of 47th Street and west of Brainard Avenue. Homes of later vintage, dating from the 1940s to the 1970s, are found in neighborhoods further west and south. With the exception of a few isolated properties, homes are very well maintained.

Multi-Family Duplex: This category includes buildings that contain two dwelling units, either side-by-side sharing a common wall, or one above the other (a "two-flat"). Duplexes are found intermingled with single family homes in the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the Central and West End Business Districts, north of Cossitt Avenue and south of Bell Avenue, and in the Eastside neighborhood. Larger duplex development locations include East Avenue between Elm and Maple Avenues, and the other on La Grange Road between 49th and 50th Streets. With the exception of a few isolated properties, these properties are very well maintained.

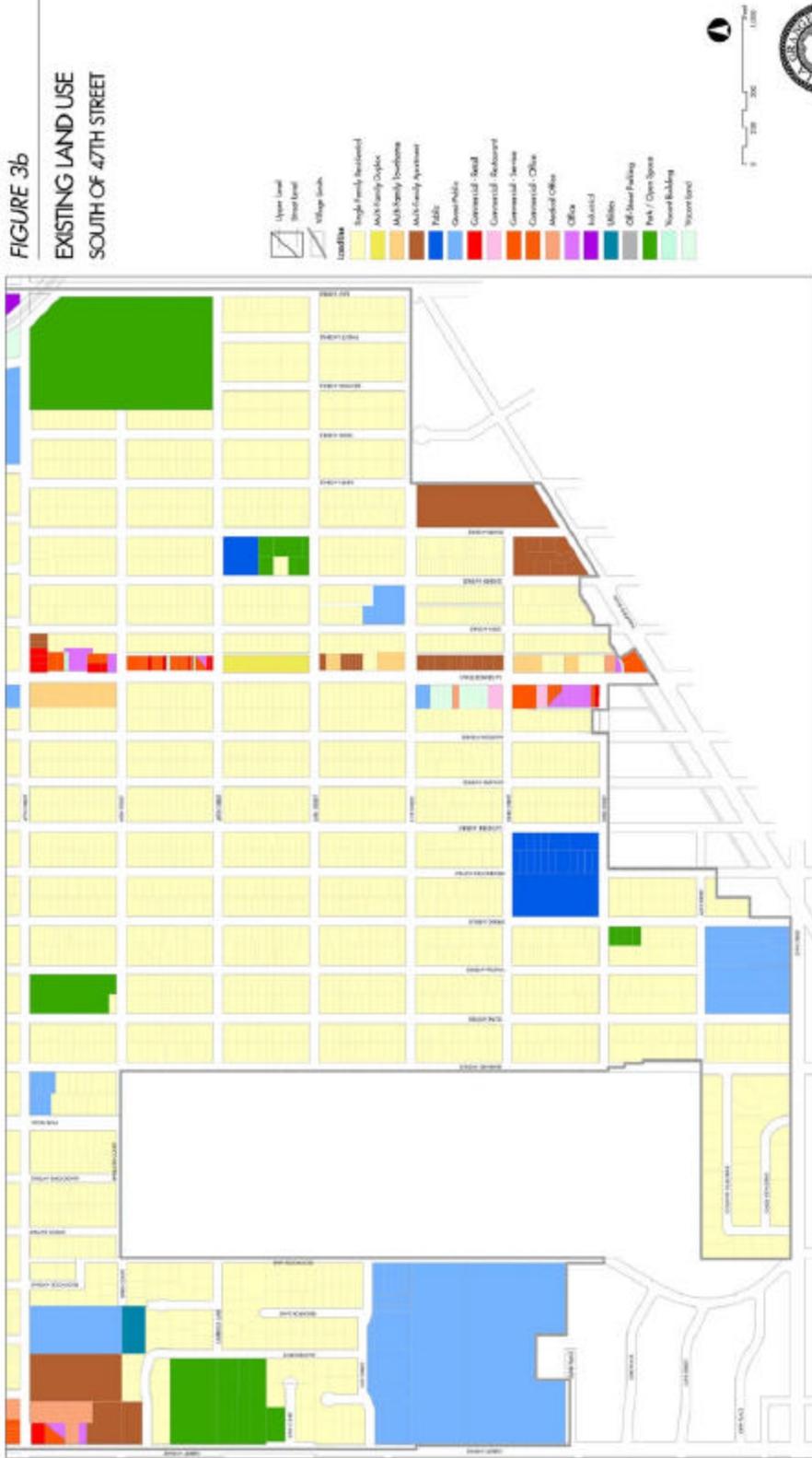
FIGURE 3a
EXISTING LAND USE
NORTH OF 47TH STREET



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FIGURE 3b
EXISTING LAND USE
SOUTH OF 47TH STREET



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VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS

Multi-Family Townhome: This category includes buildings that contain three or more dwelling units in a single structure, located side-by-side and providing individual unit entrances. Townhomes are found in a few isolated locations within and surrounding the West End Business District, and along South La Grange Road, and are two to three stories in height. These properties reflect newer construction, and are well maintained.

Multi-Family Apartment: This category includes buildings that contain multiple dwelling units, whether rental or condominium, and that share common lobby entrances and hallways to access individual units. Depending upon the date of construction, these buildings may or may not provide off-street parking for residents. This land use type is found in several locations within and surrounding the Central and West End Business Districts, including some upper-story dwelling units in mixed use buildings and three newer mid-rise condominium projects. Additionally, this land use type is found near the 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue intersection, along South La Grange Road, and in a large complex along Plainfield Road between Seventh and Ninth Avenues. With very few exceptions, these properties are well maintained.

Commercial-Retail: This category includes businesses selling consumer goods on-site. Most of the retail businesses in the Village are located within the Central Business District, with a few isolated examples in the West End Business District, along South La Grange Road and elsewhere. This land use type may be housed in a free-standing structure in newer commercial areas, or in an “in-line” storefront in older commercial areas. Often in the Central Business District it is the first floor use in a mixed use building. These properties are generally well maintained.

Commercial-Restaurant: This category includes businesses selling food and beverages for consumption on-site. Most of the restaurants in the Village are located within the Central and West End Business Districts, with a few isolated examples along South La Grange Road. This land use type may be housed in a free-standing structure in newer commercial areas, or in an “in-line” storefront in older commercial areas. Often in the Central Business District it is the first floor use in a mixed use building. These properties are generally well maintained.

Commercial-Service: Personal, banking or other services provided to customers or clients at the place of business are included in this category. In general, these businesses are non-retail operations that generate customer traffic throughout the day, such as a barber shop or dry cleaner. These types of businesses occur within the Central and West End Business Districts, and along South La Grange Road. These properties are generally well maintained.

Theatre: This category is used for one property in the Central Business District, the La Grange Theatre. It generates a significant amount of customer traffic, including “after-hours,” but does not provide off-street parking. The property is of high architectural quality, but shows signs of deferred maintenance.

Office: This category refers to office uses which serve professional, technical and business industries. This class identifies properties and structures which are devoted exclusively to office uses. These uses occur within the West End Business District and in isolated locations along South La Grange Road. Several offices are also located within the Central Business District, most often as second floor uses in mixed use buildings. These properties are generally well maintained.

Commercial-Office: This category refers to typical office uses, but includes only those that are housed in “storefront” spaces that were originally intended to accommodate retail or service businesses. These uses occur within the West End Business District and in a few isolated locations within the Central Business District. These properties are generally well maintained.

Medical Office: Doctor, dentist, chiropractor and optometrist offices are included in this category. This land use type often generates “customer” traffic throughout the day. These types of businesses occur in isolated locations within the Central and West End Business Districts, and along South La Grange Road. Several are clustered together in the vicinity of the 47th Street / Gilbert Avenue intersection. These properties are generally well maintained.

Industrial: This category refers to manufacturing, processing, packaging, warehouse and distribution facilities. Within the Village, one industrial use is located within the West End Business District. The remainder of these uses is located east of Bluff Avenue between 47th Street to the south and the Village limits to the north. Several of the properties are adjacent to the IHB Railroad. These properties are generally well maintained, with the exception of several older properties located along the IHB Railroad between Maple and Ogden Avenues.

Public: Municipal and public school facilities are included in this category. These facilities tend to be larger in scale than their surroundings, and provide on-site parking for employees and visitors. They are located throughout the Village, and are very well maintained.

Quasi-Public: This category includes facilities such as La Grange Memorial Hospital, private schools and churches that are widely accessible. Land uses in this category generally attract vehicular and pedestrian traffic that is similar to the public facilities mentioned in the previous category. These facilities tend to be larger in scale than their surroundings and, with the exception of some churches, provide adequate on-site parking for employees and visitors. They are located throughout the Village, and are very well maintained.

Utilities: This category includes two water storage and pumping facilities and the Ameritech building at Ashland and Calendar Avenues. These properties are generally well maintained.

Off-Street Parking: Parking lots of varying size and condition, and with varying levels of physical improvements, are located throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor. More detail regarding these areas is provided later in this section of the report.

Parks and Open Space: This category includes public and private parks and open spaces that are accessible for passive or active recreational purposes. These uses are located throughout the Village. More detail about these uses is provided later in this section of the report. These properties are generally well maintained.

Vacant Buildings and Land: There are a few isolated vacant buildings, tenant spaces or parcels within the Central and West End Business Districts, along South La Grange Road, along Cossitt Avenue west of Blackstone Avenue, and along the IHB Railroad between Cossitt and Shawmut Avenues. A key aspect of the Comprehensive Plan will be identification of the Village's preferences with regard to the future of these properties and structures.

The “Economic Development Strategy for the Village of La Grange” (February 2003) described later in this report provides a percentage breakdown of existing land use in the Village, which is summarized in *Table 1: Existing Land Use Distribution* on the next page. The date of the land use survey data used to calculate the percentage breakdown is unknown.

Table 1: Existing Land Use Distribution (date unknown)

| | Acres | % of Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Single Family Residential | 744.00 | 67.20 |
| Multi-Family Residential | 78.88 | 7.12 |
| Commercial | 51.86 | 4.68 |
| Industrial | 47.70 | 4.31 |
| Office | 3.67 | 0.33 |
| Open Space | 73.21 | 6.61 |
| Institutional | 107.93 | 9.75 |
| TOTAL | 1,107.25 | 100.00 |

Source: Economic Development Strategy for the Village of La Grange; February 2003

Building and Environmental Conditions

Throughout the Village, building conditions are generally very good. Ongoing maintenance, and in many cases significant reinvestment and renovation, are evident in nearly every corner of the Village. Housing age and style varies, with older homes found north of 47th Street and east of Brainard and surrounding the original commercial areas of the Village in the Central and West End Business Districts. Newer homes and more recently developed commercial uses are found south of 47th Street. Market conditions are currently such that even well maintained and valuable residential properties are being purchased and replaced within all neighborhoods of the Village.

Building conditions are a concern in only two isolated areas: 1) in some generally older and smaller industrial properties adjacent to the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad between Ogden and Maple Avenues; and 2) in scattered areas within the residential neighborhood located east of the IHB Railroad between Ogden and Cossitt Avenues. Disinvestment, or in some instances a lack of ongoing maintenance, can be seen in these areas. The situations are isolated, and it is likely that a combination of market pressure for redevelopment or rehabilitation and consistent code enforcement will address the problems in these limited areas.

There are no identified wetlands present within the Village, and only one isolated floodplain. Floodplain affects only the rear yards of several homes along the westernmost edge of the Village in the subdivision south of the La Grange Country Club, along the north-south portion of Country Club Drive.

C. TRANSIT, CIRCULATION AND PARKING

This section of the report summarizes the current state of public transit in the Village of La Grange, along with an assessment of vehicular access and circulation and parking facilities. *Figure 5: Transit, Access and Circulation* graphically depicts existing transit services, access routes and parking areas described in this section.

1. Transit Facilities and Services

Three transit carriers currently serve the Village of La Grange: Metra's Burlington Northern Santa Fe Line (commuter rail), Pace's West Division (suburban bus) and Amtrak (inter-city rail). Metra has two stations in La Grange, the La Grange Road station at 25 West Burlington Avenue, between Ashland Avenue and La Grange Road, and the Stone Avenue station at 701 West Burlington Avenue, between Spring and Brainard Avenues. Pace bus routes serve La Grange primarily along La Grange Road and Ogden Avenue extending east from La Grange Road. Amtrak provides service to western Illinois with daily stops at the La Grange Road Metra station.

