



Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan



VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS



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WORK PAPERS

Three work papers were prepared during the course of the planning study. These work papers include:

- o *Memorandum No. 1: Conditions Inventory, Public Input and Issues and Opportunities Summary* (HNTB Corporation, December 2003)
- o *Memorandum No. 2: Preliminary Community-Wide and BNSF Railroad Corridor Concept Plans* (HNTB Corporation, March 2004)
- o *Market Assessment: Village of La Grange* (Goodman Williams Group, March 2004)

These work papers, while important elements of documentation of the planning process, do not constitute the official adopted plan and policy. This Comprehensive Plan report does. Thus, where inconsistencies exist between the content of these previous documents and this Plan, the Plan itself shall be the guiding resource. Copies of the documents may be obtained at the Village of La Grange Community Development Department at Village Hall.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Comprehensive Plan* that includes the *BNSF Railroad Corridor Plan* for the Village of La Grange, Illinois, was prepared through the efforts of the Village of La Grange, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra, Pace and the project planning consultants, HNTB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group. Many citizens, staff and officials of the Village of La Grange, too numerous to mention here, participated in the planning process. Their involvement and insights are sincerely appreciated.

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i. Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is the Village of La Grange's official *policy guide* to future land use, development and conservation within the community over the next twenty years. The Plan addresses community needs and opportunities from a Village-wide perspective, while placing an emphasis on the physical development and community services and facilities aspects of the Village. It is geographically comprehensive in coverage, in that it applies to both incorporated areas and selected unincorporated areas within one and one-half miles of the Village limits.

Unlike many 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, Village Board, and other officials and staff when land use changes and capital facilities are proposed. It is long-range in orientation and intended to express general community goals and aspirations. Yet, it is specific enough to guide the day-to-day land use and development activities.

The Village's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1970. A more detailed plan that addressed the Downtown and surrounding areas, *A Plan for Northeast La Grange*, was adopted in 1986 and served, in part, as the basis for a very successful tax increment finance (TIF) project enacted in the same year. As useful as they once were, the passage of time has rendered these documents largely obsolete. However, 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 Downtown over the last decade has raised redevelopment pressures on both commercial and residential properties. Significant 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 this update to the Comprehensive Plan that takes into account the changed conditions in and around the Village and will provide effective policy guidance into the future.



A. HISTORY AND PLANNING CONTEXT¹

In 1837, Robert Leitch purchased 440 acres of land from the U.S. government in what is now La Grange. Railroad service began in 1864, and by 1869 commuter rail service connected the La Grange area to Chicago. Franklin D. Cossitt purchased 600 acres adjacent to the railroad in 1870, including part of Leitch's property, roughly encompassing the area now bounded by Ogden Avenue, 47th Street, Bluff Avenue and Waiola Avenue. The Village of La Grange was incorporated in 1879, and was named for Cossitt's hometown in Tennessee. Many of the earliest residents of the Village relocated from Chicago after the fire of 1871. Commercial businesses clustered around the railroad depot at Fifth Avenue (now La Grange Road) as well as the Stone Avenue Station. By 1890, the La Grange business district consisted of 28 stores. The community's location within the greater Chicago area, and the opening of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad (now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe) in 1864 would continue to provide La Grange with opportunity for prosperity.

By the turn of the century the Village's population quadrupled from 1,000 to 4,000. The automobile was common by 1910, and its introduction continued to enhance access to the Village and its Downtown. Through the late 1920s the Village had expanded east of La Grange Road to East Avenue, and south of 47th Street to 51st Street. By 1930, the Village of La Grange grew from 6,525 to 10,103 residents, an increase of approximately 55%. From this period through the 1950's, La Grange had successfully positioned its Downtown as a regional shopping center, anchored with stores such as JC Penneys, Sears and Montgomery Ward.

Beginning in the late 1950's through the early 1970's the Village would face financial challenges. By this time, La Grange was fully developed. The introduction of the shopping mall would introduce a business prototype in nearby competitive locations, which significantly impacted the strength of La Grange as a retailing center. In the face of this challenge, La Grange did not completely succumb to the inclusion of large-scale shopping centers in the Downtown, as many other communities did. The introduction of the Calendar Court shopping street attempted to bring new identity and energy to the Downtown. The approach was only marginally helpful during this transitional period.

¹ Historical information was taken primarily from the publication *La Grange Centennial History*, edited by William J. Cromie, published by the La Grange Historical Society in 1979 and "Downtown La Grange a Reflection of Past Success," by Jennifer Thomas, *The Doings Newspapers*, June 10, 2004.

In 1970 the Village took action to again redefine and shape its role as both a strong and desirable residential and business community. It engaged in its first community - wide comprehensive plan to focus community ideas and resources on reversing and stabilizing local business and retailing. The strategy supported the notion the Village maintain the basic orientation of the Downtown as a pedestrian environment, and work with businesses on property and marketing improvements. A flurry of rehabilitation that began in the late 1980s, and continues today, has resulted in major reinvestment in the Downtown.

With foresight of the need to continue reinvestment in the Downtown and sustain a unique role in the market place, in 1986 the Village adopted a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District in the Downtown. The finance tool made possible many changes including street repairs, business incentives and façade renovation loans for refurbishing storefronts. One of the most visible and successful projects induced by TIF financing is the Triangle Redevelopment Project at La Grange Road and Ogden Avenue.

Today, the community has again called upon itself to evaluate the state of the Downtown, West End Business District, and the community as a whole, and to refine its course for the future. The last decade has brought prosperity to the Village. The Downtown has become a well known regional entertainment location. Major reinvestment has occurred in the Village's housing stock community-wide, and its Downtown remains strong.

A major focus of the plan update is sustaining the economic success of the community while retaining its small town charm and character. For example, issues include: the growth of the Downtown and the need for investment in the West End Business District; allowing desirable residential replacement housing while ensuring a range of housing types for all citizens in the community; identifying ways to sustain and improve conditions within the Village's smaller commercial locations; and the need to continue to provide high quality community services and facilities. Many other needs have been identified in the planning process as well.

The Village is well positioned to again meet its challenges. It is well organized and in a strong financial position to manage and influence its future. The Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Corridor Subarea Plan lays groundwork to leverage the strengths and successes of the past to meet the needs of today. The Plan provides a framework for action, built upon citizen aspirations which are embodied in La Grange's Vision and the Goals and Objectives.



Again relying on its strong civic institutions, businesses, and citizen volunteerism, La Grange will continue its legacy as a strong, high quality, and full service community.

B. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

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. Residential redevelopment is beginning to alter the character of 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 through Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) on the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad also has far-reaching implications.

The Village has a demonstrated history of being proactive and sensitive to community planning issues, as evidenced by the successful implementation of the Downtown TIF District and the resulting resurgence of the Downtown. The existence of two Metra commuter stations and other available transportation modes are also highly desirable regional facilities. For these reasons, and many others, the Village will continue to attract investment and market opportunity. The Plan should provide guidance in the investment of both public and private resources.

The State of Illinois "Local Planning Technical Assistance Act" encourages local government comprehensive planning. It provides for incentives in two ways. First, technical assistance grants can be made available from the state to write or revise a local comprehensive plan. Second, compliance with the statute positions the Village to receive other state funding sources potentially affecting an array of municipal services and operations.

Plans must address each of the following elements: 1) Community Issues and Opportunities (Vision); 2) Land Use; 3) Transportation; 4) Community Facilities; 5) Telecommunications Infrastructure; 6) Housing; 7) Economic Development; 8) Natural Resources; and 9) Public Participation. Optional elements include natural hazards, agriculture and forest preservation, human services, community design, historic preservation and the adoption of sub area plans as needed.

While the state legislation identifies the purposes of each element, it also calls for the incorporation of performance measures in the Mobility Plan. To receive a technical assistance grant for five years after the effective date of the Plan, land development regulations, including amendments to the Village's zoning map and any land use actions should be consistent with the new or revised comprehensive plan.

Adoption of the La Grange Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan places the Village in compliance with the act, and enables the Village continued access to State of Illinois funding sources.

The Comprehensive Plan also provides guidance and direction for future land use and zoning patterns. As opportunities arise to guide and direct land use changes, the Plan will serve as a valuable resource to decision-makers. Reviewing the maps, goals, objectives and policies contained within the Plan will ensure that decisions regarding public and private investments are made with regard for the larger context that they will impact, and for the long-range "vision" that the Plan represents.

Without the benefit of a clear statement of community expectations and aspirations, there would be little consensus upon which to evaluate land use and development decisions. The Comprehensive Plan fulfills this purpose. It has been developed with substantial community input, and represents the conclusion of a two-year long planning process.

C. PLANNING PROCESS

Preparation of the Comprehensive Plan has followed a rigorous public involvement process. It began with documentation of the existing conditions and identification of issues or problems facing the Village. Involvement techniques such as focus groups, interviews, the Village's web site, and community surveys were employed to reach a range of La Grange's citizenry. Preparation of alternative plans and policies allowed citizens to compare and contrast alternative approaches to realizing community aspirations.

Critical to the success of the project was the appointment of a Steering Committee composed of a range of citizen representation from the Village. The Steering Committee brought a balanced view of the community and served as a critical "sounding board" on preliminary plans and proposals. Ultimately, consensus on a



community vision, and a preferred comprehensive future plan was reached. Implementation strategies to support preferred community improvement and conservation ideas were then developed.

PLANNING PROCESS

Data Collection	Issues and Opportunities	Vision	Professional Design Standards	Alternative Plans	Plan Formulating	Implementation
*Field Research	*Physical *Social *Environmental *Fiscal	*Goals *Objectives *Strategies	*Land Use *Transportation *Community Facilities *Economic Development	*Land Use *Transportation *Community Facilities *Economic Development	* Locally Best Acceptable Plan	*Capital Improvements *Land Development Code *Finance
----- Time ----->						

As mentioned earlier, the Plan update was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of Village officials, citizens, staff, and representatives of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra and Pace (refer to the Acknowledgements for a complete list of Steering Committee members). The development of the Plan was assisted by HNTB, a Chicago-based urban planning and design firm.

In addition to regular Steering Committee meetings, several community meetings were held during the planning process to solicit citizen and stakeholder input, and achieve consensus regarding the Plan, including the following:

- La Grange Business Association Workshop, September 11, 2003
- Community Workshop, October 7, 2003
- Community Workshop, October 20, 2003
- Key Person Interviews, November 3 and 4, 2003
- Focus Groups, November 5, 2003
- Community Forum, December 1, 2003
- Community Forum, March 2, 2004
- Community Forum, March 4, 2004
- Community Forum on the Draft Plan, August 18, 2004
- Plan Commission Open House, January 11, 2005
- Plan Commission Public Hearing, February 15, 2005 (continued to March 1, March 15 and March 29, 2005)

Comments received during meetings, interviews and focus groups held in the fall of 2003 are summarized in *Memorandum No. 1*. Comments received during later meetings served to provide guidance to the consulting team and Steering Committee as specific land use and transportation concepts and policies were developed.

The La Grange Village Board considered, discussed and ultimately adopted the *Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan* on May 9, 2005.

D. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into seven elements or chapters as follows: 1) Vision, Goals and Objectives; 2) Land Use; 3) Mobility; 4) Community Facilities; 5) Economic Development; 6) BNSF Railroad Corridor Sub Area Plan; and 7) Implementation.

References are frequently made to the BNSF Railroad Corridor (the "Corridor"), as described in Figure 6 on page VI-13. This area of the Village was identified for careful examination in 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 redevelopment pressure in the coming years. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra and Pace engaged in discussions with the Steering Committee at appropriate points in the



BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Boundary

process with regard to the BNSF Railroad Corridor to ensure that physical planning recommendations and planning policies support transit operations, develop transit ridership, and result in transit supportive land use and development patterns.

The contents of the Comprehensive Plan are supported by three work papers produced during the course of the planning process. These work papers, while important elements of documentation of the planning process, do not constitute the official adopted plan and policy. This Comprehensive Plan report does. Thus, where inconsistencies exist between the content of these previous



documents and this Plan, the Plan itself shall be the guiding resource. Previous work papers prepared include:

- *Memorandum No. 1: Conditions Inventory, Public Input and Issues and Opportunities Summary* (HNTB Corporation, December 2003) contains detailed background information regarding physical conditions within the Village, previous planning policies, current initiatives, summaries of stakeholder and community input, and issues and opportunities.
- *Memorandum No. 2: Preliminary Community-Wide and BNSF Railroad Corridor Concept Plans* (HNTB Corporation, March 2004) contains goals and objectives, and preliminary alternative land use and BNSF Railroad Corridor planning concepts that were reviewed and evaluated by the Steering Committee and community in order to develop the refined policies and maps contained within this Plan.
- *Market Assessment: Village of La Grange* (Goodman Williams Group, March 2004) contains an analysis of general demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the Village. The market study also contains information on local and regional economic and real estate market trends, strategic advantages and opportunities for the Village with regard to development, and general strengths and weaknesses with regard to redevelopment opportunities. This market assessment was used primarily to ensure that future land use and development plans and policies reflect a realistic assessment of the likelihood of change within the Village over the time horizon of the Plan.

E. USE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan should be used by all Village departments, committees, agencies and other community organizations and private interests. The Plan is relevant to all citizens and property owners in La Grange. In particular, the Planning Commission, Village Board of Trustees and Village staff will have a special role in administering the Plan. Many of the Plan's recommendations are directed to both public and private actions and improvements. The interface between the majority of public and private interests are primarily managed by the Village of a Grange.

In general all policies and recommendations embodied in the plan "carry the same weight" without prejudice or preference. However, the community vision and goals and objectives form a fundamental

basis of the plan. When reviewing private or public plans and initiatives, a level of deference should be given to these elements as they most directly embody the values expressed by the community in the preparation of the plan.

Further, the review of development proposals should collectively consider all relevant elements of the plan including maps, text, policies, and recommendations. Given the complexity of community evolution and change, the “priority” or “emphasis” of any given aspect of the Plan will vary depending on the nature of the issue, request or improvement under consideration by the Village.



I. The Future of La Grange – A Shared Vision

A successful comprehensive plan must be based on the needs and aspirations of the community. Thus, before the Plan, there must be a vision. In La Grange, a variety of public participation activities, review of conditions in the community, and the evaluation of alternative planning futures has led the community to define its choices for the future. The process has engaged citizens in identifying ways of dealing with community issues and capitalizing on opportunities. In the end, La Grange's Vision provides a central, orchestrating theme that guided the development of the planning program.

Visioning means the process by which a community, with the involvement of citizens, characterizes the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it.

A Vision for La Grange

Over the next twenty years, La Grange will remain a community with diverse housing, strong community services, and a reputation for civic involvement and volunteerism. Downtown La Grange remains strong, and revitalization of the West End will unify the entire BNSF Railroad Corridor. We will have experienced redevelopment, revitalization and change community-wide. Much of our housing stock will have been upgraded, but the Village will sustain a mix of housing to meet a range of lifestyle needs. We have invested in and safeguarded our quality education, recreation, open space, and municipal service systems – all of which are important to our family-oriented community.

A. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The following summary serves as a “checklist” to help ensure that planning recommendations are responsive to community concerns and opportunities and that they build upon and support the vision for La Grange. The issues and opportunities in this section relate to the Village as a whole. Issues and opportunities that are unique to the BNSF Railroad Corridor are included within the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan. Issues and opportunities were summarized from analyses of existing physical conditions and input



provided by the community during interviews, focus groups and workshops.

ISSUES AND WEAKNESSES

1. Land Use and Development

- Lack of large development parcels
- Lack of housing diversity (types, prices, locations)
- Lack of 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

2. 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

3. Transportation

- Railroad crossing congestion (La Grange Rd., 47th Street and East Ave.)
- Intersection of Ogden Avenue (Route 34) and La Grange Road (Route 45) is over capacity
- Perceived increasing truck traffic (Ogden and East Avenues)
- Perceived speeding on the increase
- Residential cut-through traffic
- The need for additional commuter parking in the BNSF Railroad Corridor
- Tilden Avenue viaduct underpass (vehicle/pedestrian conflicts)
- Pedestrian safety at intersections and near schools
- Lack of sidewalks in some areas
- Lyons Township High School student parking demands

4. Community Facilities

- Library expansion needs
- Need for additional public park space and indoor recreation facilities
- Lack of green space / athletic fields near schools

- Need for youth-friendly places
- Need for more quality daycare facilities
- Aging infrastructure (water mains)

5. Economic Development

- Limited business visibility / identity outside the Downtown
- Reliance on restaurant uses; under-served by retail uses and adequate office spaces
- Lack of development / enhancement incentives outside the TIF District
- Cook County tax structure diminishes market for “employment” uses

6. 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
- Taxes escalating

OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

1. Land Use and Development

- Continuing market demand for residential and commercial properties
- Teardowns may 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)

2. 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



3. *Transportation*

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

4. *Community Facilities*

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

5. *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

6. *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 wireless access network
- Places of worship

B. PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The La Grange Planning Goals and Objectives are intended to provide general policy direction when considering physical and design actions in the future. Goals and Objectives are intended to be used in combination with other maps, policies and recommendations to provide guidance.

Goals and Objectives transform collective community values into operational guidelines. Each has a distinct and different purpose in realizing community aspirations:

- **Goals** describe a desired *end state* toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad based and long-range in focus.
- **Objectives** describe *actions* that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall Goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning actions, guiding the implementation of each.

Planning Goals are divided into general categories for ease of reference, with applicable Planning Objectives listed immediately below each goal. The Planning Goals and their related Planning Objectives include:

A. LAND USE

Goal 1 - Seek to provide high quality and diverse housing options for Village residents.

- i. Support the provision of housing of varying types, sizes and price points in appropriate locations per this Plan, to effectively serve the housing needs of all segments of the current and future La Grange population, from young families to “empty nesters” and senior citizens.
- ii. Accommodate reasonable population growth within the Village with new “infill” housing development where appropriate.
- iii. Seek to protect the integrity and high quality of single-family residential neighborhoods throughout the Village.
- iv. Encourage the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Highlands area north of 55th Street and east of Willow Springs Road to remain a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood.
- v. Seek to maintain the Village’s current compliance with the threshold for affordable housing established by the State of Illinois¹ (at least 10% of total dwelling units), and seek to

¹ The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act became effective January 1, 2004 throughout the State of Illinois. Based upon the criteria established by the Act, and utilizing 2000 Census data, an affordable housing unit in Cook County has currently been defined as having a sales price of less than \$125,244 or a monthly rent of less than \$775.



maintain affordability that allows first-time homebuyers and older residents to live in the Village.

Goal 2 - Ensure the compatibility of new housing with existing residential neighborhoods.

- i. Consider adjustment, as appropriate, to basic zoning standards for residential redevelopment to sustain the unique character of our neighborhoods and the Village as a whole. For instance, building height and FAR standards should be examined.

Goal 3 - Maintain and strengthen the Village's existing commercial areas.

- i. Facilitate new commercial development of varying scale within the BNSF Railroad Corridor and along La Grange Road south of 47th Street, where compatible with surrounding uses and without over-stressing Village infrastructure. This could include the possibility of larger stores (up to approximately 20,000 square feet in size) where consistent with the policies of this Plan.
- ii. Encourage the upgrading and/or replacement of obsolete retail and office space.
- iii. Support efforts to accommodate retail and office uses within the Village that may be displaced as redevelopment occurs.

Goal 4 - Encourage transit supportive redevelopment within the BNSF Railroad Corridor (the "Corridor").

- i. Maintain current development review process height limits to ensure compatible redevelopment within the Corridor area.
- ii. Facilitate additional retail, service, office and multi-family opportunities in the Corridor, in particular within the West End Business District, without over-stressing Village infrastructure.
- iii. Seek a varied and self-sustaining mix of retail and service businesses in the Corridor that can benefit from transit access and a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- iv. Encourage shared parking arrangements to meet Corridor parking needs as efficiently as possible.
- v. Encourage the development of housing on upper stories of mixed-use buildings within the Corridor.

Goal 5 - Maintain and strengthen areas of the IHB Railroad Industrial Area that remain viable.

