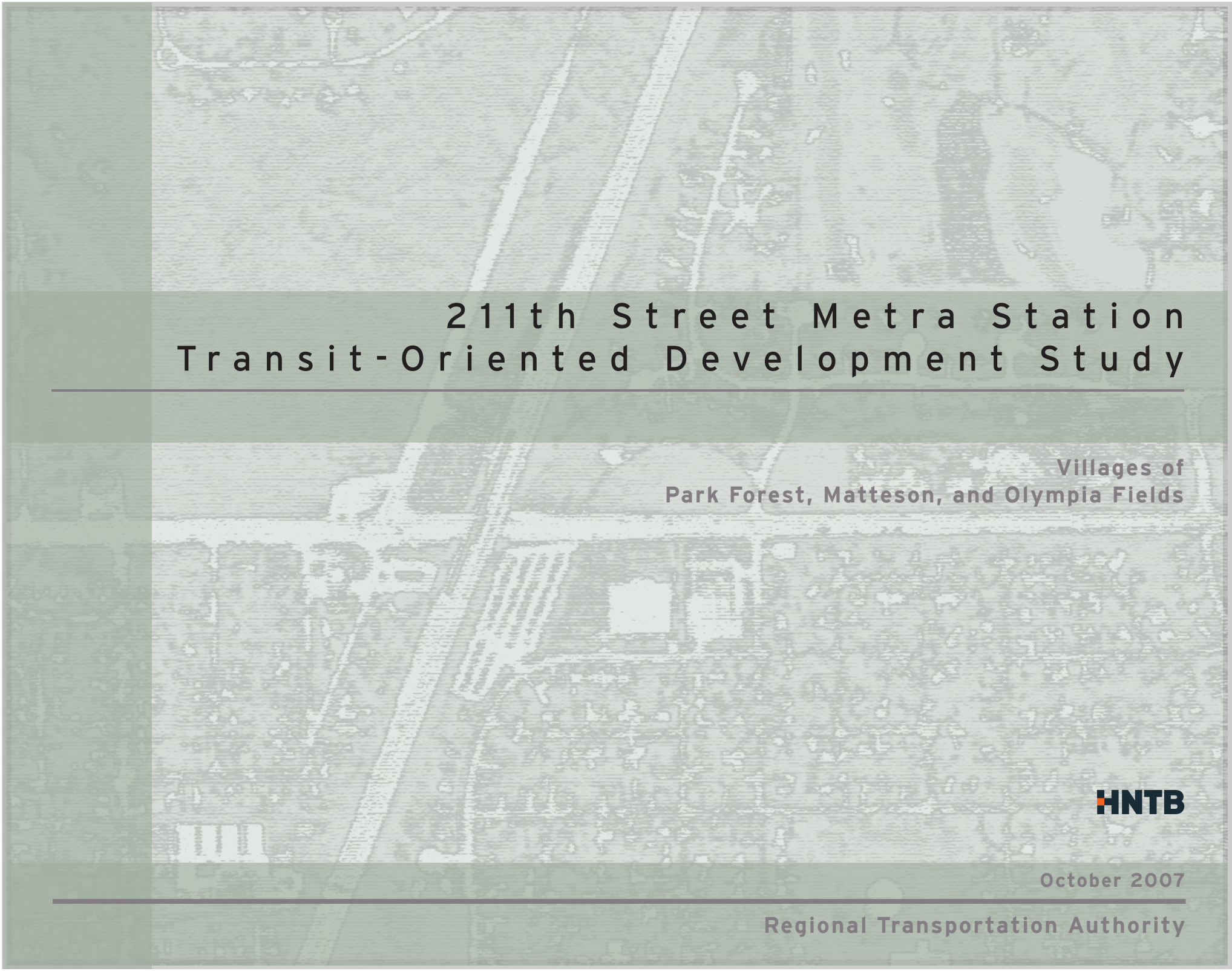

211th Street Metra Station
Transit-Oriented Development Study

Villages of
Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields

HNTB

October 2007

Regional Transportation Authority

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This document summarizes the work conducted for the 211th Street Metra Station Transit-Oriented Development Study. The document was prepared under contract with the Regional Transportation Authority of Northeastern Illinois. Preparation of the document was financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and the Regional Transportation Authority. The contents of the document do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, or the Illinois Department of Transportation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many communities in the Chicago region have capitalized on their commuter rail station as a catalyst for transit-oriented development (TOD). The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has worked with over 50 communities to formalize TOD and station area plans through its Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP). The RTAP program is used to improve transit and pedestrian access near transit stations, and facilitate local community and economic development. Using the RTAP program, the Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields partnered together on this 211th Street Metra Station Transit-Oriented Development Study to establish a welcoming gateway for their communities, create better neighborhood connections to the station, and encourage new mixed-use development within the 211th Street station area.

211th Street Metra Station

PLANNING PROCESS

Community participation in the planning process is essential for creating an improvement program that meets local expectations. As part of this study, a Steering Committee of elected officials, municipal staff, and transportation agency representatives provided guidance and feedback during each planning phase. Additionally, key person interviews provided in-depth local knowledge through informal conversations with community leaders. Throughout the process, general public meetings were held to gauge public opinion and solicit input, including a visioning workshop, a design workshop, and an open house meeting in each Village. Each Village is then responsible for plan adoption and collaborative implementation.

During the study's initial phase of work, an Inventory and Existing Conditions Report and a Market Assessment Report documented planning issues and opportunities and local market demand. In the second phase, a Preliminary Concept Plans Report described two illustrative concept plans that were used as the basis for a preferred concept plan. Lastly, this overall report was produced to summarize the project's existing conditions, conceptual plans, and most importantly, implementation strategies.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The 211th Street Metra Station is located at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Olympian Way, along the village boundaries of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields. Transit-oriented development (TOD) is typically focused within one-half mile of a transit facility. Figure 1 highlights the one-half mile study area for the 211th Street Metra Station.

Matteson was originally platted in the 1850s as a small farming village near the intersection of two railroads, the Illinois Central and Michigan Central Railroads. The Village of Matteson was formally incorporated in 1889. Matteson remained a rural village until new suburban growth fueled annexation following the Second World War.

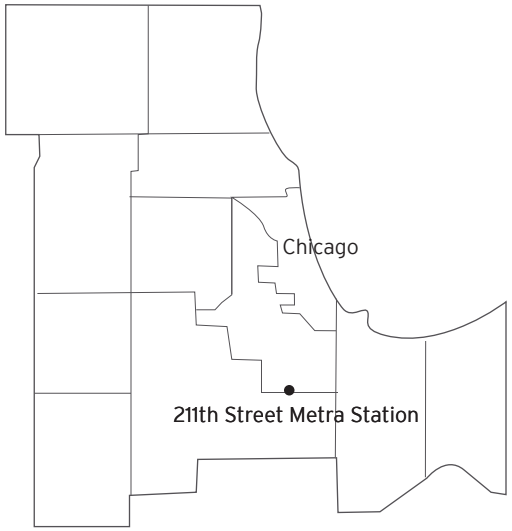
The Olympia Fields Country Club opened in 1915 east of the Illinois Central Railroad within unincorporated Cook County. The Village of Olympia Fields was formally incorporated near the country club in 1927, and grew further during the 1940s and 1950s as an elite residential community.

Similar to other master planned communities such as Riverside, Illinois and Radburn, New Jersey, Park Forest was developed in the late 1940s as an independent fully-planned suburban community for returning GIs and their families. Park Forest also contained one of Chicago's first suburban shopping malls.

Interstate 57 (I-57) was built through the area in the late 1960s. All three municipalities witnessed additional growth when I-57 was built. Lincoln Mall, one of the largest shopping centers in the southland, was built in Matteson in 1973 on Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 less than one-half mile from I-57. Lincoln Mall caused additional commercial development nearby, and contributed to the eventual decline of Park Forest's original shopping mall.

Suburban development throughout Chicagoland has caused a very competitive suburban development market. As a result of newer and competing retail locations, Lincoln Mall witnessed a decline over the last ten years and is now the subject of a redevelopment process. Similarly, Park Forest's shopping mall has been redeveloped as Downtown Park Forest over the last 10 years.

The three municipalities contain stable residential neighborhoods with middle- and upper-income residents. Consequently, the housing market has remained relatively strong and new home construction is adding more residents to the area, particularly within Matteson. All three municipalities are working to improve housing choices, stabilize their commercial tax base, and improve local schools through local planning efforts and development programs.



Regional perspective

INSERT FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Transit-oriented development (TOD) may be defined as a moderate to high density mix of uses – such as homes, retail shops, offices, civic uses, or entertainment – located within one-half mile of a transit station and in a configuration that supports transit use. The one-half mile distance is considered the typical "station area," or an acceptable 10-minute walking distance for most transit users if the area contains a destination, provides dedicated walking routes, and appears safe and visually interesting.

The general principles of TOD may be described within three broad categories –design, diversity, and density – or the "Three Ds" of transit-oriented development. The "Three Ds" are characterized as follows:

1. Design
   - Multiple transportation connections and amenities
   - Preference for pedestrians and bicyclists
   - Shared commuter parking and reduced off-street parking

2. Diversity
   - Mixed uses and varied housing types
   - Public spaces integrated into the station area
   - Market-driven development that serves commuters and the local area

3. Density
   - Higher density uses closest to the train station
   - Balance higher densities with public parks and plazas
   - Station area residents provide additional support to local businesses

When all of these characteristics are present within a station area, there tends to be a greater level of development, pedestrian activity, and transit use. Although every station area is unique, the TOD principles of design, diversity, and density were used to provide a general focus and direction for recommendations within the 211th Street Metra Station area.

New Village Center, Willow Springs Metra Station Area

EXISTING CONDITIONS

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 211th Street Metra Station is a resource that primarily serves park-n-ride commuters, but is not currently utilized for the local communities' economic development purposes. The overall planning context within a station area is important for understanding the future potential and capacity for new improvements and economic development. This section of the report addresses the following existing conditions:

- Existing Land Use
- Circulation, Access, and Transit
- Demographics Trends and Market Assessment

The existing conditions analysis was used to assess the physical planning opportunities and constraints within the study area. Ultimately, the Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields wish to improve the existing physical conditions within the station area and attract transit-oriented development at key locations.

