

## 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

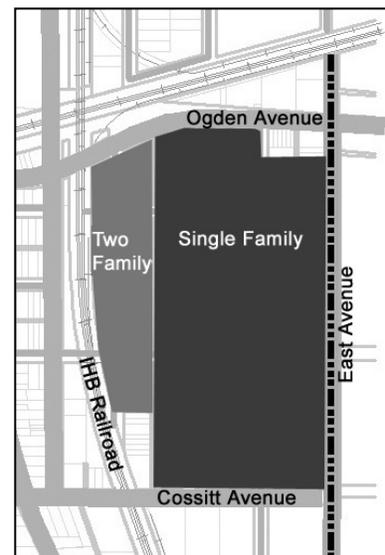
## RESIDENTIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

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.

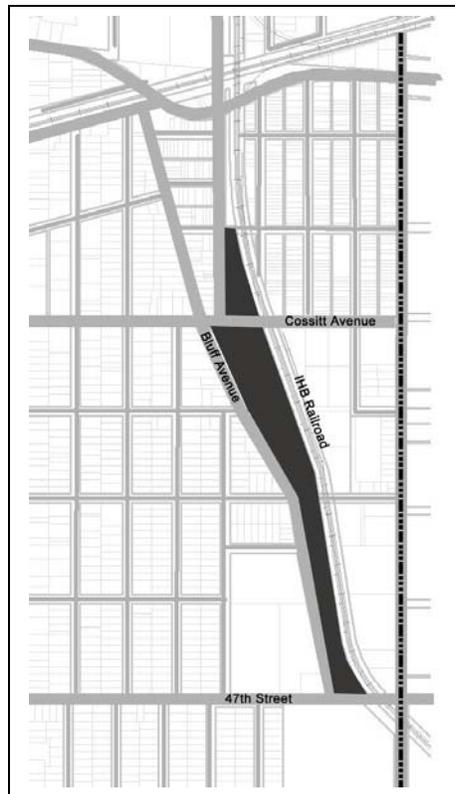


Multi-family residential uses generally follow the current land use pattern in the Village. However, there are a few locations which could be appropriate for new multi-family residential land uses. Multi-family residential areas within the BNSF Railroad Corridor are discussed in detail in Part VI B of 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 47<sup>th</sup> Street and approximately Cossitt Avenue; properties fronting on South La Grange Road between 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Streets (on the east side); and properties fronting on South La Grange Road between 51<sup>st</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> 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 51<sup>st</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> 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 affordable<sup>1</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 47<sup>th</sup> 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 47<sup>th</sup> 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 47<sup>th</sup> Street and Gilbert Avenue; and the neighborhood commercial area at 47<sup>th</sup> 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.