- i. Continue to enforce maintenance code requirements for industrial buildings and sites.
- ii. Continue to enforce zoning, nuisance and performance standards to minimize impacts on nearby residential properties from industrial operations.
- iii. Encourage the redevelopment of obsolete and/or physically deteriorated industrial buildings as appropriate.
- iv. Consider implementation of a facade improvement program similar to that currently utilized in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, to facilitate industrial facility upgrades.
- v. Undertake infrastructure upgrades, as appropriate, to support the continuing viability of stable areas of the IHB Railroad Industrial Area.
- vi. Encourage the timely remediation of environmental hazards within the industrial area, should any be identified in the future.
- vii. Facilitate coordinated and comprehensive redevelopment, if and when warranted, in the vicinity of the proposed future transfer station if Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) is implemented in the future. This could potentially include consolidation of the future transfer station with the nearby Congress Park Metra station on the Metra / BNSF Line.

Goal 6 - Maintain and enhance open space and recreational opportunities within the Village.

- i. As appropriate, cooperate with the Park and School Districts in the improvement and enhancement of existing Park and School District facilities.
- ii. Consider the expansion of open space and recreational amenities contiguous to existing parks and schools, and in underserved areas of the Village, as opportunities arise.
- iii. Cooperate with the Park District of La Grange to create a publicly accessible open space within the BNSF Railroad Corridor for community events.
- iv. Encourage the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Country Club to remain as a valuable open space amenity for the Village.



B. URBAN DESIGN

Goal 1 - Create a visually appealing system of public improvements throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

- i. Expand and enhance a consistent streetscape system throughout the Corridor.
- ii. Establish and implement consistent “gateway” treatments and wayfinding signage throughout the Corridor.
- iii. Continue the facade improvement program throughout the entire BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- iv. Strengthen existing design standards addressing architectural design, signage, parking lots, site improvements and landscaping.
- v. Seek to maintain storefronts with little or no setback from the public sidewalk in commercial and mixed-use areas, to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Goal 2 - Enhance the appearance of neighborhood commercial areas and key community entry points and traffic routes.

- i. Establish and implement a consistent streetscape treatment within neighborhood commercial areas.
- ii. Establish and implement consistent “gateway” treatments at key entries into the Village.
- iii. Establish a design review process for neighborhood and community commercial areas, with appropriate standards addressing architectural design, signage, parking lot treatments, site improvements and landscaping.
- iv. Minimize the visual impact of surface parking areas through perimeter and interior landscaping, and placement of lots behind or beside buildings.
- v. Implement a coordinated landscaping program, where financially feasible, along arterial streets, especially where side and rear property lines create an inconsistent appearance.
- vi. Bury overhead utility lines, where financially feasible, as upgrades are undertaken.

C. TRANSPORTATION

Goal 1 - Maintain and enhance existing public transportation facilities and services.

- i. Pursue opportunities to improve passenger amenities at Metra station platforms and Pace bus stops.

- ii. Pursue opportunities for increased Pace bus service within and through the Village in conjunction with Pace officials.
- iii. Explore Pace bus routing improvements to more completely serve residents and commuters using both Metra stations.
- iv. As an alternative to Pace Bus service improvements in the Downtown, study the feasibility of a shuttle service between the Downtown and West End Business District during peak activity periods.
- v. Consider, where appropriate, the feasibility of providing additional commuter parking capacity in the BNSF Railroad Corridor through shared parking agreements with private property owners.
- vi. Identify locations where remote commuter park-n-ride lots may be physically and financially feasible whether within the Village or within cooperative neighboring communities which can be linked by a shuttle bus, when other parking solutions have been exhausted.
- vii. Preserve the historic character of the Stone Avenue Station building.
- viii. Assure continued status of two BNSF Metra commuter stations as full service stations.

Goal 2 - Improve traffic flow and safety throughout the Village.

- i. Pursue a comprehensive street capacity study to better understand existing traffic conditions throughout the Village and to develop alternative congestion mitigation measures for future consideration.
- ii. Work with railroad and transportation officials to implement improvements that address increased pedestrian activity in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, including crossings of the BNSF Railroad.
- iii. Pursue improvements to the Tilden Avenue underpass below Ogden Avenue and the BNSF Railroad, should Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service be implemented on the IHB Railroad.
- iv. Consider traffic rerouting and calming measures at north-south local streets along Burlington and Hillgrove Avenues, to protect nearby residential neighborhoods from Corridor-generated traffic, on a case-by-case basis as redevelopment occurs.
- v. Consider traffic rerouting and calming measures near community facilities and at the perimeter of the Village, to protect residential neighborhoods from traffic generated outside the Village boundaries, on a case-by-case basis.



- vi. Require traffic impact analysis of proposed redevelopments to facilitate addressing potential impacts, if any, on nearby residential neighborhoods.
- vii. Pursue the acquisition of additional right-of-way, where warranted and where opportunities arise, to improve traffic flow and safety.
- viii. Investigate traffic signal priority (TSP) strategies for Pace buses at signalized intersections.
- ix. Encourage Metra to perform track safety improvement (i.e. fencing).

Goal 3 - Maintain and/or facilitate adequate parking facilities to serve land uses throughout the Village.

- i. Actively monitor and manage on-street and off-street parking needs within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- ii. Consider creative solutions for providing increased public and commuter parking within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- iii. Balance Metra's projected commuter parking needs with potential benefits to the Village.
- iv. Collaborate with School District 204 to seek shared and alternative solutions to parking demands in the vicinity of the Lyons Township High School North Campus.
- v. Improve wayfinding signage throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor to aid pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in locating and accessing public parking lots.
- vi. Pursue opportunities for the reconfiguration of off-street parking lots, and/or the establishment of shared parking agreements, to meet parking demands within neighborhood commercial areas in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Goal 4 - Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience throughout the Village.

- i. Continue to improve pedestrian comfort, safety, and convenience through sidewalk improvements. To this end, include pedestrian movements in any comprehensive street capacity study undertaken.
- ii. Encourage bicycle travel through the provision of adequate and convenient bicycle parking facilities throughout the Village.
- iii. Seek to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major thoroughfares and at busy intersections, in particular near schools, parks and commercial areas.
- iv. Complete the sidewalk network throughout the Village.

- v. Pursue opportunities with neighboring communities and agencies to create pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby trails and recreational amenities.
- vi. Reduce pedestrian barriers at the IHB Railroad through improvements to sidewalks at and near at-grade crossings.

D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL 1 - Cooperate with public service providers and institutions within the Village to accommodate the service needs and desires of La Grange residents.

- i. Cooperate with the Park District of La Grange, as opportunities arise, to accommodate facility and open space expansion needs as identified in their Master Plan.
- ii. Cooperate with the Library District to accommodate a new expanded library.
- iii. Cooperate with the Rich Port YMCA, the Park District of La Grange and other area property owners to ensure that any facility upgrade plans result in the creation of an appropriate northern “gateway” to downtown La Grange.
- iv. Continue to work cooperatively with community public service agencies, religious, assembly and other facilities within the Village to ensure their ability to function effectively while minimizing impacts on nearby land uses.
- v. Encourage all new community facilities to be located and designed as key “signature” structures within the community, with high quality site improvements and architectural design.

Goal 2 - Expand and enhance cultural, arts and entertainment resources available to Village residents and visitors.

- i. Seek to attract high quality arts and cultural uses to the BNSF Railroad Corridor, working with local business organizations, local arts organizations and others.
- ii. Explore options for maintaining the long-term viability of the La Grange Theatre, in conjunction with the property owner.
- iii. Encourage and cooperate with local school districts, the Park District of La Grange, the Community Extension Project (CEP) and others as appropriate to create easily accessible and safe location(s) for youth-oriented activities within the Village.
- iv. Seek opportunities to integrate public amenities, such as open spaces and public art, through the development review process.



Goal 3 - Protect and enhance existing historic and natural resources.

- i. Within the Village's historic district, encourage property owners and developers to maintain historic properties, and encourage renovations and/or additions that are consistent with the style and character of original construction.
- ii. Implement appropriate regulations and practices to ensure the protection of existing trees and other natural resources, as appropriate, during redevelopment within the Village.
- iii. Encourage utilities to undertake appropriate maintenance practices to protect and enhance existing trees and other natural resources, as appropriate, within the public rights-of-way and open spaces of the Village.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1 - Continue economic development efforts within the Village.

- i. Continue to enhance the commercial tax base, in an effort to reduce the tax burden on residential property owners over time.
- ii. Upon dissolution of the TIF, seek alternative means to financially leverage desired improvement projects.
- iii. Support and assist, as appropriate, small and locally-oriented retailers as the Corridor continues to evolve.
- iv. Promote the use and construction of technology infrastructure to support economic development efforts.
- v. Continue to provide diverse employment opportunities within the Village.

Goal 2 - Continue to work with business partner organizations and agencies, such as the La Grange Business Association (LGBA) and West Suburban Chamber of Commerce, to maintain and enhance the commercial business mix within the Village.

- i. Continue "theme"-based marketing efforts, incorporating marketing of neighborhood commercial areas within the Village, as appropriate.
- ii. Work with the business community to maintain and develop regional patronage through expansion of the use mix and targeted marketing efforts.
- iii. "Showcase" La Grange at public locations throughout the community, including both Metra stations, by providing maps and information about upcoming events, etc.

- iv. Continue to work with and support the LBGA in its business development efforts to coordinate advertising, business hours and other issues among local businesses.

F. ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Goal 1 - Amend and enforce Village codes, as appropriate, to support the purposes of the Plan.

- i. Establish appropriate allowable use, bulk, height and density requirements in areas likely to experience redevelopment pressure, to ensure that redevelopment is consistent with the Village's expectations.
- ii. Provide the fiscal resources to ensure adequate building code enforcement throughout the Village.
- iii. Review zoning and other development regulations for Village-wide consistency with the use, bulk, area, off-street parking and other recommendations of the Plan.

Goal 2 - Continue to provide high quality municipal services and facilities.

- i. Continue an aggressive program of Village infrastructure improvements through strategic planning and the capital improvement program (CIP).
- ii. Cooperate with other community service agencies and organizations in achieving their future service and facility development plans.

Goal 3 - Work with regional agencies, neighboring municipalities and others, as appropriate, to address issues of regional concern impacting the Village.

- i. Seek to address and mitigate traffic delays and improve safety at at-grade railroad crossings within and at the perimeter of the Village.
- ii. Pursue strategic relationships with neighboring communities, as opportunities are presented. In particular, consider a boundary agreement with the City of Countryside to address the future of unincorporated areas located between La Grange's and Countryside's current boundaries.
- iii. Identify and explore alternatives to mitigate environmental and quality of life impacts on Village residents caused by manufacturing and mining operations occurring southeast of the Village.



- iv. Pursue working agreements, as opportunities arise and as appropriate, with neighboring communities, agencies and property owners to address issues impacting the Village.

II. Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan translates the Village's Vision into physical terms. It establishes the pattern of future land uses for the next 15 to 20 years. It also includes community land use policies and recommendations to realize the Plan. The Land Use Plan strives to maintain and enhance the basic physical character of the community, promote improvements and upgrades as needed, and proactively manage market-driven redevelopment in select locations and in a compatible manner.

The Land Use Plan is to be used in concert with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. It is organized into the following sections: A) Introduction To The Land Use Plan B) Residential Land Use; C) Commercial Land Use; D) Employment Land Use; and E) Public and Quasi-Public Land Use.

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE PLAN

The existing pattern of land uses in the Village is a strong influence on future land use and development patterns. The current pattern of land uses within the Village is illustrated in *Figure 1, 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. La Grange's existing land use areas were mapped and are described in detail in *Memorandum No. 1*. Overall, La Grange is a mature, low-density, residential community. While some non-residential portions of the community are subject to change due to age or obsolescence, its physical pattern of development is well organized and stable. And, because of the quality of the living environment, it is experiencing a high level of residential replacement housing.

The *Long-Range Land Use Plan* builds upon the pattern of existing land uses, as illustrated in *Figure 1, Existing Land Use*, and provides a guide for future land use and development decisions. The *Long-Range Land Use Plan* strives to promote a compatible arrangement of uses which makes efficient use of land resources and community facilities and services, and emphasizes conservation in most areas. The Land Use Plan also considers and reflects the market analysis completed for the planning process which is also contained in *Memorandum No. 1*. The *Long-Range Land Use Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 2*. A description of the Land Use Plan and its associated recommendations are provided in the following sections.



B. RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Residential land uses in the Long-Range Plan will continue to sustain a stable pattern of development, very consistent with the current pattern of land uses in the Village. Residential land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Community-Wide Single-Family Residential* - residential areas which include single-family detached dwellings at all densities. Areas classified as “community-wide” generally include the developed residential areas outside the Village’s historic district.
- *Core Single-Family Residential* - residential areas which include single-family detached dwellings at all densities. Areas classified as “core” are generally located within the Village’s historic district, and consist of the older housing stock within the Village.
- *Two-Family Residential* - residential areas which include two family attached dwellings, either two-flats or side-by-side duplexes, which generally require 3,000 sq. ft of lot area per dwelling unit.
- *Medium-Density Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family residential dwellings in a low-rise condominium or townhome format, which generally require 2,000 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit. This type of housing includes structures that are usually two to three stories in height.
- *High-Density Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family residential dwellings in a condominium format (buildings with shared lobbies and centralized parking facilities), which generally require 1,300 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit. This type of housing generally includes structures that are four to five stories in overall height. Plan policies reiterate that structures more than three stories in height would require special approval by the Village.

Figure 1 Existing Land Use



Figure 1 back of page

Figure 2 Long-Range Land Use Plan



Figure 2 back of page

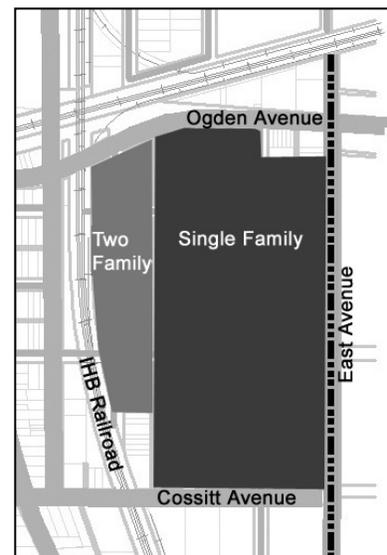
RESIDENTIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

Single-family residential land uses largely reflect existing conditions, incorporating a distinction between “core” residential areas and “community-wide” residential areas for purposes of policy distinctions. The recent increase in residential teardown redevelopment activity within the Village, and the inevitability of this redevelopment impacting older housing areas, has resulted in community sentiment to consider adjustments to current development regulations to maintain the general characteristics of residential areas that provide unique and valued character. Implementation of this concept will require several zoning code amendments to protect front yards from garages and wide driveways.

Another zoning code amendment might be introduced which provides for the control of basic building bulk through gross floor area limitation.

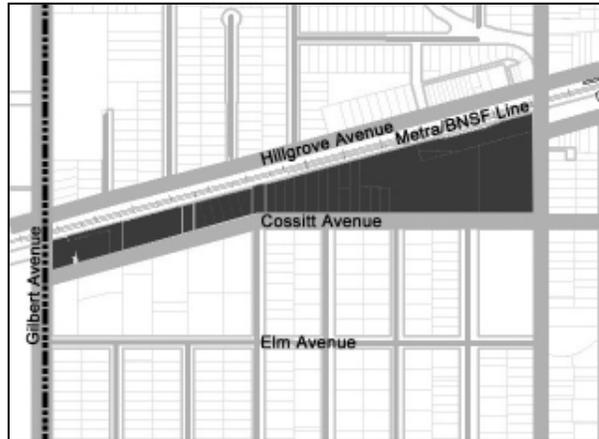
The Long-Range Land Use Plan map also clearly indicates the Village’s desire for single-family residential uses to continue within the adjacent area of the unincorporated La Grange Highlands. The Plan encourages the continued use of the La Grange Country Club as a recreational and open space facility. However, should it be subject to change in the future, the community’s land use preference for the area would be single-family detached residential that is compatible with neighboring areas.

The neighborhood bounded by the IHB Railroad, Ogden Avenue, East Avenue and Cossitt Avenue is currently a mix of single-family and two-family residences. Current development regulations allow for conversion to two-family residential throughout this neighborhood. The Land Use Plan indicates that, while two-family residential is an appropriate use type in the western portion of the area (along Hayes Avenue) to serve as a buffer against the IHB Railroad, the remainder of the neighborhood should remain as a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood.



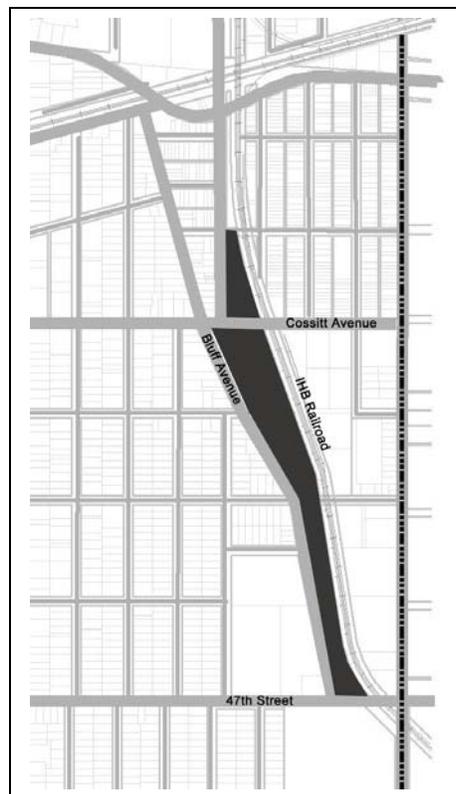
Multi-family residential uses generally follow the current land use pattern in the Village. However, there are a few locations which could be appropriate for new multi-family residential land uses. Multi-family residential areas within the BNSF Railroad Corridor are discussed in detail in Part VI B of this Plan.

Areas within the Village that could potentially accommodate additional multi-family development in the future include: the properties along Cossitt Avenue that back up to the BNSF Railroad between Gilbert Avenue and approximately Sunset Avenue (this area could potentially provide for commuter parking as well);



the properties east of Bluff Avenue that back up to the IHB Railroad between 47th Street and approximately Cossitt Avenue; properties fronting on South La Grange Road between 48th and 49th Streets (on the east side); and properties fronting on South La Grange Road between 51st and 52nd Streets (on the west side).

Development of multiple family residential uses in each of these locations will require a change of use. Thus, it is important that any land use change and development proposal encompass the entire area designated for multiple family residential use. For example, should a residential use be proposed for the west side of South La Grange Road between 51st and 52nd Streets, the entirety of the block face between these streets should encompass the proposal and illustrate how development will occur to ensure a coordinated approach, compatible with surrounding land uses. Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within residential areas of the Village. These include:



1. **The existing visual and environmental character of La Grange's various residential neighborhoods should be preserved and enhanced.** The Village is made up of several distinct neighborhood areas, each with somewhat different physical characteristics such as street configuration, landscaping, and lot sizes. Much of the Village's overall image and identity is due to the unique character of its neighborhoods, and these distinguishing features should be enhanced in the future.
2. **New multi-family residential development should include a distinctive landscaping and open space system as an integral part of the overall site design.** Landscaping or other buffering techniques should be used to screen residential areas from adjacent non-residential uses.
3. **Community-Wide Residential Scale and Bulk Preferences.** In general, residential areas should be comprised of structures not to exceed two and one-half stories in height. New homes should reflect architectural styles and materials that are not incompatible with Village standards. A Floor Area Ratio (FAR) should be considered for limiting the bulk and mass of structures in all residential zoning districts to ensure that infill and replacement housing is in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood character.
4. **Housing Opportunities in the BNSF Corridor.** Consider adjustments to minimum lot size requirements in the BNSF Corridor to better utilize properties to provide varied housing opportunities.
5. **Maintain compliance with the State of Illinois threshold for affordable housing.** The State of Illinois recently established the goal that a minimum of 10% of housing stock within each Illinois municipality should be affordable¹. Based upon the state's criteria, La Grange's 2004 housing inventory includes 20.8% affordable units. The Village should seek to maintain affordable housing at or above the State's established threshold, to continue to provide varied housing opportunities within the Village.

¹ The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act became effective January 1, 2004 throughout the State of Illinois. Based upon the criteria established by the Act, and utilizing 2000 Census data, an affordable housing unit in Cook County has currently been defined as having a sales price of less than \$125,244 or a monthly rent of less than \$775. These figures, as well as the Village's rate of compliance, will be subject to adjustment in later years.