211th Street Metra Station platform (looking west)

211th Street Metra Station platform (looking east)

EXISTING LAND USES

The municipal boundaries of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields intersect at the 211th Street Metra Station. Although the TOD planning process will focus on the overall station area, the planning recommendations will not directly affect all properties. Specifically, the Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields wish to examine the "four corners" surrounding the 211th Street Metra Station. The northwest corner contains a station entrance and the Olympia Fields commuter parking lot, as well as adjacent vacant property. The southwest corner contains a station entrance and a bus stop/kiss-n-ride. The southeast corner contains the Park Forest commuter parking lot and adjacent commercial properties. Lastly, the northeast corner contains Olympia Fields' Maynegaite neighborhood. Figure 2 highlights the existing land uses within the station area. The subsequent descriptions provide a general assessment of existing land uses and physical conditions within each municipality.

INSERT FIGURE 2: EXISTING LAND USES

Village of Park Forest Land Uses

The Village of Park Forest is in the southeast quadrant of the station area, south of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and east of the Metra Electric Line. Adjacent to the station is a large commuter parking lot. Next to this parking lot is a former car dealership property that is used for commercial office space. A former car dealership also sits vacant at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Indiana Street. These three properties may be considered underutilized from a TOD perspective due to their low intensity of building coverage and large amount of surface parking. The remaining station area land uses in Park Forest may be primarily characterized as single-family residential uses.

Lincoln Highway properties, Park Forest

Village of Matteson Land Uses

The Village of Matteson is in the southwest quadrant of the station area, south of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and west of the Metra Electric Line. One of the main entrances to the 211th Street Metra Station is located next to a bus turnaround and kiss-n-ride site. Along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 from east to west can be found the Matteson Fire Station Headquarters, a funeral home, a secondary language school, and a vacant lot at Main Street. Although these commercial properties are utilized, they may be susceptible to change over the long term. Transit supportive land uses would be more appropriate for these commercial properties. The remaining station area land uses are mostly residential uses.

211th Street Station bus turnaround, Matteson

Village of Olympia Fields Land Uses

The Village of Olympia Fields is in the northwest and northeast quadrants of the station area, north of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30. The other primary entrance to the 211th Street Metra Station is located next to a large commuter parking lot on Olympian Way. At Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Olympian Way, there is a large vacant commercial property consisting of approximately 12 acres. This vacant site is currently being considered for development with several highway commercial uses and multi-family condominium residential uses. There are two commercial uses — a gas station and an office building - adjacent to this property at Main Street. In the northeast quadrant, there area 32 townhomes and 13 single-family homes under construction. The remaining station area land uses in Olympia Fields may be primarily characterized as single-family residential uses.

12 acre vacant site, Olympia Fields

EXISTING CIRCULATION, ACCESS, AND TRANSIT

The Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields are served by a multi-modal transit facility at the 211th Street Metra Station. Conveniently located on Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, commuters may reach the train station by car, bus, or by walking. Key features of the local circulation and access pattern, as well as local transit facilities, are described in this section and illustrated in Figure 3.

Vehicle Circulation and Access

Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 is the only major arterial in the study area, running in a east-west direction. Through the study area, this arterial consists of three travel lanes in each direction, a median, and turning lanes at key intersections. Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 is designated as 211th Street, but it is rarely called that by local residents. This arterial is also designated as a historic roadway in Illinois. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the average daily traffic on Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 in the station area is 42,600 vehicles.

Speeding traffic along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 is an issue at the intersections of Olympian Way and Indiana Street. Vehicles traveling westbound cannot see the traffic signal changes at Olympian Way due to the railroad bridge viaduct. As a result, vehicles occasionally run red lights and cause accidents. At Indiana Street, there is no traffic signal. This makes it difficult for vehicles making turns from Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and from Indiana Street. A traffic signal at Indiana Street could potentially solve both issues.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 does not have a pedestrian friendly atmosphere due to speeding traffic and relatively few pedestrian amenities. The south side of the arterial contains a sidewalk through most of the study area, except east of Indiana Street. The north side of the arterial contains a sidewalk extending east from Olympian Way to Indiana Street. There are no street trees, landscaping, or additional amenities that typically provide a comfortable atmosphere for pedestrians.

The local residential streets in Matteson and Park Forest are pedestrian friendly and contain well-maintained sidewalks, parkways and trees, and front lawns. These streets provide a relatively safe and comfortable environment for residents to walk to the 211th Street Metra Station. Old Plank Road Trail is a regional multi-use pedestrian and bike path at the southern tip of the study area.

Eastbound Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30

Westbound Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30

INSERT FIGURE 3: EXISTING CIRCULATION, ACCESS, & TRANSIT

Metra Electric Line Commuter Rail

The 211th Street Metra Station is located on the Metra Electric District - Main Line, which provides suburban commuter train service between Chicago's Millennium Station and University Park in Will County. The Metra Electric Line is elevated with an earthen berm through the study area, and is carried over Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 with a modern steel bridge and roadway underpass and over Front Street with an older steel bridge structure. There are no other west-east street crossings in the station area.

Commuter Rail Service

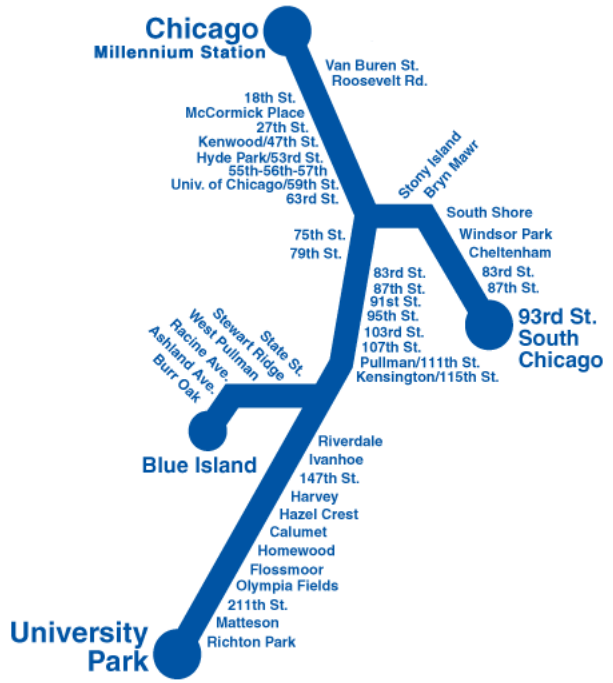
There is regular service Monday through Friday, with travel times between the 211th Street Metra Station and Chicago's Millennium Station of approximately one hour. During peak hours, express train service is available in the peak direction, with reduced travel times of approximately 45 minutes. There is a reduced service schedule on weekends, but more service on Saturdays compared to Sundays.

From Monday through Friday, the first inbound train leaves the 211th Street Metra Station at 4:28 am. There are 12 inbound morning trains between 5:23 and 9:05 am. Afterward, there is hourly service until the last inbound train at 11:48 pm. Conversely, the first outbound train leaves Millennium Station at 5:15 am. Outbound morning trains operate about every hour. However, there are 8 outbound evening trains between 4:08 and 6:38 pm. The final train from Chicago arrives at the 211th Street Metra Station at 1:50 am.

Commuter Ridership

According to Metra's Fall 2002 boarding counts, there were a total of 1,241 boardings and 1,262 alightings at the 211th Street Metra Station on a typical weekday. This is the six highest ridership count on the Metra Electric Line, excluding the downtown Chicago stations. Between 1983 and 2002, ridership at the 211th Street Metra Station increased from 796 to 1,241 commuters, with a peak ridership of 1,279 commuters in 1999. Similar to regional trends, the vast majority of commuters use the 211th Street Metra Station for morning and evening peak hour service from Monday through Friday.

Comparatively, the Matteson Station is located a little over one-half mile to the south and had an average daily ridership of 922 people in 2002. The Olympia Fields Station at 203rd Street is located approximately one mile to the north and had an average daily ridership of 186 people in 2002. A new parking lot at the Olympia Fields Station was built to accommodate the current and future demand for the entire Fare Zone F, and because there was no parking previously provided at this station.



Source: Metra website

Mode of Access

According to Metra's fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey, 70% of commuters drove alone to use the 211th Street Metra Station, compared to an average of 52% along the Metra Electric District - Main Line. The following statistics highlight the other modes of access for commuters using the 211th Street Metra Station.

- 14% were dropped off
- 6% walked
- 5% used Pace bus service
- 5% car-pooled

The station is designed as a park-n-ride station, with large surface parking lots for commuters. This explains the high percentage of commuters driving alone. The station also contains a drop-off location on Olympian Way south of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, so it is convenient for commuters to be dropped off at the station. The lack of a pedestrian amenities (i.e. sidewalks, lighting, etc.) to access the station from adjacent neighborhoods may explain the low percentage of those walking.

Origin of Passengers

According to Metra's Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey, approximately 26% of commuters at the 211th Street Metra Station are residents of Matteson. Park Forest residents make up about 15% of the total commuters, while Olympia Fields residents make up only 12%. Chicago Heights residents make up about 12% of the total. The remaining 35% of the commuters come from numerous south suburban villages.

Commuter Station and Amenities

The original train station was constructed in 1926, while the current station was constructed 23 years ago. The current station was designed with two entrances on the west side of the railroad embankment, north and south of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30. As such, there are two station houses. They were constructed within the embankment, and provide access to the platform on top of the embankment. The station platform spans across the highway.

Although the station was built only two decades ago, the interior of the station houses and the platforms are showing signs of deterioration. There are very few amenities within the station houses. The interior design and lighting is minimal, and could be described as austere and dreary. The exterior areas outside the station houses are characterized by steel canopies that appear architecturally dated. The landscaping along the embankments and near the station entrances is minimal. Therefore, the appearance of the station entrances, station houses, and platforms could be improved in the future, with funding options to be determined by the three communities. There is currently no funding in Metra's capital program for new or improved station house interiors and exteriors.

211th Street Metra Station commuter parking, Olympia Fields

Station house exterior

Station house interior

Commuter Parking

There are two commuter parking lots at the 211th Street Metra Station. Parking lot # 1 is located on the southeast side in Park Forest, but does not provide direct access to the south entrance to the station. Commuters intuitively walk to Lincoln Highway and underneath the railroad bridge to reach the station entrance on the west side of the railroad embankment. There are a total of 458 parking spaces, which cost one dollar per day. The total daily utilization rate is 86%. Commuters are directed by signage to use the Matteson Station when this parking lot is 100% utilized.