Metra's Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Commuter Rail Service

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe originates in downtown Chicago at Union Station. La Grange has two stops along the BNSF line which are the thirteenth and fourteenth stops after Congress Park, Brookfield, Hollywood, Riverside, Berwyn, LaVergne, Clyde, Cicero, Western Avenue, Halsted, and Chicago. There are several more stops after La Grange with the line ending in Aurora. The travel time from Chicago to La Grange is approximately 20 to 35 minutes, depending on whether the train is an express train or makes all the intermediate stops.

Twenty-five inbound trains stop in La Grange on weekdays, between 5:11am and 11:56pm, including eight during the peak hours of 6:00am and 8:00am. Twenty-four outbound trains stop in La Grange on weekdays, between 6:24am and 1:09am, including eight during the peak hours of 4:30pm and 6:30pm. On Saturdays, 13 inbound and 13 outbound trains stop in La Grange, between the hours of 5:58am and 1:09am.

At the La Grange Road station, inbound passengers board trains from the south platform. The station building is located mid-block between La Grange Road and Ashland Avenue, and has a ticket agent booth, inside waiting areas, restrooms and a coffee stand. Covered arcade areas at each end of the building provide weather protection for benches and bike racks. The platform is concrete and improved with planters surrounded with seating. Outbound passengers board trains on the north platform, which is also concrete. There is a weather shelter at the north platform directly across from the main station building.

At the Stone Avenue station, inbound passengers board trains from the south platform, which is finished in asphalt north and south of the station building and in brick pavers adjacent to the station. The station itself is an architecturally unique stone structure with covered outdoor waiting arcades, and inside waiting area and a ticket agent booth. Outbound passengers board trains on the north platform, which is also a combination of brick pavers and asphalt. There is a small weather shelter at the north platform directly across from the station building. The Stone Avenue station provides a signalized pedestrian crossing directly in front of the station. The station itself is sited at the edge of the platform in a generous green space with meandering asphalt paths and bench seating.

A vast majority of riders using the Metra rail service from the La Grange stations travel at peak times, into downtown Chicago during the morning rush hour and returning from downtown Chicago during the evening rush hour. On October 30, 2002, weekday boardings totaled 1,353 at the La Grange Road station and 999 at the Stone Avenue station. Of the total at the La Grange Road station, 1,297 were inbound (toward Union Station) and 56 were outbound (toward Aurora). Of the 1,297 inbound boardings, 1,135 (or 88 percent) occurred during the morning peak period. Of the total at the Stone Avenue station, 987 were inbound (toward Union Station) and 12 were outbound (toward Aurora). Of the 987 inbound boardings, 919 (or 93 percent) occurred during the morning peak period.

Table 2: Weekday Boardings Over Time- Metra BNSF Line on the next page highlights weekday boarding trends at the La Grange stations over the past two decades, in comparison to the stations immediately east and west. The boardings have been the highest at La Grange Road, with Western Springs and Stone Avenue also showing strong boarding counts. Boardings over time have remained fairly consistent at both of the La Grange stations.

Table 2: Weekday Boardings Over Time- Metra BNSF Line

| | 1983 | 1985 | 1987 | 1989 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2002 |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Western Springs | 1,022 | 1,151 | 1,121 | 1,118 | 1,166 | 1,151 | 1,138 | 1,081 | 1,179 | 1,065 |
| Stone Avenue | 1,017 | 985 | 1,089 | 1,101 | 1,171 | 1,078 | 1,090 | 1,153 | 1,123 | 999 |
| La Grange Rd. | 1,496 | 1,529 | 1,567 | 1,548 | 1,423 | 1,360 | 1,388 | 1,366 | 1,496 | 1,353 |
| Congress Park | 129 | 168 | 149 | 116 | 105 | 107 | 113 | 126 | 86 | 118 |

Source: Metra

As might be expected, weekend boardings at the La Grange stations are considerably lower than weekday boardings. A passenger count was conducted on Saturday, October 2, 1999, that indicated 173 boardings and 32 alightings at the La Grange Road station and 77 boardings and 6 alightings at the Stone Avenue station. A passenger count was conducted on Sunday, October 3, 1999, that indicated 81 boardings and 18 alightings at the La Grange Road station and 45 boardings and 4 alightings at the Stone Avenue station. This is consistent with use patterns along the entire BNSF Metra line; total boardings along the entire BNSF Line on this particular Saturday and Sunday represented approximately 12.8% and 7.8% respectively of weekday boardings that same year (6,721 on Saturday and 4,088 on Sunday as compared to 52,479 on a typical weekday).

An on-board passenger survey was conducted by Metra in the Fall of 2002 that asked train riders the "mode of access" they used to arrive at the Metra station. The survey response rate at La Grange was in the middle, with 543 total responses (representing approximately 44% of all average daily ridership) at the La Grange Road station and 519 responses (representing approximately 53% of average daily ridership) at the Stone Avenue station. Survey responses for the stations were very similar. 33 and 34 percent of the respondents of the La Grange Road and Stone Avenue stations, respectively, indicated that they drove alone to the station, while 37 percent and 38 percent, respectively, indicated that they walked. Another 18 percent at the La Grange Road station and 17 percent at the Stone Avenue station indicated that they were dropped off. System-wide responses indicates that 53% of riders overall drove alone to the station, 21% walked, and 14% were dropped off (other potential responses included carpool, bicycle or another form of transit). In comparing bicycles as a mode of transit to the stations, the La Grange stations indicated 4 and 3 percent, respectively, rode bikes to the station, while only one percent used that mode system-wide.

An "origins" survey was conducted by Metra in the Fall of 2002, using geocoded addresses for morning parkers, determined that 45 percent of commuter vehicles parked at the La Grange Road station on the day of the survey originated from La Grange addresses. Another 20 percent were from La Grange Park, 8 percent from Brookfield, 5 percent from Westchester, and 4 percent from Countryside. At the Stone Avenue station, the breakdown was as follows: 51 percent from La Grange, 12 percent from La Grange Park, 10 percent from Countryside, 8 percent from Western Springs, and 3 percent from Indian Head Park. Several other communities were represented at both stations at a rate of 2 percent or less.

Pace Suburban Bus Service

Pace has three bus routes that service the La Grange area: Route 302, Route 304 and Route 330. *Table 3: Average Daily Ridership- Pace Bus Routes* on the next page details the average daily ridership on all three routes, and indicates that all three routes experienced a slight decline in ridership between 2001 and 2002. It is possible that this drop-off in ridership reflects a system-wide drop-off due to the recent economic downturn, as they access major employment centers along their routes.

Table 3: Average Daily Ridership- Pace Bus Routes

| | | 2001 | 2002 | % Change |
|------------------|----------|------------|------------|----------|
| Route 302 | Weekday | 667 | 624 | -6.4% |
| | Saturday | 251 | 243 | -3.2% |
| | Sunday | No service | No service | |
| Route 304 | Weekday | 909 | 887 | -2.4% |
| | Saturday | 167 | 151 | -9.6% |
| | Sunday | 114 | 104 | -8.8% |
| Route 330 | Weekday | 1,411 | 1,334 | -5.5% |
| | Saturday | 567 | 546 | -3.7% |
| | Sunday | No service | No service | |

Source: Pace

Note that the figures above reflect ridership along the entire bus route; boarding and alighting data specific to the stops within La Grange for each route is not routinely collected by Pace. In 2001, average boardings and alightings on a typical weekday on La Grange were estimated to be 250 and 200, respectively, for all three routes combined. At that time, an estimate for 2002 of 235 total boardings and 190 total alightings was calculated, again reflecting an expected slight downturn in overall ridership.

Route 302 (Odgen/Stanley) provides service Monday thru Saturday between the La Grange Road/Hillgrove intersection and the Cermak/Cicero intersection in Cicero. The route provides access to the Harlem, Berwyn and Laverne Metra stations further east on the BNSF line, and to MacNeal Hospital and Morton East High School. It terminates at the east end at the CTA Blue Line station at Cermak, thus providing a link to Chicago's Loop.

Route 304 (Cicero-La Grange) provides daily service between the La Grange Road/Hillgrove intersection and the 54th Avenue CTA station at 54th/Cermak, thus providing a link to Chicago's Loop. The route provides access to Brookfield Zoo, Riverside-Brookfield High School, North Riverside Mall and Morton West High School.

Route 330 (La Grange Road) provides service Monday thru Saturday both northbound and southbound on La Grange Road, with several stops within the Village. At its north end, the route accesses O'Hare Airport. At its south end, it reaches the Quarry Shopping Center in Hodgkins before extending slightly north and east past the General Motors EMD plant to the Archer/Harlem intersection. The route provides access to the Mannheim Metra station on the Milwaukee District West line, the Bellwood Metra station on the Union Pacific West line, Leyden Community Hospital, West Point Shopping Center and Countryside Plaza.

Some issues have been identified regarding the services of Routes 302 and 304 since completion of the La Grange Crossing redevelopment. Prior to the redevelopment, both routes were able to turn around and wait in a staging area north of the BNSF tracks before departing again. After the redevelopment was completed, the ability to complete a turnaround north of the tracks was eliminated. Pace buses now have to turn around by traveling west on Burlington from Ogden Avenue, turning right at La Grange Road and crossing the BNSF tracks at grade on La Grange Road. With the frequency of rush hour trains and off-peak freight trains, this can cause scheduling delays. Additionally, safety concerns have been raised about the right turn that buses have to make to cross the tracks. Pace hopes to identify an alternative turning and staging scenario that allows buses to remain north of the BNSF tracks.

Future changes are proposed to upgrade Route 330 to include it in Pace's arterial network that services 23 regional corridors. La Grange Road is an identified corridor that would provide improved service between Des Plaines, O'Hare and La Grange. Some of the proposed improvements would include transit signal priority at intersections to improve route speed and

traffic flow, and improved bus stop facilities, transfer locations and passenger information at bus stops.

Amtrak Inter-City Passenger Rail Service

Amtrak service from western Illinois, serving Quincy, Macomb, Galesburg, Kewanee, Princeton, Mendota, Plano and Naperville stops at the La Grange Road station once daily inbound to Chicago (at 9:54am) and once daily outbound from Chicago (at 6:14pm) at the La Grange Road station. This provides a transfer point for Amtrak passengers seeking to access O'Hare Airport, as they can take Pace Route 330 north to the airport.

2. Traffic Access and Circulation

Regional access to and from the Village is provided by I-294 (Tri-State Tollway) to the west, I-290 (Eisenhower Expressway) to the north, and I-55 (Stevenson Expressway) to the south (refer to *Figure 1: Vicinity Map*) Convenient access to Chicago's Loop, O'Hare and Midway airports, and major employment centers north and west of La Grange is provided via these routes.

There are two U.S. Highways, which are under state jurisdiction, traversing the Village: Ogden Avenue (U.S. Rt. 34) and La Grange Road (U.S. Rt. 12/20/45). Ogden Avenue is grade separated to travel under the BNSF Railroad just east of La Grange Road, and again further east to travel over the IHB Railroad. It returns to grade at the East Avenue intersection at the easternmost edge of the Village.

There are several roadways under state jurisdiction within and at the perimeter of the Village, including: 55th Street, Plainfield Road, Burlington Avenue east from La Grange Road to Ogden Avenue, and Gilbert/Willow Springs from 55th Street north to 53rd Place. The Village receives funds from the state to defray maintenance costs for these state routes, and changes to these roadways require state review and approval.

Roadways under Cook County jurisdiction within the Village include East Avenue and 47th Street. Changes to these County routes require County review and approval.

Other roadways within the Village that serve to collect and redistribute traffic from local residential streets onto more major roadways include: Burlington Avenue, Hillgrove Avenue, Cossitt Avenue, Ashland Avenue, Kensington Avenue, Brainard Avenue, and Gilbert Avenue/Willow Springs Road.

There are at-grade crossings over the BNSF Railroad at La Grange Road and Ashland, Kensington, Brainard and Gilbert Avenues. At-grade crossings over the IHB Railroad occur at 47th Street and at Shawmut, Lincoln, Cossitt, Maple, and East Avenues.

Recent information regarding traffic volumes on major roadways within and near the Village is available on the Illinois Department of Transportation's website. Available average daily traffic (ADT) figures are summarized in *Table 4: Average Daily Traffic Counts* on the next page.