C. COMMERCIAL LAND USE

The Long-Range Plan for commercial land use recommends a continued strong presence of retail and commercial uses in the Village. While the Plan does not encourage substantial new commercial areas, it does place a strong emphasis on enhancing and improving conditions in existing commercial locations. This discussion includes all commercial areas of the Village except for the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Part VI of the Plan is specifically devoted to a discussion of the Corridor. Commercial land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Neighborhood Commercial* - a commercial area which provides convenience goods and services, primarily to meet the daily living needs of nearby residents.
- *Community Commercial* - a commercial area which provides services extending beyond daily living needs, possibly including comparison shopping goods. This area is typically located along major streets and caters to community neighborhoods as well as passersby from outside the Village.
- *BNSF Core Commercial* – This area forms the business and civic core of the Village and functions as a focal point for *mixed-use* activity. It includes retail and entertainment uses on the first floor of buildings, and office, commercial services and residential uses above the first floor. In order to maximize its pedestrian setting for retailing and entertainment, off-street parking by use is not required for development within this area. Shared parking is provided primarily by municipal parking facilities, helping to encourage pedestrian movement and “multiple destination” shopping trips.
- *BNSF Commercial* – This area offers a mix of uses similar to the Core Commercial area, but is intended to be less intensive in character. Any allowable land use (except residential) could be located on the first floor of buildings. Because of their perimeter locations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, these locations would be required to provide dedicated off-street parking for all uses.

COMMERCIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

Commercial land uses outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor are currently located in four distinct commercial areas: at the intersection of 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue/Willow Springs Road; along South La Grange Road, at both the south end of the Village and near the intersection with 47th Street; and, at the intersection of Ogden and East Avenues. Reflective of the auto-oriented nature of the intersection of Plainfield and La Grange Roads, the area at the south end of La Grange Road is considered a “community” commercial area. Due to their smaller size and mix of uses, the other three are designated as “neighborhood” commercial areas.

It is not anticipated that commercial areas outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor will expand. However, redevelopment within these areas is likely. This could include several vacant parcels on the southwest corner of Ogden and East Avenues. It may be necessary for a developer to acquire two adjacent residential parcels to the south of the current commercial use. Should such a private transaction be successfully negotiated, the Village should be supportive of a rezoning request. In addition, should the industrial business on Ogden Avenue just west of East Avenue cease operations, auto-oriented commercial is the most appropriate land use to consider for the parcel.

Other existing commercial areas within the Village that could potentially accommodate commercial redevelopment include: the southernmost blocks within the Village along South La Grange Road, the neighborhood commercial area at 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue; and the neighborhood commercial area at 47th Street and South La Grange Road. The Village should consider direct efforts to facilitate coordinated redevelopment efforts, such as limited parcel assemblage.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within commercial areas of the Village. These include:

1. **Establish a dominant function and role for future commercial land use areas.** High-quality new commercial development should occur at selected locations in the future. While many commercial areas could include a mix of uses, the Land Use Plan recommends that most new commercial areas be characterized by a dominant function, such as retail, office or service commercial uses. This organization is reinforced by travel patterns, surrounding land uses, and community-wide service needs.



2. **Encourage the maintenance and improvement of existing commercial areas.** Existing commercial areas should be improved and upgraded as required. Overall access, parking and environmental improvements should be undertaken where necessary. The negative impact of commercial areas on other land uses should be minimized.
3. **Ensure that the design of commercial development supports and does not conflict with the adjoining street system.** Since most commercial areas are located along the Village's major streets, access to commercial properties should be carefully designed to minimize conflicts with through traffic movement. The consolidation of access drives for several individual properties should be encouraged. Commercial areas should be designed so that no direct vehicular access is provided between them and abutting residential areas.
4. **Improve and upgrade the image and appeal of commercial areas along commercial streets.** The overall image and appearance of existing commercial areas should continue to be upgraded and improved. Much could be done to improve commercial area lighting, landscaping, signage, and pedestrian conveniences which would not only help upgrade property, but also unify the overall appearance of commercial streets.
5. **Ensure the highest quality of new construction and design.** The design and appearance of buildings, site development, landscaping, signage and graphics, and street furniture should all be of special concern.
6. **Commercial areas should not adversely impact adjacent residential areas.** Screening and buffering should be provided, including landscaped setbacks, high quality fencing, and open space areas. Commercial operations, including traffic and parking, should not be allowed to affect neighborhood quality. Noise, safety, and overall maintenance of commercial properties should be carefully controlled.

D. EMPLOYMENT LAND USE

Employment land uses will continue to serve an important role in the future. Employment land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Light Industrial* - an area generally intended for a mix of light industrial uses including office uses, warehousing and distribution of wholesale goods and supplies, and the light assembly and light manufacturing of products.

EMPLOYMENT AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

Light industrial uses are indicated in two contiguous areas of the Village: the Shawmut Avenue Business Park, located north of the BNSF Railroad and east of the IHB Railroad; and the East Avenue Business Park, bounded by the IHB Railroad, East Avenue and Cossitt Avenue. Industrial uses in other areas should be relocated or phased out over time, including: the industrial business just northwest of the intersection of Ogden and East Avenues; the industrial businesses west of the IHB Railroad along Bluff Avenue; and, the industrial businesses along Hayes Avenue between Lincoln and Calendar Avenues.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within employment areas of the Village. These include:

1. **Encourage property owners to maintain and enhance the overall condition of existing industrial, business and office developments.** As existing developments continue to age, it will become important for the Village to maintain relationships with property owners and tenants to keep these areas viable and stable in the future. Several properties could undergo site improvements, especially in the industrial area south of the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
2. **New development and redevelopment locations should occur in a planned and unified manner.** In particular, plans should emphasize the consolidation of obsolete parcels and structures to meet current development needs.
3. **New development shall have adequate off-street parking and loading facilities.** Adequately screened off-street parking and loading facilities should be provided in all light industrial areas.



E. PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC LAND USE

Public and quasi-public land uses are critically important for sustaining basic community service functions as well as enhancing the Village's overall quality of life. Public and quasi-public uses are briefly discussed in this Part, and are covered in more detail in Part IV of the Plan. Public and quasi-public land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Public and Institutional* - an area containing major community facilities or public buildings such as schools, colleges, hospitals, churches, municipal buildings and cultural facilities.
- *Open Space and Recreation* - an area intended to be maintained as a park, recreation site or open space.

Areas designated within the Land Use Plan as Public and Institutional or as Open Space and Recreation largely reflect existing facility locations, with a few areas of minimal expansion where isolated single-family residential properties are located directly adjacent to existing facilities.

The Land Use Plan also indicates the La Grange Country Club as Open Space and Recreation, reflecting the Village's desire to see the Country Club continue as a recreational amenity. However, as mentioned above, should the site be subject to change in the future, the community's land use preference for the site would be for single-family detached residential uses.

For the most part, public and quasi-public land use areas in the Village are well established. Future change will more often come by way of expansion of existing facilities.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within public and quasi-public areas of the Village. These include:

1. **The Village should consider the provision of new facilities and services which respond to the needs and desires of local residents and businesses.** The demands on community facilities and services needs may change in the years ahead. For example, the increasing number of older residents may lead to new facilities and services for senior citizens. New services might also be considered for youth, or the physically challenged.

2. **The Village should capitalize on the visual and image potentials which are presented by new community facilities.** New public buildings represent a unique opportunity to develop new civic focal points. La Grange's overall image and identity can be further enhanced by ensuring thoughtful and compatible design of new or redeveloped facilities in the context of their location. At a minimum, all facilities should be in good repair and be located on attractively landscaped sites.
3. **Work with the Park District of La Grange on the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.** While implementation of the Plan is clearly the responsibility of the Park District, the Village should work with the Park District to realize community recreation and open space objectives, as appropriate.
4. **The Village should pursue a dialogue with the La Grange Country Club and Cook County regarding the future of the property.** The Country Club is a significant open space resource for the Village located in adjacent unincorporated Cook County. The Village should work proactively with the County and property owner to seek to preserve open space to the greatest extent feasible if development occurs. Should development be proposed in the future, annexation and development with residential uses of no greater density than, and of no less than the character of, surrounding neighborhoods should be considered, with an emphasis on maximizing open space and encouraging redevelopment as a Planned Development.
5. **The Village should promote cooperation and interaction among various agencies and organizations within and around La Grange in the provision of community facilities and services.** The Village should support the library, recreation and school systems, and other governmental service agencies, as appropriate, which seek to contribute to and improve the quality of life as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. Cooperative efforts to address traffic issues and pedestrian safety concerns near community facilities should be undertaken.
6. **Existing community facilities should be maintained and upgraded as required.** These include schools, municipal buildings and other institutions. Replacement facilities should be constructed for existing facilities which become inadequate or obsolete. Special care should be taken to ensure that these new facilities are well located and compatible with surrounding land uses.



7. **The design and improvement of existing and new park and recreation facilities should consider and plan for bicycle system improvements.** Park improvements should provide an appropriate right-of-way through the park for use by cyclists; rest locations; potable water; and other facilities of convenience to both cyclists and nearby residents. These should be coordinated with the recommendations contained in the Mobility Plan for bicycle improvements.

8. **Seek the continued development of youth, teen and senior citizen facilities and services.** The Village should help to ensure the recreational needs of these groups are met for the future. Where appropriate, the Village should assist or support such programs.



Legend

- Metra Station
- Subarea Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- Arterial/Collector Street
- Public
- Quasi-public
- Commercial - Retail
- Commercial - Restaurant
- Commercial - Service
- Medical Office
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Utilities
- Off-Street Parking
- Park/Open Space
- Vacant Building
- Vacant Land
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Duplex
- Multi-Family Townhome
- Multi-Family Apartment

NOTE: Existing land use survey conducted in September, 2003



Comprehensive Plan
Village of La Grange, Illinois



Figure 1, Existing Land Use



Legend

- Metra Station
- Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
- Subarea Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- BNSF Core Commercial
- BNSF Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community-wide Single Family Residential
- Core Single Family Residential
- Two-Family Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Light Industrial
- Public and Institutional
- Open Space and Recreation
- Multi-family or Institutional
- Multi-family or Commercial
- Multi-family, Institutional or Open Space



Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan

III. Mobility Plan

While La Grange is largely a developed community, the Village would benefit from a variety of “mobility” improvements. There is a number of proposed transportation improvements intended to enhance the basic street system as well as offer transportation alternatives to La Grange residents. This chapter includes a discussion and presentation of: a) Mobility Policies; b) Existing Street Network c) Functional Street Classification; d) Street System Improvements; e) Bicycle and Pedestrian Access; and f) Transit Facilities and Services. Detailed transportation recommendations for the BNSF Railroad Corridor are included in the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan. The La Grange community-wide *Mobility Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 3*.

A. MOBILITY SYSTEM POLICIES

Transportation policies should be used to guide the overall maintenance and improvement of the Village transportation system.

1. **Maintain and improve the local street network in accordance with the Mobility Plan.** The Village should improve streets in accordance with the functional classification described in this Chapter. In the review of future public and private development proposals and projects, the Village should determine whether the improvements are consistent with the functional street classification.
2. **Ensure that new development and redevelopment plans are in compliance with Village codes and subdivision regulations.** The Village should continue to apply its subdivision regulations and improvement standards for new development and redevelopment.
3. **Develop and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout La Grange.** The Plan emphasizes the enhancement of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the community. The system should not only provide local bicycle connections to existing regional facilities, but also safely and conveniently interconnect key existing and planned activity areas and community facilities within the Village.
4. **Provide bicycle parking in conjunction with new commercial and mixed-use developments.** The Village should develop revised streetscape standards that provide for bicycle parking in conjunction with new mixed-use and retail-commercial developments. The zoning code should be amended for this purpose.



5. **Complete the Village sidewalk system.** Working with La Grange residents, the Village should install sidewalks in areas where they presently do not exist.
6. **Develop a Community-Wide Wayfinding Program.** The Village should develop a system of community "gateway" and wayfinding signage which provides motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians a means of navigating destinations in the community. This system should be coordinated with a similar system recommended as part of the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan.
7. **Seek to maximize the contributions by state, federal and other agencies toward the costs of the major roadway system of the Village.** Wherever possible, local improvement projects should be coordinated with county, state, and federal projects to maximize the development of the local street system.
8. **Encourage the expansion of Pace Bus service in the Village.** Future service expansion should carefully consider the requirements of senior citizens and local employees. The need for improved north-south access in the community is emphasized in this regard. The possibility of providing shuttle service between the Metra commuter station and the Village's intensive employment areas would be beneficial to local employers, and a possible park-n-ride facility with shuttle bus to the station would allow commuters additional parking within the Village and decrease some commuter traffic in the downtown.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING STREET NETWORK

The Village of La Grange is served by a well-developed street system. It brings people and goods into the community and provides the means by which to move about from one part of the Village to another. The Village's basic grid street pattern is one of the major "structural" elements which defines the character of the community.

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. 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. The remaining streets within the Village are controlled by either Cook County or the Village of La Grange.

Figure 3 Mobility Plan



Figure 3 back of page

C. FUNCTIONAL STREET CLASSIFICATION

Functional classification of all streets within the Village is a necessary first step in determining the need for future improvements to existing streets and the addition of new streets. Functional classification identifies the purpose of the street, such as whether it is to provide local access in residential neighborhoods or move traffic through the community to other parts of the region. Several factors were considered in identifying the functional classification of all existing and proposed streets. These include:

- The type and density of land uses abutting the street.
- Whether the street permits direct parcel access.
- The distance to which the street extends beyond the Village boundaries.
- The number of traffic lanes, types of intersection and access control.
- Spacing, relative to the network of streets in and surrounding the community.
- The overall existing and anticipated traffic volumes to be carried by the street.

La Grange's functional street classifications are listed below. The titles given these classifications describe the type of traffic expected to use the street. The categories defined are intended to be consistent with current regional and community transportation plans for the area. *Figure 3, Mobility Plan*, depicts the location and relationship of these various types of streets. The functional class applies to all streets within the Village's planning area.

- **Expressways:** Expressways or Freeways are limited access roads extending far beyond the limits of the Village, providing a transportation network throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. They are high speed arterials that carry large volumes of traffic and are accessed from select interchange locations.

An example of an Expressway is I – 294.

- **Arterials:** Arterials are intended to serve all types of trips, with a significant portion representing trips with destinations beyond the boundaries of the community, and possibly neighboring communities. Principal arterials have regional importance because of their alignment, continuity, capacity and connections with regional traffic routes.

Examples of Arterials include Ogden Avenue and 47th Street.



- **Collector Streets:** Collector streets are intended to serve only vehicle trips generated to and from neighborhoods. Their function is to collect traffic from the local street system, distribute it between neighborhoods and community facilities, and provide access to the arterial street system.

Examples of Collectors include Brainard and Cossitt Avenues.

- **Local Streets:** All other streets within the planning area are classified as local streets. A local street is intended to serve only those vehicle trips generated by land uses abutting the street, providing access to and from individual properties within the neighborhood.

D. STREET SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

This section summarizes existing street system facilities in the Village and key future needs. It includes: Street Network and Public Right-of-Way Improvements.

STREET NETWORK

A number of street improvements are proposed for the Village and its planning area. These improvements can have implications for the operation of the existing system as well as for future land use potentials and patterns. This section is not intended to identify all improvements the Village may undertake over the planning period, but highlight those critical improvements recognized at this time.

Transportation concerns within the Village will continue to focus on maintenance and improvement of the existing street system, and improving the efficiency and aesthetic appeal of the Village's major streets.

Most traffic operation problems and concerns within La Grange are located along or near the major traffic routes which pass through the community, particularly Ogden Avenue, La Grange Road, 47th Street, 55th Street, Plainfield Road, Gilbert Avenue, Cossitt Avenue, and East Avenue. Problems and concerns include relatively heavy traffic volumes along several routes, including a significant amount of through traffic and localized traffic congestion.

It is recommended that the following general projects and actions be considered to improve traffic operations within the community in the future.

1. **Monitor the need for additional roadway capacity and left-turn lane Improvements.** In general, most of the traffic operation problems along major roadways appear to relate to left-turn movements. Left-turn lanes have been provided along several routes in recent years. The Village should continue to monitor the need for additional left-turn lanes or other capacity improvements at other locations in the future.
2. **Seek to improve roadway capacity** at the intersection of Ogden Avenue (Route 34) and La Grange Road (Route 45), while also addressing pedestrian safety concerns.
3. **Consolidate or redesign access to commercial properties.** A number of commercial blocks have multiple curb cuts, which not only hamper traffic flow but are also inefficient in terms of land development. Where possible, parking and service areas within the same block should be reconfigured to allow for the consolidation of curb cuts and access drives.
4. **Seek to improve the condition of streets in the Village's industrial area south of Ogden Avenue.** The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has made this improvement a priority in the next several years and the Comprehensive Plan strongly encourages the improvement. The improvement will not only add capacity to the area, but will serve as a strong visual enhancement.
5. **Working with neighboring communities, seek to improve Plainfield Road to an urban street profile.** The current Plainfield Road cross-section east of La Grange Road is rural in character, including roll shoulders and open swales, and should be improved with an urban cross-section.
6. **Continue to work with the Illinois Dept. of Transportation to consolidate and coordinate curb cuts along major arterial routes.** The Village should establish its preferences for access and curb cut improvements to the major streets and work with IDOT or the appropriate county to realize those improvements.



PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to traffic related improvements, a range of other improvement projects should be considered within the public right-of-way to upgrade the overall image and appearance of commercial areas.

1. **Continue to maintain and repair sidewalks.** Segments of several streets have poorly maintained sidewalks, and these should be repaired. In addition, special new sidewalk surfaces and the widening of sidewalks at intersections should be considered in active pedestrian shopping areas.
2. **Maintain the Village's street trees.** Street trees are an important part of the Village's character. La Grange should continue the practice of providing street trees. In recent years, concern has been expressed over how trees have been over pruned by utility companies affecting their aesthetic character. Make it a priority to preserve the existing tree canopy where possible. Existing trees should not be over-pruned, and character should be maintained.
3. **Seek to bury overhead utilities.** One way to minimize impacts of utilities on tree trimming, and improve the overall aesthetic appearance of the community is to underground utility lines. While this is a very expensive activity, and would occur over a period of years, community-wide appearance would improve greatly. The Village should start with its most highly traveled and visible major streets first.
4. **Provide special wayfinding signage along major streets.** Special wayfinding signage can assist residents and visitors in navigating the Village, and help define appropriate vehicle routes to access assembly and related land uses. Wayfinding signage can also aid in "branding" activities of the Village and support its economic development efforts.

E. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The La Grange community has expressed a desire for an organized bicycle access network. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the continued development of a local bicycle system with regional continuity. Cooperation with the Park District of La Grange and the Cook County Forest Preserve District is encouraged where connections to other Villages is beneficial.

A preliminary bicycle route framework for La Grange is illustrated in *Figure 3, Mobility Plan*. Proposed bicycle routes throughout the Village should be located so as to facilitate safe bicycle movement between destinations such as the BNSF Railroad Corridor, Metra stations, parks and schools. Cooperation with transportation agencies and neighboring communities to facilitate routes within the Village and connections to nearby recreation destinations such as the Salt Creek Bike Trail will be necessary. The alignments shown are based upon recommended routes contained in the 1996 "West Central Bikeway Plan" developed by the West Central Municipal Conference. The 1996 plan provides further detail regarding the potential implementation of these bicycle routes.

The *Open Space Master Plan* prepared in 2000 by the Park District of La Grange identifies a bicycle access framework consistent with routes illustrated in *Figure 3*. It also shows locations for bicycle crossing lights at high traffic intersections, which are also shown in *Figure 3*.

All system improvements in La Grange are proposed as on-street facilities. As such, improvement standards require a marked bicycle travel lane of four feet in width. Bicycle routes should include regulatory and identification signage as well. All improvements should be in conformance with AASHTO design and construction guidelines. This would make the project potentially eligible for state and federal finance assistance. Where feasible and appropriate, the Village should consider acquisition of additional right-of-way to accommodate bike route improvements.

Off-street bicycle parking should be provided in association with new development or redevelopment projects in the Village. The zoning code could provide the basis for establishing new off-street bicycle parking standards and requirements.