Parking lot # 2 is located on the northwest side in Olympia Fields, next to the north station entrance. It contains 269 spaces, which cost $1.25 per day. Parking lot #2 allows for quarterly permit parking at $66 for three months. There is a permit capacity of 117 spaces, which are almost fully utilized. The total daily utilization rate for this parking lot is 98%. Commuters are directed by signage to use the Olympia Fields Station when this parking lot is 100% utilized.

Regarding ownership, Park Forest owns the land for parking lot #1 and Metra owns the parking lot improvements. This parking lot was funded using federal funds, and may be subject to certain obligations in accordance with federal agreements. IDOT and Metra own the land for parking lot #2 and related improvements. The South Suburban Mass Transit District leases the IDOT-owned portion of parking lot #2.

Based on regional growth projections, Metra has estimated that the 211th Street Metra Station will need 500 to 600 new parking spaces by the year 2030 to meet commuter demand. The existing land use patterns and land availability will make it difficult to meet this projected parking demand without structured parking. Depending on future demand and development costs, there may be potential for structured parking through a joint public-private partnership.

Pace Suburban Bus Service

Two Pace bus routes provide service to the 211th Street Metra Station, at the bus turn-around on the station's southwest entrance. Route 753-Matteson travels through the Village of Matteson west of I-57, along Lincoln Highway with stops at various shopping centers, and to the 211th Street Metra Station. Route 753 provides service from Monday through Friday. Route 357-Lincoln Highway travels between the Lincoln Mall area and Chicago Heights, with a stop at the 211th Street Metra Station. Route 357 provides service seven days a week.

The bus turn-around at the station does not have seating or a well landscaped waiting area. This area could be improved with benches and landscaping. Bus stops along Lincoln Highway are marked simply with a signpost. These bus stops should provide a bus shelter for inclement weather and for general pedestrian comfort.

Commuter parking #1, Park Forest

Bus turnaround waiting area, Matteson

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND MARKET ASSESSMENT

This section presents a summary of demographic trends in the partnering municipalities and of the development environment in the local area. A full market assessment was conducted for this station area and is documented in a separate report titled the 211th Street Metra Station Area Market Analysis (December 2006) by Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc (VSKA).

Demographic Trends

The following summary represents the key demographic findings in the local area, including population growth and density, income, and age.

- The Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields have a combined 2006 population estimate of 42,144. This total represents a 2.5% increase since the 2000 U.S. Census.
- Based on regional estimates, the three municipalities are projected to grow another 2.0% or 849 people over the next five years.
- Population density is higher in Park Forest with about 4,800 people per square mile, compared to 1,800 people per square mile in Matteson and Olympia Fields.
- An estimated 2,183 people in 772 households live within a half mile of the 211th Street Metra Station. Within a mile of this station, there are an estimated 8,421 people in 3,064 households.
- The 2006 median household income in the three communities combined is estimated at $61,671, with almost 40% of all households earning more than $75,000.
- The median age in Olympia Fields is 45.3 years, compared to 38.9 years in Matteson and 37.3 years in Park Forest.

New station area homes

Market Assessment

The following summary represents the key findings for the local retail, office, and residential markets, and the potential for future station area development. Table 1 highlights the total near and long-term demand within the station area, per the market assessment completed by VSKA. The 32 townhouses and 13 single-family detached units were approved by Olympia Fields, and are now under construction along Lincoln Highway at Indiana Street. Olympia Fields is also planning for 72-80 condominiums and 41,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, and service commercial uses at the "gateway site" on Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 at Olympian Way.

Lincoln Highway commercial, Park Forest

Table 1: 211th Street Metra Station Area Development Potential

Development Type	Units or Square Feet	Timing*	Location at MED & U.S. 30
Condominiums and/or Townhouses	32 units 72-80 units 45 - 50 units	Under construction Planned - near term Medium term potential	NE Quadrant NW Quadrant SE Quadrant
Single-Family Homes	13 units	Under construction	NE Quadrant
Retail, Restaurant, and/or Service	41,000 s.f. 20,000-30,000 s.f.	Planned – near term Medium term	NW Quadrant SE Quadrant
Office Commercial	20,000,-25,000 s.f.	Medium and long term	SE Quadrant

* Note: Near term: 0-3 years; Medium term: 3-5 years; Long term: 5-7 years

Retail Market Trends and Opportunities

- Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Cicero Avenue, a mile west of the station area, is the primary retail concentration in the local area and contains the Lincoln Mall, big-box stores, and other retailers.
- A high retail vacancy rate along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and the planned redevelopment of the Lincoln Mall will make it difficult to attract a large number of retailers and restaurants to the station area.
- The "gateway site" at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Olympian Way is planned for approximately 41,000 square feet of retail space, including a CVS pharmacy, but no tenants have signed leases or purchased land yet.
- There is potential for an additional 20-30,000 square feet of retail space in the south-east quadrant along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, assuming a stoplight is installed at Indiana Avenue to ensure adequate access.

Office Market Trends and Opportunities

- The south suburban office market suffers from a high vacancy rate (18.9%) compared to other markets, and Matteson and Olympia Fields have 30% and 19% vacancy rates, respectively.
- The area's office tenants tend to be small, use less than 2,500 square feet, and are local professionals such as doctors, lawyers, insurance agents, and accountants.
- Nearby suburbs to the west, such as Mokena and Frankfort, have office condominium buildings that are leasing well and would be an appropriate station area use.
- The station area could support approximately 20,000-25,000 square feet of office space in a single-use building or a mixed-use retail and office building that serves small office tenants.

Residential Market Trends and Opportunities

- Over 90% of the 1,335 housing permits issued in the three villages since 2003 were in Matteson, because of the strong local housing market and large amounts of vacant land.
- In 2006, the median price for attached housing is $362,000 in Olympia Fields, $180,000 in Matteson, and $73,500 in Park Forest, with the differences caused primarily by age and size of existing housing stock.
- Olympia Fields has approved 32 attached single-family homes and 13 detached single-family homes along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 east of the station, on either side of Indiana Street.
- The "gateway site" at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Olympian Way is planned for 72-80 condominiums in two four-story buildings, but still needs environmental approvals and sewer infrastructure agreements.
- There is a market for an additional 45-50 condominiums or townhouses in the station area, particularly in the southeast quadrant in Park Forest.

Background information and the complete market assessment prepared by VSKA is available under separate cover. The market assessment was used to guide the development of realistic and achievable TOD strategies for the 211th Street Metra Station area, building from recently approved projects.

Lincoln Highway office use, Olympia Fields

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

IV. KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the study's existing conditions analysis and market assessment, this section describes key issues and opportunities for future improvements and potential development. Figure 4 highlights these issues and opportunities within the one-half mile station study area. The most important opportunities relate to "areas with redevelopment potential," which are underutilized and vacant parcels with near-term development potential. The concept plans illustrated in this report show new land uses within a transit-supportive framework for these "areas with redevelopment potential." In addition, there are numerous opportunities for station improvements and streetscape enhancements to create a more pedestrian-oriented station area. The following summary describes key issues and opportunities within the station area.

Future Land Uses

- The two commercial properties and the commuter parking lot in Park Forest may have redevelopment potential as a mixed-use project with retail/office uses, condominiums, townhouses, and structured parking.
- The commuter parking lot in Olympia Fields could potentially be redeveloped with a mixed-use parking structure, depending on available funding sources.
- Olympia Fields has approved a development concept for the 12-acre "gateway site" on Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 at Olympian Way. The proposal calls for 41,000 square feet of commercial uses and 72-80 condominiums. Key obstacles include mitigating impacts to Butterfield Creek, final environmental approval by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and a sewer service agreement between Olympia Fields and Matteson.
- The two properties in Olympia Fields along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 at Indiana Street are under development. The Village has approved 32 attached single-family homes on the west side and 13 single-family homes on the east side.
- The vacant commercial lot at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Main Street could be redeveloped for a small retail and/or office use, depending on parking needs.
- The vacant residential lot on Homan Avenue is zoned for single-family homes, but could potentially be developed with multi-family housing.
- The two existing commercial businesses along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 in Matteson could potentially be redeveloped within a more transit supportive framework.

- INSERT FIGURE 4

Circulation, Access, and Transit

- The station house interiors, platforms, and platform waiting areas could be improved to provide a more welcoming environment for commuters.
- The station house exteriors could be improved with landscaping and other materials to transform the bare steel canopies into "green" canopies.
- The exposed railroad embankments within the parking lots and bus turn-around area could be improved with well-maintained landscaping and ground cover.
- The bus turn-around/drop-off location on Olympian Way could be improved as a public plaza space with landscaping, seating, and other pedestrian amenities.
- A traffic signal at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Indiana Street is recommended to provide safer vehicular access to and from the commuter parking lot and commercial and residential properties in Park Forest.
- Bus shelters are recommended for the bus stop locations within the station area to provide a more hospitable waiting area along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30.
- Sidewalks are recommended along Lincoln Highway in the station area to facilitate pedestrian accessibility to the station. In particular, the Lincolnwood neighborhood in Park Forest has requested a sidewalk along the south side of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 from Indiana Street to Western Avenue.

Urban Design Features

- The railroad bridge over Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 could potentially serve as a gateway feature with a station sign and lighting. The communities could consider a name change for the station, because 211th Street is not commonly used as a street reference.
- Pedestrian amenities along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 in the station area are recommended to create a more pleasant walking environment and to signify a gateway appearance for the station and the adjacent municipalities.

VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

V. VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Public participation is an important component of the planning process to ensure that future projects and improvements meet community needs and aspirations. The Village of Park Forest hosted a general public workshop on January 31, 2007. After a background presentation on existing conditions, the audience assembled into small working groups to provide feedback on potential development concepts and station improvements (see Appendix B for meeting results). Consequently, a future vision statement and key planning principles were drafted to capture the essence of the communities' desired improvements for the 211th Street Metra Station Area and to guide the creation of the preliminary concept plans.

