

Memorandum No. 2

**Preliminary Community-Wide
and
BNSF Railroad Corridor
Concept Plans**



VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
and
BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR PLAN



DRAFT

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I. INTRODUCTION

This memorandum presents preliminary Goals and Objectives and Concept Plans for the Village of La Grange Comprehensive Plan. It is the second memorandum prepared to help create community understanding and dialogue regarding the ways in which the Village can address land use and development opportunities and concerns. It is important to bear in mind that the Comprehensive Plan is long-range, looking over the next 10 to 15 years, to establish a road map for the overall direction and focus of community initiatives.

The preliminary Concept Plans address the built-up portions, isolated vacant areas and redevelopment-prone areas within the Village. At this point in the planning process, alternatives are somewhat general, and seek to illustrate different approaches to the major issues regarding improvement and development within the Village. The Goals and Objectives provide general guidance, while the Concept Plans provide more detail regarding planning and development options and recommendations. More detailed recommendations and strategies addressing implementation of many of the ideas included in the concepts will be addressed in subsequent steps of Plan development.

The Concept Plans build upon previous planning and development initiatives of the Village, incorporating many of the citizen ideas, comments and suggestions that have emerged during the course of the planning process. These ideas are transformed into potential policies and physical plans for controlled growth, improvement and development. They also include several ideas and suggestions yet to be discussed as part of the planning process.

The purpose of this memorandum is to assist the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee in reviewing and evaluating overall growth and development alternatives, and in selecting those alternatives which appear most suitable and appropriate for the Village of La Grange.

A. BASIS FOR THE CONCEPT PLANS

The alternative Concept Plans are based on all of the work activities completed thus far, including the substantial public input received during the first phase of process. They are also based on the Preliminary Goals and Objectives that are included in this memorandum. Even though a diversity of opinion may still exist regarding many aspects of the community, these "base line" Goals and Objectives are substantially consistent with community input to date, and provide a basis for continuing dialogue.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEMORANDUM

This memorandum is divided into several parts as described below:

- ***Transit Supportive Development Principles and Precedents*** – Because a major focus of the Plan is on the future of the BNSF Railroad Corridor, this part explores transit supportive land use and development principles that have been successfully used in other areas, and that are appropriate for La Grange. It also provides imagery of relevant existing examples of elements of transit supportive development which may have applicability in La Grange. It is intended to inform the reader of transit oriented development (TOD) concepts, and their possible applicability to La Grange.
- ***Preliminary Planning Goals and Objectives*** – These preliminary goals and objectives build upon the Village's existing plans and programs, and the extensive community participation in the first phase of the planning process.
- ***Preliminary Community-Wide Land Use and Transportation Concept*** – While La Grange is a mature community with stable land use patterns overall, there are a number of land use, development and transportation issues the Plan should explore. The analysis includes several key community areas for which direction from the Steering Committee on land use and development possibilities is sought.
- ***BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan*** – This part introduces alternatives for redevelopment and conservation in the Downtown and West End Business Districts. It covers several significant elements, including: potential redevelopment areas; potential conservation areas; off-street parking supply and demand implications; a transit and pedestrian access framework; and an urban design framework.
- ***Observations*** – In this final part, an overview analysis of the concepts is provided, offering the Steering Committee insights on directions the Village should consider in preparing the complete draft Plan. Obviously, while the Committee should benefit from the consulting team's preliminary preferences, it is essential that the Steering Committee arrive at its own conclusions.

C. NEXT STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

It should be emphasized that all of the observations and recommendations included in this report are *preliminary*. They are intended to provide the basis for dialogue and discussion by the Steering Committee and the community. All of these ideas are subject to refinement and modification during the next phase of the planning process.

The Steering Committee should review the concept alternatives and be prepared to discuss and reach consensus on a preferred concept for both the BNSF Railroad Corridor and the community as a whole. Community participation will be actively sought in this important step of Comprehensive Plan development. After consensus has been reached by the Steering Committee on preferred land use concepts, a complete draft version of the Comprehensive Plan will be prepared.

II. TRANSIT SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRECEDENTS

The principles of transit supportive development do not “fall far from the tree” in relation to planning and development principles the Village already exercises as part of its Downtown planning program. It is important however, that the special needs of transit facility development, transit users and multimodal connections be given special attention in the BNSF Railroad Corridor setting. Transit supportive planning principles can be organized around the three dimensions, or “3D’s” of transit oriented development (TOD). The level to which these principles apply varies from station to station, and from community to community. However, they provide a means for the Village to evaluate and judge the appropriateness of private and public investments in the future. The “3D’s” include: **Density**, **Design** and **Diversity**.

Density

Nationally, a 10% increase in density has been shown to correspond to a 5% increase in transit boardings. Doubling density can reduce vehicle demand by as much as 20%. In La Grange, pertinent principles 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 neighborhoods.
- When properly designed, private development projects can overcome the negative stereotypes of the appearance and massing of structures suggested by higher density.
- Balance higher densities with publicly accessible open spaces and plazas to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Design

Design is a critical element to successful transit supportive land use and development. Key principles particularly applicable in La Grange include:

- Maintain a pedestrian and bicycle orientation.
- Reduce off-street parking standards in areas well served by transit.
- Provide parking in locations that encourage use of commercial businesses and maintain a pedestrian environment.
- Street hierarchy should be addressed with a focus on pedestrian needs, rather than on typical vehicle capacity considerations.
- Consider inter-modal transit facilities for transferring passengers, including sensitive design of facilities, access, and safety. These facilities include bus stops, bike storage areas, “kiss and ride” lanes and commuter parking facilities.

- TOD area amenities, services and facilities which cater to the commuter/pedestrian should be considered.
- 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.

Diversity

Diversity is applicable to the mix of land uses within a transit area. The principles advocate that the presence of diverse, but mutually reinforcing, land uses creates desirable living, working and recreational environments. In La Grange, consideration should be given to the following:

- Mixed use development is highly desirable.
- Mixed uses may not always be accommodated within one building, but can be reflected in the transit station area as a whole.
- Public facility placement within TOD areas is crucial to creating 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.

Many of these principles are addressed in more detail as part of the Goals and Objectives and Concept Plans in the following sections of this memorandum.

A variety of successful transit supportive developments have emerged throughout the Chicago region and in other locations in the country. While La Grange is a leader among them, it is can be instructive to examine other efforts to continue to reinforce a high quality TOD environment. On the pages that follow, selected elements of mixed use development, "landmark" civic structures, entertainment facilities, streetscape and civic plazas, entry and wayfinding signage, transit facilities and other features are compiled to illustrate ideas that might be deemed pertinent to the Village of La Grange.

III. PRELIMINARY PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Village of La Grange has long been engaged in the processes of comprehensive and strategic community planning. The Village has been guided in recent years by a Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1970 and a Downtown Plan adopted in 1986. Annually, the Village conducts a strategic planning session, develops a community-wide capital improvement program (CIP), and makes plans for effective service delivery. The Village has successfully implemented a variety of plans and programs.

The Comprehensive Plan update provides the Village an opportunity build upon the efforts of successful community planning activities to date, and to respond to new challenges and ideas for the future of the Village. The Planning Goals and Objectives are based upon first phase activities including community input, Steering Committee direction and the observations of the consulting team, as summarized in Memorandum No. 1 (December 2003).

The Preliminary Planning Goals and Objectives presented below are intended to provide land use 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 for the future of La Grange, as well as those unique conditions of the BNSF Railroad Corridor. The maps, policies and recommendations to be developed during the planning process will respond directly to these Goals and Objectives. Additional recommendations and actions in support of the Plan will be developed as part of the next steps of the process.

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, representing an end to be sought.
- **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 AND DEVELOPMENT

1. ***Seek to provide high quality and diverse housing options for Village residents.***
 - a. Support the provision of housing of varying types, sizes and price points, to effectively serve the housing needs of all segments of the current and future La Grange population, including “empty nesters” and senior citizens.
 - b. Accommodate reasonable population growth within the Village with new “infill” housing development where appropriate.
 - c. Encourage the maintenance of the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Highlands area north of 55th Street and east of Willow Springs Road as a single family residential neighborhood.

2. ***Ensure the compatibility of new housing with existing residential neighborhoods.***
 - a. Consider adjustment, as appropriate, to basic zoning standards for residential redevelopment within the La Grange Historic District to sustain the unique traditional character of the area.
 - b. Consider utilizing site plan review procedures for new multi-family housing (in locations not currently subject to site plan review) to ensure compatibility with adjacent single family residential areas.

3. ***Maintain and strengthen the Village’s existing commercial areas.***
 - a. Accommodate new commercial development of varying scale where compatible with surrounding uses within the BNSF Railroad Corridor and along South La Grange Road, including “large-format” retailing where feasible.
 - b. Encourage the upgrading and/or replacement obsolete retail and office space where feasible.
 - c. Support efforts to accommodate desirable retail and office uses within the Village that may be displaced as redevelopment occurs.

4. ***Encourage transit supportive redevelopment within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.***
 - a. Determine and implement appropriate height limits to ensure compatible redevelopment within the Corridor area.
 - b. Accommodate additional retail, service, office and multi-family uses in the Corridor, in particular within the West End Business District.
 - c. 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.
 - d. Encourage the development of housing on upper stories of mixed use buildings within the Corridor.

5. ***Maintain and strengthen areas of the IHB Railroad Industrial Corridor that remain viable.***
 - a. Continue to enforce maintenance code requirements for industrial buildings and sites.
 - b. Continue to enforce zoning, nuisance and performance standards to minimize impacts on nearby residential properties from industrial operations.
 - c. Encourage the redevelopment of obsolete and/or physically deteriorated industrial buildings as appropriate.