In the future, bicycle improvements should utilize this framework as a guide. Alternative or expanded routes could eventually be established. Improvements should be coordinated with the Park District of La Grange, Cook County Forest Preserve District and other agencies as appropriate.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Pedestrian facilities are adequate throughout the majority of the Village. There are a few areas in the southern area of the Village which currently do not provide for sidewalks. Working with homeowners in these areas, the Village should work toward providing sidewalks in these areas in the future.



Areas in need of sidewalk improvements for pedestrian comfort and safety include the Gilbert Avenue / 47th Street intersection, and the at-grade crossings of the IHB Railroad at Lincoln and Cossitt Avenues. The Village should also encourage improved pedestrian access to and within the La Grange Memorial Hospital campus.

In general, the following standards should apply to sidewalk improvements:

- The minimum width for a sidewalk should be 5 feet.
- Sidewalks may need up to an additional 2 feet of width if they directly abut fences, walls and buildings.
- Within commercial areas and places with high pedestrian volumes, sidewalks should be sized and surfaced appropriately for anticipated pedestrian traffic volumes and to meet or exceed ADA guidelines.
- "Count-down" clocks indicating the number of seconds during the crossing cycle at pedestrian crossings should also be considered at high traffic intersections, as deemed appropriate

F. TRANSIT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Three transit carriers currently serve the Village of La Grange: the Metra/Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Line (commuter rail), Pace's West Division (suburban bus) and Amtrak (inter-city rail). The continued provision of these services to Village residents is an important component of the mobility system serving the Village of La Grange. Metra facilities and services at both the Downtown La Grange Road and Stone Avenue stations are discussed as part of the *BNSF Railroad Corridor Plan* in Part VI.

Pace bus routes serve La Grange primarily along La Grange Road and along Ogden Avenue extending east from La Grange Road. Amtrak provides service from Chicago to western Illinois with a daily stop at the La Grange Road Station.

METRA COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE

Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS), which would utilize the IHB Railroad right-of-way to provide commuter rail service, could introduce another important public transportation opportunity in the Village. A new transfer station could be developed where the IHB and BNSF railroads cross. This would necessitate the creation of a transfer station facility near the intersection of the BNSF and IHB Railroads, most likely northwest of the intersection.

The Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) is included in the Chicago Area Transportation Study's (CATS) Shared Path 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). If such a station facility is developed, vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns should be assessed and accommodated, with improvements including a pedestrian connection over Ogden Avenue to connect the new station to the BNSF Railroad Corridor and improvements to the Tilden Avenue underpass to facilitate improved traffic patterns in the area. Given current understanding that the station would be a transfer facility, and that transfer volumes are unknown at this time, transit oriented land use and development opportunities are difficult to measure. Further, given the long term horizon under which these improvements might occur, recommended land uses conservatively assume no change in the overall development pattern. By the time a decision is made to develop circumferential rail service, the Village would have ample time to develop new detailed land use plans for this area.

The Village of La Grange should also explore "park-n-ride" facilities, or feeder bus service to commuter facilities, in locations outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Because land availability will remain constrained in the Downtown area, park-n-ride facilities offer another means under which the Village can help meet facility needs for its growing commuter market. Metra and Pace have begun research on attributes which make these facilities successful, through experience gained at existing park-n-ride locations by working with other communities. The Village should maintain an open dialogue with Metra and Pace to explore how these facilities and/or services might service La Grange in the future.

PACE SUBURBAN BUS SERVICE

Pace currently provides service to the Village along Routes 302, 304, and 330. Future changes are being considered for Route 330 which operates on La Grange Road to enhance service. Enhancement to Pace service within the Village of La Grange will be consistent with Pace's Vision 2020 Plan, which can be viewed at www.pacebus.com. Enhanced mobility requires services that are cost and time competitive with the automobile and that also contribute to the community development objectives of the Village. The La Grange Road Metra Station will continue to be served by Pace; La Grange Road is being considered for traffic signal priority (TSP) to make public transit more efficient between O'Hare Airport and the Village of La Grange, along with other arterial streets served by Pace in the region. The Village should support Pace service enhancements as well as the transit signal priority program. One pending Pace service upgrade that will



positively benefit Village residents in the near future is a planned shuttle service between the Hollywood Metra Station in Brookfield (the “Zoo Stop”) and Brookfield Zoo.

AMTRAK INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Amtrak provides services from Chicago's loop to western Illinois (Quincy) and makes one outbound and one inbound stop in La Grange each day. Because this is the only transit service in La Grange which extends beyond the Chicago metro area, it provides an important service to community residents.

G. MOBILITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance measures or “indicators” are a performance-monitoring standard that permit La Grange to measure the extent to which the goals and policies of the Mobility Plan are being achieved. They are prepared to be responsive to the State of Illinois *Local Technical Planning Assistance Act*. The performance measures are used to monitor change in transportation system performance.

For the major street system a level of service (LOS) approach is used to measure performance. Six levels of service, as currently defined by the Illinois Department of Transportation, are defined for each type of facility. They are given letter designations from “A” to “F”, with level-of-service “A” representing the best operating conditions and level-of-service “F” the worst. The various levels of service are defined as follows for uninterrupted flow facilities:

- A Represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.
- B Is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable.
- C Is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream.
- D Represents high-density, but still stable, flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted and the driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience.
- E Represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult.

- F Is used to define forced or breakdown flow. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can traverse the point. Queues form behind such locations. Operations within the queue are characterized by stop-and-go waves, and they are extremely unstable.

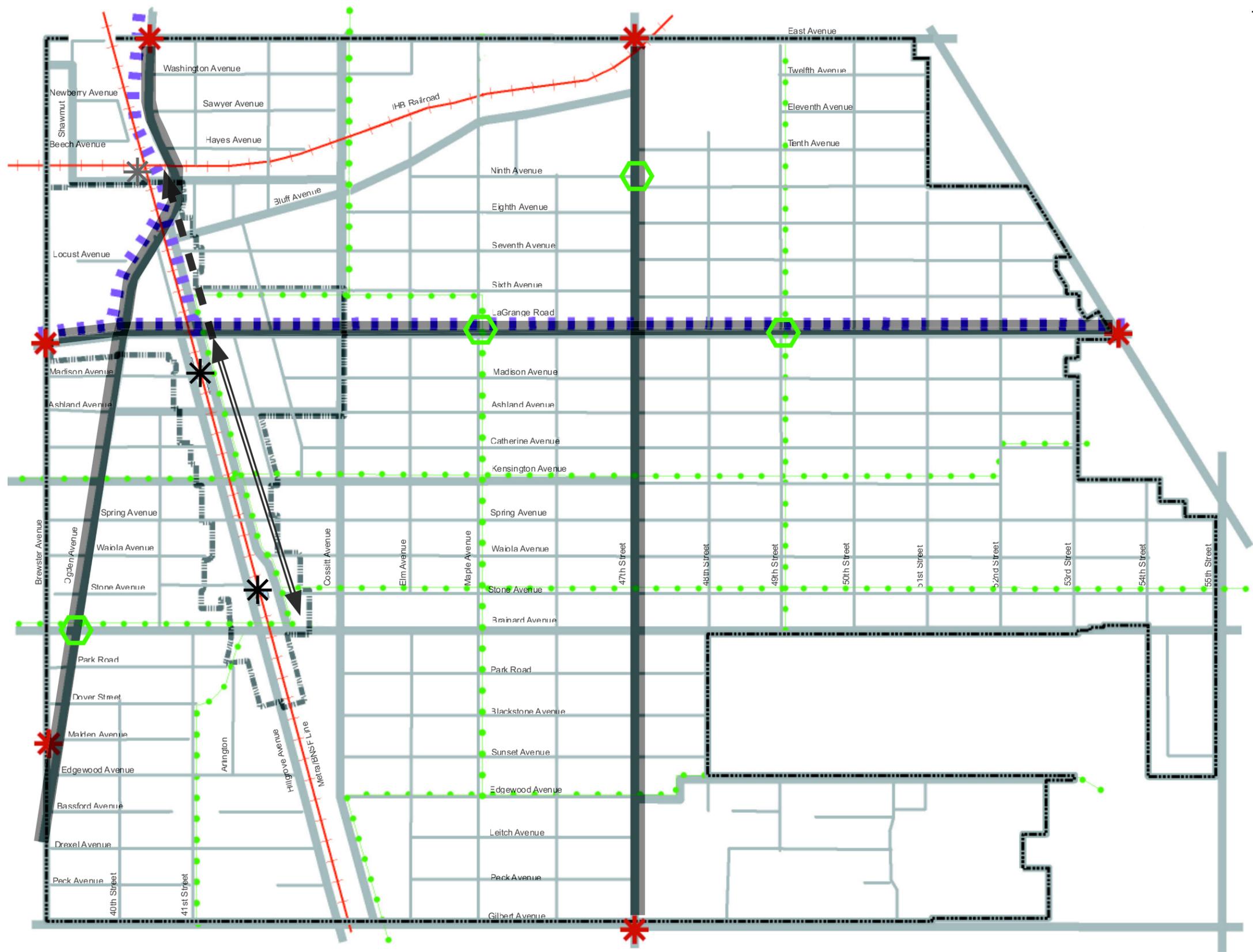
For suburban areas such as the Village of La Grange, the performance measure proposed is to reach an overall level of service C. However, level of service D is acceptable during peak periods along critical travel routes. To measure performance, the Village will need to undertake an LOS assessment of traffic patterns along key roadways in the Village and select minor streets. This should include testing at known congestion locations. The Village should undertake service level testing every two or three years following this initial assessment to determine performance.

In addition to these studies of existing conditions, Village consideration of redevelopment proposals should require that potential future traffic impacts be identified, and that mitigation measures be cooperatively developed and implemented.

With regard to public transportation, and over the next ten to fifteen years, several basic performance measures can be used:

- Consider implementation of a shuttle service throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor, particularly between the LaGrange Road and Stone Avenue Metra stations.
- Implement zoning recommendations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor which will result in transit supportive development that is integrated into the community.
- Monitor Metra commuter parking demand and balance new parking opportunities with demonstrated need. Increased commuter parking should provide a benefit to the Village without over-stressing roadway infrastructure.





Proposed bicycle route alignments are based upon preliminary routes included in the 1996 "West Central Bikeway Plan" developed by the West Central Municipal Conference, preliminary routes included in the Park District of La Grange Master Plan, and input from the Village Engineer.

Legend

- Community Gateway
- Village Limits
- Proposed Bicycle Route
- Bus route
- Railroad
- Proposed bicycle crossing signal
- Arterial Street
- Collector Street
- Local Street
- Metra Station
- Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
- BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary
- Peak hour shuttle and/or Pace Bus concept



Comprehensive Plan
Village of La Grange, Illinois



Figure 3, Mobility Plan

IV. Community Facilities Plan

The Village of La Grange is host to a range of high quality community facilities and services, and the Comprehensive Plan seeks to sustain and enhance these services. Quality community services are an important element of a mature residential community like La Grange.

The term “community facilities” includes buildings, land, interests in land (e.g., easements), and equipment of governmental services on behalf of the public. They may include facilities that are operated by public agencies as well as those that are owned and operated by private (for-profit or non-profit) enterprise for the benefit of the community.

For the most part, community facilities in La Grange are of high quality and not in need of significant improvement. Participants in the planning process spoke highly of the services available to the Village. Community facilities generally include the following: municipal facilities, schools, parks and recreational facilities, utilities, and other institutions.

Community facilities are an important aspect of the quality of life in the Village, providing valuable services to residents and businesses. This Chapter focuses on policies for maintaining and enhancing existing facilities. The policies outlined at the end of this chapter are to be implemented in concert with other policies, goals and recommendations of the Plan.

A. EXISTING FACILITIES

This section highlights community facilities and resources that contribute to the high quality of life of residents in the Village of La Grange. They provide a necessary foundation to maintain the community’s traditionally strong residential character.

La Grange is currently served by a full range of community services and resources. A brief listing of the organizations providing services to the community is provided below. Further information regarding many of these agencies’ facilities and services can be found in *Memorandum No. 1*.

- *Village of La Grange* - including Village Hall, Public Works Department, Police Department and Fire Department
- *Schools* - including Districts 102, 105 and 204



- *La Grange Public Library*
- *Park District of La Grange*
- *Richport YMCA*
- *La Grange Country Club*
- *La Grange Field Club*
- *Cook County Forest Preserve District*
- *La Grange Memorial Hospital*
- *Southwest Suburban Center on Aging*
- *La Grange Art League and Gallery*
- *La Grange Area Historical Museum*

HISTORIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The *La Grange Historic District* is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The southern portion is roughly bounded by Brainard Avenue, 47th Street, Eighth Avenue and Cossitt Avenue, with extensions north along Catherine Seventh Avenues. A second portion of the District, located north of the BNSF Railroad, is roughly bounded by Stone, Hillgrove, Madison and Ogden Avenues. The District was placed on the National Register in 1979. It is a prime example of a 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, at 53 South La Grange Road, 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 buildings listed in either the Illinois Inventory of Historic Landmarks or Structures, including: the Stone Avenue Station; portions of the Lyons Township High School North Campus; Seventh Avenue School at the southeast corner of 49th Street and Seventh Avenue; the Kensington School building at 125 North Kensington Avenue; the church at the southeast corner of Ogden and Kensington Avenues; a utility building at 530 East Cossitt Avenue; the Jackson Storage Warehouse at 108 East Burlington Avenue; and, twenty-seven homes (nineteen of which are within the Historic District; see Appendix for a complete listing).

B. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The *Community Facilities Plan*, Figure 4, generally reflects existing facilities with isolated locations where facilities might undertake minimal expansion to achieve a consistent facility boundary in the future as opportunities arise. While some proposals for community facilities are known, few have been conceptualized or mapped. None the less, community facility proposals that are recommended to be considered are as follows:

PARKS AND RECREATION

Because La Grange is a mature community, there are limited opportunities to acquire new open space. Through the planning process, several opportunities for improved recreational facilities were identified. These are briefly discussed below.

- **Master Parks and Recreation Plan** – The Park District of La Grange has adopted the Master Parks and Recreation Plan as its primary guide to recreation and facilities improvements. The *Master Plan* should be used as a reference tool and resource in working with the Park District in program implementation.
- **Make efficient use of existing facilities** – The Comprehensive Plan recommends continued efficient use of existing recreational land and facilities. Land resources will be limited, and the Plan encourages continued collaboration between the Park District of La Grange, local schools, and the Village of La Grange.
- **Where opportunities arise, consider the expansion of existing facilities** - If at any time properties contiguous to existing park sites become available for acquisition and inclusion in the local parks system in the future, the Village should work with the Park District of La Grange to allow such park expansions to occur. Beyond the recommendations of the Master Parks and Recreation Plan, the only other new park opportunity site is along Bluff Avenue. The Residential Area Recommendations and policies section of the Land Use Plan discusses this potential in greater detail.



It is important to point out that parks and recreation facilities, services and programs are the responsibility of the Park District of La Grange. The Plan recommends that future initiatives undertaken by the District should occur with the coordination and advice of the Village of La Grange, as appropriate.

A Special Note on the La Grange Country Club

The La Grange Country Club is the only remaining large expanse of land within La Grange's planning area. Although it exists within unincorporated Cook County, it is logical to expect that since it is nearly surrounded by the Village, it will eventually become part of the Village. While it is expected that the site will remain as a golf course for the foreseeable future, some consideration should be given to its function and value to the community as an open land resource when setting out a planning perspective for the future. The area also provides drainage and recreational benefits, and contributes to the character of the community.

It is not inconceivable that the land could be sold for development in the future. The Village should, therefore, cooperate with current and subsequent owners, as well as Cook County, to maintain open space to the greatest extent feasible. These efforts should include pursuing a boundary agreement with Countryside, and investigating the establishment of a conservation district designation with the County for some or all of the property. Should development be proposed in the future, annexation and development with residential uses of no greater density than, and of no less than the character of, surrounding neighborhoods should be considered, with an emphasis on maximizing open space and encouraging redevelopment as a Planned Development.

VILLAGE MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

For the most part, existing municipal facilities will meet the needs of the Village in the future, and major changes are not anticipated. However, with respect to the Public Works Department, there remains a need for better organized and defined space that is dedicated to the materials, equipment, and operations associated with infrastructure maintenance.

Figure 4 Community Facilities Plan



Figure 4 back of page

Presently, the department uses space at its main office and garage facility located at Cossitt Avenue and East Avenue and in a separate fenced area located along the north side of the BNSF Railroad near the Tilden Avenue water storage reservoir. These two areas should be consolidated to a single facility to be effective. The main public works facility should be expanded south to encompass some of the neighboring residential and commercial parcels. All material and equipment storage would then be consolidated into the expanded main operations center and the Tilden Avenue yard cleared for other use.

Alternatively, the entire public works facility would be relocated to the west side of the IHB Railroad within one of the industrial properties located between Maple Avenue and Cossitt Avenue. This relocation would place the public works facility in a more accessible location to the community. The only area of the Village feasible for establishing a public works operation would be within the industrial zoned area located between Cossitt Avenue, East Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Bluff Avenue.

WATER SYSTEM

In general, the existing water distribution system is adequate and will continue to meet the future needs with incremental maintenance and targeted system upgrades. Known water distribution system deficiencies are generally associated with small four-inch and certain six inch diameter water main segments located in a number of areas around the Village.

Two targeted system upgrades are planned. One is located along Gilbert Avenue and the other along Bluff Avenue. The Gilbert Avenue project will correct distribution system deficiencies in the northwest neighborhood by eliminating three dead end water main segments and eliminating an undersized water main segment. The Bluff Avenue project is intended to replace a deteriorated segment of water main, where repair incidence is high. This work should be completed as part of a future roadway improvement for the area.



STORM AND WASTE WATER COLLECTION SYSTEMS

The majority of the community is served by a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. In general the sewer systems serving the Village meet current and future needs. While waste water facilities are of adequate capacity, storm water capacity problems exist in a number of areas, particularly where sewer back up and basement flooding occurs.

A system of relief storm sewers should be developed to provide added storm water disposal capacity, and thereby reduce the risk of basement and street flooding. Where economically feasible, separate storm sewers should be extended to surface drainage outlets to reduce the drainage load on the combination sewer and treatment systems.

ELECTRICAL, GAS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In general the facilities maintained by the energy and telecommunications industry within the Village appear to be sufficient to meet community needs. However, future capabilities are of question. The Village might consider hosting a series of industry forums to discuss the capabilities of the infrastructure and the plans for renovation and expansion to meet the future needs of the community. A list of objectives and guidelines could be established to aid coordination of system upgrades with municipal projects and community interests.