It is interesting to note that in the 1970 *Community Development Plan*, several ADT figures from 1966 are provided. A comparison of similar locations indicates that La Grange Road south of Ogden Avenue and East Avenue north of 47th Street have experienced the greatest increases in automobile traffic in the past three decades- a 73% increase (from 17,900 ADT in 1966) and a 71% increase (from 6,600 ADT in 1966), respectively. Increases on Ogden Avenue are also significant, with a 38% increase west of La Grange Road (up from 16,000 ADT in 1966) and a 47% increase east of La Grange Road (up from 15,600 ADT in 1966).

Table 4: Average Daily Traffic Counts

| Routes | Autos | Trucks |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| La Grange Road | | |
| north of Ogden Ave. | 25,500 | 3,000 |
| south of Ogden Ave. | 30,900 | 3,200 |
| Ogden Avenue | | |
| west of La Grange Rd.. | 22,100 | 1,400 |
| east of La Grange Rd.. | 22,900 | 1,900 |
| East Avenue | | |
| north of 47 th St. | 11,300 | -- |
| south of 47 th St. | 15,000 | -- |
| Brainard Avenue | | |
| south of 47 th St. | 6,600 | -- |
| Gilbert Avenue | | |
| south of Cossitt Ave. | 11,200 | -- |

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation (website); date unknown

Access to the Metra stations is relatively easy for pedestrians and bicycle riders coming from nearby La Grange neighborhoods, as there is a complete sidewalk network in the older neighborhoods of the Village surrounding the BNSF Railroad Corridor. There are no clearly designated bike routes leading to the Metra stations, but due to low levels of traffic on local residential streets in the neighborhoods surrounding the station, access is not difficult. Access difficulty only exists for commuters and bicycle users who must cross La Grange Road or Ogden Avenue at signalized intersections.

The *Open Space Master Plan* prepared in 2000 by the Park District of La Grange identifies locations for bicycle crossing lights at high traffic intersections, and recommends a system of on-street bicycle routes linking school and park sites within the Village, indicated with consistent signage. Also recommended is an improved on-street connection north through La Grange Park along Brainard Avenue to provide access to the Salt Creek Bicycle Trail.

Several areas of traffic congestion and/or pedestrian conflict have been identified and are summarized below:

- La Grange railroad crossing- increased pedestrian traffic to access La Grange Crossing, without appropriate signalization adjustments.
- La Grange / Ogden intersection- difficult pedestrian and bike access to YMCA due to heavy traffic and narrow sidewalks on the north side.
- Tilden Avenue underpass below Ogden Avenue and BNSF Railroad- single traffic lane.
- 47th Street / Gilbert Avenue intersection- many student and senior citizen pedestrians at a high traffic intersection with narrow sidewalks.
- 47th Street / East Avenue intersection- two at-grade railroad crossings in close proximity.
- Increasing truck traffic on Ogden and East because of closure of a section of Joliet Road to the south.
- Lack of sidewalks in a few areas at the south end of Village.

Pending roadway improvements in the Village are listed below:

- Reconstruction of Hillgrove Avenue from Gilbert Avenue to Kensington Avenue in 2004.
- Reconstruction of Bluff Avenue from Burlington Avenue to 47th Street in 2007.
- Grinding and resurfacing of Burlington Avenue from Brainard Avenue to Bluff Avenue in approximately 2009.

3. Parking

Three types of parking are discussed below: commuter parking in the BNSF Railroad Corridor; Central Business District parking for shoppers and employees; and Village-wide parking in neighborhood commercial areas, at institutional uses and in residential neighborhoods. Parking locations are highlighted in *Figure 5: Transit, Access and Circulation*.

Commuter Parking

Commuter parking at the La Grange Road station is provided through a combination of 171 on-street diagonal parking spaces and 166 off-street spaces (in municipally owned parking lots at Sixth Avenue and Seventh Avenue south of the BNSF tracks, and Locust Avenue north of the BNSF tracks) for a total of 337 commuter-designated spaces. The off-street lot spaces and the on-street spaces in Hillgrove east of Beacon are available by monthly permits administered by the Village. The remaining on-street spaces are metered. A Metra survey conducted on October 14, 2003 indicated that these spaces were 98.2% occupied.

Commuter parking at the Stone Avenue station is provided through a combination of 305 on-street diagonal parking spaces and 161 off-street spaces (in a municipally owned parking lot at Brainard and Burlington) for a total of 466 commuter-designated spaces. The off-street lot spaces and some of the on-street spaces are available by monthly permits administered by the Village. The remaining on-street spaces are metered. A Metra survey conducted on October 14, 2003 indicated that these spaces were 100.0% occupied. It has been noted by the Village that, due to the proximity of this station to Lyons Township High School's north campus, some of the permit and metered spaces are occupied by high school students rather than by commuters.

In general, commuter lots are sold out about six months ahead of time for a lot of average distance from the train station and nine months ahead of time for a closer lot. These spots are always on a first come, first serve basis in terms of parking and renewal which causes an issue with commuters as their parking spot is not guaranteed from year to year. The Village does not have a waiting list and they do have to turn commuters away. As part of Metra's long-term facility planning process, the need for an additional 200 to 250 commuter-designated parking spaces by the year 2030 to serve the two La Grange stations has been identified.

Another item of difficulty for the Village has been the tracking of commuter permits. The Village is in the process of researching software to purchase that will increase the efficiency of permit renewal and tracking of parking spaces in the Village. While the Village does have a system in place now to track spaces, it is a non-computerized system that can at times make it difficult to accurately track the status of available spaces.

Central Business District Parking

The Village also issues parking permits to two other types of parking users: Central Business District residents and employees/business owners in the CBD. For employees/business owners in the CBD, a parking pass can be purchased that allows month to month parking in designated off-street spaces. Residents can purchase permits a maximum of three months at a time, for daytime and/or nighttime parking in designated municipal parking lots. Overnight permits are available to residents of the Central Business District area who reside in apartment or condominium buildings constructed prior to 1991, as many of these buildings do not provide off-street parking adequate to accommodate residents. Resident permit users are hard to quantify as some may purchase a day pass as well as a night pass.

Parking for shoppers and visitors to the BNSF Railroad Corridor is available through a combination of on-street parking with time limitations enforced through ticketing, and several

municipally owned off-street parking lots with time limitation also enforced through ticketing. On-street parking is generally provided in the Central Business District with the exception of some areas along La Grange Road, Burlington and Hillgrove. On-street parking is not provided on Ogden Avenue, or on La Grange Road north of the BNSF tracks. Only a few buildings within the Central Business District provide dedicated off-street parking areas for customers, clients and/or employees. Within the West End Business District, however, dedicated off-street parking lots are more prevalent and often go underutilized throughout the day.

A "Central Business District Parking Study" completed by Rich and Associates in March of 2003 identified an overall short-fall of available parking within the Central Business District of approximately 200 spaces, due to increased shopper and visitor parking demand at peak times during the week now occurring due to the resurgence of retail and restaurant activity in the Central Business District. According to the study, weekend and evening shortages occur largely as a result of restaurant activity, and daytime shortages occur due to long-term parkers (employees) "shuffling" their cars in short-term parking spaces. Data included in the final report indicate that within a "core study area" consisting of Village-owned lots and on-street spaces in the Central Business District (west to Kensington Avenue) there are 1,575 off-street spaces and 601 on-street spaces, providing a total of 2,176 spaces (this includes the 337 commuter spaces mentioned previously). Within a "secondary area" that includes two off-street lots (at Brainard and Locust Avenues) and off-street spaces extending west from Kensington Avenue to Gilbert Avenue along the BNSF Railroad, there are 293 off-street spaces and 438 on-street spaces, for a total of 731 spaces (this includes the 466 commuter spaces mentioned previously).

Based upon the recommendations of the Rich and Associates study, the Village is currently discussing the possibility of constructing a parking structure providing an additional two levels of parking above grade at the existing municipal lot behind the Village Hall. It should be noted that this proposed parking solution addresses meeting a *current* need for parking due to existing demands along La Grange Road south of the BNSF Railroad; future redevelopment within the Central Business District will create additional parking demands that will need to be carefully considered and provided for.

Village-Wide Parking

Throughout the remainder of the Village, parking is generally not a concern, with the exception of the area immediately surrounding the Lyons Township High School North Campus as the number of students driving to school has increased over the years. In residential neighborhoods throughout the Village overnight and early morning parking restrictions are utilized, as appropriate, to discourage parking by Metra commuters and high school students.

For the most part, commercial businesses, institutions and multi-family developments outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor provide off-street dedicated parking sufficient to meet user needs. There are a few isolated areas along La Grange Road that provide time limited on-street shopper parking spaces, in areas where older commercial structures exist that were developed without a dedicated off-street parking requirement. Churches located in residential neighborhoods will often rely upon on-street parking during peak use times on weekends, but do not create parking issues for the remainder of the week.

D. URBAN DESIGN

This section of the report addresses issues of streetscape and urban design within the BNSF Railroad Corridor and other commercial and industrial areas of the Village, and summarizes the general preferences of community members who completed the Visual Preference Survey administered during both Community Workshops in October 2003.

1. BNSF Railroad Corridor

Significant streetscape upgrades have been undertaken within the Central Business District since the inception of the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District in 1986. *Figure 6: Streetscape and Urban Design Features* indicates the current extent of streetscape treatments, along with an identification of planned improvements to be installed during the next year. Improvements will focus north of the BNSF Railroad in conjunction with the reconstruction of Hillgrove Avenue. Streetscape enhancements throughout the Central Business District consist of high quality concrete sidewalks with "stone" paver inserts at corners and other key locations, ornamental light fixtures with seasonal banners, benches and trash receptacles, and free-standing planters. This treatment has been extended north of the BNSF Railroad along La Grange Road at the La Grange Crossing development.

To date, the Village has installed the following improvements in the Central Business District: 298 paver inserts (varying sizes and locations); 322 pedestrian lights; 156 street trees (22 in concrete planters, 134 in iron grates); and 54 benches.

The platforms at the La Grange Road Metra station are also improved in a manner consistent with the Central Business District streetscape theme, with the addition of bench-height concrete planters along the south platform east of the station building that provide additional shade and seating. Several citizens commented in early community participation activities that seating and passive open spaces at the Stone Avenue station are highly valuable. It was suggested that landscaping, seating and pedestrian amenities could be further formalized in the area. Several comments were also made regarding the need for public plazas and open spaces in the BNSF Railroad Corridor in general.

In addition to streetscape treatments to be installed along Hillgrove Avenue west to Brainard in the next year, funding has been secured by the Village to upgrade the pedestrian sidewalks on the south side of Hillgrove Avenue along the BNSF right-of-way west to connect to the Stone Avenue station north platform. Additionally, the sidewalks and on-street commuter parking areas along Hillgrove Avenue west from Brainard to Gilbert Avenue will be upgraded during the reconstruction of Hillgrove next year, and improved areas for bicycle parking will be added at the Stone Avenue station. As discussed with the Steering Committee on the kick-off meeting walking tour, ways of creating greater pedestrian comfort at the La Grange Road railroad crossing and at the intersection of La Grange Road and Ogden Avenue should be considered as part of the Plan.

Municipal parking lots within the Central Business District are improved with a landscaped buffer, a decorative wrought iron fence at the perimeter, and consistent signage. The municipal parking lots at the northeast corner of Sixth and Harris Avenues and at Brainard and Burlington Avenues in the West End Business District have not been enhanced in this manner.

Design and rehabilitation standards are in place requiring a review by the Village prior to any exterior renovation work occurring within the DR Design Review Overlay District. Compliance with the standards is required regardless of whether a property owner is seeking interest-free loan assistance from the Village to finance façade improvements.

Several comments were made as part of the process addressing appropriate building heights within the Central and West End Business Districts. Many felt that a building height of three to four stories in the Central Business District and two to three stories in the West End Business District was acceptable. However, there may be a few select sites within the core of the Central Business District which, due to their distance from adjoining residential areas, might be appropriate for five or six stories in height. This should be explored in the next step of the planning process.

FIGURE 6
STREETSCAPE AND
URBAN DESIGN FEATURES



DRAFT
NOVEMBER 2003

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS



Elements the Village may want to consider include a community-wide and downtown entryway and wayfinding signage program. Given the scale of the Central Business District and its increasing complexity, a wayfinding program would be beneficial to residents and visitors alike.