- d. Consider implementation of a façade improvement program similar to that currently utilized in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, to facilitate industrial facility upgrades.
- e. Undertake infrastructure upgrades, as appropriate, to support the continuing viability of stable areas of the Industrial Corridor.
- f. Encourage the timely remediation of environmental hazards within the Industrial Corridor, should any be identified in the future.

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

- a. As appropriate, cooperate with the Park and School Districts in the improvement and enhancement of existing Park and School District facilities.
- b. Support the expansion of open space and recreational amenities contiguous to existing parks and schools, and in underserved areas of the Village, as opportunities arise.
- c. Encourage and cooperate with the Park District to create a publicly accessible open space within the BNSF Railroad Corridor for community events.
- d. Encourage and cooperate with the Park District to create easily accessible and safe location(s) for youth-oriented activities within the Corridor.
- e. Encourage the maintenance of the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Country Club as a valuable recreational amenity for the Village.

B. TRANSPORTATION

1. *Maintain and enhance existing public transportation facilities and services.*

- a. Pursue opportunities to improve passenger amenities at Metra station platforms.
- b. Be mindful of the potential implications of Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) on the IHB Railroad on redevelopment decisions in the vicinity of the proposed future transfer station.
- c. Seek increased Pace bus service within and through the Village in conjunction with Pace officials, as opportunities arise.
- d. Explore Pace bus routing improvements to more completely serve the BNSF Railroad Corridor and both Metra stations.
- e. As an alternative to Pace Bus service improvements in the Downtown, study the feasibility of a shuttle service between the Central Business District and West End Business District during peak activity periods.
- f. Consider, when appropriate, the feasibility of providing additional commuter parking capacity in the BNSF Railroad Corridor through shared parking agreements with private property owners.

2. *Improve traffic flow and safety throughout the Village, and in particular in the BNSF Railroad Corridor.*

- a. Work with railroad and transportation officials to implement improvements that address increased pedestrian activity in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, including increased pedestrian crossings of the BNSF Railroad.
- b. 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.

- c. Consider limited street closures of north-south local streets at Burlington and Hillgrove Avenues, to protect nearby residential neighborhoods from Corridor-generated traffic, on a case-by-case basis as redevelopment occurs.
- d. Require traffic impact analysis of proposed redevelopment to minimize potential impacts, if any, on nearby residential neighborhoods.
- e. Pursue the acquisition of additional right-of-way, where appropriate, to improve traffic flow and safety.

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

- a. Actively monitor, manage and address the on-street and off-street parking needs within the BNSF Railroad Corridor to ensure adequate and conveniently located parking to serve all current and future land uses.
- b. Consider creative solutions for providing increased public and commuter parking within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- c. Consider ways to accommodate Metra's desire for an additional 200 to 250 total commuter parking spaces to serve both La Grange stations by 2030.
- d. Coordinate with School District 204 to seek shared solutions to increasing parking demands in the vicinity of the Lyons Township High School North Campus.
- e. Improve wayfinding signage throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor to aid pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in locating and accessing public parking lots.
- f. 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.

4. *Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience throughout the Village.*

- a. Improve pedestrian comfort, safety, and convenience through sidewalk improvements throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor, in particular to and between both Metra stations.
- b. Improve bicycle travel throughout the Village, through a consistent system of striped and signed bicycle routes accessing major destinations such as the BNSF Railroad Corridor, schools and parks.
- c. Improve wayfinding throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor to assist in locating and accessing public parking lots.
- d. Seek to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major thoroughfares and at busy intersections, in particular near schools, parks and commercial areas.
- e. Complete the sidewalk network throughout the Village.
- f. Work with neighboring communities and agencies to create pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby trails and recreational amenities.
- g. Reduce pedestrian barriers at the IHB Railroad through improvements to sidewalks at and near at-grade crossings.

C. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

- a. 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.

- b. Cooperate with the Library District to ensure that a new or expanded library is ideally located and designed within or near the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- c. Cooperate with the Rich Port YMCA to ensure that any facility upgrade plans result in the creation of an appropriate “gateway” to downtown La Grange.
- d. 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.
- e. Encourage all new community facilities to be located and designed as key “landmark” structures within the community.

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

- a. Working with the La Grange Business Association and local arts organizations, seek to attract high quality arts and cultural uses to the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- b. Explore options for maintaining the long-term viability of the La Grange Theatre, in conjunction with the property owner.
- c. Working with the La Grange Business Association and private interests, encourage the establishment of a live theatre venue in the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

3. *Protect and enhance existing historic and natural resources.*

- a. 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.
- b. Implement appropriate regulations and practices to ensure the protection of existing trees during redevelopment within the Village.
- c. Encourage utilities to undertake appropriate maintenance practices to protect and enhance existing trees within public rights-of-way and open spaces within the Village.

D. URBAN DESIGN

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

- a. Expand and enhance a consistent streetscape system throughout the Corridor.
- b. Establish and implement consistent “gateway” treatments and wayfinding signage throughout the Corridor.
- c. Continue the facade improvement program throughout the entire BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- d. Strengthen existing design standards addressing architectural design, signage, parking lots, site improvements and landscaping.
- e. Seek to maintain the “street wall” in commercial and mixed use areas to enhance the pedestrian experience.

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

- a. Establish and implement a consistent streetscape treatment within neighborhood commercial areas.
- b. Establish and implement consistent “gateway” treatments at key entries into the Village.

- c. Establish a design review process for neighborhood commercial areas, with appropriate standards addressing architectural design, signage, parking lot treatments, site improvements and landscaping.
- d. Minimize the visual impact of surface parking areas through perimeter and interior landscaping, and placement of lots behind or beside buildings.
- e. Implement a coordinated landscaping program, where feasible, along arterial streets, especially where side and rear property lines create an inconsistent appearance.
- f. Bury overhead utility lines, where feasible, as upgrades are undertaken at key traffic routes.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. *Continue economic development efforts within the Village, in particular within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.*

- a. Continue to enhance the commercial tax base, to reduce the tax burden on residential property owners over time.
- b. Upon dissolution of the TIF, seek alternative means by which to financially leverage desired improvement projects, within the Corridor and the Village as a whole.
- c. Support, and assist as appropriate, small and locally-oriented retailers as the Corridor continues to evolve.
- d. Promote the use and construction of technology infrastructure to support economic development efforts.
- e. Continue to provide diverse employment opportunities within the Village.

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

- a. Continue “theme”-based marketing efforts, incorporating marketing of neighborhood commercial areas within the Village, as appropriate.
- b. Work with the business community to maintain and develop regional patronage within the BNSF Railroad Corridor through expansion of the use mix and targeted marketing efforts.
- c. “Showcase” La Grange at public locations throughout the community, including both Metra stations, including providing Corridor maps and information about upcoming community events, etc.
- d. Continue to work with and support the LGBA in its business development efforts to coordinate advertising, business hours, and other issues among all local businesses.

F. ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

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

- a. Establish appropriate allowable use, bulk and density requirements in areas likely to experience redevelopment pressure, to ensure that redevelopment is consistent with the Village’s expectations.

- b. Provide the fiscal resources to ensure adequate building code enforcement throughout the Village.
- c. Review zoning and other development regulations for Village-wide consistency with the use, bulk, area, off-street parking and other recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

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

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

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

- a. Seek to address and mitigate traffic delays and safety concerns at at-grade railroad crossings within the Village.
- b. 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. COMMUNITY-WIDE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT

This section presents a community-wide land use concept for the Village of La Grange. Based upon an analysis of existing land use patterns, *Figure 1: Preliminary Community-Wide Land Use Concept* illustrates preliminary land use recommendations for the La Grange planning area. Proposed land use classifications are described, followed by a description of the key features of the preliminary land use concept. Six areas requiring particular attention and discussion are then highlighted. This part of the memorandum concludes with a preliminary transportation framework.

A. PRELIMINARY LAND USE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In association with the development of the community-wide concept, a refined land use classification system is recommended. For the Plan to be effective, this classification system must have clear understanding in the community. This section briefly defines the land use categories that have been used in the land use concept.