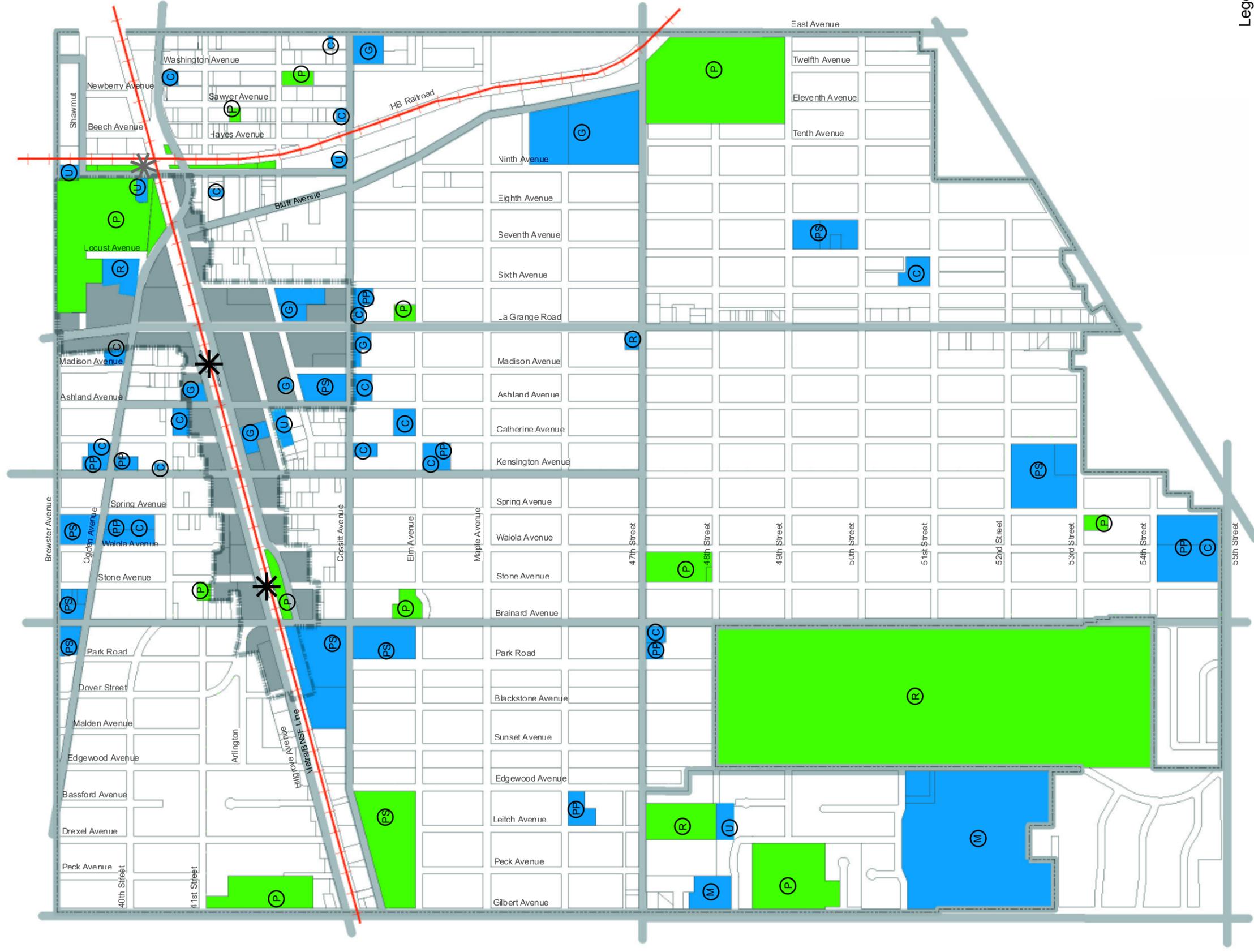
Overhead Electrical Service

The majority of La Grange receives power from overhead aerial cables. In many areas these cables and pole systems conflict with trees or other municipal infrastructure. Extensive tree trimming operations by the power industry is common to reduce storm damage and power interruptions. However, the extent of tree trimming often results in unnecessary pruning, frequently threatening the health of the community's trees. While expensive and difficult to accomplish, the Village should work with the power industry to place overhead electrical and utility lines underground. The Village should meet with agencies to devise a strategy toward this end.

Telecommunications

The telecommunications industry entered a period of transition about 15 years ago as certain government and private initiatives precipitated the explosive growth of the internet and wireless communication systems. The placement of fiber optics along the BNSF Railroad in 1999 has been followed by a number of upgrades to facilities owned by SBC, Sprint, and other communications companies. All future plans for expansion of telecommunications facilities must be carefully monitored by the Village. Replacement of obsolete infrastructure consistent with updated technology standards should be encouraged, with infrastructure placed underground where opportunities arise. The Village should coordinate with the development community to facilitate the provision of broadband wireless technology. The Village should meet with telecommunications providers to devise a strategy toward this end.





Legend

- Metra Station
- Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
- Subarea Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- Public School
- Parochial School / Private School
- Church
- Recreational / Cultural Facility (Public or Private)
- Park
- Medical Center
- Government / Community Facility
- Utility



Figure 4, Community Facilities Plan

V. Economic Development Plan

Balancing economic resources in a mature residential community such as La Grange is a challenge. The Comprehensive Plan has identified a range of community facility and development needs. While public finance is an integral element of the Plan, equally important is the actions the community can take relative to shaping and affecting market forces. The Economic Development Plan focuses on private initiatives which create economic opportunities for the Village.

The Plan seeks to ensure that adequate economic development opportunities are available; identify the strategic competitive advantages of the community and the surrounding region; assess the community's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry; and define the Village's role within this broader strategy.

A. EXISTING RESOURCES

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 the "themed" marketing strategy for downtown. Briefly identified below are three key tools/organizations that are identified in the Economic Development Plan, and have particular relevance in the Comprehensive Plan.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

- **The La Grange Business Association (LGBA)** 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 LGBA in association with the Village of La Grange has been a major force in the revitalization of Downtown 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 Downtown to benefit all members. The Business Association works with the Village to promote the Downtown.



- **The West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry** is supported by 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 S. 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.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Development opportunities will play a very important role in realizing economic development in the Village in the years ahead. The following summarizes the findings of the market assessment completed at the time of Plan adoption, and identifies the types of economic and real estate development opportunities likely to be brought before the Village for consideration. An extensive analysis of La Grange's market opportunities was made early in the planning process, and was considered in formulating land use and development decisions reached in preparing the Comprehensive Plan. More information on the La Grange market, and its consideration in the planning process are included in Appendix *Memorandums No. 1* and *No. 2*.

RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL

With nearly 100 retail establishments located in the Village, La Grange's retail market remains strong. Through the Village's redevelopment efforts, Downtown branding strategy and public-private partnership with the business community, La Grange has broadly expanded its market. Several national retailers have expressed an interest in La Grange. The Village will need to work with these to identify appropriate sites for larger stores (up to approximately 20,000 square feet in size), where access and infrastructure issues can be addressed. Continuing to maintain a mix of small and large businesses in the community is important.

The mix of retail and service uses along South La Grange Road and near the intersection of Gilbert Avenue and 47th Street could be

improved. Due to the age of structures in these locations, redevelopment would help provide new functional building space, and assist in diversifying the tenant mix at each location.

In the years ahead, several hundred thousand square feet of new commercial and retail development may be possible in La Grange. The key to capturing this new development will be to provide appropriately sized floor space in select locations. The Plan does not suggest that the Village accommodate all new development potential. Rather, that the new development be well designed and integrated into the community.

ENTERTAINMENT

Restaurants will remain an important element of Downtown La Grange's entertainment strategy. With a current mix of approximately 40 restaurants, La Grange is a dining destination, and attracts patrons from a fairly large trade area. Market research indicates that the market for eating, drinking and entertainment establishments is not yet saturated. As confirmed by work completed in the Plan, local brokers and property owners continue to see interest from a variety of types of prospective restaurant operators. Maintaining a balance of restaurants with other uses will be important. The introduction of new cultural attractions and retail activities will help reinforce the dining and entertainment market.

OFFICE

Office uses will continue to serve a support role in the La Grange economy. The market for office uses in the Village will primarily be for 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.

The recent trends of "live-work" zones (areas that accommodate combined residences and small-scale work spaces) and "third place" work environments (working across wireless networks from locations other than the office or home) are workplace types that the Village should seek to accommodate in the future, as well.



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 (IHB) Railroad. These areas are successful and stable. Market demand for manufacturing and distribution uses remains strong. Several properties could be improved and redeveloped in locations south of Ogden Avenue. This would not only introduce new employment activities, but would help stabilize neighborhood conditions as well. Especially in the area south of Ogden Avenue, the Village should carefully examine its zoning regulations to ensure new development is compatible with surrounding residential areas.

RESIDENTIAL

La Grange will continue to experience market pressure for replacement single family detached housing as well as new condominium development. With its quality schools, community facilities and neighborhoods, as well as a strong sense of community, La Grange will continue to see residential reinvestment pressure for the foreseeable future.

The market for multi-family and attached single family residential development is also strong. High quality developments with an emphasis on small to mid-size units have met with strong market acceptance in recent years. The Village could absorb an annual average of approximately 20 to 25 new units. To date, multi-family redevelopment activity has been directed to the BNSF Railroad Corridor. New residential development in the Corridor is important to continue to sustain retail and commercial service uses. As discussed in the Land Use Plan, there are other locations in the Village which could support low to moderate density multi-family residential development, as well.

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 the 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 of La Grange maintains a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is a major consideration in preparation of the annual budget. CIP funds are allocated to the following categories: streets, alleys and

streetscape; water system; vehicles and equipment; sidewalks, curbs and gutters; street lighting; sanitary and storm sewers; and, tree planting and other miscellaneous expenses.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

There are several strategies the Village can undertake to continue successful economic development in La Grange. These are identified below.

- **Village Economic Development Support** – The Village should continue to provide resources for economic development activities in La Grange. La Grange has developed a strong and unified work program with the La Grange Business Association, and this should continue in the future. It is critical that the Village continue to work with business and property owners to realize its economic development goals.
- **Cultural Attractions** – The community has identified art and cultural venues as growth segments for the community. Expanded activities will support a core entertainment role of the Downtown in the Village's economic development strategies. The Village and LGBA should work together to define opportunities. Cultural activities are typically both publicly and privately sponsored.
- **Public Investment Strategies** – The Village's current Downtown TIF District expires in 2009. As discussed in the implementation section, the Village will need to identify alternative resources for investment in the future.

It is important to point out that even though residential and non-residential markets currently remain strong in La Grange, the need for redevelopment finance assistance will also remain important. Development costs associated with land assembly and acquisition, building demolition, and related development costs can serve to create financial "gaps" and block retailers' entrance into the market. Thus, while each request for assistance should be considered on its own merits, it will be important for the Village to make redevelopment investment resources available in the future.

- **Continue to Support Business Networking and Marketing** – The Village should continue to play an active role in networking and marketing for business development activities.



VI. The BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan

The Village of La Grange, its business community, and civic and institutional partners, have worked hard to realize the success of Downtown La Grange. This Subarea Plan is intended to focus on strengthening and sustaining the Downtown for the long-term, and expanding its positive impacts throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor by building upon successful initiatives already undertaken by the community.

While the Village has had substantial development and economic success within the Downtown over the last decade, the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan will help position the Downtown for economically sustainable growth over the next 10 to 15 years. It also addresses long-term community service and facility needs.



The Subarea Plan for the BNSF Railroad Corridor reinforces the role of Downtown La Grange as the community's mixed-use center, an important regional shopping and entertainment attraction and an intermodal transportation center. The real estate market will continue to place redevelopment pressure on the Corridor; this Subarea Plan clearly defines the Village's preferences to allow for the proactive management of this expected change.



The Village has diligently guided the renaissance of Downtown La Grange over the last decade. Recent emphasis has been placed on the “core” of the Downtown, the main core of the Downtown in the eastern portion of the area, and the community has realized substantial success. However, work remains to define the future role and character of the West End Business District. The purpose of the Plan is to build upon the Downtown core to influence and strengthen the area as a whole.

Over the last 10 years, a variety of improvements have been made in the Downtown and BNSF Railroad Corridor. Some of these improvements are briefly described below.

- The Downtown has realized the addition of 67,275 sq. ft. of new retail and commercial space.
- Over this period of time, the Village has seen approximately 31 Downtown facade renovations valued at 1.3 million dollars investment.
- In total the tax increment finance district has leveraged 40 million dollars in private real estate investment. From the period 1986 to 2003 the incremental increase in sales tax revenues has gone from \$20,000 to \$ 350,000 in 2003.
- 29 million dollars has been invested in public improvements.
- A total of 173 new residential dwellings have been added to the Corridor and to the community's inventory.
- Recent studies estimate that 30 commuters reside in the Spring Avenue Station development¹, and that 25% of Beacon Place residents commute to Chicago². These “transit-oriented” residents support La Grange retail and service businesses with minimal increases in vehicle traffic.

This Subarea Plan seeks to leverage the inherent strengths of the Corridor, expand its intermodal transit functions, and ensure that the Downtown continues to serve its mixed-use community center functions. It builds upon working relationships between the Village, business organizations, local institutions, and property owners which have already significantly contributed to the success of the area in recent years.

¹ Data from “Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey” conducted by Metra.

² Data from “Lemont Station Area Plan” (separate RTAP study completed in 2004).

WHAT DOES THE PLAN ADDRESS?

The Plan focuses on the unique character of the Downtown and the BNSF Railroad Corridor. The Downtown is comprised of a variety of stakeholders, each serving an important role in the day-to-day functions of the Downtown. Most activities are organized around the community's business associations. It is this unique public-private partnership which has enabled the Downtown continued success and prosperity. The Plan builds upon this historical community model. The map on page VI-1 delineates the study area boundary for the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

The Plan also focuses on several key aspects of the Corridor to ensure that change is consistent with community aspirations for the area and the community as a whole. These key considerations include:

- Establish a land use guide to ensure compatible development within the Corridor as well as adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Focus and direct expected redevelopment demand to priority locations within the Corridor.
- Creatively provide off-street parking for both business and commuter parking needs, as demand warrants and opportunities arise, that is appropriately located and sized to minimize impacts on surrounding areas.
- Continue to reinforce the implementation of a cohesive and high quality visual image for the Corridor through well designed public improvements and careful review of proposed private redevelopment projects.
- Accommodate community facilities that support the mixed-use function and also contribute to the overall vitality of the Corridor.
- Proactively respond to economic development opportunities, to ensure a healthy and varied mix of businesses and services within the Corridor to serve local residents, commuters and regional visitors.

A. TRANSIT SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Developing the linkage between land use and multi-modal transit services in the BNSF Railroad Corridor is an essential element of the BNSF Railroad Corridor Plan. Improvements and initiatives focused on improving the relationship between these elements will maximize land and transportation resources serving the Corridor. There is a difference between development which is "transit adjacent" and that which is "transit supportive." The greater the



dependency between a land use and transit, the more transit supportive it is. For example, reductions in off-street parking for market rate uses that can rely upon transit are one way of creating greater land use interdependence and making more efficient use of land resources.

Thus, it is important that the special needs of transit facility development, transit users and multimodal connections be given special attention in the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan. The Plan organizes transit supportive planning principles around the three dimensions, or "3D's," of transit oriented development (TOD). They provide a means for the Village to evaluate and judge the appropriateness of private and public investments that may be considered in the future. The "3D's" include: *density*, *design* and *diversity*.

Density

Pertinent transit-supportive principles related to *density* include:

- Encourage higher housing densities within one-quarter mile, or a five minute walk, of station areas. In La Grange this area covers much of the Downtown and West End Business District.
- Densities should respect community sensitivity relative to building height, especially adjacent to single family neighborhood areas.
- Minimize mass and bulk in building design through the use of pedestrian-scaled detailing, facade variation and upper-story building setbacks.

Design

Key principles related to *design* are:

- Maintain and emphasize pedestrian and bicycle improvements and access.
- Consider reductions in required off-street parking standards for commercial and residential uses in areas well served by transit – especially land use areas within one-quarter mile of station areas.
- Extend a pedestrian oriented streetscape on all BNSF Railroad Corridor streets.
- Develop wayfinding improvements which serve the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, as well as motorists.
- The Village should seek opportunities to provide or encourage shared parking facilities.
- Street hierarchy should be addressed with a focus on pedestrian needs, rather than on typical vehicle capacity considerations.

- Develop intermodal transit facilities for transferring passengers, including sensitive design of facilities, access, and safety. These facilities include bus stops, bicycle storage areas, “kiss and ride” lanes and commuter parking facilities.
- Amenities, services and facilities which cater to the commuter/pedestrian should be considered at key intermodal facilities.
- Roadway space should be allocated for required circulation, but signal timing and cross-walk right-of-way priorities should favor the pedestrian.
- Public spaces should feel secure, with adequate lighting and visibility. Such lighting and visibility should not encroach on residential properties.

Diversity

The following principles are related to *diversity*:

- Mixed-use developments are highly desirable.
- Mixed-use might not always be accommodated within one building, but can be reflected in the transit station area as a whole.
- Maintaining a strong presence of public facilities within TOD areas is crucial to sustaining a vibrant, mixed-use environment.
- Varied housing types should be located within walking distance to transit facilities.
- Retail, office and residential land uses generate the greatest ridership and are most mutually supportive in a TOD area.
- Retail development must be market driven; transit access strengthens the market but does not create it.
- Density combined with mixed land use creates the most effective and successful TOD, particularly with regard to generating increased usage of transit facilities.

Recommendations, policies and other actions that support these principles are provided throughout the Plan.

B. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The existing pattern of land use is a strong influence on future land use patterns. The existing physical pattern impacts opportunities for sustaining or improving the overall land use mix within the Corridor, the intensity of land use, and the cohesiveness of the urban design image of the area. Community facilities are a key consideration as well. This section of the Subarea Plan describes the existing land use pattern within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, identifies key issues and opportunities with regard to land use and



development, establishes overall land use and development planning policies, and presents the BNSF Railroad Corridor Land Use Framework. Further background information with regard to land use and community facilities within the Corridor can be found in *Memorandum No. 1*, *Memorandum No. 2* and the *Market Assessments* report.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND LAND USE ISSUES

Figure 5, BNSF Railroad Corridor Existing Land Use, illustrates the range of land uses within the Downtown and West End Business District. Consistent with overall zoning patterns in the Downtown, the Downtown area includes the strongest concentration of retail uses, while the West End includes a strong mix of commercial and service uses.

There are several key community facilities within the Corridor, including the Village Hall at La Grange Road and Harris Avenue, the Police and Fire Department facility on Burlington Avenue between Kensington and Ashland Avenues, the United States Post Office at Hillgrove and Ashland Avenues, and several municipal parking lots throughout the Downtown core area. At the perimeter of the Corridor, there are several other key facilities, including Cossitt Elementary School on Cossitt Avenue between Ashland and Madison Avenues, the La Grange Public Library at La Grange Road and Cossitt Avenue, and the North Campus of Lyons Township High School west of Brainard Avenue and south of the BNSF / Metra Line. Several churches are also located at the edges of the study area. With the exception of Public Library plans to construct a new facility within the confines of its current property, officials have not indicated any plans for expansion of these facilities that will impact the Corridor in the coming years.

In the early stages of the planning process, feedback from the community was solicited regarding the planning issues and opportunities confronting the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Issues related to land use and development that were identified, and which this Subarea Plan will address, include the following:

- Current underutilization of the West End Business District.
- A lack of retail activity in the West End Business District.
- Establishing and maintaining an appropriate mix of retail and service uses.
- Defining an appropriate height, bulk, and density for redevelopment within the Corridor.

Figure 5 BNSF Railroad Corridor Existing Land Use



Figure 5 back of page

- A non-uniform development pattern along Burlington and Hillgrove Avenues.
- The need to plan for additional off-street parking for both business and public transportation.
- Addressing the potential for redevelopment.
- The need for an open space for community events within the Corridor.

Opportunities related to land use and development that were identified include the following:

- The potential for revitalization of the West End Business District.
- Maintaining a vibrant and cohesive Downtown.
- Accommodating continuing retailer interest in La Grange.
- Accommodating new housing.
- Establishing well designed Corridor “entryways” (La Grange Road / Cossitt Avenue and La Grange Road / Ogden Avenue).
- Introducing an arts and cultural focus in the Downtown.
- Accommodating existing and new community facilities in the Corridor.

The success of the public – private partnership between the Village and the business community will likely lead to continued investment interest in the Downtown. An important issue discussed as part of the planning process was “where and how will new development be allowed to occur within the Corridor?” Related questions of density, off-street parking and others follow.

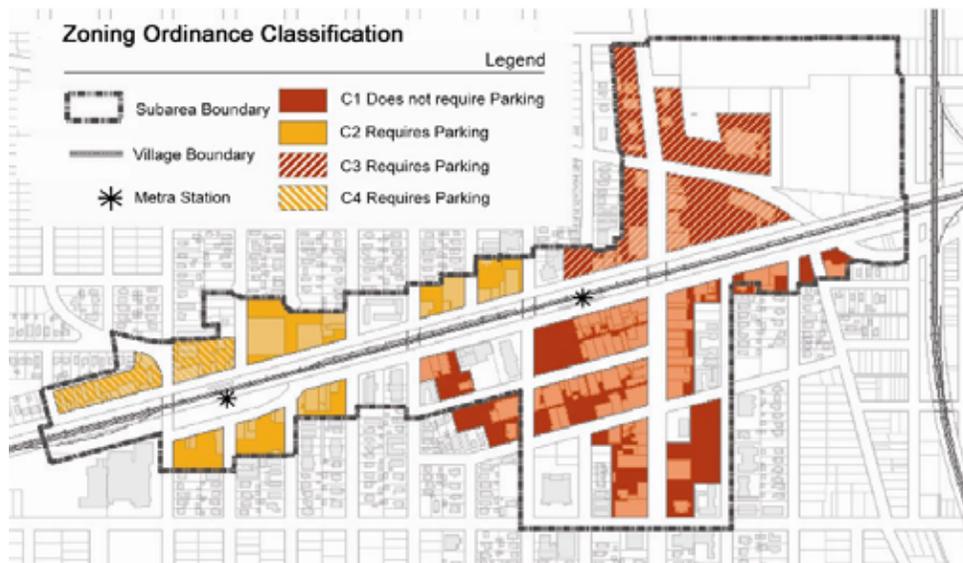
While it can be argued that any site may be potentially redeveloped, or be “subject to change” in the future, clearly some sites are more vulnerable to redevelopment than others. Sites may be subject to redevelopment for a number of reasons, as viewed from the private real estate investment perspective. It is important to realize and proactively address the ways that the market might behave over the course of the Plan’s time frame.