2. Neighborhood Commercial Areas

The two neighborhood-oriented commercial areas in the Village are located at South La Grange Road and at 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue. Portions of the South La Grange Road area are deficient in off-street parking. Much of the area is a single lot in depth off the frontage of La Grange Road. The Plan will need to explore redevelopment and off-street parking prototypes indicating ways in which new development can be accommodated in the area. Off-street parking and pedestrian safety were issues identified at the 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue commercial area.

In addition, neither area has benefited from consistent streetscape treatments or other public realm upgrades. Additionally, the appearance of private parking areas and other site improvements vary considerably in these areas. Some properties provide attractively landscaped parking areas, well designed and maintained foundation plantings at buildings, and consistent and attractive monument-type signage. Many other properties, however, exhibit deferred maintenance, little if any landscaping or site improvements, and unattractive and out-dated business signage and façade treatments. At the south end of La Grange Road in particular, there are numerous curb cuts and sidewalks are inconsistent. Both of these commercial areas are generally inhospitable to pedestrians.

3. Community Visual Preferences

At each of the Community Workshops held on October 7 and 20, 2003 a combined total of seventy-four interested citizens completed a Visual Preference Survey, offering a number of insights into community preferences regarding redevelopment options in the Village. Participants rated a series of images presented in various categories, and answered a series of written questions. The results of the survey are summarized below. A complete summary of the highest and lowest rated images, along with all written responses, is included in the Appendix of this report. What follows are overall community preferences in each topic area surveyed. These ideas and suggestions will be considered when alternative land use and physical design concepts are prepared in the next step of the planning process.

Preferences Regarding Commercial and Mixed-Use Building Types

- One to three stories in height
- Tallest building downtown should be three to five stories, if carefully located and designed
- Break up mass of building vertically into distinct “storefronts”
- Awnings and well-lighted traditional signage
- Masonry and stone on exterior
- Small architectural details for visual interest
- Large windows with attractive displays
- Varied rooflines and parapet wall construction
- Potential mixed-use development types:
 - Retail with office or residential above
 - Condominiums and townhouses
 - Retail with parking above, and office or residential on upper floor(s)
 - Incorporate the Library or a community gathering space

Preferences Regarding Housing Types

- Two to three stories in height
- Condominiums or townhouses
- Green space surrounding building, shared or private
- Individual unit entrances
- Masonry and stone on exterior
- Garages not visible from the street
- Architectural details, balconies, material changes to break down building scale
- Interesting rooflines
- Incorporate single family detached homes, and reflect their character

Favorite Downtown Building

- Village Hall
- Stone Avenue Metra station
- La Grange Theatre
- Triangle development (La Grange Crossing)
- Traditional older commercial buildings, including: Chipotle/Noodles building, Palmers restaurant

Streetscape and Downtown Environment Preferences

- Ornamental lighting
- Upgraded paving
- Low planters with colorful plantings
- Planters and/or walls and/or fences at parking lots
- Benches, water fountains, trash receptacles
- Street trees
- Wide sidewalks
- Open spaces interspersed with commercial buildings
- Color (plantings, awnings, signage)

Parking Lot and Structure Preferences

- Open structures
- Brick exterior, blending with surroundings
- Vines on outside of structure
- Structure partially below grade
- Easy access
- Good lighting
- Clear signage
- Concealed but easy to find

Open Space and Landscaping Preferences

- Defined walking paths with upgraded paving
- Seating areas
- High quality fencing
- Water features, sculpture
- Lawn areas

- Shade trees
- Colorful low plantings (flowers and shrubs)

Potential “Pedway” Locations (defined pedestrian routes)

- Along the BNSF right-of-way
- Around Stone Avenue station
- Across La Grange Road and Ogden Avenue (safe crosswalks)
- At BNSF crossings (underpasses?)
- From La Grange Road station to Gordon Park area (over Ogden and the BNSF bridge)
- Connections to lots behind Village Hall, Horton’s, other buildings

Transit Facility and Pedestrian Amenity Preferences

- Greenery
- Shade trees and ornamental trees
- Benches, trash receptacles
- Attractive newspaper boxes
- Attractive fencing
- Upgraded paving
- Ornamental lighting
- Bike racks
- Weather shelters, information kiosks
- Convenient ADA-accessible parking

Community-Wide Residential Scale and Bulk Preferences

- Two to three story maximum outside the BNSF Corridor
- Traditional single family detached homes: Victorian, Four-Square, Georgian, etc.
- Newer homes should reflect traditional styles
- Brick, stone or real wood siding
- Hidden garages
- Varied rooflines

Potential Locations for Multi-Family Residential Development
(outside the BNSF Corridor)

- South La Grange Road
- North of Ogden Avenue
- Village perimeter
- Near wooded areas
- Along IHB Railroad and Bluff Avenue

Community-Wide Commercial Area Preferences

- One or two stories
- Brick facades with wood or metal accents
- Break down building facades with changes in plane, architectural details
- Varied rooflines
- Attractive signage
- Landscaping in front and in parking areas

Community-Wide Employment Area Preferences

- Brick facades with windows
- Avoid plain “sheds” and metal buildings
- Varied massing, rooflines, colors
- Concealed loading areas
- Landscaping in front and in parking areas
- Buffers at differing land uses

E. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

This section highlights community facilities and resources that contribute to the high quality of life of residents in the Village of La Grange. These existing facilities and features can be built upon, whether functionally or visually, to further enhance the Village in the future. Many of the facilities highlighted in this section are graphically depicted in *Figure 7a: Community Facilities North of 47th Street* and *Figure 7b: Community Facilities South of 47th Street* on the following pages. Additional information regarding future plans for expansion or change is provided, where known.

1. Educational Facilities

Public Schools

There are several public schools that serve the residents of the Village, all but one of which are located within the Village. These are briefly described below.

School District 102

Total enrollment in the district is 2,666 students, with no increase in enrollment expected in the coming years. Schools are currently near capacity, and are in good condition, having benefited from a combined investment of \$6.6 million in renovations in the last several years. No expansion or significant additional physical improvements are planned. Facilities include the following:

- Odgen School (elementary), 501 W. Ogden Avenue (approx. 69,000 sq. ft.)
- Cossitt School (elementary), 115 W. Cossitt Avenue (approx. 71,500 sq. ft.)
- Park Junior High School, 325 N. Park Road

School District 105

Total enrollment in the district (which also includes schools in neighboring communities) is 1,150 students, and anticipates a small increase in enrollment in the coming years. None of the Districts' facilities is near or over capacity or in poor condition. The District has no identified plans to undertake expansion or physical improvements programs. Facilities include the following:

- Seventh Avenue School (elementary), 701 S. Seventh Avenue (approx. 52,000 sq. ft.)
- Spring Avenue School (elementary), 1001 S. Spring Avenue (approx. 34,000 sq. ft.)
- Gurrie Middle School, 1001 S. Spring Avenue (approx. 70,900 sq. ft.)

School District 204

Total enrollment on the two campuses is 3,580 students, with very slight annual growth (of about 1% to 1.5%) expected over the next decade. The two campuses are currently at about 85% capacity, and are in very good condition. The original structure at the North Campus dates from 1888 but has been extensively restored and is well maintained. Some internal renovations at the North Campus are planned over the next year. Facilities include the following:

- Lyons Township High School South Campus (grades 9 and 10), 4900 South Willow Springs Road (located in Western Springs)
- Lyons Township High School North Campus (grades 11 and 12), 100 South Brainard (approx. 550,000 Sq. ft.)

Private Schools

There are several private schools within the boundaries of the Village:

- St. Francis Xavier School, 145 N. Waiola Avenue (pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade, 700 students)
- St. Cletus School, 700 West 55th Street (pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade, 500 students)
- St. John Lutheran School, 505 S. Park Road (pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade, 230 students)
- Creative World Montessori School, Edgewood and Goodman Avenues

These facilities are all in good condition, and have some expansion room on-site should they need to grow physically in the coming years. It is not expected that any of these schools would pursue a campus expansion.

Other Educational Resources

La Grange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE) is a special education cooperative serving sixteen area school districts; their administrative offices are located at 1301 W. Cossitt Avenue, west of the Lyons Township High School North Campus.

2. Municipal Facilities

Municipal facilities include those maintained and operated by the Village of La Grange's various departments, or by other utility operators. Village-owned public parking lots were described in a previous section of this report.

Village Administration, Public Works and Utilities

Village Hall, located at 53 S. La Grange Road, houses the Administrative, Finance and Community Development Departments, along with the Village Board Chambers (auditorium), on three levels. It is an historic landmark building on the National Register of Historic Places. It is adequate to meet with Village's administrative needs, and no expansion or relocation is anticipated.

The Public Works department is composed of water, sewer, streets and buildings/grounds divisions. The Village's Public Works facility is located at 320 East Avenue, east of the IHB tracks. The department is responsible for all infrastructure associated with the distribution of water, the discharge of waster water, pedestrian sidewalks, street and streetlight maintenance and mechanical maintenance of Village facilities.

Parts of the Public Works building are 100 years old, with later additions added. Ongoing maintenance is necessary, including tuckpointing and roof replacement. The building is currently at capacity. Within the next two decades it will be necessary to expand the building size, which can be accommodated on-site.

A 300 foot by 50 foot Public Works storage yard is currently located west of Tilden Avenue and north of Odgen Avenue. Water pumping and storage facilities are located at Odgen and Tilden Avenues, on Birks Court west of Edgewood Avenue, and at East Avenue in Hodgkins (south of the Village). Water pumping and storage capacity overall is currently more than adequate. Water pressure problems can arise in older neighborhoods and within the Central Business District where water mains are under-sized.

Ameritech operates a large facility at the southwest corner of Calendar and Ashland Avenues, which houses significant amounts of equipment and some employee activity. It is not a location that provides customer service, and therefore generates minimal traffic impacts.

Police Department

The Village is served by the La Grange Police Department located at 304 W. Burlington Avenue. All department operations, with the exception of some off-site training, are provided within this facility. The facility is approximately 15,300 sq. ft. in size and is adequate, with the exception of the need for a larger classroom space for training purposes. The lower level of the building is currently unused, and the department anticipates both finishing out the lower level and redesigning the communications center in the future. The department works cooperatively with neighboring agencies to handle "in-progress" calls, as needed.

Fire Department

The Village is served by the La Grange Fire Department located at 300 West Burlington Avenue. The fire department employs 24 firefighters including 12 paramedics and six emergency medical technicians. The fire department has two fire engines, one ladder truck, two ambulances, two utility vehicles, a special operations unit that carries hazardous materials and fire investigation equipment and one chief's car. The Village is currently classified by the I.S.O. as a Class 4 community, and will be re-evaluated in early 2004.

The current fire station was renovated in 1986 and is in generally good condition. It contains approximately 59,000 sq. ft. of usable area on two levels, and an unused basement. It is located on a 30,000 sq. ft. lot (100 feet wide by 300 feet deep). The department is in need of a larger training room and apparatus bay; however, overall the facility is adequate in size. Additionally, the station is situated directly on Burlingont Avenue, which leaves no off-street room for vehicle maneuvering or a ramp.

The station is no longer ideally located to serve the entire community, as the Village has expanded significantly to the south since the building was originally sited. This has impacted the department's ability to ensure timely emergency response, especially to the southwestern area of the Village near the hospital. Significant new development could stretch the resources of the department due to increases in call volume and building size.

3. Recreational and Open Space Facilities and Resources

There are several key recreational resources within the Village, operated both by the Park District of La Grange and other entities.

Park District of La Grange

The Park District was founded in 1929, and operates approximately 750 to 1,000 programs every year (150 to 350 programs per session). The district sustains an operating budget of approximately \$1.2 million with ten full-time, three part-time and fifty to sixty seasonal employees. The District serves the entire Village and a small unincorporated neighborhood south of La Grange Memorial Hospital, with ten park facilities on just over 66 acres. Currently this allows for approximately 3.9 acres of park space for every 1,000 residents in the District. Implementation of the District's 2000 *Open Space Master Plan* would increase this figure to 4.7 acres per 1,000 residents.