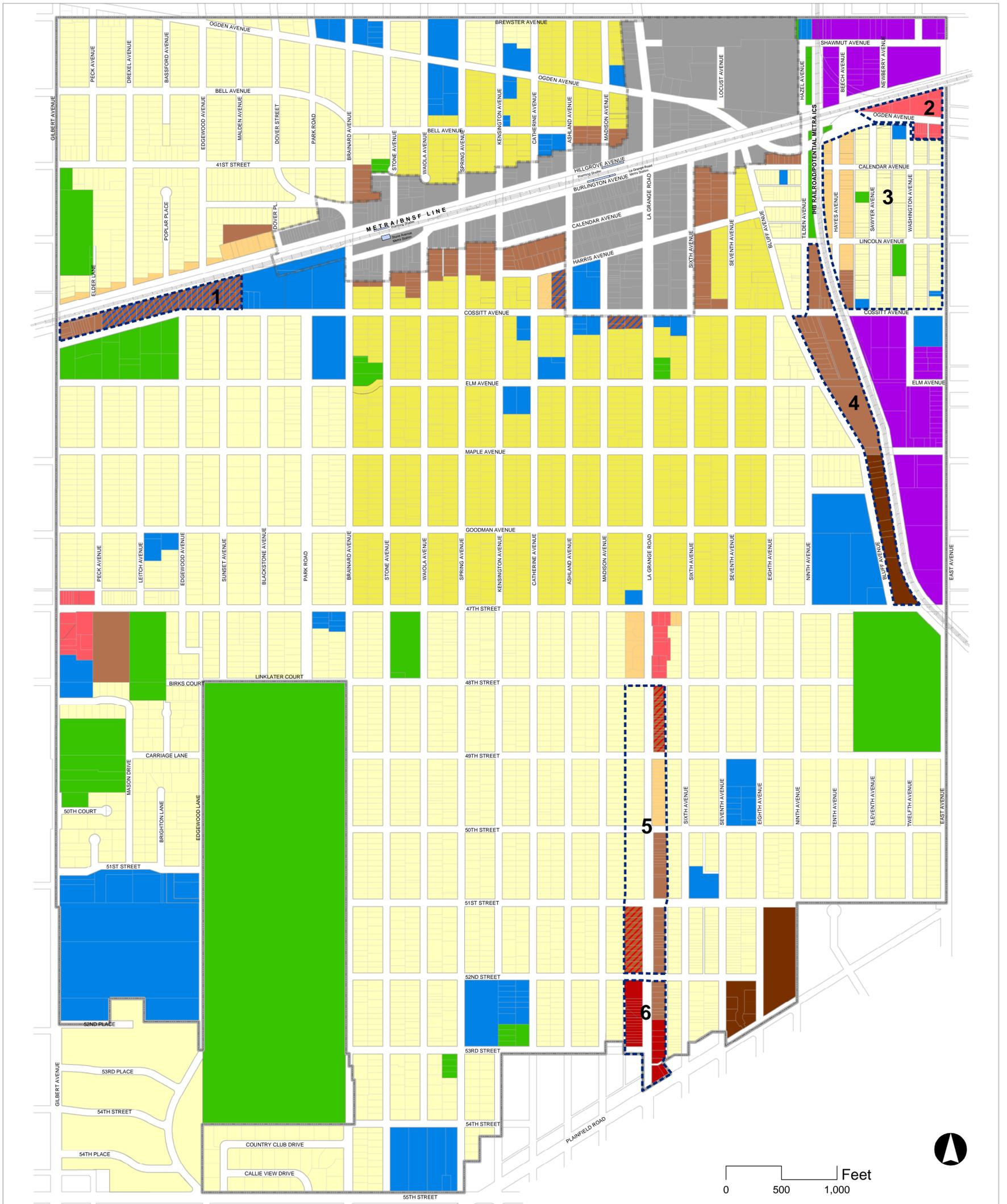
Residential

- *Contemporary Single Family Residential* - residential areas which include single family detached dwellings at all densities. Areas classified as contemporary include the more recently developed areas outside the Village's historic district.
- *Traditional Single Family Residential* - residential areas which include single family detached dwellings at all densities. Areas classified as traditional 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, generally at a density of approximately 15 dwelling units per acre.
- *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.

Figure 1

FIGURE 1

PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY-WIDE
LAND USE CONCEPT



LEGEND

Contemporary Single Family Residential	Two-Family Residential	Community Commercial	Light Industrial	Village Limits
Traditional Single Family Residential	Medium Density Residential	Neighborhood Commercial	Public and Institutional	see BNSF Railroad Corridor Land Use Plan
High Density Residential	Multi-Family or Institutional	Multi-Family or Commercial	Open Space and Recreation	



Commercial

- *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 street corridors and caters to community neighborhoods as well as passersby from outside the Village.
- *Central Business District 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.
- *Central Business District 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. 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).

Employment

- *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.

Public and Quasi-Public

- *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.

B. PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY-WIDE LAND USE CONCEPT

In general, the community-wide land use concept builds upon the existing land use and development patterns in La Grange. It strives to promote a compatible arrangement of uses which makes efficient use of land resources and community facilities and services.

A brief description of the preliminary recommended community-wide land use concept is provided below.

Residential Land Use

Single family residential land uses largely reflect existing conditions, incorporating a distinction between traditional residential areas and contemporary residential areas for purposes of potential planning policy distinctions. Given the recent increase in teardown activity within the Village, and the inevitability of this redevelopment eventually impacting older housing areas, the Steering Committee and community should consider whether there are recurring design characteristics of housing in the traditional residential area that are highly valued. If so, a few minor adjustments to current development regulations, such as the allowable placement of garages and limitations on curb cut width, could be undertaken to ensure that new housing developed within more traditional neighborhoods reflects the established neighborhood character in these areas.

Multi-family residential uses 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. These areas are discussed under special land use areas of consideration, below. Multi-family residential areas within the BNSF Railroad Corridor are discussed in the next section of this memorandum.

The land use concept also clearly indicates the Village's desire to see single family residential uses continue within the adjacent area of the unincorporated La Grange Highlands.

Commercial Land Use

Commercial land uses outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor are 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. Commercial land uses within the BNSF Railroad Corridor are discussed in detail in the following part of this memorandum, and two key commercial areas are discussed below.

Light Industrial Land Use

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. As is discussed below, it is proposed that industrial uses in other areas be relocated and/or phased out over time.

Community Facilities and Open Space

Areas designated within the land use concept 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. A new linear open space is suggested adjacent to the IHB Railroad between Lincoln and Shawmut Avenues to convert small vacant parcels of land or older structures that are in marginal condition into a greenway. Due to the size and proportion of these properties, development or redevelopment may be difficult; instead, they offer an opportunity to create an attractive physical buffer between the IHB Railroad and adjacent neighborhood areas.

The land use concept 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. The Country Club is currently unincorporated. The Village should continue dialogue with the Country Club regarding annexation possibilities in the future.

C. COMMUNITY AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL LAND USE CONSIDERATION

Although La Grange is a stable, high quality community, there are several locations in the Village where land use patterns may be subject to change in the future, for a variety of reasons. The Comprehensive Plan should provide clear guidance and direction regarding community preferences for these areas. *Figure 1* highlights six areas for special Steering Committee and community consideration. Each of these areas is described below, along with preliminary recommendations for each area.

Area 1

- *Issues*

This area contains properties that back up directly to the BNSF Railroad, and currently includes a mixture of vacant parcels, isolated multi-family and institutional uses, and parking lots. It is located adjacent to the Lyons Township High School (LTHS) North Campus. The area could be more intensively developed for multi-family residential and/or institutional use, and could also possibly provide a location for additional off-street parking to serve the LTHS North Campus. Should the opportunity arise, the Village should also encourage the Park District to acquire property in this area for additional Park District open space or facilities.

- *Preliminary Recommendation*

A combination of: institutional expansion at the east end, including parking and/or facilities to serve the LTHS North Campus; contiguous multi-family residential development at the west end; and, possibly a new neighborhood-oriented Park District open space.

Area 2

- *Issues*

This area is occupied by an industrial facility, a convenience store / gas station and vacant parcels south of Ogden Avenue. It is a very visible “gateway” location for the Village, serving as the easternmost entry point into the Village along Ogden Avenue. It sustains a number of curb cuts along Ogden Avenue, and the existing industrial facility may not be ideally located for easy truck access.
- *Preliminary Recommendation*

Vacant parcels are likely to redevelop with auto-oriented commercial uses, due to high traffic volumes along Ogden Avenue. Care should be taken to ensure that new development is attractive and of high quality, and that adequate space is set aside to accommodate a community gateway feature as redevelopment occurs.

Area 3

- *Issues*

This neighborhood is predominantly a mixture of smaller single family and two-family properties of varying ages. It also contains two Park District facilities, two small churches and several scattered vacant parcels and structures. Small and deteriorated industrial properties exist between the IHB Railroad and Hayes Avenue between Lincoln and Calendar Avenues. Zoning within the area currently allows for two-family residential development; because of minimum lot frontage requirements within the Village code, conversion to two-family uses in some areas of the neighborhood is not possible without parcel consolidation.
- *Preliminary Recommendation*

As indicated in *Figure 1*, isolated industrial and vacant properties should be converted to either open space or multi-family residential use. Within the remainder of the neighborhood, it may be beneficial to maintain some areas for smaller scale single family residential use (due to smaller lot sizes) while allowing other areas to continue to convert to two-family use. For example, as a buffer between the IHB Railroad and single family homes to the east, properties along Hayes Avenue might remain zoned for two-family conversion. Properties to the east might be rezoned to maintain a single family neighborhood character. More careful review would be required to specifically determine where single family residential uses might be encouraged to remain through a zoning amendment process, should this potential strategy receive support from the Steering Committee and community.

Area 4

- *Issues*

Properties that are located east of Bluff Avenue and west of the IHB Railroad, extending from Cossitt Avenue on the north to 47th Street on the south, are currently a mixture of industrial businesses, multi-family apartment buildings, single family residential and vacant land. Also included within this area are the industrial parcels between Tilden Avenue and the IHB Railroad, north from Cossitt Avenue to Lincoln Avenue. Existing industrial properties vary in condition and age, but their presence in

this location is a destabilizing influence on adjacent residential neighborhoods to the west. "Brownfield" issues (potentially contaminated sites) may exist on some of the existing industrial properties.

- *Preliminary Recommendation*

Over the long term, industrial activity in this area should be discontinued, with viable businesses relocated to one of the two designated business park areas east of the IHB Railroad. Underutilized public rights-of-way should be vacated, and larger redevelopment parcels should be consolidated for coordinated multi-family redevelopment that will provide an effective buffer against the IHB Railroad.

Area 5

- *Issues*

This area consists of parcels fronting onto South La Grange Road between 48th and 52nd Streets. The area contains a mixture of single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial and quasi-public uses. Building conditions vary, and the commercial structures at the north end of the area are becoming physically obsolete.