Reasons for which property might be subject to redevelopment include underutilization, such as a commercial off-street parking lot or single story building in an area which can be intensified under current zoning and planned unit development (PUD) regulations. The age of existing structures can also compel the market to seek reinvestment. Obsolescence, in terms of smaller building footprints or outdated construction types, can also be a factor in whether sites are subject to change. Within Downtown La Grange, many opportunities for potential intensification exist. The question is to what level of intensity will change be allowed in the future.



Development regulations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor limit allowable building height to three stories or forty-five feet, with increased height allowable to five stories (or seventy feet) only with additional scrutiny and Village approval through the planned unit development (PUD) process. The height of structures on limited sites within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, those north of Hillgrove Avenue and east of La Grange Road, may reach seven stories or ninety feet in overall height. Currently the tallest structures in the Downtown include the condominiums at 141 North La Grange Road (ten stories), Beacon Place (seven stories), La Grange Plaza (five stories) and Spring Avenue Station (five stories).

As illustrated next, off-street parking is currently required in the West End Business District, but not in the Downtown core. The planning process has established that the West End should reposition itself in the market and intensify with new mixed-use development. This would largely consist of retail uses on the first floor with residential or office uses above. Accomplishing this objective will require relaxing the parking requirements in the West End similar to the Downtown.



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Listed below are the planning policies that will guide consideration of opportunities for redevelopment and potential changes in the land use pattern within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

1. While redevelopment may occur generally within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, the Village should undertake an active role in directing redevelopment to appropriate locations in the West End Business District.
2. While off-street parking requirements for the West End Business District should be relaxed overall, through the development process, the Village should continue to seek a share of necessary parking through the development project. In addition, should development displace any current commuter parking lots or spaces, the Village should work with Metra (and the developer, if appropriate) to ensure commuter spaces can be replaced within or near the development, ensuring no net loss in the number of spaces available for commuters.
3. Where an identified need exists and there is a benefit to the Village without over-stressing roadway infrastructure, proactively plan to explore opportunities for congregate parking, in which shared off-street parking areas that serve several businesses and/or other land uses are created.
4. The Village can expect requests for building height in excess of that allowed by right within the zoning code. The potential impacts of increased height should be weighed carefully against other planning considerations, such as the ability to accommodate additional parking and/or open space, and architectural design issues. The existing zoning code height regulations and planned unit development (PUD) regulations are consistent with Plan policies, in that they allow for limited increases in allowable height in exchange for additional project amenities.
5. Existing facade design review procedures should be maintained within the Corridor. The Village should consider the application of more specific design guidelines for new development, including mixed-use and multi-family developments, to more carefully examine issues such as building massing, setbacks, rooflines, open spaces, exterior materials, parking facilities and site improvements.
6. Community facilities are a vital component of the land use mix within the Corridor. The Village should continue to support a diverse mix of community services in the Corridor area. Efforts should provide a special focus on the community's desire to enhance arts and cultural amenities.



7. To provide gathering space for community events within the Corridor area, additional open space of various scales should be provided as redevelopment occurs.
8. Continue to diversify the types of business establishments within the Corridor with an emphasis on a broader range of retail offerings.
9. Coordinate improvement plans and actions with the BNSF Railroad, IHB Railroad, Illinois Commerce Commission, RTA, Metra and Pace, as appropriate.

BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR LAND USE FRAMEWORK

In order to meet the Village's land use and development objectives, a refined "system" of land use has been developed to uniquely translate these needs to the physical space of the Corridor. As illustrated in *Figure 6, BNSF Railroad Corridor Land Use Framework*, the system reinforces the land use and development policies described above.

Residential Land Use

- *Medium-Density Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family residential dwellings in a low-rise condominium or townhome format, generally with a density of up to 22 dwelling units per acre. This type of housing includes structures that are usually two to three stories in height.
- *High-Density Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family residential dwellings in a condominium format (buildings with shared lobbies and centralized parking facilities), generally at a density of up to 33 dwelling units per acre. This type of housing generally includes structures that are four to five stories in overall height. Plan policies would reiterate that structures more than three stories in height would require special approval by the Village.



*General BNSF Corridor
Residential Areas (future)*

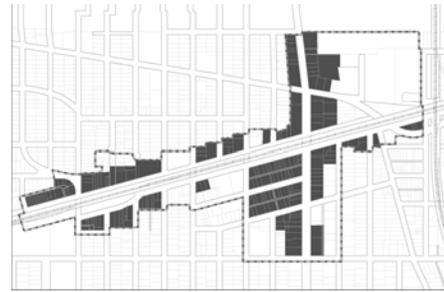
Figure 6 BNSF Railroad Corridor Land Use Framework



Figure 6 back of page

Commercial Land Use

- *BNSF Core Commercial* – This area forms the business and civic core of the Village and functions as a focal point for *mixed-use* activity. It includes retail and entertainment uses on the first floor of buildings, and office, commercial services, and residential uses above the first floor. In order to maximize its pedestrian setting for retailing and entertainment, off-street parking by use is not required for development within this area. Shared parking is provided primarily by municipal parking facilities, helping to encourage pedestrian movement and “multiple destination” shopping trips.
- *BNSF Commercial* – This area includes similar *mixed-uses* to the Core Commercial area, but is intended to be less intensive in character. Any allowable land use could be located on the first floor of buildings (except residential). Because of their perimeter locations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, these locations would be required to provide dedicated off-street parking for all uses. As a result, redevelopment overall would be less mixed and less dense (building height and lot coverage).



General BNSF Corridor Commercial and Mixed-Use Areas (future)

Public and Quasi-Public Land Use

- *Public and Institutional* - an area containing major community facilities or public buildings such as schools, colleges, hospitals, churches, municipal buildings and cultural facilities.
- *Open Space and Recreation* - an area intended to be maintained as a park, recreation site or open space.



General BNSF Corridor Public Use Areas (future)



Figure 6 illustrates the future land use patterns for the Corridor. The arrangement of core commercial land uses will serve to extend a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development pattern into a “secondary core” within the West End Business District. The Plan reinforces the Downtown core along La Grange Road as BNSF Core Commercial. In this framework, the West End Business District is foreseen as a mixed-use area in which parking is provided primarily through shared parking lots throughout the area that serve all businesses and commuters. Multi-story buildings would be sensitively accommodated within the West End Business District, in order to accommodate ground floor retail and services and residential and office uses on upper floors. The Village should consider direct efforts to facilitate coordinated redevelopment efforts, such as limited parcel assemblage.

This “secondary core” in the West End is flanked by new and existing multi-family residential uses. It concentrates mixed-use activity surrounding the Stone Avenue Metra Station, providing the potential for more new dwelling units, and in turn, more support for retail uses. Areas indicated as “Public and Institutional” uses generally reflect existing facilities within the Corridor.

C. MOBILITY

Mobility encompasses all modes of transportation serving the BNSF Railroad Corridor including automotive, transit, bicycle and pedestrian. The Plan suggests ways in which the system can be sustained and improved to best serve both the Downtown core and the West End in the future.

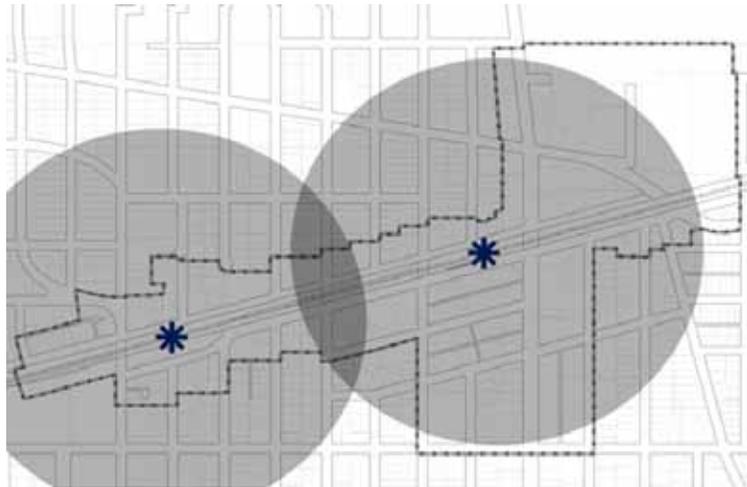
The efficiency of the transportation system directly bears a relationship to maintaining and strengthening the economic vitality of the Corridor. This section of the Subarea Plan identifies key mobility issues and opportunities, and establishes transportation planning policies. It also identifies key transportation system initiatives that will improve access throughout the Corridor, and the roles of responsible agencies to realize them. Further background information with regard to transportation infrastructure within the Corridor can be found in *Memorandum No. 1*, *Memorandum No. 2* and the *Market Assessment* report.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND MOBILITY ISSUES

Downtown La Grange is both a local and a regional destination. Primary access to the community is by Ogden Avenue and La Grange Road, both of which transect the Downtown area. These streets establish continuity with I-294 and I-290.

Traffic congestion in the Corridor is an issue during peak periods in isolated locations. These include La Grange Road and Brainard Avenue during the morning and evening peak hour periods. Congestion will be exacerbated by continued redevelopment in the Corridor, and must be proactively addressed.

The two Metra stations are major assets within the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Stations are located in both the Downtown (La Grange Road) and the West End Business District (Stone Avenue). The Downtown station is also served by Pace suburban bus service and Amtrak, providing the nucleus for transit supportive land use and development. Many local residents rely on this system today primarily for employment access. Metra weekday boardings at both stations in 2002 averaged 2,355.



The BNSF Railroad Corridor is just under one mile in length on an east-west axis. From an average pedestrian's point of view, this is considered too far to walk whether for shopping or commuting. In general, a walking distance up to one-quarter mile is comfortable for most people (a radius of one-quarter mile around each Metra station is depicted on the map on the previous page). During the first phase of the planning process, the West End Business District was identified as having a need for a greater mix and diversity of



land uses, and to encourage additional activity and commercial viability in the area.

While local residents generate a high level of pedestrian traffic within the Corridor, visitors from beyond the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the Corridor arrive to the area by automobile. As redevelopment occurs, sufficient and convenient parking will remain a challenge. Redevelopment should consider consolidating and expanding commuter parking within parking facilities of new development sites and to look for opportunities for shared-use parking between commuters and other users, such as retail, business, visitors, etc. The Village should continue to work with Metra to ensure that there is not a net-loss in the number of spaces available for commuters.

Commuter parking at the La Grange Road Station is provided through a combination of 170 on-street diagonal parking spaces and 169 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 339 commuter-designated spaces. There are a total of 222 regular and four disabled permit spaces in the station area; the remaining 113 on-street spaces are metered. According to Metra's October 2003 parking counts, these spaces are fully occupied.

Commuter parking at the Stone Avenue Station is provided through a combination of 315 on-street diagonal parking spaces and 160 off-street spaces (in a municipally owned parking lot at Brainard and Burlington) for a total of 475 commuter-designated spaces. According to Metra's October 2003 parking counts, these parking spaces are fully utilized. The off-street lot spaces and some of the on-street spaces (total of 346 spaces) are available by monthly permits administered by the Village. The remaining on-street spaces are metered. 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.

Fifty-two (52) additional on-street commuter parking spaces will be created in 2005 as part of the planned reconstruction of Hillgrove Avenue from Kensington to Gilbert Avenues. These additional spaces are likely to be utilized by Stone Avenue Station commuters. As part of Metra's long-term facility planning process, the need for an additional 200 commuter parking spaces by the year 2030 to serve the two La Grange Metra stations has been identified.

The Village also issues parking permits for two other types of parking users: Downtown residents and employees/business owners in the Downtown. For employees/business owners in the Downtown, a parking pass can be purchased that allows month to month parking in designated off-street spaces. Overnight permits are available to residents of the Downtown 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 and several municipally owned off-street parking lots, with time limitations enforced through ticketing. On-street parking is generally provided in the Downtown with the exception of some areas along La Grange Road, Burlington Avenue and Hillgrove Avenue. On-street parking is not allowed on Ogden Avenue, or on La Grange Road north of the BNSF tracks. Only a few buildings within the Downtown provide dedicated off-street parking areas for customers, clients and/or employees. Within the West End Business District, however, dedicated off-street parking lots for private uses are more prevalent and are frequently underutilized throughout the day.

In the early stages of the planning process, feedback from the community was solicited regarding the mobility issues and opportunities confronting the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Issues related to mobility include:

- Non-vehicular linkages between the Downtown and West End Business District are weak.
- Increasing traffic congestion.
- Congestion and safety along Brainard Avenue at LT High School.
- Pedestrian safety and comfort will become more of a concern as activity increases (intersections, railroad crossings, kiss-n-ride areas).
- Parking throughout the Corridor (quantity, location, management).
- Competition within the West End for available parking (commuters, LTHS students, business patrons).



Opportunities related to mobility include:

- Both Metra stations create “hubs” of activity in the Corridor.
- A comfortable pedestrian scale exists within the Downtown and West End Business District.
- Future Pace service upgrades could help accessibility.
- Daily Amtrak inter-city rail service stops in La Grange.
- A potential Inner Circumferential Service commuter rail / transfer station at the IHB Railroad could impact commuter traffic patterns east of the La Grange Road Metra station.

MOBILITY POLICIES

Planning policies that will guide improvements and initiatives within the BNSF Railroad Corridor are presented below. These policies are general to provide overall direction to decision making. More specific improvement recommendations follow in the next section.

1. Consistent with the principles of transit supportive development, future improvements within the Corridor will place emphasis on the needs and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists.
2. Mitigate peak period congestion along La Grange Road, Brainard Avenue and other heavily traveled local streets, while ensuring pedestrian safety and minimizing “cut-through” traffic.
3. Improved bus transit service within the Corridor will help to relieve congestion, and should be actively pursued. A continued and strong working relationship with Metra and Pace is essential in this regard. Where appropriate, the Village should coordinate with Pace on its *Pace Vision 2020* improvement program.
4. While balancing other BNSF Railroad Corridor development and improvement needs, continue to explore ways of expanding and increasing the number of commuter parking spaces without over-stressing roadway infrastructure. Redevelopment should consider consolidating and expanding commuter parking within parking facilities of new development sites and looking for opportunities for shared parking between commuters and other (off-peak) uses. The Village should continue to work with Metra and to ensure that there is not a net-loss in the number of spaces available for commuters. Metra parking is but one factor in the overall parking inventory and use mix of the BNSF Corridor, with the same timing and development review issues as private redevelopment proposals.

5. Ensure that sufficient off-street parking is provided to serve new development within the West End Business District.
6. In the development review process, seek to minimize unnecessary traffic and circulation impacts on surrounding residential areas.

MOBILITY FRAMEWORK AND IMPROVEMENTS

A variety of mobility improvements have been identified for the Corridor area. These improvement recommendations are consistent with and support Land Use Plan and transit supportive development recommendations. The *Mobility Framework* is illustrated in *Figure 7*, and described in more detail in the recommendation improvements below.

Transit and Multi-Modal Systems and Facilities Improvements

Several improvements should be made to the Stone Avenue Station. Improved platform paving and passenger amenities, outdoor seating and trash receptacles should be provided. The shelter structure at the outbound (north) platform should be upgraded to be visually compatible with the landmark station structure. Kiss-n-ride and pedestrian access routes to the station and both platforms should be clarified and upgraded, to minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and facilitate traffic movement during busy periods. These improvements should be made consistent with the urban design plan discussed below.

1. Kiss-n-ride and bus stop facilities at the La Grange Road Station platforms and operations could be better defined through improved signage and pavement marking improvements, to minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and facilitate traffic movement during busy periods.
2. Convenient, secure and clearly marked ADA-accessible parking spaces should be provided in close proximity to both Metra stations.
3. Convenient, safe and, where feasible, weather protected bicycle parking should be provided in close proximity to both Metra Stations, and elsewhere throughout the commercial areas of the Corridor. The zoning code could be amended to require bicycle parking.



4. The Village, through coordination with Pace, should pursue installation of "traffic signal priority" (TSP) technology to aid in the movement of both emergency vehicles and Pace buses in the Downtown.
5. Pace bus routing should be reconfigured to minimize the need for Pace routes to cross the Metra / BNSF Line at La Grange Road, while still considering convenience for transferring passengers from Metra trains. To this end, the Village should study the feasibility of grade separated pedestrian access along the Corridor.
6. As a more intensive mix of uses develops in the West End Business District, a shuttle bus between the West End and the Downtown would increase access and reduce unnecessary traffic movements. The shuttle would likely run only during peak activity periods such as weekends and during special events. The Village should work with Pace, the La Grange Business Association and other key institutions in developing the system should the need arise.

Access and Circulation Improvements

7. Improvements to traffic operations will be warranted as parcels within the West End and Downtown are redeveloped, particularly improvements at and near at-grade crossings of the BNSF / Metra Line. Pedestrian/vehicle conflicts occur within the area during peak periods of Metra train activity and at the beginning and end of the school day. A Village-wide street capacity study should be undertaken to assess current conditions, exploring both potential improvements for vehicle and pedestrian movement, and potential impacts of redevelopment in the future.
8. There are a few local north-south residential streets which enter the Downtown and the West End Business District which could potentially be closed to vehicle access, or subject to traffic calming measures, as redevelopment occurs. Traffic calming or street closure can often benefit adjoining neighborhood areas by reducing "cut-through" traffic and providing greater neighborhood privacy. Street closures can also support redevelopment interests by providing new locations for off-street parking, common open space or enlarged redevelopment sites.

Figure 7 BNSF Railroad Corridor Mobility Framework



Figure 7 back of page

Any locations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor considered for future street closure or traffic calming would first require the input and support of the immediate surrounding property owners and the neighborhood. It is important to note that, even if vehicle access is restricted, pedestrian access should be maintained.

Pedestrian Access Improvements

9. There are additional locations in the BNSF Railroad Corridor which would benefit from the use of pedestrian activated crosswalk signals, including: existing La Grange Road signal locations, and Brainard at Burlington/Hillgrove/the BNSF Metra Line. Existing and new pedestrian activated crosswalks should utilize a “countdown” signal which depicts the number of seconds remaining in the green signal phase before the light turns yellow, and should include a “pedestrian-only” period within the regular light cycle.
10. Ideally, pedestrian walkways should be a minimum of 10’ to 15’ in width. Additional public right-of-way should be acquired where feasible as redevelopment occurs to facilitate the provision of generously sized and well-designed sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.
11. A wayfinding program is an important tool to assist residents and visitors alike in orienting themselves in an unfamiliar area. It can support the community’s “branding” effort through the incorporation of logos and other features which reinforce the “theme” developed for the Downtown. If desired, it could assist in introducing a new theme for the West End Business District. Local business associations should be actively involved in designing and funding the wayfinding program.
12. The “pedway” network should be maintained and further enhanced, to provide clear and complete pedestrian access to all areas of the Corridor. As redevelopment occurs, care should be taken to protect existing pedestrian pathways and consider the need for additional connections to municipal and commuter parking locations.
13. The Village should study the feasibility of grade separated pedestrian access along the Corridor. One or two grade separated access points along the Corridor, most likely below grade, are desirable. These improvements would provide greater flexibility in accessing the stations and would assist Pace



in minimizing crossing the Corridor. It would also enhance the efficiency of the parking system.