The 211th Street Station - A 2020 Transit Community

The 211th Street Metra Station and its immediate surroundings will be an attractive and welcoming gateway to the Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields. New streetscape improvements along Lincoln Highway and station house improvements will create a pleasing environment for pedestrians to reach the station and each neighborhood. Replacement parking facilities will be constructed to accommodate existing and future commuter parking needs and to facilitate new residential and commercial uses. Future developments and improvements will unify the station area into a distinctive mixed-use transportation center to serve all three communities.

Key Planning Principles

Planning Principle 1: Facilitate new mixed-use commercial and residential development

The market demand exists within the three communities to begin establishing a mixed-use transportation center. Since the existing commercial properties near the station are vacant or underutilized, there is potential for a limited amount of new development without the need for a parking structure. However, a new parking structure would permit an increased level of mixed-use commercial and residential development. Any new development should strive to create appropriate additions and transitions to existing residential neighborhoods.

Planning Principle 2: Create a safer streetscape environment for pedestrian access

The current traffic levels and speeds along Lincoln Highway do not provide a pedestrian-friendly environment to access the train station from existing residential neighborhoods. A unified streetscape improvement plan should be developed by Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields to provide specific recommendations for the following: new sidewalks; parkways with street trees and hedges; pedestrian-scaled lighting; landscaped medians; and, gateway and wayfinding signage. A high quality pedestrian environment typically encourages more pedes-

trian access and slower traffic movements.

Planning Principle 3: Beautify the overall station facilities and landscaping

Based on general outward appearance, the station house interiors, exteriors, and landscaping require regular maintenance and future enhancements. Regarding maintenance issues, the platforms, interior walls, and restrooms should be maintained regularly to provide a sense of renewal and care for the basic station facilities. In the mid-term, the station house interiors could be improved with new lighting, paint, and locally-based artwork or murals. The station house exteriors and waiting areas could be updated with new paint, artwork, benches, and landscaping. In the long-term, the communities could plan for completely new station facilities that include: a larger enclosed platform waiting area; new modern interiors with elevators; eastside tunnel entrance to Park Forest; and, new modern exterior waiting areas with pedestrian amenities, park spaces, and landscaping. Discussions regarding beautification of the overall station facilities, proposed new station facilities, proposed new pedestrian tunnel, and landscaping must include, but are not limited to, the municipalities, Metra, Canadian National Railway, IDOT, and the Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit District.

Planning Principle 4: Unify all developments and improvements with design guidelines

A unified sense of design for new development, streetscape improvements, and station improvements should be established through the use of design guidelines. The design guidelines should include standards for building types, building materials, parking lot design, landscaping, streetscape improvements, and station improvements. Over the long-term, the station area should be redeveloped to provide a unified character and sense of place as a multi-modal, mixed-use transportation center.

Planning Principle 5: Provide more parking for commuter use and new development

The existing commuter parking lots at the station provide 727 commuter spaces and have a 90% average daily utilization rate. Although there is no adjacent land available for additional surface parking, Metra projects the need for 500-600 new spaces by the year 2030 based on regional population forecasts. In order to provide more parking for commuter use and accommodate transit-oriented development, the commuter parking lots may need to be re-configured or utilized for a shared-use parking structure. Metra's commuter parking guidelines may be found on page 7-21. Discussions regarding construction of any parking facilities must include, but are not limited to, the municipalities, Metra, IDOT, and the Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit District.

PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAN AND CIRCULATION PLAN

VI. PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAN AND CIRCULATION PLAN

The Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields reviewed and discussed the preliminary concept plans through the project's Steering Committee at its April 18, 2007 meeting. The preliminary concept plans are described and depicted within Appendix C. Based on Steering Committee review, a preferred concept plan was determined and approved for detailed implementation analysis. Importantly, the preferred concept plan was split into a short-term phase and a long-term phase to illustrate immediate improvements and full build-out improvements, even though the implementation strategies may include mid-term actions. In addition, the following substantive revisions were made based on Steering Committee feedback:

- In the short-term, Park Forest will seek out interested developers to redevelop the commercial parcels along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 with mixed-use commercial and with multi-family residential uses.
- Short-term improvements in the station area should seek to enhance the Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 underpass for pedestrian comfort, while long-term improvements should include a pedestrian tunnel from Park Forest to the Matteson (south) station entrance.
- Appropriate and clear wayfinding signage is needed over the short-term and mid-term to direct the anticipated growing number of riders in the area to park at the lots at the Matteson and Olympia Fields Stations.
- In the short- and mid-term, providing additional parking in satellite lots removed from the immediate 211th Street Station area that could be connected via Pace's existing bus routes and service the station may alleviate some parking demand.
- In the short-term, the existing commuter parking lots will remain intact. In the long term, either or both commuter parking lots may potentially provide the site necessary for a shared-use parking structure with ground-floor retail, if the appropriate public and private funding sources can be identified.
- In the long-term, Park Forest prefers a two-level commuter parking deck with a new station building and retail, while Olympia Fields prefers a four-level shared-use parking structure with a new station building and retail.

Figures 5 and 6: Preferred Concept Plan (Short-Term) and (Long-Term) together illustrate the full build-out plan of the proposed improvements and mixed-use developments. As previously mentioned, the three communities would need to request the proposed station name change to "Park Forest/Lincoln Highway" in writing to Metra's Executive Director. The preferred concept plan is the basis for the implementation process described later in this report.

INSERT FIGURE 5

INSERT FIGURE 6

Development and Redevelopment Recommendations

- Within Park Forest, a one-story retail building and two-story mixed-use commercial buildings are proposed along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Indiana Street, as well as four-story condominium buildings along Homan Avenue in the short term. However, this scenario reflects full build-out capacity, and its timing will be determined by private market demand and absorption and public incentives.
- The short-term concept assumes that Olympia Fields approves the proposed commercial and residential development at the "gateway site" along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 at Olympian Way.
- Two-story, mixed-use retail/office buildings are proposed in Matteson at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Main Street within the short-term future.
- To meet long-term commuter parking demand, a two-level parking deck with ground-level retail and station building is proposed at the Park Forest commuter parking lot. Alternatively, a four-level shared-use parking structure with ground-level retail is proposed at the Olympia Fields commuter parking lot. Metra's commuter parking guidelines may be found on page 7-21.

Access and Infrastructure Recommendations

- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields cooperatively seek state and federal transportation funds for pedestrian-friendly streetscape improvements along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and a new station entrance from Park Forest to create better access.
- Park Forest and Olympia Fields partner together in seeking approval and funding from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for a signalized intersection at Indiana Street and Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 to facilitate safer access.
- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields work with Pace to reconfigure existing bus routes to provide better access between the station and local shopping, employment, and recreational destinations.

Community Facility Recommendations

- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields cooperatively plan and seek funding for unified improvements to the station interiors, such as new interior wall treatments, new lighting, maintained restrooms, and seating.
- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields cooperatively plan and implement exterior station improvements that include unified landscaping plans and new station buildings, which may incorporate retail vendors based on municipal preferences.
- Park Forest and Matteson cooperatively plan and seek funding for a pedestrian tunnel between the Park Forest commuter parking lot and the existing 211th Street Station entrance and railroad platform access.
- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields work with Pace to improve the existing bus turn-around with a new park space, benches, lighting, and landscaping.

Parking Facility Recommendations

- Appropriate and clear wayfinding signage is needed over the short-term and mid-term to direct the anticipated growing number of riders in the area to park at the lots at the Matteson and Olympia Fields Stations. New trailblazer signage can be provided to the Villages from Metra, but the placement of the signs must be coordinated with Metra.
- Providing additional parking in satellite lots removed from the immediate 211th Street Station area that could be connected via Pace's existing bus routes and service the station may alleviate some parking demand.
- The two-level shared-use parking structure for commuters and other uses (commercial, residential, etc.) in Park Forest would provide approximately 575 spaces, including 458 replacement spaces and 117 new spaces. A commuter surface parking lot would also provide 142 new parking spaces. The total commuter parking would be 717 spaces.
- The four-level, shared-use parking structure (commuters and commercial uses) in Olympia Fields would provide approximately 550 spaces, including 269 replacement spaces and 281 new spaces. A commuter surface parking lot would also provide 106 new parking spaces. The total commuter parking would be 656 spaces.
- The grand total number of commuter spaces recommended in both Park Forest and Olympia Fields is 1,373 spaces. Any structured parking would occur in the long-term, and should be designed to allow for additional levels of parking to be added as demand and funding warrant. Metra's commuter parking guidelines may be found on page 7-21.
- On-site surface parking is proposed for new commercial uses in Park Forest and Matteson.
- Internal structured parking is proposed within the new condominium buildings in Park Forest.
- The Villages could market the commuter parking lots at the Olympia Fields and Matteson Stations to local residents in order to reduce local demand from the commuter parking lots at the 211th Street Station.

Open Space Recommendations

- A public plaza is recommended in front of the new parking deck in Park Forest to act as a welcoming gateway to new station area development.
- As part of a multi-municipal project for commemorating historic Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, Park Forest desires to locate a gazebo and descriptive sign in the recommended public plaza.
- A large park space is recommended adjacent to the new parking deck in Park Forest to serve as open space and act as a buffer to surrounding residences.
- A gateway park is recommended at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Main

Street to provide an amenity for new development and incorporate wayfinding signage to Old Matteson.
- On-street and off-street pedestrian and bike connections are recommended for better public access to Old Plank Road Trail and to Spirit Trail Park.

Natural Resource Recommendations

- All new buildings and parking lots should utilize best management practices that minimize surface run-off and stormwater impacts to the Butterfield Creek.

High Priority Project Recommendations

- Park Forest should establish partnerships with the existing commercial property owner, developer(s), and necessary public agencies to facilitate redevelopment.
- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields should create a unified streetscape plan and design guidelines for Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 between Main and Indiana Streets.
- Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields should lobby elected representatives for state and federal funding for new public infrastructure improvements.

PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAN ILLUSTRATIONS

To provide a three-dimensional understanding for new development and station area improvements, three illustrative drawings were created to depict the preferred concept plan in the long-term future. Figure 7 shows a street-level perspective along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 eastbound at Olympian Way, and highlights streetscape improvements, a new station building in Matteson, and a mixed-use parking structure in Olympia Fields. Figure 8 shows a street-level perspective along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 from the railroad underpass looking towards new mixed-use development in Park Forest. Figure 9 shows a "bird's eye" aerial perspective along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 westbound from Indiana Street and highlights new mixed-use development in Park Forest. All three figures may be found on the following pages.