Park District facilities currently include the following:

- The Community Center is located at 200 Washington Avenue. The center is used for general programs and classes. It has two outdoor basketball courts and a playground.
- Denning Park is ten acres with a playground, walking trails, open space, picnic areas and shelter and administrative offices. It is located at 4903 S. Gilbert Avenue.
- Elm Park, at Elm between Brainard and Stone Avenues, is two acres in size and includes a playground, half-court basketball and a small sledding hill.
- Gilbert Park is located at 55 Gilbert Avenue. This 6 acre park contains four tennis courts, two t-ball fields, half-court basketball, playground, 1,000 foot walking trail, picnic areas and a preschool building which houses Playschool Preschool.
- Gordon Park is the Village's second largest park with 17 acres and is located at 90 Locust Avenue. The park has four lighted softball fields, three lighted handball courts, four lighted tennis courts, a playground, a picnic shelter, and maintenance offices and garages.
- Sawyer Park is a one-quarter acre playground located at 116 Sawyer Avenue.
- Sedgwick Park is the Village's largest park with 25 acres. It is located at 500 East Avenue. The park has two sand volleyball courts, two basketball courts, three lighted baseball fields, two soccer fields, four tennis courts, picnic areas, and a small activity building for youth and special-interest classes.
- Spring Park is a one acre playground and picnic shelter located at 5300 Spring Avenue.
- Stone Park is a one-half acre playground and half-court basketball court at 44 Stone Avenue.
- Waiola Park is a 3.5 acre park with open area for soccer and basketball, a walking trail and playground. It is located at 500 Waiola Avenue.

The Park District's 2000 Plan identified the need for a new recreation center facility to provide a gymnasium, indoor activity areas and multi-purpose rooms. Currently the District arranges with other facilities in the Village to house Park District programs as needed. The Plan also identified general locations for two new mini-parks (between one-half acre and two acres in size): near Cossitt and Peck Avenues, and near Seventh and Goodman Avenues. These mini-parks should provide a playground, and open play area, a picnic shelter, a basketball court, and a softball field, if feasible.

Rich Port YMCA

Rich Port YMCA is located on a 4.3 acre site at 31 E. Ogden Avenue (Ogden Avenue and La Grange Road) and offers a 240 room hotel facility, fitness programs and facilities, child care, two pools, six racquetball courts, an indoor skate park and a full gym. It is 240,000 square feet in size and draws over 1,000 users daily. Communities served by the facility include La Grange, La Grange Park, La Grange Highlands, Countryside, Riverside, North Riverside, Brookfield,

Hodgkins, Western Springs, Burr Ridge, Oak Brook, Hinsdale, Indian Head Park, Westchester, Willowbrook, Lyons and McCook.

The YMCA facility has been added onto over the years, and is inefficient in layout with significant accessibility issues. Substantial renovations are needed if the current facility remains in use. It is the intention of the YMCA to instead construct a new facility, most likely on the current site.

La Grange Country Club

The La Grange Country Club is a private membership facility located on 120 acres of unincorporated land bounded almost completely by the Village of La Grange, with a main entrance off of Brainard Avenue. The facility is bordered by Edgewood Avenue on the west, Brainard Avenue on the east, Linklater (48th) on the north and Country Club Drive (54th) on the south. The Club was founded in 1899, and includes an 18-hole golf course, a swimming pool, tennis courts, and restaurant and banquet facilities. Most members live in La Grange, Western Springs and Hinsdale.

La Grange Field Club

The La Grange Field Club is a private membership club located on a 3.4 acre site on the south side of 47th Street opposite the end of Leitch Avenue. It houses an outdoor pool and tennis facilities.

Kiwanis Park

Kiwanis Park, located at the northeast corner of La Grange Road and Elm Avenue, is privately owned and maintained by the Kiwanis organization, and is provided for the passive recreation enjoyment of all citizens of La Grange. It contains walking paths, seating areas and planting beds.

Cook County Forest Preserve District- Salt Creek Division

Although not located within the boundaries of the Village, the Cook County Forest Preserve District's Salt Creek Division provides significant recreational assets within close proximity to the Village. The Division includes Bemis Woods, which is located north of Ogden Avenue and just east of the Tri-State Tollway. The Division extends north and west to encompass 3,800 acres of land in total, including the 215 acre Brookfield Zoo at the eastern edge. Salt Creek Bicycle Trail extends from Bemis Woods east to Brookfield Zoo through the Salt Creek Division property. Sundown Meadow (sometimes referred to as Cantigny Woods), Theodore Stone Forest and Arie Crown Forest comprise a 575 acre forest preserve located south of Joliet Road, roughly between Brainard and East Avenues.

4. Historic and Architectural Resources

The La Grange Historic District (see *Figure 7a*) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is roughly bounded by Brainard Avenue, 47th Street, Eighth Avenue and Cossitt Avenue, with extensions north along Catherine Avenue and Seventh Avenue. A second self-contained area of the District north of the BNSF Railroad is roughly bounded by Stone, Hillgrove, Madison and Ogden Avenues. The District was placed on the National Register in 1975 as a prime example of a traditional residential neighborhood that has maintained significant architectural integrity. The area contains high quality examples of restored Victorian, Queen Anne, Prairie Style and American Four-Square homes.

There is also one individual National Register Landmark within La Grange. The Village Hall was constructed in approximately 1899 and for many years served as Lyons Township Hall. It was listed on the Register in 1978.

There are thirty-four additional structures registered as historic properties by the State of Illinois, including the Stone Avenue Metra station, portions of the Lyons Township High School North Campus, Seventh Avenue School, Kensington School, a church at Ogden and Kensington, a utility building at 530 East Cossitt, the "antique mall" building on East Burlington, and twenty-seven homes (nineteen of which are within the Historic District).

The La Grange Area Historical Society operates a house museum at 444 S. La Grange Road, which is decorated and furnished in a historically accurate manner on the first floor, and which houses the Society's offices and archives on the second floor. It is located within the La Grange Historic District. The Society maintains files on each property within the Historic District, and designates local landmarks at property owners' request after due diligence to establish that the property is in a historically appropriate condition.

5. Other Community Resources

There are several other key community resources within the Village. While this is not an exhaustive list, it includes those resources or organizations who operate physical facilities within the Village, the needs of which are to be carefully considered during the development of planning recommendations.

The **La Grange Public Library** serves the community from its facility at 10 W. Cossitt Avenue. One of its major needs is a larger building to better serve its residents, at least double the size of its current approximately 16,000 square foot facility. There are 12 full time staff members and 21 part time staff members. The library offers approximately 93,700 books (including 27,300 children's books), 300 periodicals, 67 videos, 170 DVDs, 2,670 audio recordings, and 13 computers for public use that provide internet access. The Library is currently assessing improvement options to provide expanded space to serve the community.

La Grange Memorial Hospital is located at 5101 S. Willow Spring Road and is a part of the Adventist Health System. It serves over 100,000 patients annually. It is currently undergoing a renovation and expansion that will be completed in 2006. The renovation will expand the hospital facility from 435,000 square feet to 620,000 square feet. There are currently 174 operational beds, 223 licensed beds, and 1,338 full and part time employees. Specialties include cardiology, interventional radiology, emergency services and obstetrics. Additional amenities resulting from the renovation will include more and larger patient rooms, a new intensive care unit, semi-private shared bathrooms and larger waiting areas.

The **Community Nurse Health Association** provides medical and dental care for low-income families. It was founded in 1921. The organization also provides an emergency food pantry, vaccination programs, and non-medical in-home assistance to the ill. Three clinics (adult, pediatric and dental) and two resale shops are operated by the Association on Calendar Avenue. Buildings at 23 and 27 W. Calendar house the resale shops on the first floor, and clinic and office space above. The adult clinic operates on the first floor at 110 W. Calendar, with rental apartments above. A storefront space at 108 Calendar accommodates the Secret Santa program. Demand for medical and dental services has never been greater than it is currently. The shops have been very successful and could expand in the future; however, the Association does not currently plan to purchase more buildings.

The **Southwest Suburban Center on Aging** at 111 W. Harris Avenue (the “Senior Center”) provides services ranging from transportation to health and wellness seminars for adults 60 years and older. Some of the programs include in-home services, daily checkup phone calls, elder abuse prevention, caregiver support groups, recreational opportunities, nutrition programs, social services, and physical and mental health services. The Center serves 21 communities in Lyons, Riverside and south Proviso Townships. Their current location is near the geographical center of the service area. During fiscal year 2003, 750 residents of La Grange utilized the Center’s services.

OARS-Proviso Adult Day Care, at 712 E. Elm Avenue, provides day care and congregate meals for seniors with dementia, strokes and other similar conditions, and serves all of Lyons Township. The La Grange facility is one of three operated within the Township. The organization has no immediate plans to relocate or expand their facilities.

Community Extension Project is a service organization that has provided leadership opportunities since 1978 to junior high and high school students living in seventeen communities in Lyons and south Proviso Townships, to help them realize their full potential. CEP works closely with other organizations, and focuses on diversity. The organization’s local office is located at 47 S. Sixth Avenue, and is approximately 2,000 sq. ft. in size. Many CEP programs are conducted off-site at locations such as local schools or the YMCA, but the organization is in need of a larger office space and is considering purchasing a building to house both office and program space.

The **CommUnity Diversity Group** meets monthly at the Community Center at 200 S. Washington Avenue. The organization addresses diversity issues, provides tutoring for local youth, and sponsors Black History, Martin Luther King and youth scholarship programs.

Illinois Masonic Children’s Home, founded in 1886, provides services to neglected children including room, board, clothing and guidance. The facility is located at 441 S. Ninth Avenue and can provide residence for up to 41 children.

B.E.D.S. is a community organization which serves the homeless by operating a seasonal emergency shelter at four rotating sites in La Grange and Western Springs, where case workers can help the homeless find a permanent place to stay. The **La Grange Area Transitional Housing Corporation** provides temporary housing to the homeless.

The **La Grange Art League and Gallery** promotes art awareness and appreciation in the community. It is located at 122 Calendar Avenue.

III. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Relevant policies from previous planning documents are summarized below, along with a brief description of current zoning policies regulating land use within the Village. This section of the report then concludes with a section discussing economic development policies, partners and tools that are currently in place in the Village.

A. PREVIOUS PLANNING POLICIES

The Village has been relying on two out-dated planning programs for guidance in recent years. These include the *Community Development Plan* and *A Plan for Northeast La Grange*. A review of these plans indicates that many of the recommendations contained within them *have* been implemented since their original adoption dates. Highlighted below are several policies contained within the plans yet to be implemented, to facilitate discussion as to whether they are still relevant policies that merit being brought forward in a new plan, in either original or revised form. In addition, three more recent documents have been summarized below- one addresses economic development strategies for the Village and the other two address the implications of potential future commuter rail service along the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad alignment.

The ***Community Development Plan*** (May 1970) prepared by Nason, Wehrman, Knight and Chapman, Inc. is the most current Comprehensive Plan created by the Village. At the time the plan was developed and adopted, the community was concerned about the weakness of the Central Business District and potential deterioration of older residential neighborhoods. The plan contains very general planning goals and policies, which for the most part have been followed over the years. Five recommendations from the 1970 Plan merit mention:

- A gradual phasing out of industrial uses north of Maple Avenue along the IHB Railroad;
- A gradual phasing out of commercial uses at La Grange Road and 47th Street, to be replaced with residential uses;
- The replacement of some commercial properties in the Central Business District with multi-family uses;
- Creation of a new public park in the Eastside neighborhood; and
- Creation of a public park adjacent to the current public library site.

A Plan For Northeast La Grange (May 1986), prepared by Camiros, Ltd. focused on the Central and West End Business Districts and the neighborhoods east of the IHB tracks, and immediately preceded in the preparation (by Teska Associates) and adoption of the Tax Increment Finance District that is currently in place and due to expire in 2009. The recommendations of the plan have been followed closely during efforts to revitalize the Central Business District. Recommendations of the Plan that have not come to fruition include:

- Creation of a new public park in the Eastside neighborhood;
- Replacement of industrial uses along the IHB Railroad between Ogden and Maple with multi-family residential uses;
- Multi-family development at the current site of the YMCA;
- Improvements to the Tilden Avenue underpass;
- A “gateway” retail development south of Village Hall;
- Limited street closures where north-south residential streets intersect with Burlington and Hillgrove Avenues between Brainard and Ashland (similar to closures at the Grayhill site);

- Significant redevelopment of the West End Business District with office, commercial and residential uses; and
- Facilitating the relocation of fire and police facilities (mentioned in the TIF redevelopment plan).