Parking Facilities Improvements

14. The Village should proactively consider the need for additional public parking within the West End Business District as redevelopment occurs. Parking facilities could accommodate shoppers, commuters, employees and LT High School parking needs. Further, if there is additional redevelopment within the Downtown, there will eventually be a need for additional public parking within the existing core, as well. While most developments will typically provide off-street parking for residential uses, it will be difficult to meet demand for commercial parking requirements on-site. The provision of shared shopper parking in convenient locations throughout the West End, rather than on a site-by-site basis, will in fact generate a more vibrant and successful venue for smaller retailers by encouraging the "multiple destination" shopping patterns currently supported in the Downtown core. The approach further facilitates a transit-oriented center as well.
15. Where additional parking is created within the Corridor, whether in surface parking lots or parking structures, care should be taken to minimize the visual impact on surrounding residential areas. This can be achieved by limiting access to parking areas to primarily non-residential streets, concealing parking areas behind or within developments where feasible, and designing visible structures to coordinate visually with adjacent structures.
16. Consideration should be given to the potential for shared parking between off-street commuter parking spaces and off-peak uses within the Corridor as an effective way to accommodate additional commuter parking capacity. Remote "park-n-ride" facilities are another potential alternative.
17. The Village should review its zoning code requirements regarding off-street parking. Provisions for individual on-site parking requirements in the West End should be eliminated. Further off-street parking requirements for residential uses should be reviewed to determine if they should be reduced consistent with transit supportive policies. Again, consistent with paragraph 16 above, any potential impacts to commuter parking should first be discussed with Metra.

18. Working with the business community, the Village should develop a map which illustrates business parking, public parking, commuter parking and other features for public distribution.

D. URBAN DESIGN

Urban design is a critical element of the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Community preferences on urban design will have strong influence on the level of pedestrian orientation in the Corridor and the degree to which Village objectives for transit supportive land use can be realized. Together with land use regulations such as the Village's zoning code, urban design decisions affect the perceived quality and character of the Corridor.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND DESIGN ISSUES

The Village of La Grange and its business partners have successfully sustained the Downtown with a balance between older structures and newer styles of development. La Grange has undertaken a streetscape improvement program which reinforces the charm and ambience of the Downtown. Aesthetic improvements combined with the bulk regulations of the Village's zoning code, have created a Downtown area that is highly pedestrian oriented, and "walkable". Significant streetscape upgrades have been undertaken within the Downtown since the inception of the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District in 1986, including the extension of wide sidewalks and streetscape amenities north of the Metra / BNSF Line along La Grange Road at the La Grange Crossing development.

The commuter station platforms at the La Grange Road Station have also been improved consistent with the Downtown streetscape theme through the provision of bench-height concrete planters along the south platform east of the station building that provide additional shade and seating. Most municipal parking lots within the Downtown are attractively landscaped, frequently including decorative wrought iron fencing, and with consistent Downtown signage.

Design review standards are in place requiring review by the Village prior to any exterior renovation work. The design review regulation encompasses most of the Corridor. This tool helps ensure that changes to existing structures and new development are compatible with surrounding conditions in the Corridor.



Early in the planning process, the Village solicited input regarding key planning *issues* and *opportunities* confronting the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Issues related to urban design include the following:

- A lack of pedestrian continuity between the Downtown and West End Business District.
- A lack of adequate wayfinding and entry signage.
- Many outdated building facades.
- Poorly marked/designed walks across the BNSF Railroad Corridor right-of-way.
- The scale of some of the Corridor's newer structures.
- A need for additional open space within the Corridor, of various scales.

Opportunities related to urban design that were identified include the following:

- An established visual identity (streetscape) to expand, and to enhance with additional amenities.
- A Design Review Overlay District mechanism for design review is already in place.
- Several attractive buildings and facades.

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

The following principles and policies should guide design decisions with regard to both public and private improvements within the Corridor to facilitate a consistent visual image and pedestrian-friendly character. An illustration of several of these principles relating to building facades is shown in *Figure 8, Facade Design Principles*.

Architectural Design

1. Buildings should not exceed five stories in height within the Corridor, and should be sensitively designed to be compatible with their surroundings regardless of height.
2. The overall mass and bulk of buildings should be broken down with vertical "storefront" divisions and/or changes in exterior materials, to remain compatible in scale with older structures.



Figure 8 BNSF Railroad Corridor Facade Design Principles



Figure 8 back of page

3. Rooflines should be varied for visual interest—parapet wall construction is most appropriate for commercial and mixed-use structures.
4. Architectural details—such as facade accents, balconies and awnings—can also serve to break down the scale of larger buildings and provide visual interest.
5. Masonry, stone and other natural exterior materials are most appropriate within the context of the Corridor.
6. Commercial storefronts should be located along the “street wall” and have large windows for merchandise display, encouraging a window shopping and strolling atmosphere.
7. Small scaled and non-illuminated signage is most appropriate within the Corridor; large and garish “box signs” or signs with moving parts are not in keeping with the character of the area.
8. Outdoor off-street parking spaces and garage entrances for multi-family residential developments should be concealed from view along public rights-of-way.



Transit Facilities

1. Provide shade trees, ornamental trees and attractive plantings in the vicinity of Metra stations and platforms to provide visual relief (subject to railroad and Metra Technical Services parking design guidelines and standards regarding sight lines and clearances at tracks and crossings).
2. The design and appearance of station shelters and information kiosks should be coordinated with the architectural design of the primary Metra station, and the overall streetscape.
3. Passenger amenities—such as benches, newspaper boxes, refuse receptacles and bicycle racks—should be visually coordinated with the overall streetscape theme of the Corridor.



Open Spaces and Streetscape

1. Provide generous sidewalks that allow for a “walking zone” adjacent to storefronts and an “amenity” zone at the curb to accommodate planters, street trees and benches. Ideally, sidewalks should be at least fifteen feet in width.



2. Integrate plazas, rest areas and open spaces of varying scales in the Corridor to provide rest and relaxation opportunities for shoppers and other visitors. Spaces should be strategically positioned and of high quality design.

3. Larger open spaces should incorporate lawn areas, defined walking paths, shade trees and focal points such as water features or public art displays.



4. Provide ornamental lighting sufficient to ensure secure walking conditions after dark, especially at off-street pedways and pedestrian crossing areas.
5. Street trees should be provided throughout the Corridor, in either grates or planted parkways, as appropriate.
6. Benches, water fountains, trash receptacles and other pedestrian amenities should be visually coordinated.
7. Color should be introduced through the use of plantings in low planters/planting beds, storefront awnings and pole-mounted banners.

Parking Lots and Structures

1. Lots and structures should be buffered from their surroundings with perimeter fencing and plantings, where visible from public rights-of-way.
2. To the extent feasible, parking lots should be visually concealed behind or beside



buildings, but be easy to find and access (see illustrative diagram below).

3. Clear signage and adequate lighting for wayfinding and security should be provided at all parking areas.



4. Parking lots should incorporate shade trees within planted islands for visual relief and user comfort.
5. Parking structures should be open in design, partially below grade if feasible to minimize overall height, and treated on the exterior with high quality materials and vines to blend in visually with their surroundings.

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND IMPROVEMENTS

There are a variety of additional urban design improvements which could be undertaken in the future, to enhance existing improvements. *Figure 9, Urban Design Framework* illustrates the desirable extent of the Corridor streetscape treatment, suggesting some expansion in the years ahead.

There are currently few open spaces or plazas within the BNSF Railroad Corridor. To function as a “full service” Downtown and Corridor, it is essential that pedestrians be provided with small outdoor “retreats” where they can rest, hold conversation, appreciate public art, or be entertained. Plazas and small open spaces can fulfill this need.

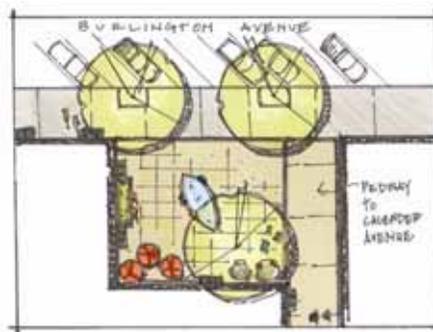


Figure 9, Urban Design Framework illustrates potential locations for future consideration.

The Village should remain flexible on these locations, and take advantage of opportunities arising from private development proposals where possible. For example, should the Calendar Avenue parking lot redevelop in the future, the Village could accomplish several functional and urban design objectives. The pedway connection between Calendar and Burlington Avenues should be maintained, while creating an urban plaza amenity (see illustrative diagram above). These spaces would not only perform



the functional role of providing rest and retreat, but would add to overall visual interest and the pedestrian experience throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

Key to maintaining pedestrian continuity, and supporting the Village's TOD development efforts, is the continuation of the pedestrian-oriented "street wall" where buildings are developed up to the front lot line. Continuing to maintain and develop attractive storefronts is critical to sustaining the pedestrian character of the Corridor. Locations where it will be important to develop or maintain the Corridor's "street wall" character are illustrated in *Figure 9, BNSF Railroad Corridor Urban Design Framework*. Listed below are other potential aesthetic improvements, both public and private, within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

1. Expand the established streetscape palette into all areas of the Corridor, as indicated below in the Urban Design Framework. Consider the addition of benches and other additional amenities in areas that are already improved, where space permits, to enhance the comfort of shoppers and other visitors to the Corridor.



2. Improve the open space surrounding the Stone Avenue Metra Station with new walkways, seating areas and plantings, to encourage use of the area and tie it into overall streetscape upgrades throughout the area (see illustrative diagram above).
3. At both Metra stations, provide additional seating, trash receptacles, attractive newspaper vending machines, information kiosks, plantings and other amenities to visually coordinate station and platform areas with the overall streetscape theme of the Corridor.
4. Establish gateway treatments, as indicated in *Figure 9*, to announce arrival into the Corridor at key locations and aid in orientation, in conjunction with the wayfinding signage system.



Figure 9 BNSF Railroad Corridor Urban Design Framework



Figure 9 back of page

5. Municipal parking lots and structures should be sensitively designed and well buffered from their surrounding through the use of careful siting, landscaped and fenced setbacks, and high quality materials.
6. Community input in the first phase of the planning process indicated that public art could be an important component of the Corridor. The market analysis indicates that there is a potential for arts and cultural facility development in the downtown. A high quality public art program could support this initiative. If and when it is pursued, the community will need to define a public arts program in more detail.
7. Encourage new private developments to adhere to the Urban Design Principles outlined below with regard to architectural design and site improvements, to provide a consistent and transit-supportive built environment throughout the Corridor.



STRATEGIES FOR BNSF CORRIDOR FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

The current La Grange Facade Renovation/Restoration program serves properties within only the current Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Eligibility for loans includes owners, contract purchasers, or tenants. The Village offers zero-interest, fixed rate loans for facade renovations not to exceed a loan amount of \$40,000. Owner participation is not a requirement of a loan award. Submittals and awards are made on a first-come, first-serve basis. La Grange specifies six general rehabilitation standards. The applicant must clearly identify how the renovation meets each standard. As mentioned earlier, to date approximately 31 renovations have been completed at an estimated value of 1.3 million dollars of investment.

Clearly, the program is substantial, and has worked well. However, because the Plan recommends the facade program be expanded throughout the entire Corridor, Village funding becomes an issue. The current TIF district covers only a portion of the Corridor and entirely excludes the West End Business District. Typically there are two ways that communities fund facade renovation programs. These include a Tax Increment Finance district (TIF) or a business improvement district (BID). Both tools provide the administrative



mechanism needed to administer a program. Further, both tools sustain plausible application throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

Frequently, communities enroll the assistance of local finance institutions to provide a below market rate loan pool to serve a project. Most often, zero interest rate loan programs are underwritten by both the lender and the host community. Either a TIF or BID approach would be appropriate in La Grange. As mentioned earlier, however, the selection of the tool will likely be tied to the overall Corridor redevelopment finance strategy selected by the Village.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Village of La Grange and its business partners have worked hard to reinvigorate the Downtown, develop a special marketing and branding program, and secure new real estate and business development investments. This effort has largely been successful due to a strong public-private initiative between the Village and community business organizations. Economic development activities defined in the Plan build upon this successful model.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The Downtown now contains a wide variety of shopping and eating establishments that enhance the overall quality of life in the Village and will be an ongoing source of revenue. These coordinated efforts must now begin to encompass the Corridor as a whole, dedicating significant attention to encouraging additional commercial activity within the West End Business District.

In the early stages of the planning process, feedback from the community was solicited regarding planning issues and opportunities confronting the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Issues related to economic development include:

- The existing TIF District in the Downtown area expires in 2009.
- Rising rents may occur with redevelopment, threatening the long-term viability of smaller, local businesses.
- Business hours of operation are not coordinated or late enough to coincide with restaurant peak use periods.
- Avoid attracting too many “generic” chain businesses; maintain a unique local shopping experience.

Opportunities related to economic development include:

- A strong La Grange Business Association.
- LTHS-generated customer traffic that can be captured in the West End Business District.
- A targeted entertainment marketing strategy to attract regional patrons.
- "Showcase" area businesses / events at the Metra stations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

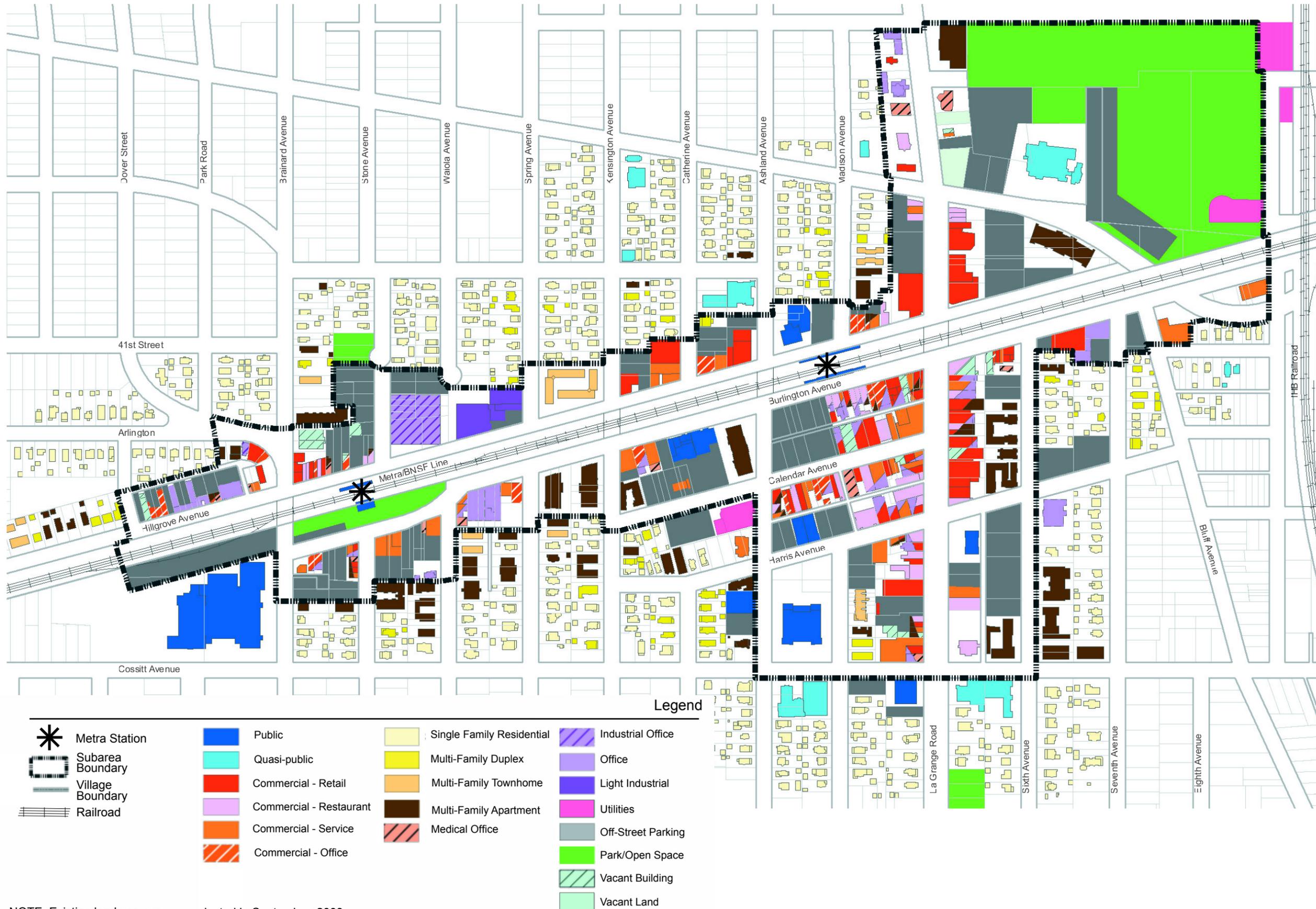
Listed below are the planning policies that will guide consideration of economic development opportunities within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

1. Continue to work with and leverage the organizational assets of the local business associations, including the LGBA, toward Downtown goals.
2. Identify and selectively recruit businesses the Village desires to see within the Downtown and West End Business District.
3. Through redevelopment in the West End, capitalize on the market potential of LTHS students, parents and employees in the West End Business District.
4. Continue to support the *Economic Development Strategy for the Village of La Grange*, prepared by the Economic Development Advisory committee,
5. Balance locally owned businesses with national chains in achieving a sustainable and mutually supportive business mix. While national chains can generate needed regional traffic, the Village should actively discourage the loss or displacement of local businesses that provide uniqueness and variety within the Corridor. While there are no easy, "patented" solutions to this issue, the Village and the local business associations should consider actions that might be taken on a case-by-case basis.
6. Expand existing, and create new, community events in the Corridor to generate both local and regional interest in patronizing the Downtown and West End Business District. Showcase these events to Metra commuters and a larger regional audience to build awareness and patronage of the Downtown and West End Business District.



7. Include West End Business District off-street parking and traffic studies as part of a comprehensive Village-wide street capacity study. Although this item is discussed under Mobility, it is also an important economic development issue as well. Developing consensus on a strategy to manage parking in the West End in the long term will benefit all interested parties. The Village should actively develop traffic and parking strategies that target improved circulation patterns prior to redevelopment occurring.

8. In view of the fact that the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District will expire in 2009, the Village may need to seek new financial resources to support public improvement projects. Part VII, *Implementation* includes several ideas. One approach would be to consider the adoption of a new tax increment finance district for improvements in the West End Business District.

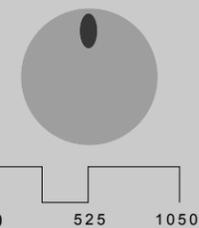


Legend

Metra Station	Public	Single Family Residential	Industrial Office
Subarea Boundary	Quasi-public	Multi-Family Duplex	Office
Village Boundary	Commercial - Retail	Multi-Family Townhome	Light Industrial
Railroad	Commercial - Restaurant	Multi-Family Apartment	Utilities
	Commercial - Service	Medical Office	Off-Street Parking
	Commercial - Office		Park/Open Space
			Vacant Building
			Vacant Land

NOTE: Existing land use survey conducted in September, 2003

Figure - 5, BNSF Railroad Corridor Existing Land Use





Legend

-  Metra Station
-  Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
-  Subarea Boundary
-  Village Boundary
-  Railroad
-  BNSF Core Commercial
-  BNSF Commercial
-  Medium Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Open Space and Recreation

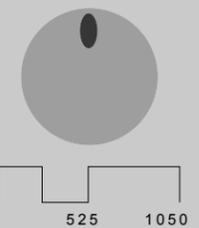


Figure - 6, BNSF Railroad Corridor Land Use Framework



- | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| | Metra Station | | Pedway | | Future Shuttle Extension |
| | Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station | | Improved Pedestrian Crosswalks | | Illustrative Street Closure |
| | Pedestrian Activated Crosswalks | | Illustrative "Shuttle" Service | | Metra Parking |
| | | | Subarea Boundary | | Proposed Bicycle Route |
| | | | Railroad | | Proposed bicycle crossing signal |

Proposed bicycle route alignments are based upon preliminary routes included in the 1996 "West Central Bikeway Plan" developed by the West Central Municipal Conference, preliminary routes included in the Park District of La Grange Master Plan, and input from the Village Engineer.