- *Preliminary Recommendation*

It is recommended that single family and multi-family uses within the area remain. Should redevelopment opportunities arise within the northern commercial block (east side of La Grange Road) and the southern commercial block (west side of La Grange Road), either commercial or multi-family redevelopment should be considered. However, it would be desirable to require the coordinated redevelopment of the entire block frontage, rather than allowing "piecemeal" redevelopment of these blocks, due to the challenge of redeveloping such shallow parcels and providing adequate off-street parking in an attractive and coordinated manner.

Area 6

- *Issues*

This area currently includes a mixture of auto-oriented commercial and office properties, and multi-family and single family residential properties. Building and site improvements vary in age and condition. It is a very visible "gateway" location for the Village, serving as the southernmost entry point into the Village along La Grange Road.

- *Preliminary Recommendation*

The area should be redeveloped, as opportunities arise, primarily with auto-oriented commercial uses, with the exception of parcels east of La Grange Road where newer multi-family properties exist. Care should be taken to ensure that new development is attractive and of high quality, and that adequate space is set aside to accommodate a community gateway feature as redevelopment occurs.

D. PRELIMINARY TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK

La Grange is served by a number transportation modes. The Village's street network, while well developed, could benefit from a number of operational and localized roadway adjustments. In addition, the Plan should recognize and support regional efforts in developing a bicycle plan that includes bike route alignment through the Village. Pedestrian access issues and public transit facilities and services (Metra and Pace) in the Village are primarily discussed as part of the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan.

Figure 2: Preliminary Transportation Framework indicates the network of arterial and collector streets within and at the perimeter of the Village. These are the streets that "collect" and funnel traffic from local streets within residential neighborhoods onto major thoroughfares such as La Grange Road, Ogden Avenue and roadways at the perimeter of the Village. The potential for limited street closures within the BNSF Railroad Corridor as redevelopment occurs is discussed in the Subarea Plan.

A key element of the arterial network is the confluence of highly traveled roadways and rail lines that occurs at and near the intersection of East Avenue and 47th Street, where two at-grade crossings of the IHB Railroad exist. The Village should work with neighboring communities and regional agencies to address potential signalization improvements, as appropriate. The Village should also pursue opportunities created by the new CREATE initiative to assess the feasibility of more significant improvements, potentially including grade separation (the CREATE initiative is discussed in Memorandum No. 1).

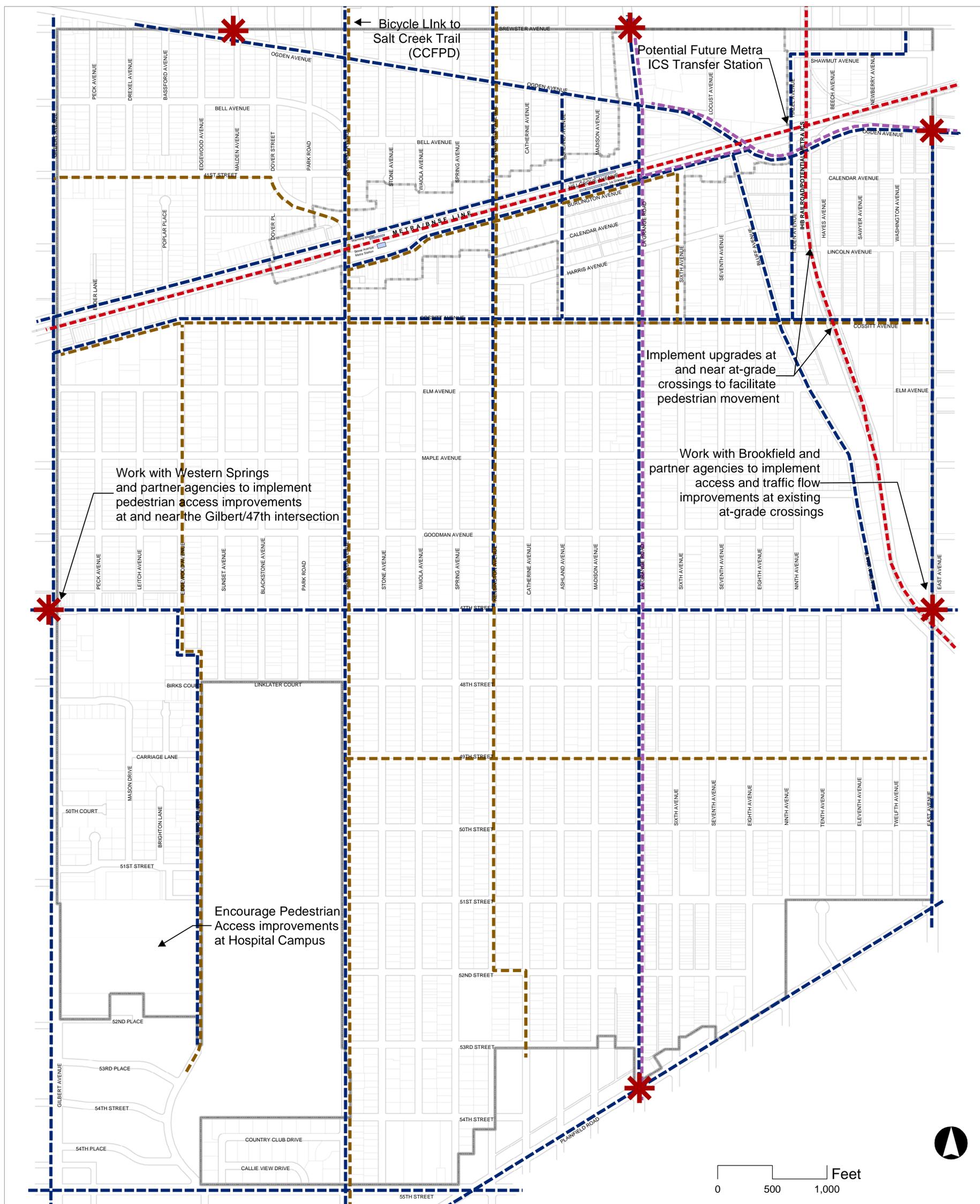
Figure 2 also indicates proposed future bike routes throughout the Village, located so as to facilitate safe bicycle movement between destinations such as the BNSF Railroad Corridor, Metra stations, parks and schools. These routes would be on-street, ideally within a dedicated and striped bike lane, and augmented by signage. Cooperation with partner agencies and neighboring communities to facilitate routes within the Village and connections to nearby recreations destinations such as the Salt Creek Bike Trail will be necessary.

Pedestrian movement throughout the Village is effective in most areas. However, isolated locations where improvements to the pedestrian movement network are merited do exist. Some of these are discussed within the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan. Several other specific areas in need to sidewalk improvements were identified in Memorandum No. 1, along with the need to improve pedestrian comfort and safety at the Gilbert Avenue / 47th Street intersection, and at 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.

As discussed in some detail in Memorandum No. 1, another potential impact upon the transportation network within the Village is Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS), which might eventually utilize the IHB Railroad right-of-way to provide commuter rail service. Implementation of this new regional public transit service, should it come to pass, 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 potential time horizon for the development of these facilities is long – perhaps as

Figure 2

PRELIMINARY TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK



LEGEND

-  Arterial-Collector Network
-  Potential Future Bike Route (Signed, On-Street)
-  Commuter Rail Routes (Existing and Proposed)
-  Pace Bus Routes
-  Community Gateway Identity Location
-  Village Limits
-  BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary

NOTE: Future Bike Route alignments are based upon recommended routes included in the 1996 "West Central Bikeway Plan" developed by the West Central Municipal Conference.



long as twenty years. 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 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.

V. BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR SUBAREA PLAN

The Village of La Grange, its business community, civic and institutional partners, and the community as a whole, have worked hard to realize the success of Downtown La Grange. This planning effort is intended to focus on strengthening and sustaining the Downtown for the long-term, and expending its positive impacts throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor. It will capitalize upon strengths and seek to correct weaknesses.

Concept Plans for the BNSF Railroad Corridor recognize that Downtown La Grange is a mixed use community center, as well as an important regional shopping and entertainment attraction. At this stage in the planning process, the Concept Plans seek to address basic issues of land use type and intensity, and related off-street parking considerations for the Downtown and the West End Business District. As the real estate market continues to place redevelopment pressure on the Corridor, the Plan must clearly define the Village's preferences to allow for the proactive management of change. The following analysis discusses and evaluates key questions in this regard.

A. BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

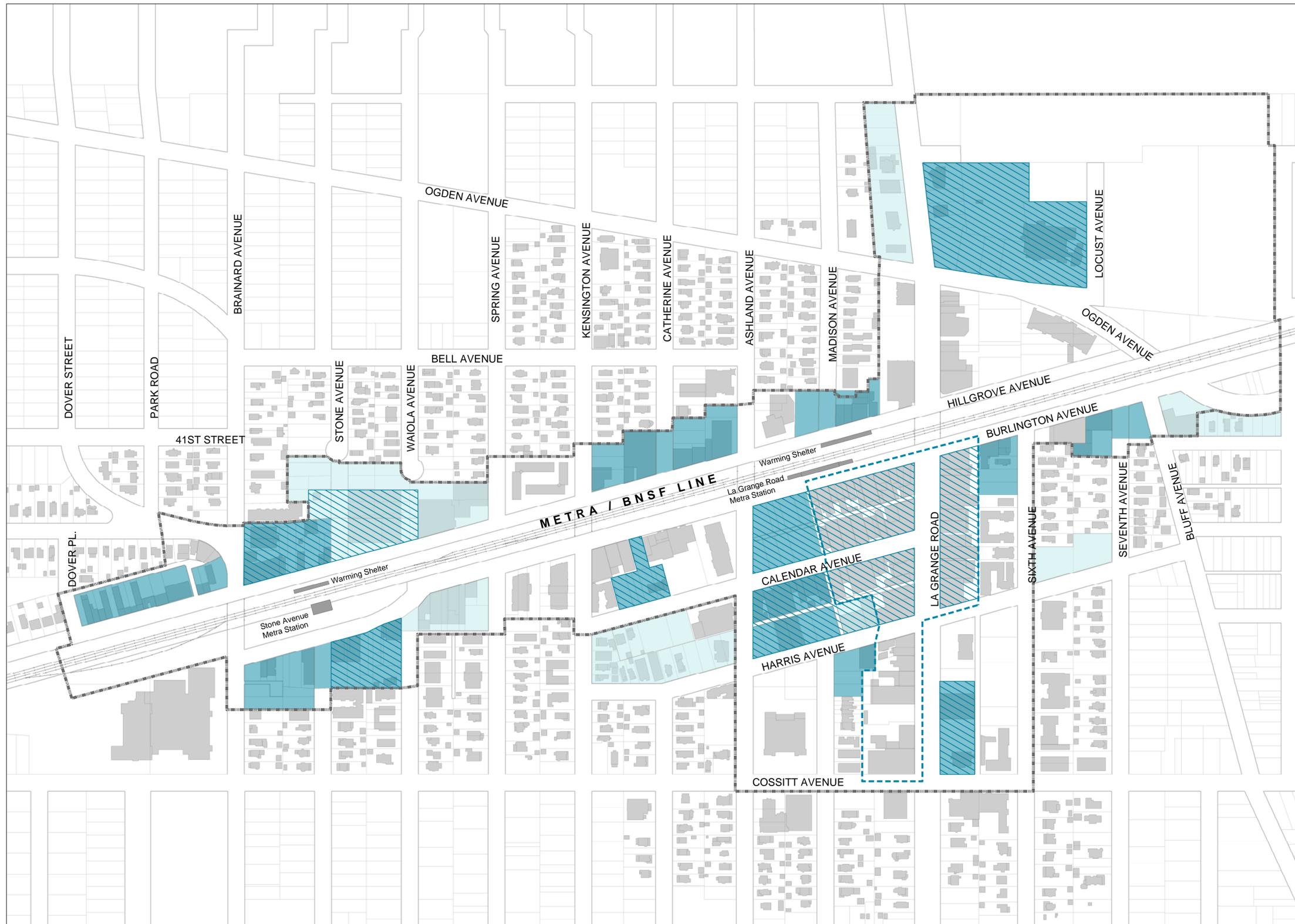
Figure 3: Redevelopment Potential Areas illustrates a number of locations where redevelopment may be possible in the future. While it can be argued that any site may be subject to change, clearly some site may be more vulnerable than others. Sites may be subject to redevelopment for a number of reasons, as viewed from the private real estate investment perspective. This is not to conclude that Village policy should or should not resist change; rather, it provides an understanding of how the market might behave over the course of the Plan's time frame, should current market trends continue. It is also not expected that changes will be proposed in all of these locations over the time frame of the Plan.

Reasons for which property might be subject to redevelopment include underutilization, such as an off-street parking lot or single story building in an area which can be intensified. 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.

Another feature displayed in *Figure 3* is the locations in the Downtown and West End Business District where building heights *might* exceed three stories in height. Current zoning regulations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor limit allowable building height to three stories or 45 feet, with increased height allowable only with additional scrutiny and Village approval through a planned development process. Currently the tallest structures in the Downtown include the condominiums at 141 North La Grange Road (ten stories), Beacon Place (seven stories) and Spring Avenue Station (five stories). Several other condominium and apartment buildings within and at the edges of the Corridor are four stories in height. Potential locations identified for structures taller than

Figure 3

FIGURE 3
REDEVELOPMENT
POTENTIAL AREAS



-  Potential for limited infill within this area
-  Potential for increased height
-  Short-Range Redevelopment Potential
-  Long-Range Redevelopment Potential
-  BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary

0 250 500 1,000 Feet



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three stories in *Figure 3* were based on the principle that sites which do not directly adjoin single family detached residential areas could potentially accommodate structures of increased height, provided that they are sensitively sited and designed. The Plan need not eventually support the possibility of increased height in any or all of these locations. However, these are locations where the development community might come forward to make a compelling case for increased building height.

Clearly, under these assumptions, there is a substantial amount of redevelopment investment potential within both the Downtown and West End Business District in the coming years. Key questions include: 1) does the Village desire this level of physical change; 2) what uses might occupy these areas; and 3) how will off-street parking needs be accommodated within them, should change occur?

B. CURRENT AND FUTURE PARKING CONDITIONS – A KEY CONSIDERATION

Existing Conditions

To begin to understand the potential impacts of redevelopment policies on off-street parking in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, *Figure 4: Existing Off-Street Parking Supply* illustrates the Corridor divided into four different subareas. The areas define current distinct geographic parking service areas. Individuals parked in one area are not likely to walk to another due to distance, physical barriers or other “convenience” related factors; they are likely to drive from one area to another.

The off-street parking areas illustrated in *Figure 4* include the sites which were previously identified as potentially subject to redevelopment in *Figure 3*. As identified from preliminary field counts and existing parking study counts, the approximate total off-street parking within each area is:

West End	428 spaces
Hillgrove	146 spaces
Downtown	700 spaces
Ogden North	439 spaces

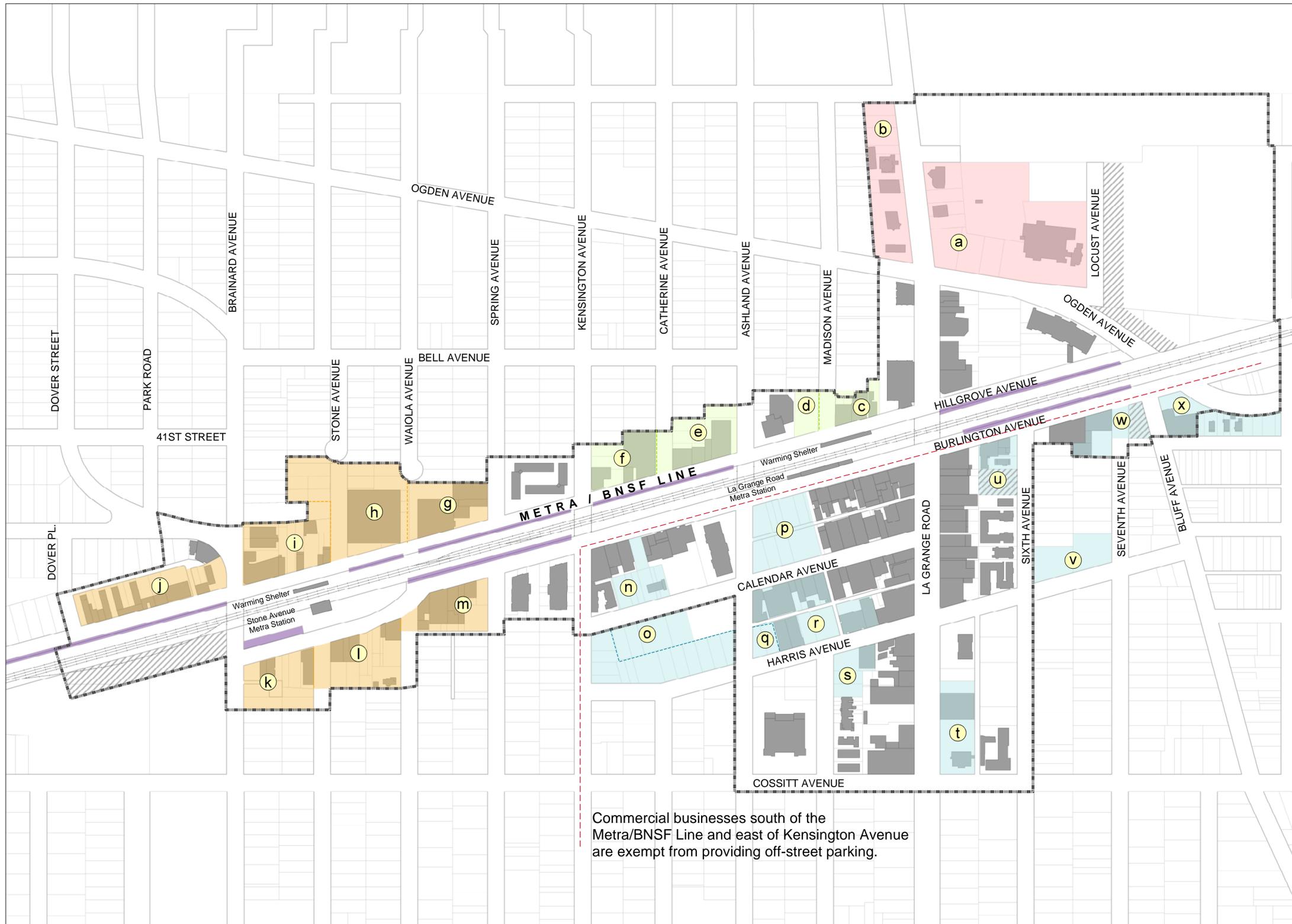
These figures include both publicly accessible *municipal* parking spaces currently provided by the Village, primarily within the Downtown area, and private parking spaces throughout the Corridor. For the most part, all publicly accessible and most private off-street parking is well utilized. Redevelopment plans should take into account replacement of any publicly accessible parking lost due to displacement, as shoppers at most existing businesses throughout the Downtown area rely upon it.