INSERT ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWING 1 (STREET LEVEL WESTBOUND AT OLYMPIA WAY)

INSERT ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWING

INSERT AERIAL DRAWING

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS PLAN

The Circulation and Access Plan is a complimentary component of the Preferred Concept Plan, and describes the recommended vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements within the station area. The main purpose of the Circulation and Access Plan is to create a more pedestrian-friendly station area environment, improve multi-modal access to the station, and address commuter parking needs. Figure 10: Circulation and Access depicts the overall recommended improvements that are described by access mode in the following subsections.

Vehicle Circulation, Access, and Parking

One of the study's major objectives is to transform the station area into a welcoming gateway for the three communities. Since most vehicular travelers view the station area from Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, the best way to visually transform the station area into a gateway is with streetscape improvements. The following elements should be considered as part of a detailed streetscape study for Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 between Main and Indiana Streets:

- Decorative highway street lighting
- Pedestrian-scaled streetlamps
- Streetlight banners, with a transit-based theme
- Uniformly designed sidewalk network
- Pedestrian improvements for the railroad underpass
- Clearly designated crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals
- Street trees within a landscaped parkway, between curb and sidewalk
- Wayfinding signage to the commuter station, bus stop, and parking lots at the 211th Street, Matteson, and Olympia Fields Stations
- Gateway signage at the commuter station

Due to the subjective nature of streetscape design, the Villages should consider an experienced design firm to conduct a detailed study that includes a public preference survey for the design elements. In addition, the streetscape study should include the preliminary engineering and survey work necessary to obtain the most accurate construction cost estimates. The Villages could use these end products to more successfully seek funding for final engineering and construction costs.

INSERT FIGURE 10

Besides streetscape improvements, the most requested vehicular improvement within the station area is for a signalized intersection at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Indiana Street. Many of the nearly 450 vehicles parking in the commuter lot in Park Forest access the lot using the Indiana Street intersection. In addition, local residents in the Lincolnwood neighborhood and Maynegaite neighborhood use Indiana Street to access the highway. Due to the perceived lack of safe access, the Villages of Olympia Fields and Park Forest should petition IDOT to install a signalized intersection at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Indiana Street.

Commuter Parking

Based on 2030 regional population projections by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), Metra estimates the need for 500-600 new commuter parking spaces by the year 2030. However, there is a documented need for short-term commuter parking solutions. For the 211th Street Metra Station, the latest parking counts from March 2007 indicate that the Park Forest (south) commuter lot was 86% utilized and the Olympia Fields (north) commuter lot was 98% utilized. Although these latest counts represent a 4% average decrease from the previous August 2006 counts, the current utilization rates for these two commuter lots indicate a need for additional commuter parking. Metra typically considers new commuter parking when commuter spaces are 85% utilized.

Due to new residential developments proposed near the station, Metra's parking projections may be partially met through a percentage of the total number of constructed residential units. It is statistically proven that a certain percentage of residents living near a station bought their home due to proximity to the train. The Villages could further influence this percentage by reducing residential parking requirements and promoting the Center for Neighborhood Technology's location efficient mortgage program, which provides more buying power for those living near transit.

A short-term solution to ease the demand at these highly-utilized commuter lots is to direct commuters to nearby stations and parking lots through new wayfinding signs and marketing. Based on the March 2007 parking counts, 59% of the 514 new commuter spaces were utilized at the Olympia Fields Station – an increase of 26% since the previous August 2006 count. Likewise, 63% of the 928 total spaces were utilized at the Matteson Station—a 7% increase since the previous May 2006 count. Based on the March 2007 parking counts at all three stations, there has been a net increase of 165 spaces occupied since the previous August 2006 parking counts. Through the appropriate and coordinated placement of clear wayfinding signage, it is expected that there could be some shift in parking use between the three stations, which will allow for additional riders over time who could not find parking before at the 211th Street Station. The Villages could also market the nearby commuter parking lots at the Olympia Fields and Matteson Stations to local residents in order to reduce local demand from the commuter parking lots at the 211th Street Station.

Another short-term solution to commuter parking demand is to increase daily parking rates. Currently, the daily parking rate at the Park Forest lot is $1.00, while it is $1.25 at the Olympia Fields lot. At the very least, the Park Forest and Olympia Fields parking fees should be the same. Pending a written request letter to Metra's Executive Director who would need to review and approve any changes, the Village of Park Forest could potentially increase the fee at the Park Forest (south) commuter lot. However, the new surface parking fee would need to remain comparable and competitive with commuter parking fees around the area. Metra's commuter parking guidelines may be found on page 7-21.

The Villages could also work with Pace to develop satellite park-n-ride lots for commuters as the 211th Street Station parking lots become fully utilized, including the other commuter parking lots at Matteson and Olympia Fields Stations. Pace Route 357 operates along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 between Cicero and Cottage Grove Avenues and provides connections to Lincoln Mall, the Chicago Heights Terminal at 16th and Vincennes, St. James Hospital, and major commercial strip centers along Lincoln Highway. Pace Route 753 is a feeder route that provides service generally along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 from Ridgeland Avenue to the 211th Street Station. Ideal remote parking facilities would be located along both Pace routes where existing parking facilities may be underutilized during the workday, such as shopping centers, churches, grocery stores, and movie theatres. Timing of the bus routes to maintain connections with the MED trains departing 211th Street Station and other bus routes near the Chicago Heights bus terminal would need to be looked at further.

In the long-term, the Villages could seek out public and private funding sources and work with Metra to explore the feasibility for two shared-use parking structures. A two-level shared-use parking structure for commuters and other uses (commercial, residential, etc.) in Park Forest would provide approximately 575 spaces, including 458 replacement spaces and 117 new spaces. A commuter surface parking lot would also provide 142 new parking spaces. The total commuter parking would be 717 spaces. The four-level, shared-use parking structure for commuters and commercial uses in Olympia Fields would provide approximately 550 spaces, including 269 replacement spaces and 281 new spaces. A commuter surface parking lot would also provide 106 new parking spaces. The total commuter parking would be 656 spaces. The grand total number of commuter parking spaces for both areas is 1,373 spaces.

Several key factors will influence the potential to build these structures: future market demand, land values and construction costs, and public and private financing. Both Park Forest and Olympia Fields have expressed a willingness to redevelop a portion of one and/or both commuter parking lots with a shared-use parking structure. The initial parking structure(s) could be built to accommodate a percentage of future parking demand, and include design elements that would allow for additional parking levels to be added as future demand and funding warrants.

Transit Circulation and Access

A short-term recommendation for transit circulation and access improvements relates to the bus turn-around and drop-off location on the Matteson side of the station. The existing conditions do not provide a very welcoming environment for commuters due to the lack of landscaping, shelter and seating, and pedestrian amenities. The Villages should work together to fund overall station interior and exterior improvements as described in the Implementation Strategies section of this report.

A long-term transit recommendation relates to new station buildings on the exterior portions of the railroad embankment. The new station buildings would serve as a welcoming public facility to access the station platforms, and contain new waiting areas and leased retail space. Depending on available public funding sources, the proposed station building in Matteson could be built separately or in tandem with the proposed pedestrian tunnel, station building, and parking structure in Park Forest. The proposed station building in Olympia Fields could be built separately or combined with the proposed parking structure north of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30.

Discussions regarding the proposed beautification of the overall station facilities, new station facilities, new pedestrian tunnel, and landscaping must include, but are not limited to the following: the municipalities, Metra, Canadian National Railway, IDOT, and the Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit District. There is currently no funding in Metra's capital program for new or improved station house interiors and exteriors or the proposed pedestrian tunnel.

MED Train Capacity Improvements

Local residents have expressed concern over their experiences with MED commuter trains being at capacity, which is a perception based on available seating. Metra has verified that there are a couple of trains that have slight capacity issues. As of January 8, 2007, Metra revised the MED schedule that modified some departing times. Metra Operations will continue to monitor the capacity of those couple of trains that exceed 98% occupancy and will try to make adjustments if there are means to do so.

Local residents also expressed a desire for additional MED service. Metra has stated that it considers adding service on a system-wide basis, and that the MED has much more frequent service compared to a majority of Metra rail lines. Currently, there are some significant capital and operating constraints to adding service on the MED.

A major capital improvement is Metra's funding needs for the purchase of 160 Highliner cars for the MED, which is dependent upon special bond funding from the State of Illinois. Metra recently received 26 individually powered Highliner electric railcars to replace the cars in ser-

vice for 35 years. Metra still needs to replace the rest of its Highliner cars, and continues its remanufacturing and rehabilitation programs for its locomotives and cars. The new Highliner cars are replacing carbon-steel Highliner cars, now reaching the end of their useful life. The new cars will feature stainless steel construction and state-of-the art propulsion, restrooms, larger windows, better seats, and brighter lighting. This project is listed under the RTA's Moving Beyond Congestion Report (February 2007) under the "Invest to Maintain" category. Additional Metra trains where feasible to serve demand is included under the "Invest to Enhance" category within the same report.

Other major capital improvements include a new MED yard, which is needed to service and support the new Highliner cars. This project is also listed under the RTA's Moving Beyond Congestion Report (February 2007) under the "Invest to Maintain" category. The MED extension to Peotone is also proposed in this report under the "Invest to Expand" category. This project is authorized for New Starts funding in the Federal Transportation Bill (SAFETEA-LU).

Southeast Service Line

Metra's proposed Southeast Service (SES) Line that is proposed to operate between Downtown Chicago and the Village of Crete is currently being studied by Metra through an Alternatives Analysis, which should be completed in Fall 2007. However, Metra expects that the proposed SES Line will only have a minimal and short-lived impact on the existing Metra Electric District Line. Ridership will be further studied through the proposed SES Line's Alternatives Analysis and subsequent studies.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and Access

The streetscape recommendations described for vehicular access also relate to pedestrian and bicycle access. The key recommendations include a continuous sidewalk network along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 in the station area, streetscape amenities, viaduct underpass improvements, new crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals, and a new signalized intersection at Indiana Street. Importantly, a pedestrian crossing across Olympia Way is proposed for further study in order to connect the "gateway site" development and the Olympia Fields' station entrance.