An ***Economic Development Strategy for the Village of La Grange*** was published in February 2003 by the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Community Development Department. The economic development “mission statement” included in the plan indicates that the Village’s goal is “to support and encourage the continued vitality and character of the entire community.” The plan is action-oriented, and describes tasks to be undertaken by the Advisory Committee or Village staff, as appropriate, to: enhance data collection and monitoring efforts; maintain information on available properties; establish developer contacts; prepare recruitment packages; continue theme-based marketing efforts; and, market façade loans to local property owners.

An ***Inner Circumferential Commuter Rail Feasibility Study*** (April 1999) by Metra and STV, Inc. and an ***Inner Circumferential Commuter Rail Service Land Use and Community Planning Study*** (April 2003) by the North Central Council of Mayors and West Central Municipal Conference were prepared to assess the feasibility of and potential impacts of establishing commuter rail service linking O’Hare and Midway Airports. Four alternate alignments were studied, one of which passes through La Grange utilizing a new track within the current IHB Railroad right-of-way, and referred to as the IHB-BRC alignment. The intersection of the IHB and BNSF Railroads has been identified as an ideal transfer station location along the route. The next stations to the north and south, respectively, would be at 31st Street in La Grange Park, and in Summit at the intersection with the Heritage Corridor line. Because of Metra’s current prioritization of the new STAR line, it is likely that implementation of Inner Circumferential Commuter Rail service is at least fifteen to twenty years away.

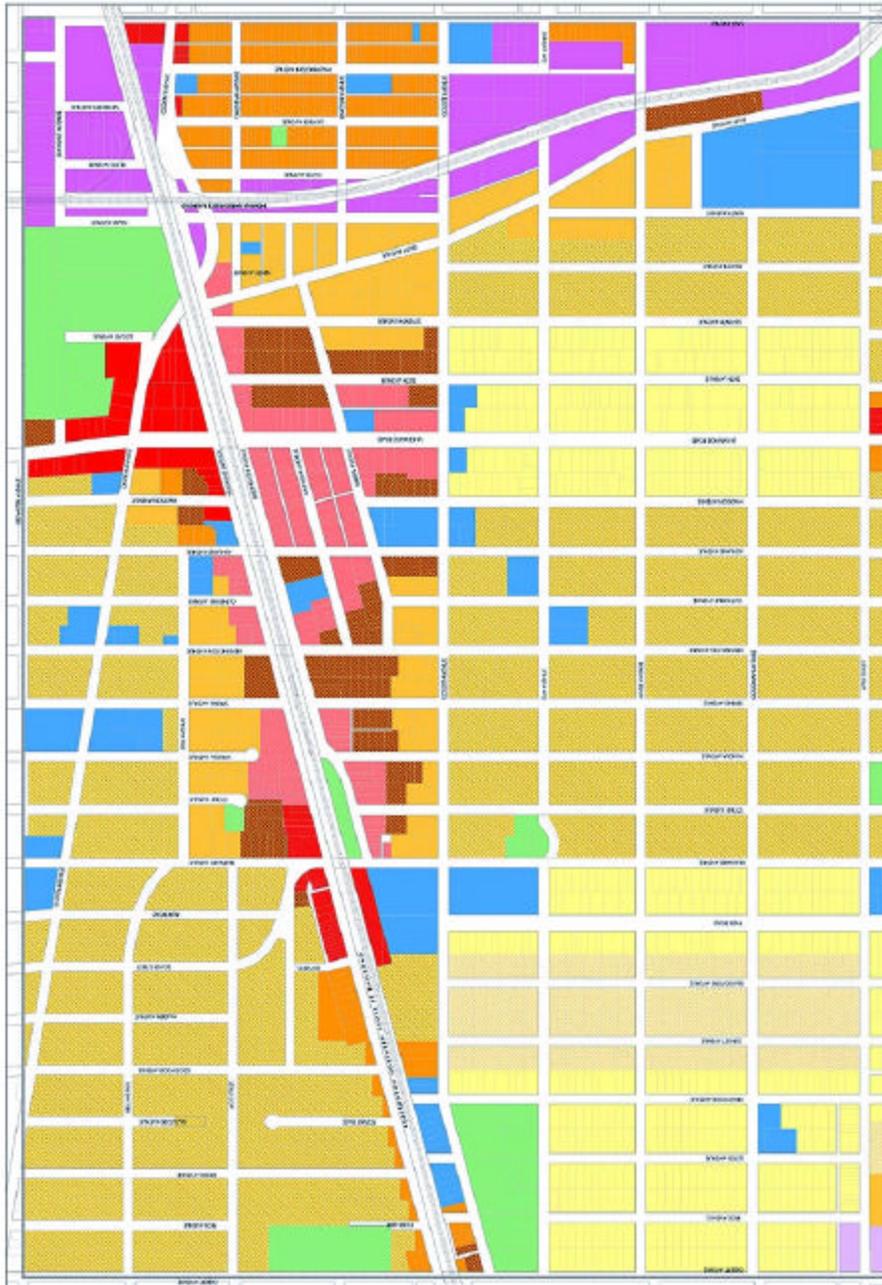
A bi-level station would be necessary and would likely be located northwest of the intersection, on property currently occupied by Gordon Park. The size of the station and the amount of parking to be provided are unknown at this time. Connections would need to be made between the transfer station and surrounding thoroughfares, and the Congress Park Metra station in Brookfield could potentially be consolidated with the new transfer station (it is currently located 2,000 feet east of the proposed station location). A workshop was conducted in each future station community to assess community preferences with regard to future land use surrounding the new stations. In La Grange, workshop findings included the following:

- Continue current land use trends, retaining residential uses south of Ogden and commercial along Ogden, Burlington and Hillgrove;
- Maintain Gordon Park as an open space by providing underground parking facilities;
- Accommodate new mixed-use and townhouse development west of Gordon Park; and
- Convert existing industrial uses northeast of the station to high density residential and green space.

B. DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The land use map within a comprehensive plan represents the community’s desired development pattern for the future. A key implementation mechanism used to achieve the desired development pattern is the mapping of zoning districts that establish the desired uses and development densities anticipated by the land use map. The Village of La Grange currently utilizes several zoning designations that are briefly summarized below. The Village’s current zoning map is graphically depicted in *Figure 8a: Existing Zoning North of 47th Street* and *Figure 8b: Existing Zoning South of 47th Street*.

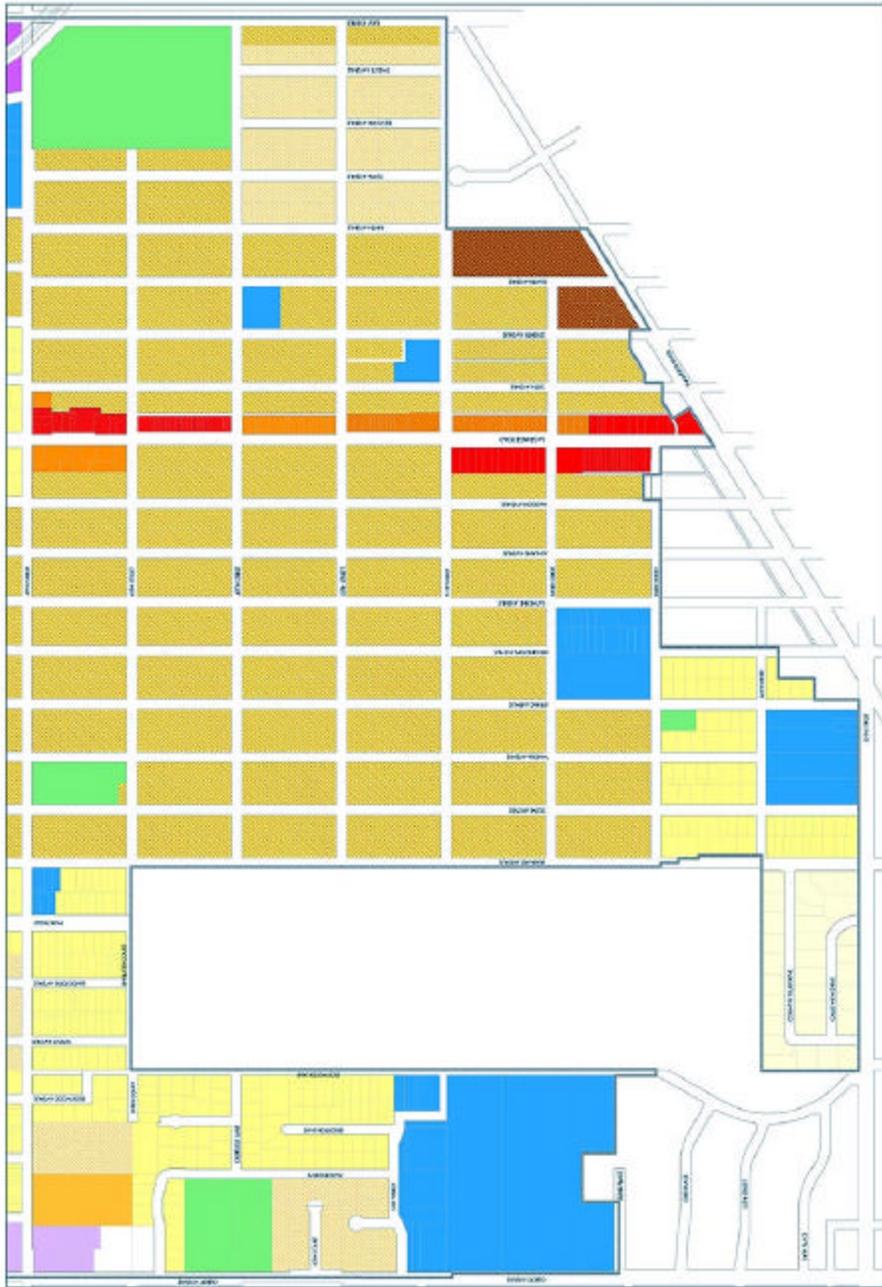
FIGURE 8a
EXISTING ZONING
NORTH OF 47TH STREET



DRAFT
NOVEMBER 2003

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS

FIGURE 8b
EXISTING ZONING
SOUTH OF 47TH STREET



DRAFT
NOVEMBER 2003

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS



For the most part, La Grange's existing land use pattern reflects the current zoning map, with the exception of some single family residential uses in districts surrounding the Central and West End Business Districts that allow for higher density (multi family) residential development. As the planning process proceeds, the need may arise to analyze key districts in more detail, to determine whether text or map amendments will be appropriate to facilitate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The allowable mix of uses and/or allowable development density may need to be adjusted in some areas to more closely align development regulations with the policy intent of the Plan. For example, current allowable uses are based upon SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) codes, and as a result some uses that may be considered desirable in commercial areas are not specifically mentioned in the code.

Single Family Residential Districts

La Grange has five single family residential districts that range from large (16,000 square feet) to small (5,000 square feet) lot sizes and housing types. These districts are intended to provide for the preservation of existing housing while encouraging new housing that is compatible with the character of existing development. Overall the allowable uses are the same in each district, providing for single family dwelling units and public utility facilities that would be compatible with the character found in the single family residential district. Accessory uses such as storage, residential recreational facilities, accessory parking, off-street storage of vehicles, antennas, amateur radio facilities, exterior lighting, garages and other uses are subject to special restrictions. District standards are fairly similar with variations addressing minimum lot area, lot width, setbacks and dwelling unit size.

The majority of the Village has a single family residential zoning classification. The largest district classification is the R-4 district. This designation can be predominately found in areas to the north of the BNSF tracks, and the older residential area generally bordered on the north by Cossitt Avenue, on the west by Brainard Avenue, on the east by Ninth Avenue, and on the south by 55th Street. This district is the second-least restrictive single family district, allowing a minimum 6,000 square foot lot with a minimum dwelling size of 1,200 square feet. Interspersed throughout the R-4 classification are pockets of the R-3 and R-2 districts. An area located west of Brainard Avenue is a significantly sized R-2 and R-3 district, and another occurs along La Grange Road. The R-2 and R-3 districts are less dense districts with larger minimum lot sizes, 12,500 and 7,500 square feet, respectively, and larger minimum dwelling unit sizes, 2,000 square feet and 1,500 square feet, respectively. The R-1 district occurs in a small, more recently developed subdivision located south of the La Grange Country Club, and requires a minimum lot size of 16,000 square feet and a minimum dwelling unit size of 2,000 square feet. The R-5 district, allowing for the smallest single family lot sizes in the Village at 5,000 square feet, generally occurs along Bluff Avenue, and in a "buffer zone" just beyond areas zoned for multiple-family residential uses at the perimeter of the Central and West End Business Districts.