Future Conditions

Within the Downtown and Ogden North areas, if redevelopment were to occur on *every* site identified as having redevelopment potential (an unlikely possibility, as later discussed), upwards of 600 existing publicly accessible *municipal* parking spaces would be displaced. This would include an additional 150 permit spaces currently used by Metra commuters. Redevelopment should accommodate these displaced spaces either in other Corridor locations or as part of the redevelopment project. Where future

Figure 4

FIGURE 4
EXISTING OFF-STREET
PARKING SUPPLY



Existing Off-Street Parking Totals in Potential Redevelopment Areas

a. 330 *	n. 42
b. 65 *	o. 64
c. 12	p. 187
d. 41	q. 12
e. 49	r. 60
f. 44	s. 58
g. 24 *	t. 72
h. 120 *	u. 29
i. 70 *	v. 98
j. 60 *	w. 54
k. 82 *	x. 24 *
l. 32 *	
m. 40 *	

* HNTB parking estimates. All other counts taken from 2003 CBD Parking Study by Rich & Associates

Summary Tabulation

 Ogden North - 395 Spaces
 Hillgrove - 146 Spaces
 Downtown - 700 Spaces
 West End - 428 Spaces

Metra Commuter Off-Street Parking - 329 Spaces **

Metra Commuter On-Street Parking - 485 Spaces

** 47 Existing Metra Commuter Off-Street Parking Spaces are potentially impacted by redevelopment. (See areas U and W)

BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary

1Foot
13000



redevelopment displaces *private* off-street parking spaces, it can be presumed that new development can provide for its own parking. However, it should be pointed out that this is not currently a requirement in many locations in the Downtown and West End Business District.

The two alternative Concept Plans described below have very different implications, and potential impacts, with regard to the future provision of parking for commercial uses within the West End and Hillgrove areas (in either concept, it is assumed that new residential units would have on-site resident parking). *Concept A* presumes that within the West End and Hillgrove areas, new developments would provide on-site parking to meet parking demands generated by any new use(s) on the site. By contrast, *Concept B* presumes a more transit supportive and traditional model in which some, if not all, of the parking demand generated by new commercial uses would be accommodated in a few centralized, shared parking areas. This pattern would reinforce a pedestrian-oriented, “multiple destination” pattern of use in the area, similar to that of the Downtown core.

It is also important to bear in mind that Metra is interested in accommodating a total of approximately 250 additional off-street parking spaces by the year 2030 to serve one or both Metra stations. As a preferred Concept Plan evolves, consideration of ways to work with Metra to accommodate this demand should also be considered.

C. ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLANS

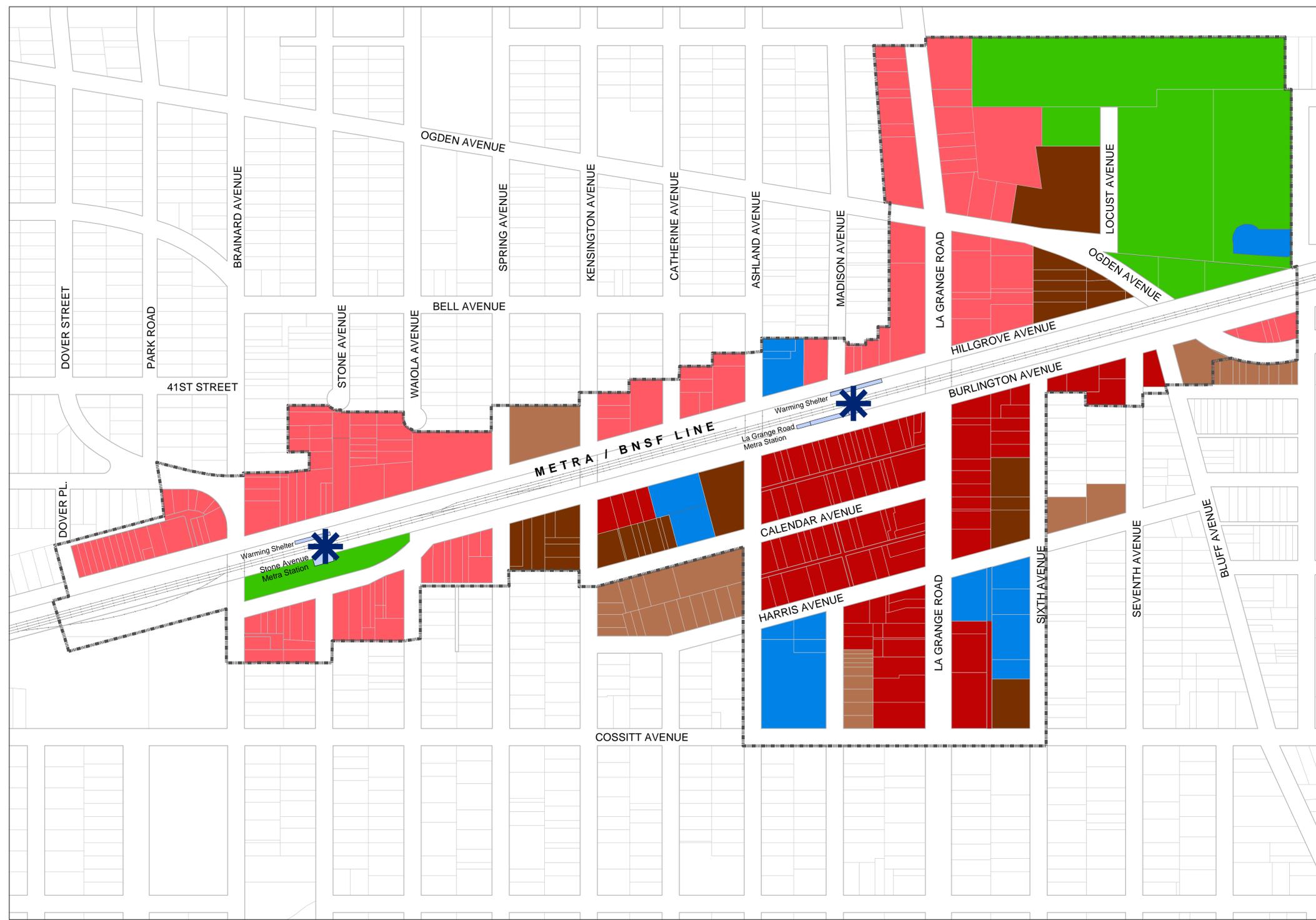
Two alternative Concept Plans for the BNSF Railroad Corridor have been developed. Please note that these concepts utilize the land use classification system described in the previous section of this memorandum. The alternatives are specifically intended to pose distinct options with regard to the land use mix, development intensity and provision of off-street parking within the Corridor. This approach, while in some ways theoretical in nature, will help the Steering Committee and community distill issues that are most important in the Corridor, and the solutions which best meet local needs and desires.

Areas indicated in each concept as “Public and Institutional” uses are generally consistent with current zoning and reflect municipally owned properties within the Corridor. In the final Plan, it will be desirable to accommodate other “landmark” public or quasi-public facilities within the Corridor (including the Rich Port YMCA and potentially a new public library) and perhaps additional public open space(s). However, agency commitments have yet to be made, and thus specific siting recommendations cannot be incorporated into the preliminary concepts at this time.

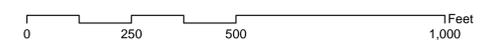
Figure 5: Commercial Corridor Concept A describes a future in which the Downtown core and areas extending north of the core along La Grange Road remain largely unchanged in land use mix and intensity. The West End Business District is envisioned as a less intensely developed, and somewhat auto-oriented, area that operates as an adjunct to the Downtown core. Its physical character would closely reflect the development pattern along La Grange Road north of the railroad.

Figure 5

FIGURE 5
COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
CONCEPT A



- CBD Core Commercial
- CBD Perimeter Commercial
- Public and Institutional
- Open Space and Recreation
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary



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In this concept the West End Business District is a predominantly commercial area. First floor uses would allow for a mix of retail and commercial business types. Although residential uses would be allowed above the first floor, this scenario assumes only single story commercial uses. Private off-street parking would be required to serve individual uses. A portion of this area (currently zoned C4) along Hillgrove Avenue, west of Stone Avenue, requires off-street parking. Yet the remainder of the frontages along both Hillgrove and Burlington Avenues in the West End do not currently require off-street parking. This inconsistency should be resolved. Thus, a major focus of this scenario is to examine the impacts of a possible policy requiring all uses in the area to provide their own off-street parking. Although multi-story buildings could potentially be developed within the area, off-street parking requirements would likely restrict the overall intensity of redevelopment. Several considerations should be noted when assessing this concept:

- A very general, “order of magnitude” calculation regarding the potential redevelopment capacity for this concept (derived from *Figure 5*) envisions a potential for at least 400,000 square feet of new commercial development within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, which would in turn generates a significant need for additional parking spaces dedicated to commercial uses.
- Using similar general calculations regarding the redevelopment capacity of areas envisioned to include residential redevelopment, this concept envisions a potential for approximately 500 new residential dwelling units within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, developed primarily in a condominium format on the upper floors of new mixed use structures in the Downtown Core area, and east of the Downtown core along Ogden Avenue.
- Again, the calculations described above follow rules of thumb for redevelopment potential, and primarily provide a basis for comparison of the two alternative concepts. The magnitude of redevelopment activity reflected in the calculations assumes that *all* redevelopment potential areas undergo change. This is unlikely since 500 new residential units would require 20 to 25 years to be absorbed by the market. Likewise, the retail development could require upwards of 30 years to be absorbed. The reality is that there a greater inventory of land for potential redevelopment than market demand.

A possible outcome of Concept A might be a focus on select future redevelopment opportunities in the West End and along Hillgrove Avenue north of the railroad. Land values would likely command more intensive redevelopment in any event in order to be viable from an investment perspective. On the other hand, were parking not provided by land owners/developers in the area, allowing for intensification of redevelopment on each site (and similar to the situation in the Downtown core) the Village would be obligated to provide off-street parking to “bridge the gap.” The approach suggested in this concept would limit the public’s exposure to the cost of providing off-street parking, but would likely restrict potential redevelopment activity overall.