Regarding bicycle access, there is a local desire for convenient and safe access to bike trails and local parks in the station area. Due to the existing auto-oriented environment, the bicycle access between Olympia Field's Spirit Trail Park and the Old Plank Road Trail should occur through Matteson via the signalized intersection at Main Street and Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30. In the future, another bicycle connection between this local park and trail could be designated through Park Forest along Indiana Street and Homan Avenue when the proposed intersection improvements are made at Indiana Street.

Although related to commuter parking, the communities have expressed a desire for better pedestrian access between the Park Forest commuter lot and the station entrance. As part of the streetscape recommendations for Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, the railroad underpass should be improved in the short-term with pedestrian enhancements, such as new lighting and protection from birds roosting under the bridge. In the long-term, a pedestrian tunnel between the parking lot east of the MED Line and the station entrance west of the MED Line and south of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 may be feasible depending on public funding sources and the utilities buried under the MED Line and CN tracks. The communities would have to seek out funding for the proposed tunnel, and discuss the proposal with Metra and the Canadian National Railway. Metra owns the west side of the railroad, and the Canadian National Railway owns the east side.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

VI. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Preferred Concept Plan is a full build-out vision of future improvements and development for the 211th Street Metra Station and the immediate station area. The Plan serves to establish a welcoming gateway for the three adjacent communities, create better neighborhood connections to the station, and encourage new mixed-use development within the station area. The three partnering communities of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields have worked together to create this Plan. As such, the Villages will need to continue their cooperative efforts to effectively implement the Preferred Concept Plan. The following implementation strategies and subsequent descriptions in this section highlight the basic actions necessary for making the vision a reality.

- Strategy 1: Formalize Municipal Cooperation and Leadership
- Strategy 2: Amend Development Regulations
- Strategy 3: Use Local Funds to Leverage Public Funding and Private Capital
- Strategy 4: Secure Appropriate Funding Sources
- Strategy 5: Initiate Intergovernmental Relations
- Strategy 6: Market Station Area to the Private Sector Developers
- Strategy 7: Schedule Recommended Project Phases

Strategy 1: Formalize Municipal Cooperation and Leadership

In order for a plan to become reality, a cooperative spirit and a project champion(s) are necessary for successful implementation. Each Village should formally institutionalize their cooperative efforts and designate a project representative to ensure that the planning and implementation process are seamless and continuously pursued.

First, the Villages should create and adopt an intergovernmental agreement stating the purposes of this study and its commitment to the implementation process. This type of agreement could become an invaluable resource for future lobbying efforts to secure public funds and for competitive grant applications.

Second, the Villages should designate a project representative to facilitate the implementation process. Each Village had already designated a representative(s) to serve on this study's Steering Committee, which included Plan Commission members, elected and appointed officials, and economic development staff. Therefore, each Village could designate a Steering Committee representative or another appropriate representative to serve as an on-going project champion.

Lastly, the Villages' project representatives will need a forum to discuss the implementation process, provide updates on related development projects, and seek cooperation for future station improvements.

Strategy 2: Amend Development Regulations

The current station area is characterized by low-density highway commercial uses along a high-speed arterial and by single-family neighborhoods that are essentially auto-dependent to meet daily needs. However, the Villages could amend their respective development regulations to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, encourage mixed-use development, and ensure compatible building styles within the station area. Ultimately, the adjacent neighborhoods should be able to safely and comfortably walk to the Metra station and to future commercial uses along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, while visitors should experience the station area as a gateway to each community.

The Villages should amend their development regulations to include a mixed-use zoning district, a planned unit development (PUD) classification, or a transit zoning overlay. Any of these zoning methods could be used to encourage new transit supportive development that is pedestrian-friendly. At a minimum, the following standards should be considered:

- Mixed-use requirements could be flexible to allow for vertically mixed uses in one building, such as mixed retail/residential or retail/office, and horizontally mixed uses on one parcel.
- A minimum residential density could be established in order to support transit and local businesses, such as the nationally-recognized minimum of 12 units per acre for a station area.
- A density bonus provision could be used to allow developers to build more than the minimum residential density in exchange for public improvements, such as parks, plazas, streetscape amenities, or a public parking contribution.
- Reduced parking standards could be established to support transit and reduce developer costs, such as 1.0-1.5 parking spaces per residential dwelling unit and 2.5-3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space.
- Auto-oriented commercial uses, such as gas stations and repair shops, could be excluded since they typically do not create a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Pedestrian streetscape amenities, such as sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian-scaled lights, could be required for all new developments.
- New landscaping requirements could be used to screen parking lots with shrubs and/or include shade trees within a large surface parking lot.

Due to local prerogatives, each Village may amend their development regulations separately using these baseline standards. Alternatively, the Villages could cooperatively fund an experienced planning consultant or lawyer to create unified zoning standards as a template that they could each adopt separately.

Since the Villages seek a unified development style within the station area, they should consider adopting design guidelines as part of their development process. Design guidelines typically address both commercial and residential construction, provide flexibility to allow creative solutions, and include the following components:

- Building siting and orientation
- Building materials and façade articulation
- Building height, bulk, and massing
- Building lighting and signage
- Parking lots and parking structures
- Site signage and lighting
- Site landscaping and amenities
- Public streetscapes, plazas, and open space

The Villages could cooperatively fund an experienced planner or architect to create unified design standards that they could each adopt separately. Each Village could require the use of design guidelines as part of their development review process, through a preliminary sketch plan submission and design review meeting.

Most importantly, each Village should consider an expedited review process for development proposals within the one-half mile station area. One of the most commonly cited incentives for developers is a predictable due diligence process that allows for timely plan review, submission, and approval for construction. Each Village should consider an expedited review process of two to three months for station area proposals. The guidelines for expedited review should include adherence to the new station area development regulations and design guidelines, as well as applicable local, state, and federal environmental regulations.

Strategy 3: Use Local Funds to Leverage Public Funding and Private Capital

Each Village will need to contribute local funds for various public improvements in order to highlight a commitment to its vision of the station area, and to provide an incentive for the private sector to contribute through high quality development. Some public improvements relate to local jurisdictions, while others relate to state and federal jurisdictions and may be eligible for state and federal funding sources. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the proposed public improvements will occur without local financial commitment. Each Village should use its capital improvement budget process to allocate an appropriate local share for proposed public improvements, which may be used to leverage public funding sources and private developer contributions.

Proposed Public Improvement Costs

The following summary highlights the planning level order-of-magnitude costs for the proposed public improvements (see Table 2 for more details). The costs do not include land acquisition costs, nor costs for the proposed mid-term and long-term improvements to the station interiors and exteriors. These costs are in 2007 dollars and are subject to change.

1. Olympia Fields parking structure (550 spaces)	$12,100,000
2. Park Forest parking structure (575 spaces)	$12,650,000
3. New exterior station building in Matteson	$ 480,000
4. New exterior station building in Olympia Fields	$ 720,000
5. New exterior station building in Park Forest	$480,000
6. New surface parking lot in Park Forest (142 spaces)	$ 1,136,000
7. New surface parking lot in Olympia Fields (106 spaces)	$ 848,000
8. Public plaza adjacent to Park Forest parking structure	$ 336,000
9. Public plaza adjacent to Olympia Fields parking structure	$ 156,000
10. Boulevard streetscape (Lincoln Highway/, Olympian Way to Indiana Street)	$490,000
11. Streetscape improvements (Lincoln Highway, Olympian Way to Main Street)	$ 247,500
12. Streetscape improvements (Homan Avenue, north side)	$ 156,250
13. Streetscape improvements (Indiana Street, west side)	$ 59,375
14. Streetscape improvements (Olympian Way)	$151,875
15. New internal streets (Park Forest development site)	$774,000
16. Underpass improvements	$192,000
17. Bus turnaround improvements	$ 420,000
18. Intersection improvements (Olympian Way)	$75,000
19. Intersection signalization (Indiana Avenue)	$ 150,000
20. Pedestrian tunnel (between Park Forest and Matteson)	$ 3,100,000
Total Costs:	$34,722,000

Table 2: Proposed Public Improvement Costs*

Item	Location	Size	Unit	Unit Cost	Total	Description
Parking Structure	Olympia Fields	550	Parking Spaces	$22,000.00	$12,100,000.00	base construction costs does not include land acquistion and site preparation, or retail space
Parking Structure	Park Forest	575	Parking Spaces	$22,000.00	$12,650,000.00	base construction costs does not include land acquistion and site preparation, or retail space
New Station Building	Matteson	4000	SF	$120.00	$480,000.00	base construction costs for retail building; no transit facility costs are included
New Station Building	Park Forest	6000	SF	$120.00	$720,000.00	base construction costs for retail building; no transit facility costs are included
New Station Building	Olympia Fields	4000	SF	$120.00	$480,000.00	base construction costs for retail building; no transit facility costs are included
Surface Parking	Park Forest	142	Parking Spaces	$8,000.00	$1,136,000.00	new surface parking to be provided within current surface parking area
Surface Parking	Olympia Fields	106	Parking Spaces	$8,000.00	$848,000.00	new surface parking to be provided within current surface parking area
Plaza	Park Forest Parking Structure	28000	SF	$12.00	$336,000.00	demolition, paving, utilities, planting, paving, amenities, signage, and demolition
Plaza	Olympia Fields Parking Structure	13000	SF	$12.00	$156,000.00	demolition, paving, utilities, planting, paving, amenities, signage, and demolition
Boulevarded Streetscape	211th Street (between Olympian Way and Indiana Street)	1400	LF	$350.00	$490,000.00	demolition, sidewalk, planting, street lighting, utility coordination, median curbing, irrigation, drainage, and amenities
Streetscape	211th Street (between Olympian Way and Main Street)	1100	LF	$225.00	$247,500.00	demolition, sidewalk, planting, street lighting, utility coordination, and amenities
Streetscape	Homan Avenue (north side)	1250	LF	$125.00	$156,250.00	demolition, sidewalk, planting, street lighting, utility coordination, and amenities
Streetscape	Indiana Street (west side)	475	LF	$125.00	$59,375.00	demolition, sidewalk, planting, street lighting, utility coordination, and amenities
Streetscape	Olympian Way	675	LF	$225.00	$151,875.00	demolition, sidewalk, planting, street lighting, utility coordination, and amenities
Internal Streets	Park Forest Development	1200	LF	$645.00	$774,000.00	demolition, roadway, curb, striping, sidewalk, planting, signage, street lighting, utilities, and amenities
Underpass	Metra viaduct	320	LF	$600.00	$192,000.00	Bird protection screening, and new lighting
Bus turnaround	Matteson	35000	SF	$12.00	$420,000.00	Demolition, planting, paving, utilities, hardscape, architectural features, wayfinding, amenities, and coordination with PACE. No bus lane reconfiguration is included.
Intersection	211th Street & Olympia Way	1	EA	$75,000.00	$75,000.00	Demolition, striping, paving, crosswalk, signage, and pedestrian countdown signal.
Intersection signalization	211th Street & Indiana Avenue	1	EA	$150,000.00	$150,000.00	Demolition, signals, striping, paving, crosswalk, lighting, signage, and ped countdown signal.
Pedestrian tunnel	Between Park Forest and Matteson	200	LF		$3,100,000.00	lump sum cost estimate (in current dollars) provided by Metra's Engineering Department
Total					**$34,722,000.00**	*All costs estimated, in 2007 dollars