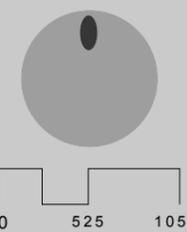
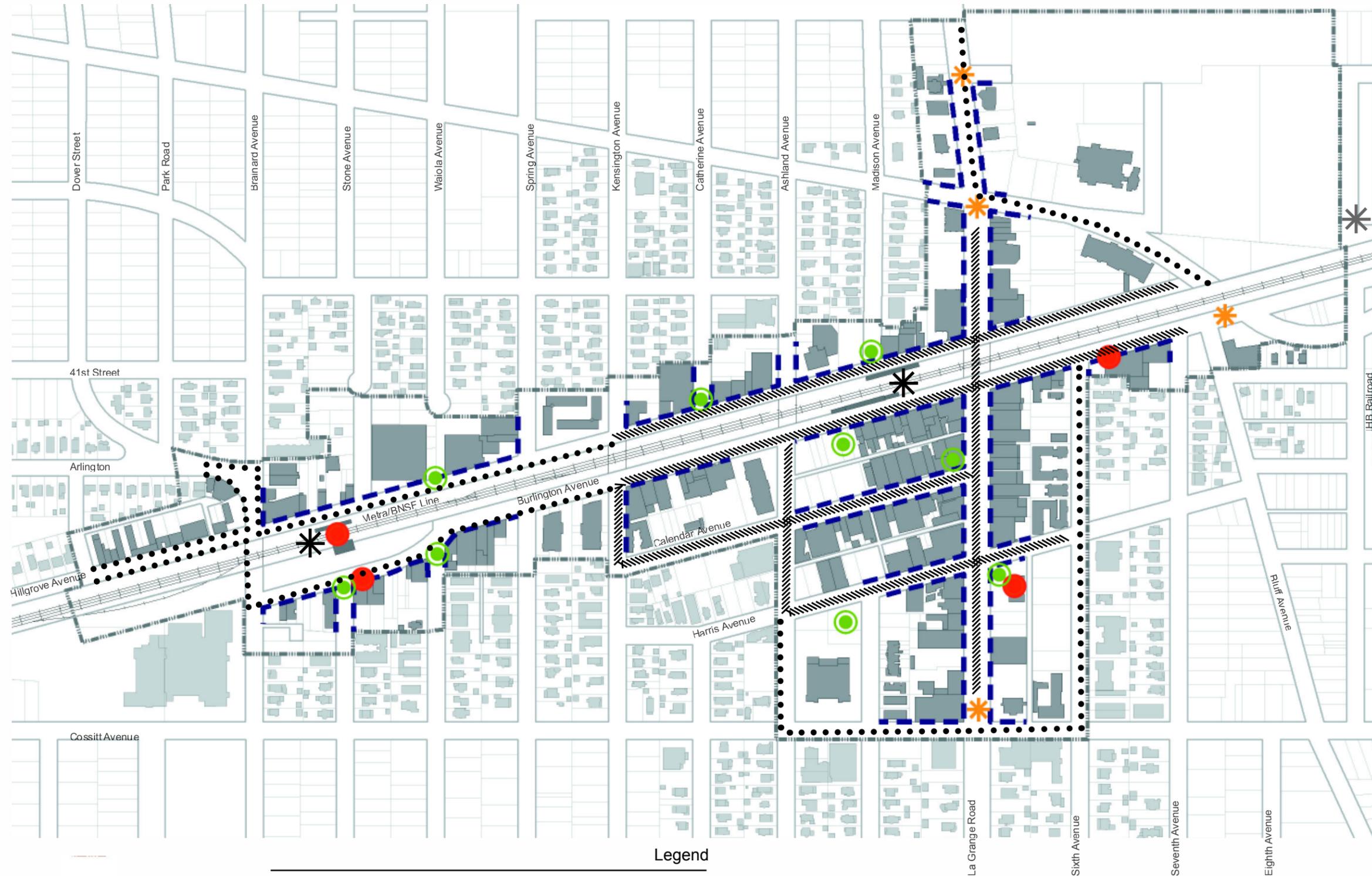


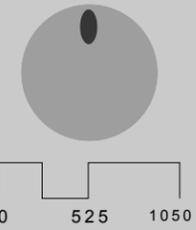
Figure - 7, BNSF Railroad Corridor Mobility Framework





Legend

-  Metra Station
-  Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
-  Subarea Boundary
-  Village Boundary
-  Potential Open Space/ Plaza Location
-  Key Existing Landmark and/or High Quality Facade
-  Railroad
-  Gateway / Entry Feature
-  "Street Wall" Continuity Areas
-  Proposed Streetscape Enhancement
-  Existing Streetscape Enhancement



VII. Implementation

The planning process in La Grange has just begun. In many ways, formal adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan* is only the first step, not the last. Without continuing action to implement and update the Plan, Village efforts up to this point will have little lasting impact.

The *Comprehensive Plan* sets forth an agreed-upon "road map" for the next fifteen to twenty years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the La Grange community, the Plan Commission, and the Village Board.

A. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The purpose of the Implementation program is to ensure that key plan activities are translated into actions that are designed to advance plan recommendations. The implementation program should give meaning to the Vision, Goals and Objectives of the Plan.

Initiation of these actions requires the appropriate authorization on behalf of the Village. In addition, implementation activities are subject to change over time, and the Village should remain flexible regarding implementation opportunities and needs. A few key implementation items are identified below.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

These early-action projects represent public policy or administrative actions. They do not require a significant new allocation of funds, and they should all be undertaken within a relatively short time frame. These actions relate to revising and updating local codes and ordinances, follow-up studies and related administrative actions.

Economic Development and Redevelopment Finance

1. In general the partnership formed between the Village and the La Grange Business Association provides a strong management structure for communications, promotions, coordination of activities and related needs. A key issue raised in the process is the ability of the Village to maintain funding for Downtown public



and private investment activity. The downtown Tax Increment Finance District will retire in 2009 leaving a major resource gap. Further, no financial tools are in place to facilitate private and public improvement projects within the West End.

2. Cook County tax policy provides an incentive for small scale mixed-use development (residential use above first floor retail) that may be applicable for infill redevelopment projects in the BNSF Railroad Corridor. For buildings of 20,000 square feet or less and containing six or fewer "units" (dwellings or lease spaces) under a single PIN number, commercial space can be taxed at the residential rate (16%) rather than the commercial rate (38%). Mixed-use development is a transit-supportive land use that can help improve the success and sustainability of retail uses over the long term.

Zoning Code Update

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan should be followed by a review and update of the Village's various development controls including zoning, subdivision regulations, and other related codes and ordinances. It is essential that all development controls be consistent with the new Comprehensive Plan. The Village's zoning regulations have not been comprehensively reviewed within the last several years.

3. **General Zoning Code Update** - While preparation of a new Unified Land Development Code should be considered, there are a number of specific zoning code changes that could be immediately undertaken.
 - Core Single-Family Area Amendments (residential) – Preservation of the unique character of design, such as the preclusion of street facing garages, limiting driveway widths, and establishing a gross floor area limitation would be addressed. Neighborhood input would be needed to refine these potential mechanisms;
 - East Side Residential District Reclassification (residential) – Maintaining the single-family residential character of properties in this neighborhood is important. The Village should seek neighborhood input and further study rezoning some of the area to a single-family residential zoning classification;
 - Bluff Avenue Redevelopment – Aging industrial uses and the negative land use impact on the surrounding neighborhood is an issue along the east side of Bluff Avenue south of Cossitt

Avenue. The area could be redeveloped for multiple family residential uses, with businesses relocated to other areas of the community. The Park District of La Grange has expressed interest in acquiring a park site in this area as well;

- Industrial Development along the north side of Ogden Avenue east of the IHB Railroad – Quality development and urban design are the issues concerning this “gateway” location to the Village. This area should be zoned for commercial uses to more fully support and complement the retail development pattern along the Corridor;
- Consider making provision for “park-n-ride” facilities in appropriate locations in the Village.
- Use-Table Review (light industrial zoning district) – To address the issue of quality redevelopment, there is a need to prepare design guidelines and new light industrial zoning district standards; and
- Other – As emerging land use issues are identified, there is a need to respond as appropriate with revisions to the zoning code and subdivision regulations to guide land development and redevelopment.

4. **BNSF Railroad Corridor Related Zoning Code Amendments -**

Among other zoning recommendations included in the Plan, the Village should consider the following:

- The manner in which the commercial zoning districts have been applied within the Downtown should be re-evaluated. The current configuration of districts should align with the Plan’s land use and off-street parking recommendations.
- Consider adjustments to minimum lot size requirements in the BNSF Corridor to better utilize properties to provide varied housing opportunities.
- A comprehensive evaluation of the Village’s off-street parking requirements should be undertaken with a focus on encouraging transit supportive development. Residential parking requirements, in particular, might be considered for reduction.
- In view of the challenges faced relative to financing Downtown improvements, the Village should explore the possibility of a parking impact fee. This fee would provide the Village some resources for off-street parking improvements throughout the Corridor. A payment would apply to spaces not built that would otherwise be required under the zoning code off-street parking standards. The approach does not presume the impact fee would be equal to the full cost of a surface or structured off-street parking space. Rather, the fee



- should reflect a portion of the cost of a space to generally help off-set public improvement costs within the district.
- The Village should consider a “build to” set back line in the Corridor in consideration of the urban design recommendation to maintain a “streetwall” throughout much of the Downtown.
 - Consider developing standards for bicycle parking within the Corridor.
 - Improvement standards for the landscaping of off-street parking areas should be considered.

B. FUNDING SOURCE OPTIONS

Below, a variety of funding source options has been identified to assist in implementation projects. These include long-term multi-year programs and annual or single purpose resources. In developing more refined funding strategies for plan implementation, it will be important to consider the longevity of the funding source in relation to implementation needs. While both will be important in implementation, their effectiveness must match the finance requirements of implementation activities

For example, the use of a one-time, single purpose CMAQ grant for the installation of sidewalks would serve its purpose. However, in the case of public finance support to a redevelopment project, the Village would need to identify and dedicate substantial multi-year resources capable of supporting debt service. The one time CMAQ grant would not qualify for this purpose.

In general, annual financial resources could be applied to almost any project in the community. However, for redevelopment initiatives which rely on public-private finance relationships, these projects will require multi-year funding resources. Thus, recommended activities in the BNSF Corridor, community commercial areas, and the Village's light industrial areas would benefit most from long-term funding sources.

Multi-year sources and other funding sources are each identified below. The reader should be aware that funding programs frequently change, especially those which can be characterized as single purpose or project restricted programs. The Village will need to stay abreast of changes in funding programs over the planning period.

GENERAL MULTI-YEAR FUNDING RESOURCES

- **General Fund Sources** - Communities have a number of general sources of revenue that can be applied to any corporate purpose that will benefit the community as a whole. The largest of these is normally the general-purpose property tax, which primarily funds the City's General Revenue Fund. Others include state income tax rebates, motor fuel tax funds, public utility taxes, hotel/motel tax, plus various fees, fines and other receipts. Municipal bonds may also be considered for special projects during various phases of the implementation of the Plan that may require more long-term financing. Another type of bond that could be considered for targeted area projects is the special assessment bond. These bonds are issued to finance improvements that are to be paid for by special assessments against benefited properties. Bond obligations are payable only from the special assessment receipts, are not backed by general taxes, and usually carry higher interest rates.

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - Tax increment financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis. TIF allows a community to capture the increase in local property taxes that results from a redevelopment project in order to pay for the public costs involved in the project. La Grange has adopted TIF in its Downtown area, and has stimulated substantial amounts of new private and public development improvements in accord with the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan. The term of the district is limited by law, and the current TIF district will dissolve in 2009.

- **Business Improvement District** - Business Improvement Districts are authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois. A community may designate an area as a Business Improvement District after a public hearing. In carrying out business district development or redevelopment plan recommendations, a municipality is given the statutory authority to:
 - ✓ Approve all development and redevelopment proposals.
 - ✓ Exercise the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of real and personal property for the purpose of a development or redevelopment project.
 - ✓ Acquire, manage, convey or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired pursuant to the provisions of a development or redevelopment plan.



- ✓ Apply for and accept capital grants and loans from the United States and the State of Illinois, or any instrumentality of the United States or the State, for business district development and redevelopment.
- ✓ Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment, and in this connection issue such obligation or revenue bonds as it shall be deemed necessary, subject to applicable statutory limitations.
- ✓ Enter into contracts with any public or private agency or person.
- ✓ Sell, lease, trade or improve such real property as may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment plans.
- ✓ Expend such public funds as may be necessary for the planning, execution and implementation of the business district plans.
- ✓ Establish by ordinance or resolution procedures for the planning, execution and implementation of business district plans.
- ✓ Create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as agent for the Village for the purposes of business district development and redevelopment.

The benefits of a Business Improvement District could include: 1) providing the ability to control and dispose of property; 2) securing financing for improvements; and 3) monitoring and reviewing development and redevelopment proposals. The process to establish a business improvement district is fairly simple to execute. The Village does not currently utilize Business Improvement Districts.

- **Special Service Areas (SSA)** – The Village of La Grange currently utilizes an active SSA program in the Downtown. The SSA program is a finance tool that utilizes a real estate property tax levy to fund “special services” in a targeted area where property owners voluntarily tax themselves for these services. SSA services and programs are in addition to—and go beyond—the normal programs and services provided by the community. Typically, commercial and industrial areas are subject to an SSA tax, although it is frequently extended to residential properties. When introducing an SSA, SSA services and improvements are funded entirely through the tax revenues generated by the special service tax. The revenue is derived from a computation using the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of the taxable parcels within the special service area boundaries. The Village’s most recent SSA (#7) was levied to produce \$50,000 in revenue for 2006. Funds will be used for either Downtown improvements or maintenance. An SSA does not exist in the West End Business District.

Utilizing these mechanisms can provide a community the ability to exercise greater oversight over the redevelopment process, and to work proactively to control potential development impacts.

OTHER ANNUAL OR USE RESTRICTED PROGRAMS

- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Guaranty Loans** - The SBA can usually guarantee up to \$750,000 of a private sector loan. The maximum on loans in excess of \$150,000 is 85 percent. Proceeds may be used to finance fixed assets for up to 25 years and working capital for five to seven years. New programs include Low Doc for loans less than \$100,000, and Greenline which provides short-term working capital for businesses. SBA determines if companies qualify as a small business based on the average number of employees for the prior 12 months or on the sales volume averaged over a three year period.
- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Women-Owned Businesses** - The SBA has a program targeted specifically to women business owners. This program will pre-qualify women-owned businesses and back those with a SBA guarantee prior to approaching lenders for credit.
- **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)** – The DCEO replaces the former Illinois DCCA. It annually provide a range of opportunities which may be of interest to the Village and local businesses. Information on these programs are readily available through the State of Illinois' web site. Briefly, some of these include: Community Service Block Grant Loan, State Treasurer's Economic Program, Community Development Assistance Program, and Illinois Technology Enterprise Center. Because programming and funding can frequently change, please refer to their web site.
- **Metra Capital Improvement Program** - Metra's capital program consists primarily of federal, state, and RTA grant sources, most of which are listed here. The Metra five-year program allocates funds for station and parking improvements. Metra examines its station assessment and parking databases to determine necessary improvements at each station. Land acquisition for new parking lots can be a major impediment to developing additional parking, so Metra works closely with local communities to assess areas for future parking development. It is important to note that Metra has often provided funding for additional new surface parking spaces, but Metra and most grant funding



sources do not assist in financing the replacement of existing commuter parking spaces that are lost for development purposes.

- **Pending Transportation Equity Act (“TEA”) Bill** - Based on the types of improvements recommended for Downtown, the funding sources that will most likely be applicable to La Grange are future programs of the predecessor Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), including ITEP, CMAQ and STP Programs. The TEA programs are administered through various regional and state agencies and are supported by federal revenues. While the details of project eligibility vary from program to program, they all generally require that a project have a local sponsor (the Village of La Grange), and some evidence of local support of the project. Brief descriptions of the component programs of TEA-21 are described below.

Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) - This funding source is administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and is a set-aside fund from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Among the projects that are eligible for this competitive funding source include bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, landscaping, historic preservation and projects that control or remove outdoor advertising. Federal reimbursement is available for up to 50 percent of the cost of right of way and easement acquisition and 80 percent of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering and construction costs.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) - The CMAQ program is also part of TEA, and it focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types include transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects and projects that result in emissions reductions. These projects are also federally funded at 80 percent of project costs. The competitive program is administered through the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS). Transit improvements and commuter parking lot projects typically score higher when supported by Metra. Similarly, bicycle and pedestrian projects which are coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions are also rated highly. In most cases, grants are not available to assist in financing the replacement of existing commuter parking spaces or other improvements that were originally federally funded, should they be displaced for redevelopment purposes.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) - These funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category must have a local sponsor and are selected based, among other factors, on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors. STP funds are allocated among the following programs: demonstration projects; enhancement; hazard elimination; and urban funds.

- **Operation Greenlight and Access to Transit:** Currently, FY2004 is the last year of funding for the Operation Greenlight and Access to Transit program. However, there is some expectation that this program may continue beyond FY 2004, although with possible changes in the program structure. Funds are currently allocated to any project that is related to transit. Two types of funds are available: general grants and access to transit funds. General grants are for any transit project including station projects, commuter parking lots, and pedestrian bridges and tunnels in a station area. Accesses to transit funds are available for any project that allows direct access to the station area, including sidewalks and access roads. This program is federally funded and implemented through the Illinois Department of Transportation. In most cases, grants are not available to assist in financing the replacement of existing commuter parking spaces or other improvements that were originally federally funded, should they be displaced for redevelopment purposes.
- **Endowments and Gifts:** For certain projects, the Village might consider soliciting endowments and gifts to help fund and support implementation activities. These activities should be undertaken only if the Village Board of Trustee's has first set policy regarding the manner in which these activities would be executed.

C. REVIEW AND UPDATE

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; the planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated on a regular basis. The need for Plan amendments are the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption. The following paragraphs describe the procedures which apply to any amendment of the Comprehensive Plan.



DAY-TO-DAY MONITORING AND ADMINISTRATION

In order for the Plan to be “maintained” and updated in a timely manner, the designation of an agency responsible for coordinating planning activities, receiving community input and comments, and providing and disseminating information regarding the Comprehensive Plan is required. While the Plan Commission and Village Board are ultimately responsible for implementing the updated Plan, the Village staff is the most appropriate group to carry out the day-to-day activities of Plan administration. The Village will:

1. Make the Plan available for review at various local public agency offices, including the Village Hall, Village web site and Library. Copies of the Plan document will also be made available for public purchase.
2. Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate.
3. Assist the Village Board in the day-to-day administration, interpretation and application of the Plan.
4. Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues or needs which may be a subject of change, addition or deletion from the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Coordinate and assist the Village Board in the Plan amendment process.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

Although a proposal to amend the Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the Village should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. The Village should initiate review of the Plan at least every three to five years. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Appendix

Historic Residential Properties in the Village of La Grange

Listed on the "Illinois Inventory of Historic Structures" and/or the "Illinois Inventory of Historic Landmarks"

1. Cossitt House, 100 South Ashland Avenue
2. Lyman House, 133 South Spring Avenue
3. Pratt House, 222 South Spring Avenue
4. Residence at 102 South Blackstone Avenue
5. Residence at 141 South Blackstone Avenue
6. Residence at 209 South Blackstone Avenue
7. Residence at 424 South Blackstone Avenue
8. Residence at 2 South Catherine Avenue
9. Residence at 211 South La Grange Road
10. Residence at 425 South La Grange Road
11. Residence at 136 South La Grange Road
12. Residence at 43 North Drexel Avenue
13. Residence at 715 West Goodman Avenue
14. Residence at 429 South La Grange Road
15. Residence at 21 South Madison Avenue
16. Residence at 423 South Madison Avenue
17. Residence at 540 South Park Road
18. Residence at 421 South Spring Avenue
19. Residence at 338 South Sunset Avenue
20. Residence at 424 South Sunset Avenue
21. Residence at 109 South Waiola Avenue
22. Residence at 200 South Waiola Avenue
23. Residence at 301 South Waiola Avenue
24. Residence at 344 South Sixth Avenue
25. Residence at 230 South Seventh Avenue
26. S.M.B Hunt House, 345 South Seventh Avenue
27. Residence at 108 South Eighth Avenue