Figure 6: Mixed Use Corridor Concept B describes a future for the Corridor that includes the extension of a traditional, pedestrian-oriented and mixed use development concept into the West End Business District. As in Concept A, the Downtown core and areas extending north of the Metra/BNSF Line along La Grange Road remain largely unchanged in land use mix and intensity. In this concept, the West End Business

Figure 6

FIGURE 6
COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
CONCEPT B



- CBD Core Commercial
- CBD Perimeter Commercial
- Public and Institutional
- Open Space and Recreation
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary



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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. Multi-story buildings would have a higher level of probability within the West End Business District in this concept, in order to accommodate ground floor retail and services and residential and office uses on upper floors. Several considerations should be noted when assessing this concept:

- This concept more directly “embraces” redevelopment opportunity, promoting replacement of many of the marginal structures currently existing in the West End and along Hillgrove Avenue north of the railroad. It presumes that the Village would develop policies that more closely reflect current market demand with regard to use mix, building height and the provision of parking.
- This concept would create a secondary “West End Core” that is flanked by new and existing multi-family residential uses. It would concentrate mixed use activity surrounding the Stone Avenue Metra Station providing for the potential for more new dwelling units within the Corridor. The creation of new dwelling units will in turn generate an increased demand for commercial businesses.
- A very general, “order of magnitude” calculation regarding the potential redevelopment capacity of each potential redevelopment area for this concept (derived from *Figure 6*) envision a potential for at least 200,000 square feet of new commercial development within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, which would in turn generates a significant need for additional parking spaces dedicated to commercial uses.
- Using similar general calculations regarding the redevelopment capacity of areas envisioned to include residential redevelopment, this concept envisions a potential for up to 950 new residential dwelling units within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, developed primarily in a condominium format on the upper floors of new mixed use structures in the Downtown and West End areas, and east of the Downtown core along Ogden Avenue. Some “stand-alone” residential development (both condominiums and townhomes) would be accommodated west of the West End core and between the Downtown and West End core areas.
- As noted above, the calculations described above follow rules of thumb for redevelopment potential and primarily provide a basis for comparison of the two alternative concepts. The magnitude of redevelopment activity reflected in the calculations assumes that *all* redevelopment potential areas undergo change. Again, this is unlikely as the 950 new residential units potentially accommodated in this scenario could require 35 to 45 years to be absorbed by the market. Likewise, the retail development could require upwards of 15 years to be absorbed by the market. The reality is that there a greater inventory of land potentially available for redevelopment than market demand.

A possible outcome of Concept B might be the replacement of many of the marginal structures currently existing in the West End and along Hillgrove Avenue north of the railroad, some with mixed use structures and others with residential developments. This concept more closely reflects current market realities regarding the intensity of development required to make redevelopment viable, but in turn assumes that the Village would be obligated to provide off-street parking to meet commercial parking demand that could not be met on-site in new developments. It could also suggests that the Village would focus its redevelopment efforts in the West End. The approach

suggested in this concept increases the public's exposure to the cost of providing off-street parking, but would likely encourage potential redevelopment activity overall, and in a more transit supportive and pedestrian-friendly manner.

D. MOBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The BNSF Railroad Corridor is just under one mile in length on an east-west axis. From an average pedestrian's access point of view, this is considered too far to walk. In general, a walking distance up to one-quarter mile is comfortable for most people. During the first phase of the planning process, the West End Business District was identified as being in need of a greater mix and diversity of uses to encourage additional activity and commercial viability in the area. One strategy to accomplish this might be to provide shuttle bus service between the Downtown and the West End. As a greater mix of uses develops in the West End, a shuttle bus 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. A conceptual route is illustrated in *Figure 7: Transit and Pedestrian Access Framework*. Costs for shuttle services could be supported by the La Grange Business Association, the Village and/or Pace.

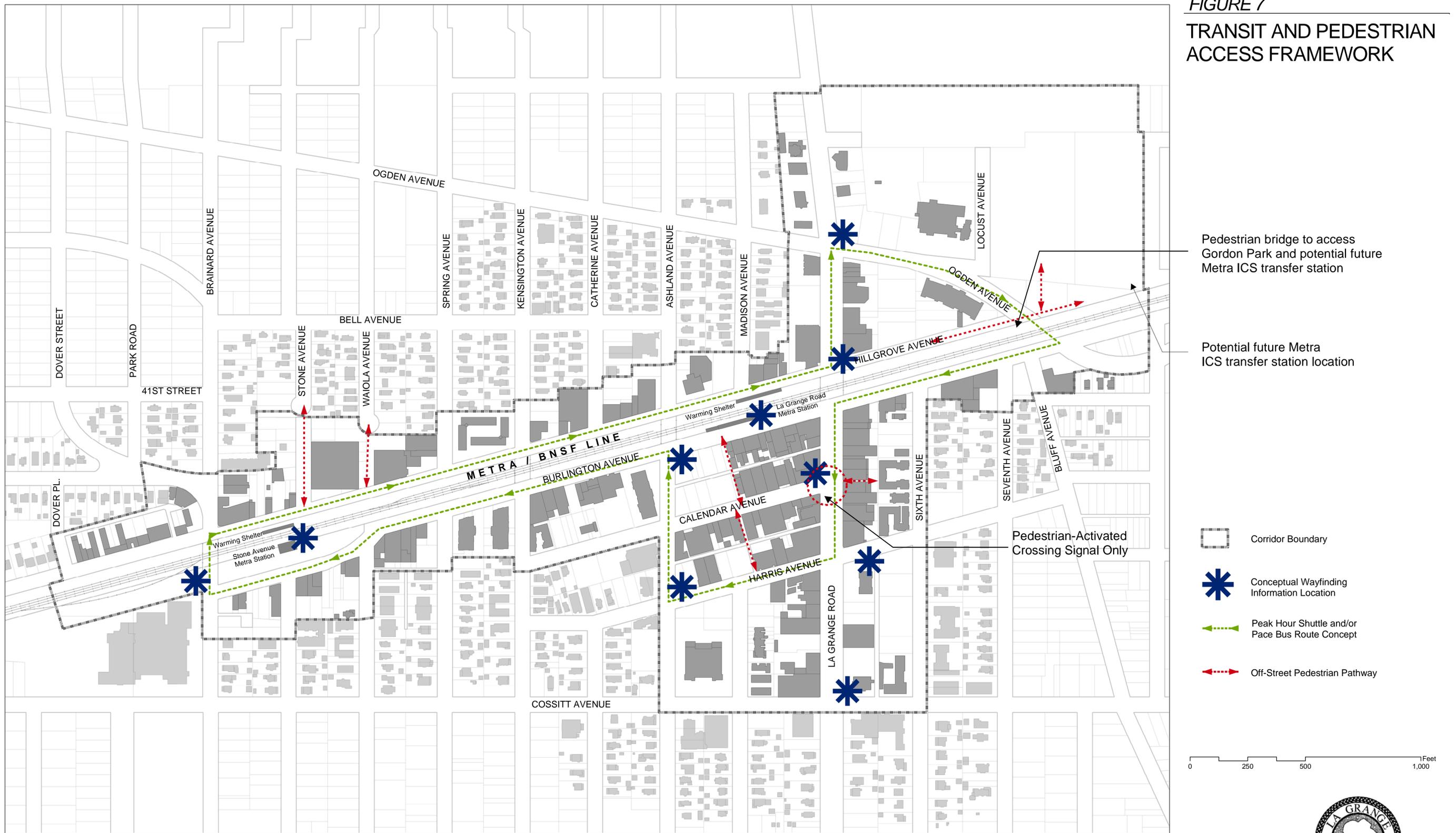
To further the transit supportive principles discussed in a previous section of this memorandum, there are a number of locations in the BNSF Railroad Corridor which would benefit from the use of pedestrian activated crosswalk signals. Key Downtown and West End Business District "pedestrian barrier" streets include: La Grange Road, Ogden Avenue, Brainard Avenue, and the combination of Hillgrove and Burlington Avenues and the BNSF Railroad. 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. A number of communities, such as Naperville, have implemented this system.

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 as redevelopment occurs. Closure of streets can often benefit adjoining neighborhood areas by reducing "cut-through" traffic and providing greater neighborhood privacy. Street closures often support redevelopment interests by providing new locations for off-street parking or enlarged redevelopment sites. Any locations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor considered for future street closure 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 by future street closures, pedestrian access should be maintained (as it has been at the closures adjacent to the Grayhill facility).

Finally, *Figure 7* identifies a number of conceptual "wayfinding information" locations. While the ultimate location of these stations and other improvements would be subject to further study, key gateway and destination locations have been identified where visitors could access Corridor information. A wayfinding program is an important tool to assist visitors in orienting themselves when in an unfamiliar area. It can support the LGBA'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. Some communities provide historical facts about the town as "footnotes" in the wayfinding program. As illustrated in the transit

Figure 7

FIGURE 7
TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIAN
ACCESS FRAMEWORK



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supportive precedents section, the wayfinding system not only serves a functional need of informing visitors about the community, but can serve as an important urban design element. Elmhurst recently introduced a new wayfinding program in its Downtown to supplement streetscape enhancements.

E. URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The Village of La Grange and its business partners have successfully reinvigorated the community core with a strong balance between conservation of traditional structures and the accommodation of new development. The Village has undertaken a streetscape improvement program which adds to the charm and ambience of the Downtown. The goal of the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan is to build upon these successful initiatives already undertaken by the Village and business community.