Multiple-Family Residential Districts

La Grange has three multiple family residential districts that allow single family attached, two family and multiple family residential development. These districts are intended to allow residential uses and densities that provide for a range of housing types, from relatively low density attached and two-family units in the R-6 district to higher densities in the R-7 and R-8 districts. Residential uses and standards vary in each district. Permitted uses include single family detached dwellings, single family attached dwellings, two family dwellings, multiple family dwellings in the R-7 and R-8 districts, group family households for up to six residents and personal wireless service antennas and related electronic equipment and structures. Accessory uses such as storage, residential recreational facilities, accessory parking, off-street storage of vehicles, antennas, amateur radio facilities, exterior lighting, garages and other uses are subject to special restrictions. There are a few special uses that are permitted subject to the issuance of

a special use permit and include senior citizen housing, nursing and personal care facilities, congregate housing, planned developments and public utility stations.

District standards are fairly similar throughout all multiple family districts. Within the R-8 district, higher structures are permissible, with 3 stories or 45 feet allowed as compared to 2.5 stories or 35 feet within the R-6 and R-7 districts. Total lot area and lot area per unit are used to control density. Minimum lot area for all single family uses (whether attached or detached) and two-family in the R-7 and R-8 districts is 5,000 square feet. Two-family units in the R-6 are slightly less dense with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. All other uses in the R7 and R-8 require a minimum lot area of 12,000 square feet. In reviewing the lot area per unit, the largest variances are in the R-8 district starting with 3,500 square feet per unit for a single family detached lot to 600 square feet per unit for nursing or personal care facility. All other standards are similar between the districts.

The R-6 district is predominately located in the neighborhood east of the IHB tracks and bounded on the north by Ogden Avenue and on the south by Cossitt Avenue. Other pockets of the R-6 district are located along La Grange Road. The R-7 District is located predominantly along La Grange Road, from 50th Street to about 52nd Street. The R-8 District is located in three areas within the Village. The predominant area is within a “buffer” area between commercially zoned properties in the Central and West End Business Districts and properties zoned for single family residential uses. The other two locations are along Bluff Avenue south of Maple Avenue and just north of Plainfield Road between Seventh and Ninth Avenues.

Commercial Districts

There are four commercial districts within the Village of La Grange- C-1, C-2, C-3 and C-4. The purpose of these districts is to provide for a full range of commercial uses that serve the needs of the citizens of La Grange. Parking standards are not differentiated by commercial district, rather they are separated by uses. This allows the Village to be responsive to specific parking needs that could arise in specific areas if problems are identified. In general, parking requirements for commercial uses are one parking space per some amount of square feet. Within the commercial districts, there are some performance standards that require conformance with noise, exterior lighting, enclosed structure and live entertainment standards.

The C-1 Central Commercial District generally provides for the development and maintenance of pedestrian-oriented commercial shopping centers with special regulations that protect retail development at street level. This designation is located primarily within the Central and West End Business Districts. Multiple family dwelling units are permitted within this district, but not on the first floor. The maximum height allowed is 3 stories or 45 feet, whichever is less. Total building coverage area is 100 percent and the maximum floor area ratio is 3.0.

The C-2 Limited Service Commercial District is intended to provide areas in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, primarily in the West End Business District, for existing commercial uses and to encourage redevelopment of new uses compatible with adjacent residential uses. Multiple family dwelling units are permitted within this district, but not on the first floor. The maximum height allowed is 3 stories or 45 feet, whichever is less. Total building coverage area is 75 percent and the maximum floor area ratio is 2.0.

The C-3 General Service Commercial District generally provides for the development of service, commercial, and retail uses requiring direct vehicular access. This designation is located primarily within the West End Business District in the two blocks nearest to Brainard Avenue north of the BNSF tracks, and at the La Grange Crossing development and commercial properties extending north along Ogden Avenue. Multiple family dwelling units are permitted within this district, but not on the first floor. The maximum height allowed is 3 stories or 45 feet,

whichever is less. Total building coverage area is 50 percent and the maximum floor area ratio is 1.5.

The C-4 Convenience Commercial District is intended to serve the day-to-day shopping and consumer service needs of the low-density residential neighborhoods of the Village. This designation is located primarily along south La Grange Road with a small pocket along Odgen Avenue at the easternmost edge of the Village. The maximum height allowed is 3 stories or 45 feet, whichever is less. Total building coverage area is 50 percent and the maximum floor area ratio is 1.0.

Office District

The O-1 General office district is generally located at the intersection of 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue. The mix of uses in this district seeks to provide a full range of business and professional office uses and related retail and service uses. Some special uses are permitted with the issuance of a special use permit, including limited manufacturing, retail trade and personal services, live entertainment as an accessory use, drive-in banks and credit agencies, ATM's, and a variety of transportation and utility services. Buildings are limited to a height of 3 stories or 45 feet, whichever is less. The minimum lot area needed is 10,800 square feet, with a total allowable lot coverage of 80 percent and a maximum floor area ratio of 0.50.

Industrial District

The I-1 Light Industrial District is intended for high quality and nuisance-free manufacturing, warehousing, and wholesaling uses that are compatible with the residential character of the Village. This district is located primarily on the east side of the Village, east of Bluff Avenue and Tilden Avenue. Permitted uses in this district include: vacant land; vacant buildings intended for a permitted or special use; agricultural services such as veterinary services; landscaping services; construction; manufacturing focusing on production, processing, servicing or warehousing; transportation and public facilities; wholesale trade; retail trade; and finance, insurance, and real estate services. There are some special uses permitted in this district in the areas of construction, transportation and public utilities, wholesale trade, retail and services. Some adult uses are permitted subject to special limitations. Parking standards are not differentiated from other commercial and office districts, rather they are separated by uses. Within the industrial district, there are some use limitations that require conformance with performance standards regarding noise, glare and heat, vibration, air pollution, electromagnetic interference, fire and explosive hazards. The maximum height allowed is 3 stories or 45 feet, whichever is less. The minimum lot area needed is 12,500 square feet with a maximum floor area ratio of 0.75

Special Districts

There are three special districts within the Village of La Grange including: the OS Open Space District, the IB Institutional District, and the DR Design Review Overlay District.

The OS district is mapped throughout the Village. It's primary purpose is to recognize the existence of major open space and recreational areas of notable quality. Permitted uses in this district include publicly owned parks, playgrounds, forest preserves, botanical and zoological gardens, arboreta, conservatories, recreational areas, public or private golf courses (including associated structures such as club houses, maintenance buildings and pro shops), and other open areas. There are some special uses permitted with the issuance of a special use permit, including band shells and amphitheaters, libraries and information centers, museums and art galleries, public sports and recreation buildings and facilities, membership sports and recreation clubs, commercial facilities incidental to the operation of public recreational uses, and landbanking of required parking. The minimum lot area for museums and art galleries is 7,500

square feet, with a minimum lot area of 15,000 square feet for all other uses. The maximum floor area ratio for all permitted uses is 0.10.

The IB district was established to accommodate existing and future public buildings. Permitted uses in this district include publicly owned parks, playgrounds, forest preserves, botanical and zoological gardens, arboreta, conservatories, recreational areas, and any governmental activity or service conducted within a building owned or leased by a public body. There are several special uses permitted with the issuance of a special use permit such as hospitals, other medical office type uses, libraries, colleges and universities, and some retail trade uses only if 80 percent of the net floor area is devoted to health services, etc. The minimum lot area in this district ranges from 7,500 square feet for museums and art galleries up to 80,000 square feet for secondary schools, colleges and universities. The maximum floor area ratio also varies from 0.45 for uses not listed in the district to 1.0 for museums and art galleries.

The DR district is primarily located within the Central Business District, and is mapped over the underlying zoning districts described above. The purpose of this district is to promote the historic, architectural and residential qualities of the Village. Additional areas of concern include special character, local atmosphere, compatibility, transitional areas, attractiveness, strong economy and education, pleasure and welfare. Any development within this area must submit for development plan review.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As previously discussed, in early 2003, the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Community Development Department jointly developed an "Economic Development Strategy for the Village of La Grange" that seeks to support and encourage the continued vitality of the Village, including marketing of the Central Business District utilizing the "Ahhh! La Grange!" theme. This section briefly describes the existing Village mechanisms, marketing partners and economic development tools that are in place to assist in their efforts.

1. Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Program

The Village recognizes that an important component in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and overall fiscal responsibility is the budget process and Capital Improvement Program. The Village's budget process is recognized for its utility as a policy document, operational guide, finance plan and communication device. The Village's total budget for the 2003-2004 fiscal year is just over \$21,300,000, and will be slightly lower than total revenues for the period. The largest portion of the budget is personnel costs (40.28%), followed by capital outlays (mainly for the CIP, 18.17%), interfund transfers (14.43%), operations and contracts (13.73%), debt service on the 1998 Streetlighting Program (9.23%), supplies and miscellaneous costs (4.17%).

The Village of La Grange maintains a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is rolled into the standard annual budget. The current program includes fiscal years 2003 through 2008. The capital spending budget for fiscal year 2003-2004 is approximately \$3,300,000. The total capital spending of projects listed in the five-year CIP is approximately \$10,140,000. The allocation of current funds is as follows: streets, alleys and streetscape- 44.52%; water system- 15.44%; vehicles and equipment- 14.05%; sidewalks, curbs and gutters- 11.35%; street lighting- 8.79%; Sanitary and storm sewers- 4.89%; and tree planting and other miscellaneous expenses- 0.76%. The most visible projects occurring during the current fiscal year will be the reconstruction of Hillgrove Avenue and maintenance of the standpipe (water tower) near Ogden and Tilden Avenues.

2. Business Development Organizations

La Grange Business Association

The La Grange Business Association is a member-based organization that seeks to enhance the local business climate, and promote and stimulate orderly growth for businesses located in La Grange. The organization meets monthly to discuss issues of interest to local business owners and operators, promotes the growth of its member businesses, represents the interests of local businesses to the Village and the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and sponsors promotional efforts and events within the Central Business District to benefit all members. The Business Association works with the Village to promote the Central Business District using the “Ahhh! La Grange” marketing theme.

West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry is an advocate for businesses with 350 members within seven communities in the western suburbs (La Grange, La Grange Park, Countryside, Willow Springs, Western Springs, Indian Head Park and Hodgkins), helping to promote their stability and well-being. Its offices are located at 48 South Sixth Avenue in La Grange. The organization provides several member services, including: informational mailing inserts, new resident welcome packets, news articles and press releases, business lists and mailing labels, event sponsorships, and business promotion events. The Chamber of Commerce also maintains a website. Some of its on-line assistance links include resources for business start-up, workforce development, environmental standards and safety compliance, federal and state government resources, legislative issues and other business organizations. The website also contains a database of all properties that are for sale or rent. The data base provides a general description of the property, its location along with the exact address, the type of use desired and the square footage available, and an aerial photograph.

3. Economic Development Tools

The Village has proactively focused on economic development by establishing tools that will eventually aid in implementing aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. These tools are summarized below.

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District

The Village created a TIF district in 1986 that encompasses the Central Business District, allowing the Village to proactively encourage revitalization and redevelopment projects. The District is due to expire in 2009. The general boundaries include Odgen Avenue to the north and Cossitt Avenue to the south. The District generally encompasses commercial properties in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, extending west to Kensington Avenue along the BNSF tracks, and west to Ashland Avenue along Calendar, Harris and Cossitt Avenues.

The tax revenue collected during the year prior to District creation is the “base” amount that continues to be distributed as before; the additional revenues generated within the District are the “increment” set aside for District-specific initiatives. These “incremental” revenues have assisted with streetscape improvements throughout the District, the provision of interest-free loans to businesses for façade upgrades, and the completion of the La Grange Crossing redevelopment. The presence of this TIF district may aid in securing developer interest and investment in future projects likely to be identified during the planning process, as well as the implementation of public realm improvements that the Plan may identify as high priority.