There are a variety of additional urban design improvements which could be undertaken in the future. *Figure 8: Urban Design Framework* illustrates the desirable extent of the Downtown streetscape treatment, suggesting some minimal expansion in future years. It also emphasizes key “gateway” locations where identity features, such as those illustrated in the transit supportive precedents section, should be accommodated in the future.

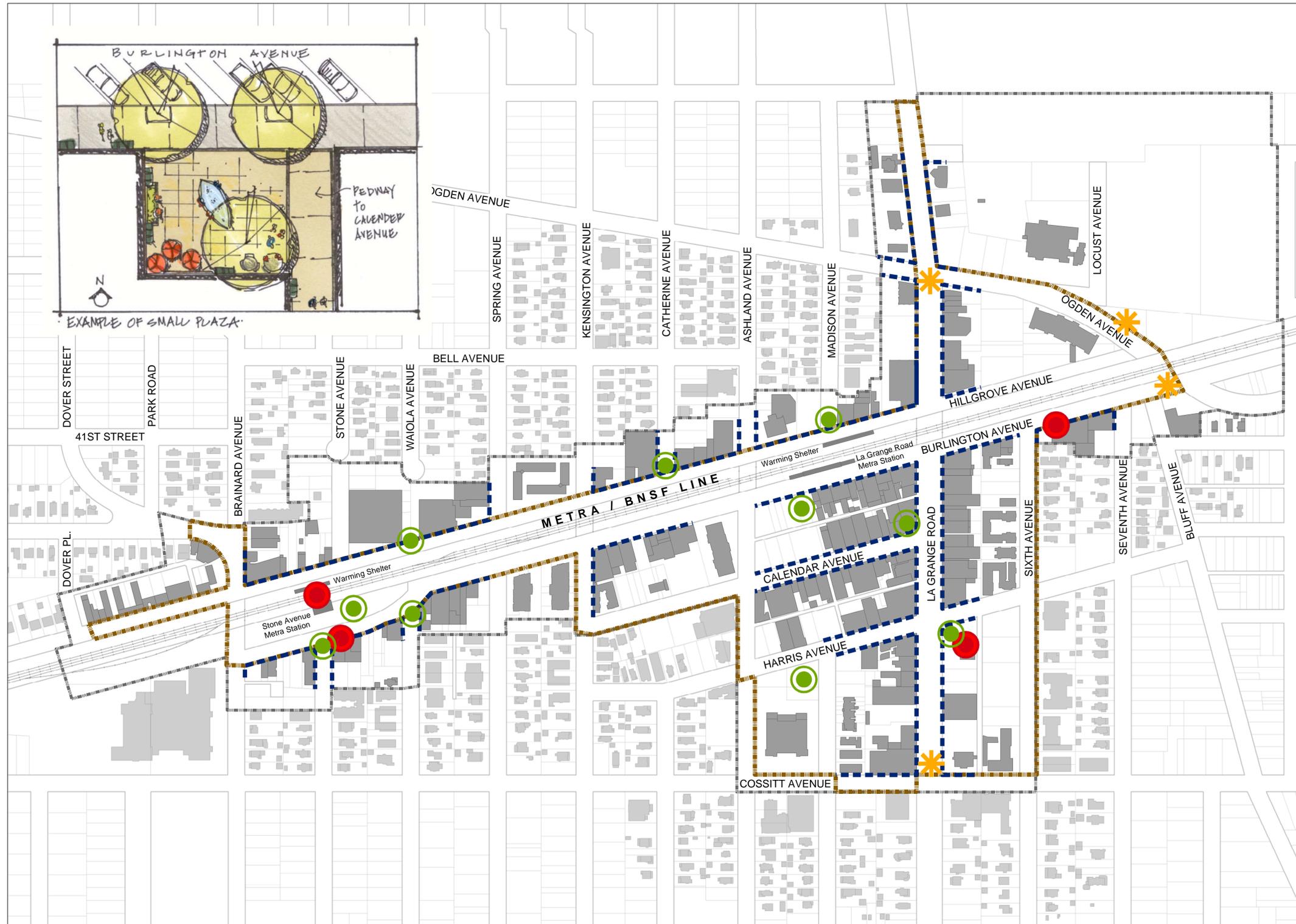
There are currently few open spaces or plazas within the BNSF Railroad Corridor. As the business community grows, the level of activity in the Corridor will also increase. It is essential that pedestrians be provided small outdoor “retreats” where they can rest, hold conversation, appreciate public art, or be entertained. As illustrated in the precedents section, plazas and small open spaces can fulfill this need. *Figure 8* illustrates several potential locations where these small plazas and open spaces might be located.

One way to accomplish the development of plazas or small open spaces is through the redevelopment process. For example, should the Calendar Avenue parking lot redevelop in the future, the Village could accomplish several functional and urban design objectives. *Figure 8* suggests an urban design concept which depicts retaining the pedway corridor between Calendar and Burlington Avenues as well as creating an urban plaza amenity. It could include seating, offer opportunities for vendor stalls, or simply function as a highly shaded outdoor rest area. These spaces would not only perform the functional role of providing rest and retreat, but would add to the visual interest and pedestrian experience throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

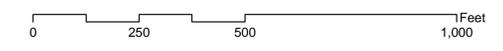
Key to maintaining pedestrian continuity, and supporting the Village’s TOD development efforts, is the continuation of the pedestrian-oriented “street wall” where buildings are developed up to the front lot line. Continuing to maintain and develop attractive storefronts is critical to sustaining the 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 8*.

Figure 8

FIGURE 8
URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK



-  "Downtown" Streetscape Zone
-  Potential Open Space/
Plaza Location
-  Key Existing Landmark and/or
High Quality Facade
-  Gateway/Entry Feature
-  "Street Wall" Continuity
Areas
-  BNSF Railroad Corridor Boundary



BNSF RAILROAD CORRIDOR PLAN
VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS

DRAFT
FOR STEERING COMMITTEE REVIEW
FEBRUARY 24, 2004



Community input in the first phase of the 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. Were it to be pursued, the community would need to define a public arts program in more detail.

6. OBSERVATIONS

There are several key observations regarding both the community-wide and BNSF Railroad Corridor concepts that are important for the Steering Committee to consider. These are summarized below.

Community-Wide Concept

1. The community-wide concept seeks to sustain the overall existing pattern of land use and development in the Village. The concept calls for distinguishing between the traditional and contemporary single family residential areas. The Steering Committee should confirm whether there is consensus on this feature.
2. The concept suggests that the Village state a preference for the continuation of current land use patterns at the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Country Club and La Grange Highlands neighborhood, but not actively seek annexation at this time. The Steering Committee should confirm whether there is consensus on this feature.
3. Land use and development recommendations are offered for six key community areas (outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor). The Committee should arrive at its preferences for each of these areas.

BNSF Railroad Corridor Concepts

1. Both concept plans for in the BNSF Railroad Corridor illustrate that the Village has more than ample redevelopment potential in both the Downtown and the West End Business District over the next 10 to 15 years. This is particularly true with respect to residential development. While close to 200,000 sq. ft. of retail space (as illustrated in Concept B) may be possible over the next 10 to 15 years, it is largely a question of whether bigger first floor retail spaces will be made available to accommodate growth, and whether sufficient residential development occurs to support such an increase. 400,000 square feet of retail space is clearly an over statement of the market within the Corridor area.

Given existing parcel sizes and street configurations in the West End Business District, smaller retail/service uses will tend to occupy this area. Larger retailers will seek frontage along Ogden Avenue and La Grange Road. Thus, mixed use development that includes residential uses above the first floor could be important in the West End to help sustain retail demand.

2. Concept A assumed only single story retail development outside the Downtown core. Given the relatively high value of land in La Grange, and the fact that most sites are already improved, there will likely be limited interest in single story construction in the Corridor.

3. Concept Plan B provides a stronger framework for transit supportive land use and development. This is primarily due to the encouragement of mixed uses within the West End Business District, and the accommodation of more residential development overall. This would appear to be the preferred approach to a land use framework for this area.
4. Should the Village choose to consider Concept Plan B with regard to mixed use development in the West End Business District, it is likely that additional publicly supported off-street shopper parking will be required. While this will be tempered by the pace and extent of redevelopment, the Village should consider this possible need. While most mixed use development will provide off-street parking for residential uses, it is difficult to also meet off-street commercial parking requirements on-site (without providing structured parking). 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.
5. If there is additional redevelopment within the Downtown core area, there will eventually be a need for additional public parking. Further, Metra’s desire to accommodate up to an additional 250 commuter parking spaces within the BNSF Railroad Corridor will have physical implications when considering parking options for both the Downtown and West End Business District.
6. It should also be noted that from a project feasibility standpoint, any future proposed residential or mixed use development within the BNSF Railroad Corridor will likely be greater than three stories in height. Current planned development review allows for the consideration of four to seven story buildings (depending upon location), which is a reasonable range to consider.
7. The Steering Committee should consider whether residential buildings (without first floor retail) would be appropriate on Hillgrove Avenue between Kensington and Ashland Avenues. While it would be somewhat consistent with the use pattern in the area, it would break down the potential for commercial “street wall” continuity along Hillgrove Avenue. If it is found that sufficient retail demand exists, mixed use development with first floor retail could be encouraged in this area, also.

Implementation Implications

The ideas presented in the Concept Plans will require the participation of both the public and private sectors in implementation. Depending on the Steering Committee’s direction to the consulting team in its review of the Concept Plans, the consulting team will further define potential implementation actions in the next step of the planning process. Development of specific implementation mechanisms is premature prior to achieving community consensus on an overall land use and development for the Village.