Façade Renovation Program

The façade renovation program was started in 1989 to promote revitalization of La Grange's retail core. The Village provides five-year, interest free loans to business owners that can be used to renovate, restore, provide maintenance or improve a sign for a business located within the TIF district. Since 1989, 31 loans have been approved with an approximate value of \$1,133,000. The loan amounts vary but cannot exceed the greatest of \$20,000 per building side, or \$40,000 per building or \$800 per front lineal foot and 100 percent of the renovation costs. The area where the façade renovation program is implemented falls within the DR Design Review Overlay District. Therefore, any improvements in this area must meet certain design and rehabilitation standards, and be in keeping with the character of the Central Business District.

IV. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

What are the planning implications of all of the information presented within the earlier sections of this background report? This final section endeavors to synthesize the key findings identified thus far in the planning process, including the major implications of the market analysis prepared by Goodman Williams Group.

The Village of La Grange is at a critical point in its evolution as a community. It is a built-out, mature suburb with little available land for redevelopment, yet it is facing significant market pressure for new commercial and multi-family housing development. The West End Business District holds significant potential for change in the coming years; change the Village should proactively seek to direct for the benefit of the entire community. Teardown redevelopment is beginning to alter the character in several residential neighborhoods. Key community facilities are facing the need to expand and/or upgrade. The long term potential for an additional transit station facility on the east side of the Village also has far-reaching implications.

The Village has demonstrated a willingness to be proactive and sensitive to community planning issues, as evidenced by the successful implementation of the Downtown TIF District and the resulting resurgence of the Central Business District. The existence of two Metra train stations and other available transportation modes is also critical to the community's desirability. For these reasons, among others, there are several positive aspects within the Village that can continue to be built upon.

This section of the report seeks to synthesize the key planning considerations the Village is facing as the concepts development phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update process begins. Both market-related and physical planning issues are discussed. Steering Committee and community input on these considerations will be critical to ensuring that planning concepts are responsive to the Village's needs.

Key findings are summarized in the second part of this section in the form of *issues* that will need to be considered and addressed during the development of planning recommendations, and *opportunities* that the Village can build upon and leverage in the coming years. These will serve as a "checklist" mechanism to ensure that planning recommendations yet to be developed are responsive to community concerns, and build upon existing community assets to the greatest extent possible.

A. MARKET CONDITIONS – KEY FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

This section briefly discusses several aspects of the market and demographic assessment in relation to community planning policy issues. The complete market analysis conducted for the Village and the BNSF Railroad Corridor by Goodman Williams Group has been published under separate cover as a companion to this report. It is suggested that the reader review the market analysis for understanding of the commentary made in this section.

Residential

La Grange will continue to see market pressure for the development of replacement single family housing as well as new condominium development. With its quality schools and rising property values, La Grange is attracting families that are buying lots and replacing older homes with more

substantial ones. All indications are that this “teardown” activity will continue for the foreseeable future, particularly on larger lots.

While some citizens have raised scale and character as an issue in the process, to date the topic has not been one of overwhelming concern. In addition, there is a certain amount of ambivalence in response to the question of what the Village might consider in response to this trend. Perhaps there is a need for continuing education on the issue before any constructive conversation can occur, or before ideas evolve on how to deal with it.

The market for multifamily condominium and townhouse development is also strong. High quality developments with an emphasis on small to mid-size units have met with strong market acceptance. The Village could absorb an annual average of approximately 20 to 25 new units. Ideally, this demand would be accommodated in buildings with no more than 35 to 40 units, as well as in smaller infill projects. To date, the larger multifamily activity has been directed to the BNSF Railroad Corridor. There may be other locations in the Village which would benefit from low to moderate density attached residential development. This can be explored in the next phase of the study.

Retail

With nearly 100 retail establishments located in the Village, La Grange's retail market remains strong. Particularly in the Central Business District, few storefronts are vacant and the new large-format retailers are doing well. Several additional national retailers are reportedly interested in locating in La Grange, including Linens n' Things, Ann Taylor, Chico's, Office Depot, and Cost Plus. However, most of these retailers require building footprints substantially larger than the smaller “inline” storefront space typically found in the BNSF Railroad Corridor. The planning process will need to explore whether additional locations for large-format retailing with adequate off-street parking can be identified.

The market for smaller local retailers is more limited and their economic feasibility is less certain. As experienced in other successful downtowns, rising rents for storefront spaces along the premier retail streets may preclude some businesses from entering the market, and may force some of those incapable of operating more efficiently to move. Because the diversity of small business is an important asset of the Central Business District, the Village may eventually need to take creative steps to assist small businesses. This might include helping to preserve and rehab older buildings or creating incentives for major tenants to help underwrite the cost of space for small local retailers. In any event, as the Central Business District evolves maintaining the smaller local retailers will likely become more of an issue.

The mix of retail and service uses along the South La Grange Road corridor and at the intersection of Gilbert Avenue and 47th Street could be improved. Buildings and site improvements in these locations are beginning to show signs of functional obsolescence. As discussed in the land-use section, ways of providing newer marketable space along with desired parking should be undertaken in the next steps of the study.

Restaurants

Many participants in the planning process raised the question of whether the community has reached its capacity for the number of restaurants in the Central Business District. Based on our research, the market for eating, drinking, and entertainment establishments has not yet been saturated. With approximately 40 restaurants, La Grange is now a dining destination, and attracts patrons from a fairly large trade area. Local brokers and property owners continue to see interest from a variety of types of prospective restaurant operators. This raises several important policy considerations for the Village. Does the continuing growth in the industry erode the “quality” of the restaurant experience in the Central Business District generally, or is this mix of dining and

entertainment establishments an important economic asset for the community? How will future restaurant growth affect parking conditions, which are now most pressured during the evening hours?

Office

The market for office uses in the Village is limited primarily to small business and professional service firms. Current demand in the Village has been met mostly in storefront space in combination with retail uses and where allowed under current zoning, primarily in the West End Business District and the neighborhood commercial areas of the Village. Future demand will come primarily from the need to replace older facilities and will be strongest from medical/dental and financial service firms. In particular, La Grange Memorial Hospital's plan to raze a professional office building as part of its campus expansion will displace approximately 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of space by 2007. Appropriate relocation sites off the hospital campus should be explored as part of this planning process.

The Grayhill office building on Hillgrove is substantially underutilized with a 17,000 square foot block of space currently available for lease. Despite its prominent location, attractive rents, and off-street parking, a back-office user has not yet been found. The demand for larger office users in La Grange has not been demonstrated recently.

Industrial

La Grange has a sizable concentration of small industrial firms, clustered primarily in the northeast section of the Village along the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad. Despite comparatively high taxes and limited truck access, this appears to be a viable and active industrial area. Conflicts with the residential neighborhood, primarily related to outdoor storage and truck traffic, do arise. Industrial operations often impact residential quality as well. The Grayhill manufacturing building is the only large-scale industrial operation that remains within the BNSF Railroad Corridor. The company anticipates remaining in that facility for the foreseeable future.

B. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

As mentioned previously, this summary will serve as a "checklist" mechanism to ensure that planning recommendations yet to be developed are responsive to community concerns, and build upon existing community assets to the greatest extent possible. The issues and opportunities in this final section are separated into those related to the Village as a whole, and those that are unique to the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

1. Summary of Community-Wide Planning Issues

Land Use and Development

- Lack of large development parcels
- Housing diversity (types, prices, locations)
- Housing affordability (seniors, first-time homebuyers, young families)
- Impact of "teardown" redevelopment (increasing bulk and density)
- Stability of residential areas adjacent to industrial uses
- Lack of investment in older industrial properties

Transit, Access and Circulation

Railroad crossing congestion (La Grange Rd., 47th Street, East Ave.)
Increasing truck traffic (Ogden and East Avenues)
Speeding on the increase
Residential cut-through traffic
Tilden Avenue viaduct underpass (safety concerns)
Pedestrian safety at intersections, near schools
Lack of sidewalks in some areas
LTHS student parking demands

Urban Design

Lack of “gateway” image at major community entry points
Lack of pedestrian-friendly environment in neighborhood commercial areas
Need for improved signage (public and private) in neighborhood commercial areas
Maintaining architectural and historic integrity of neighborhoods
Tree loss during redevelopment
Buffering between industrial and residential areas

Community Facilities and Services

Library expansion needs
Need for additional public park space and indoor recreation facilities
Lack of green space / athletic fields near schools
Lack of youth-friendly places
Need for more quality daycare facilities
Location of fire department (no longer ideal)
Aging infrastructure (water mains)

Economic Development

Limited business visibility / identity outside the Central Business District
Lack of development / enhancement incentives outside the TIF District
Cook County tax structure diminishes market for “employment” uses

General / Quality of Life

Maintaining diversity
Maintaining sense of community
Cultural amenities lacking
Insufficient code enforcement (volume of construction activity rising)
Homelessness / vagrancy
Drug and gang issues (isolated)
Environmental threats southeast of Village

2. Summary of Community-Wide Planning Opportunities

Land Use and Development

Continuing market demand for residential and commercial properties
Teardowns modernize and upgrade housing stock
Relocation of displaced medical and dental offices (from hospital campus)

Vacant properties along BNSF tracks west of LTHS North Campus
Fairly active industrial market (for smaller properties)

Transit, Access and Circulation

Several existing transportation modes
Regional access to build upon (to Loop, airports)
Pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly environment exists in many areas
Create bike and pedestrian routes linking destinations where lacking
Add/upgrade traffic lights to ease congestion and pedestrian movement
Coordinate adjacent off-street parking areas and develop shared parking agreements

Urban Design

Potential for consistent streetscape within neighborhood commercial areas
Potential for expansion of design review into neighborhood commercial areas
Attractive, tree-lined residential streets

Community Facilities and Services

YMCA plans to replace their facility
Public Library as an “anchor” use in current or new location
High quality school and municipal facilities

Economic Development

Define the market “niche” of each commercial area
Enhance partnerships with other area economic development organizations
Expand incentives beyond the TIF District
Enhance retail sales tax revenue (reduce homeowner tax burden over time)
Attract job-producing “employment” uses

General / Quality of Life

Concerned, involved citizenry
Family-oriented, stable community
Strong organizations and volunteerism
Quality education system
Historic district, individual landmark properties
Establish a Village-wide digital network

3. Summary of BNSF Railroad Corridor Planning Issues

Land Use and Development

Underutilized West End Business District
Retail / restaurant mix- Will it change? Should it change?
Define an appropriate height / bulk / density
Non-uniform development pattern along Burlington and Hillgrove
Lack of retail activity in West End Business District (partly due to zoning code)
Redevelopment potential of existing parking lots
Some potentially desirable uses not currently allowed in zoning code

Transit, Access and Circulation

Link between Central and West End Business Districts is weak
Parking (quantity, location, management)
LTHS students fill up metered spaces in West End
Pedestrian safety (intersections, railroad crossings, kiss-n-ride areas)
Increasing traffic congestion
Additional 200 to 250 commuter spaces desired by Metra (by 2030)

Urban Design

Lack of pedestrian continuity between Central and West End Business Districts
Lack of adequate wayfinding and entry signage
Many outdated building facades

Community Facilities and Services

Need an open space for community events within the Corridor
Senior Center site facing redevelopment pressure
Increasing police calls in the Central Business District

Economic Development

TIF ends in 2009
Rising rents with redevelopment (threatens “mom & pop” business viability)
Business hours of operation (not coordinated or late enough)
Avoid generic chain businesses; maintain unique local shops

4. Summary of BNSF Railroad Corridor Planning Opportunities

Land Use and Development

West End revitalization potential
Vibrant and cohesive Central Business District
Continuing retailer interest in La Grange
New housing types
“Wow” factor at La Grange Road / Cossitt Avenue
“Wow” factor and La Grange Road / Ogden Avenue

Transit, Access and Circulation

Metra stations create a hub of activity
Pedestrian scale within Central and West End Business Districts (but not between)
Pending sidewalk upgrades to and within West End Business District
Future IHB commuter rail service / transfer station
Future Pace service upgrades
Amtrak connection to build upon

Urban Design

Established visual identity (streetscape) to enhance and expand
Pending Hillgrove reconstruction
Design Review Overlay District mechanism in place

Several attractive buildings and facades
Further enhancement of amenities (benches, etc.)

Community Facilities and Services

Arts / cultural focus
Cluster institutions in the Corridor
Re-establish or create community events
Provide a live theatre venue in the Corridor

Economic Development

Strong La Grange Business Association
LTHS-generated customer traffic to capture in the West End Business District (all ages, times)
“Restaurant row” marketing strategy
“Showcase” area businesses / events at the Metra stations