Strategy 4: Secure Appropriate Funding Sources

The majority of expenses for the site-specific development recommendations will be borne by the private sector; however, the Villages may need to make financial incentives available for challenging site conditions or desirable public improvements. The Villages may provide financial incentives, but should set goals for the expected financial or community benefits. The Villages may also engage in political lobbying and grant writing to secure appropriate public funding. Therefore, the Villages should thoroughly investigate the following public funding sources and financing tools to determine the most appropriate method for their individual financial circumstances and wherewithal.

Local Funding Sources

Capital Improvement Plan

A commonly used funding mechanism among the participating Villages is the use of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to implement public projects. The CIP could be used to implement key features of the station area plan, such as local streetscapes, parks and plazas, and station house interior and exterior improvements. Public dollars will always be limited, so each Village should balance its priorities with available resources and other funding source options. When updating its annual CIP, each Village should consider the priorities that are described in the phasing recommendations in Strategy 7.

Revenue-Sharing Agreements

All three Villages could enter into a revenue-sharing agreement for sales taxes generated within the station area's commercial corridor. The shared revenues could be used for public infrastructure projects along the corridor, or be utilized as local matching funds necessary for state and federal funding programs. Matteson has some existing businesses along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, Olympia Fields has a planned commercial center, and Park Forest has market potential for a new commercial center. Therefore, all three Villages will have a relatively equal amount of commercial space within the corridor, and could potentially initiate a revenue-sharing agreement in the near future.

Property Tax Abatement

Alternatively, a Village could use property tax abatement as an incentive to entice new development and redevelopment. Cook County Assessor's office established the Class 8 for property tax relief in order to level the highly competitive market between Counties. This type of incentive program may be particularly useful within the station area due to its proximity to Will County and Indiana, which have lower commercial property taxes. Nevertheless, the Vil-

lage could structure property tax abatement around costly redevelopment expenses, such as demolition, site preparation, and environmental remediation. More information may be found at www.cookcountyassessor.com/forms/cls8b.pdf.

Land Banking

Park Forest appears to be the only community with an opportunity for land banking. The Village is currently seeking control of the tax-delinquent commercial property at Lincoln Highway and Indiana Street. Once ownership is obtained, the Village could hire a market consultant to conduct a financial analysis and development pro forma to determine site preparation costs and property value based on the Plan. Afterward, the Village could use this informed bargaining power as a financial incentive to attract a developer for the site, or create a public-private partnership to redevelop the site in combination with the adjacent available site.

Public-Private Partnerships

A community could enter into a public-private partnership with a private developer to facilitate the proposed commercial redevelopment or future parking structures. This partnership may be established through informal discussions about the project and potential financial incentives, and then through legal negotiations and performance standards. As part of these negotiations, the Village could consider performance-based incentives that require a developer to deliver tangible results.

Commuter Parking Fees

Construction of the commuter parking lots at the 211th Street Metra Station were funded through state and federal funding sources. The Villages of Park Forest and Olympia Fields maintain the parking lots with commuter parking fees, based on a Metra maintenance agreement and a CSSMTD maintenance agreement, respectively. Pending a written request letter to Metra's Executive Director who would need to review and approve any changes, the Village of Park Forest could potentially increase the fee at the Park Forest (south) commuter lot. However, the new parking fee would need to remain comparable and competitive with commuter parking fees around the area. Metra's commuter parking guidelines may be found on 7-21.

It should be noted that surplus parking fees are generally accumulated for parking improvements and renovation, as required to keep a commuter parking lot in good operating condition, and to insure that the lot is properly maintained to standards acceptable to Metra. Surplus fees cannot be used for any other purposes (i.e. station interior and exterior improvements) without approval from Metra's Executive Director.

Transportation Enhancement District

All three Villages could work with the RTA, Metra, Pace, IDOT, and the Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit District (CSSMTD) to create a Transportation Enhancement (TE) district for the commuter station and parking lots. The TE district could unify the management and maintenance of all these public facilities, and search for grants for station and parking improvements.

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District

A community could create a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district to help improve a stagnant area that requires significant public infrastructure improvements to attract private investment. Once implemented, a TIF allows public improvement costs to be repaid by the increased property tax revenue that is generated by private development. State law allows TIF funds to be used for planning studies, land acquisition, demolition and site preparation, and public infrastructure.

Many communities throughout the Chicago region have used TIF districts within their Metra station areas to fund public improvements and facilitate development. TIF funds are especially useful in providing local capital needed to offset the costs of a shared-use parking structure. According to Metra research, about 58% of the 166 existing suburban station areas in the region have TIF districts that include the station or are within one mile.

Business Improvement District (BID)

The Village could create a business improvement district (BID) to increase its options for development and redevelopment. Specific benefits of a BID include: control and dispose of property; secure bond financing for public improvements and development; enter into contracts with any public or private agency; and, exercise the use of eminent domain for property acquisition for redevelopment purposes. Due to existing site conditions and development goals, Park Forest could consider the creation of a BID for the properties fronting on Lincoln Highway between the railroad and Indiana Street. In particular, this option would allow the Village to seek bond financing if necessary to fund public improvements.

State Funding Sources

Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning Grant

IDOT administers this program to support planning activities that promote the integration of land use, transportation, and infrastructure facilities in transportation corridors. The types of project funded include intergovernmental land use agreements, zoning amendments, and

multi-municipal corridor plans, economic plans, and congestion reduction plans. Since multi-municipal applications are more competitive in receiving grant awards, the three communities could cooperatively apply for numerous projects in this study. More information may be found at: www.dot.il.gov/corridorplanning/corridor_grant.html.

Truck Access Route Program (TARP)

IDOT administers this program to help local governments upgrade roads to accommodate heavy trucks. IDOT provides up to $30,000 per lane mile and up to $15,000 per intersection, with a maximum contribution limit of 50% or $600,000. Given the heavy truck traffic along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, the communities could potentially seek funding for the proposed intersection and streetscape improvements along this highway. The proposed improvements would help maintain traffic flow within the posted speed limits and improve safety through new signalization. Additional information may be found at: www.dot.state.il.us/opp/itep.html.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program

This IDOT program aims at facilitating the planning, development, and implementation of projects that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution within two miles of public and private schools (K-8 grades). The types of projects funded include sidewalks, crosswalks, bike facilities, and traffic calming improvements, such as signals, stop signs, and "skinny streets." All projects are funded at 100% with no local match required. Additional information may be found at: www.dot.il.gov/saferoutes/saferouteshome.aspx.

Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant (MBRG) Program

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) provides grants to municipalities for the clean-up of contaminated sites for the purpose of redevelopment. Eligible expenses include environmental consultant services, remedial investigation and design, and corrective action plans and implementation. The maximum grant is $120,000, with no more than $240,000 per municipality, and requires a 30% local match. Park Forest could consider this program to determine whether any corrective actions are needed for the former auto repair property at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Indiana Street, if a determination has not already been secured by the current owner. More program information may be found at: www.epa.state.il.us/land/bronwfields.

Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD), & Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers both programs to assist communities in the acquisition and/or development of land for parks and open space. Projects can vary from small tot lots to small neighborhood parks. The OSLAD program is state financed, and the LWCF program is federally funded. Under both programs, grants of up to 50% may be obtained. Acquisition grants are limited to $750,000 and park development grants are limited to $400,000. Park Forest could potentially use these programs to finance the public parks and plazas recommended as part of the mixed-use redevelopment project. More information may be found at: http://dnr.state.il.us/ocd/newoslad1.htm.

Federal Funding Sources

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

IDOT administers this reimbursable program which is funded through the 2005-2009 federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU. Funding is available for 80% of engineering and construction costs, while 20% of the costs must come from the local project sponsor. Eligible projects include station improvements, streetscapes, and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements. The three Villages could cooperatively lobby local, state, and federal representatives to fund the recommended station facility and corridor improvements within the Preferred Concept Plan. In Fiscal Years 2004-2006, 107 projects were chosen for over $60 million in ITEP funds. Additional information may be found at: www.dot.state.il.us/opp/itep.html.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

Under the auspices of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) administers the CMAQ program. This program is funded through the 2005-2009 federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, for projects that benefit regional air quality and reduce auto emissions. Projects may include transit improvements, commuter parking, traffic flow improvements, and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements. Grant dollars are not available for financing the replacement of commuter parking spaces that are displaced from designated and/or historical commuter parking facilities. Funding is available for 80% of the total engineering and construction costs. To be eligible for funding, a project must be included within CATS transportation improvement plan. Additional information may be found at: www.catsmpo.com/broch/tip-brochure.pdf and www.catsmpo.com/prog-cmaq.htm.

Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP)

Municipalities may directly apply for this grant program, which is authorized by SAFETEA-LU. The program supports planning and implementation projects that improve the efficiency of the transportation system, reduce environmental impacts, reduce the need for future costly public infrastructure investments, improve access to jobs, and encourage private sector development. Planning grants may include those to improve walking, biking, and transit systems, as well as the development of new types of transportation financing. Implementation grants may include grants for activities to implement TOD plans. A 20% local match is required for the grants. Due to the multi-municipal location of the station, the three communities could cooperatively seek out this funding source for numerous project recommendations, such as the corridor streetscape study, design, and construction and a multi-municipal maintenance and financing structure for station improvements. Information may be found at: www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/pi_tcsp.htm.

Potential Project Funding Methods

On July 26, 2007, Park Forest hosted a multi-municipal and multi-agency funding partnership summit to discuss potential funding sources and methods. As a result, the following ideas were generated as a starting point for future deliberations among the three municipalities and the potential funding agences (see page 7-6 for more project details).

1) A three-municipal submittal to the SSMMA Surface Transportation Program (STP) for a 211th Street Circulation Improvement Project, including:
   - Underpass improvements $ 192,000
   - Bus turnaround improvements $420,000
   - Intersection improvements at Olympia Way $ 75,000
   - Intersection improvements at Indiana Street $ 150,000

2) A three-municipal submittal to the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) for a 211th Street Station Area Streetscape Project, including:
   - Boulevard streetscape $490,000
   - Streetscape: Lincoln Highway/Olympia Way to Main Street $ 247,500
   - Streetscape: Olympia Way $ 151,875

3) A joint venture (Olympia Fields/Metra/federal legislative initiative/developer) submittal to the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program for 211th Street Station parking:
   - 550-space parking structure $12,100,000
   - Public plaza $ 156,000

4) A joint venture (Park Forest/Metra/federal legislative initiative/developer) submittal to the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program for 211th Street Station parking:

- 575-space parking structure	$12,650,000
- Pedestrian tunnel	$ 3,100,000
- Public plaza	$ 336,000

Strategy 5: Initiate Intergovernmental Relations

The Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields should cooperatively lobby local, state, and federal representatives to provide public funding for the proposed transportation improvements related to the Preferred Concept Plan. The strategy of "strength in numbers" is especially relevant to the commuter station, which serves the three communities and regional commuters. Specifically, unity among all three communities will surely produce better results than one of the three communities requesting public funding sources.

At the local level, the three communities could seek assistance from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). CMAP is the new umbrella organization for land use and transportation planning within the Chicago region. A policy committee of 21 local representatives helps determine updates to the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan, and Unified Work Program which are used to schedule proposed projects for future funding and construction. This policy committee includes representatives from Cook County, RTA, Metra, Pace, and IDOT; therefore, the three communities could lobby for public transportation improvements through these representatives. Information on CMAP may be found at: www.chicagoareaplanning.org/default.asp and www.chicagoareaplanning.org/committees/default.asp.

At the state level, the three communities could focus efforts on Illinois State representatives. In particular, the communities could schedule a project briefing for state representatives and request political support for state and federal funding sources. These representatives may also have access to discretionary state funding sources for district projects which are not advertised through state agencies. Lastly, Mayor Ostenburg of Park Forest served as a state representative, and could be consulted on effective methods for lobbying state representatives.

At the federal level, the three communities could focus efforts on their U.S Representative. Since this study seeks to improve local economic conditions around two transportation assets, a Metra commuter rail station and Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, their congressman could be influential in securing federal funding for transportation improvements through future transportation legislation.

Strategy 6: Market Station Area to Private Sector Developers

The Villages' private sector marketing efforts should indicate to potential developers and businesses that the station area is an important district that will receive special attention and commitment. As such, the Villages should be prepared for proactive marketing efforts by initiating and/or completing the recommended tasks in the previous strategies. In particular, each Village will need an appointed project representative, updated development regulations, local funding commitments, potential funding from outside sources, and political support from local and state representatives. The following marketing strategies highlight the interrelated actions that each Village may initiate individually or cooperatively.

Each community has already established connections with prospective developers and businesses, private consulting firms, and professional trade organizations. To successfully market the Preferred Concept Plan to the private sector, the Villages should cooperatively discuss current projects, developers, and business mix to determine potential candidates for Plan implementation. These discussions could occur on a regular basis through the recommended organizational forum described in Strategy 1, or through meetings between the current economic development coordinators for each Village. These cooperative discussions will then allow each Village to individually pursue potential private sector candidates that would support the overall vision for the station area.

The need for cooperative marketing efforts has been discovered through this study's TOD planning process. For example, the residential developer of the "Reserve at Maynegaite" in Olympia Fields explained that he was discussing the potential to build the proposed condominiums of the "gateway site" with the site's developer. The same residential developer also expressed interest in the proposed condominiums for the Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 properties in Park Forest. Clearly, the overall economic development conditions within the station area could benefit from cooperative discussions between each Village and the prospects resulting from these discussions.

For proposed development sites, each Village could individually pursue potential developers through its established contacts, from prospective leads given by the cooperating Villages, or through requests for qualifications (RFQs) or proposals (RFPs). Specifically, Matteson is already receiving interest from developers for sites at Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and Main Street; therefore, the Village could facilitate discussions with these developers or seek out other developers through established contacts. For sites along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, Park Forest has already contacted numerous local developers; therefore, the Village could use an RFQ process to seek out developers from the larger metropolitan region or from national firms with TOD experience.

Once the developments have been built, the Villages should continue their discussions to understand the business tenant mix within each portion of the station area. For instance, the proposed business mix for the "gateway site" includes a CVS pharmacy, drive-thru bank, free-

standing restaurant, and small strip center with multiple retailers. On the opposite side of the station, Park Forest is interested in finding a developer and businesses for the proposed mixed-use commercial sites along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30. Thus, Olympia Fields and Park Forest share a mutual interest in creating commercial areas that do not directly compete with each other, but instead serve non-competing market demand based on local shopping needs and commuters.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of the Preferred Concept Plan depends on the co-operative efforts of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields. All three communities benefit from the commuter station's location, and should actively participate in its improvement and development as a mixed-use transportation center.

Strategy 7: Schedule Recommended Project Phases

Given the magnitude of public improvements recommended in the Preferred Concept Plan, the Villages should schedule project phases to create a strong impression of improvements and provide time to secure financing. In the short-term, the Villages could focus on improving the public streetscapes and encouraging private development through high quality standards. In the medium-term, the Villages could improve the commuter station house interiors and exteriors. Over the long-term, the Villages could facilitate the construction of a new station house and pedestrian tunnel, and redevelop one or both commuter parking lots with mixed-use parking structures. The following phasing plan summarizes the key public and private sector actions within the recommended short-term, medium-term, and long-term timeframes.

Phase 1: Short-Term Development and Public Improvements (0-3 Years)

The Villages should begin the improvement process where it is needed most — along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 — in order to change the visual impression of the station area. The Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 corridor is the gateway to the commuter station and the adjacent communities. Any public improvements and private development will immediately signal a change. The Villages should capture the documented market demand as catalyst projects within the station area, and seek public funding sources for public improvements along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30.

Olympia Fields Commercial Lots

- The Village has already approved the concept plan for the "gateway site" at Olympian Way. The approved concept plan includes 41,000 square feet of single-story commercial uses within an auto-oriented format and 72-80 condominiums within two 4-story buildings facing Spirit Trail Park.
- Within six months, the Village could amend their development regulations with new design guidelines and request the "gateway site" developer to use high-quality building materials and provide pedestrian amenities, which could serve as a precedent for future development in the station area.
- Within six months, the Village also could incorporate best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater into its design guidelines, such as drainage swales, native vegetation, and permeable paving, and request the "gateway site" developer to use BMPs to minimize potential impacts to Butterfield Creek.

Matteson Commercial Lots

- The Village has already received interest from potential developers for its commercial lots along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30, on the west and east sides of Main Street. The Village could hold off on reviewing any development proposals until it has adopted the appropriate development regulations or a set of design guidelines.
- Within six months, the Village could amend their development regulations with zoning requirements and/or design guidelines, to facilitate mixed-use develop-

ment in a transit-supportive framework. The current zoning does not permit residential uses or mixed-use development.
- The Village could encourage the appropriate mixed-use development by offering expedited review and approval for potential developers that adhere to the new transit-supportive regulations.

Park Forest Commercial Lots
- The Village is currently seeking control of the tax-delinquent commercial property along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 at Indiana Street. Since this property was a former auto repair business, the Village should determine if any environmental remediation is needed and seek appropriate state funding, if necessary.
- Within six months, the Village could amend their development regulations with new zoning requirements and/or design guidelines, to facilitate mixed-use development in a transit-supportive framework. The current zoning does not permit residential uses or mixed-use development.
- Within six months, the Village could use the Indiana Street property as a financial incentive for redevelopment of the adjacent commercial property, which is currently underutilized by the property owner who is seeking interested developers.
- Within the first year, the Village could negotiate with the current property owner of the commercial property to establish a public-private partnership for the joint redevelopment of both commercial lots. The Village should complete a financial analysis and seek legal representation prior to this action.
- If a public-private partnership is established, the Village could issue a request-for-qualifications (RFQs) to attract qualified developers of the two commercial lots that would adhere to the Preferred Concept Plan or provide another transit-supportive design.
- Alternatively, the Village could seek potential developers for the Indiana Street lot to initiate a phase one development based on the Preferred Concept Plan.

Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 Public Improvements
- Within the first year, the Villages could cooperatively fund and initiate a streetscape design study in order to create corridor design guidelines for new development and public improvements between Main and Indiana Streets.
- As part of the streetscape study, viaduct improvements could include bird protection screening, lighting, and a low solid wall to buffer traffic.
- The Villages could negotiate with potential developers to initiate partial streetscape improvements along their property boundaries and establish a precedent for future improvements.
- Within the first and second years, the Villages could lobby and seek available state and federal funding sources for construction of the proposed corridor improvements, including streetscape and median improvements, intersection upgrades and signaling, and underpass improvements.
- Within the third year, the Villages could facilitate the construction process for the streetscape improvements.

Station Area Parking Improvements

- Olympia Fields and Park Forest should continue maintaining the existing commuter parking lots per their maintenance agreements, including those at the Matteson and Olympia Fields Stations. Since the lot in Park Forest is nearing its 20-year due date for resurfacing, the Village could design the resurfacing improvements to include an opening for a future street connection to the adjacent commercial property and pedestrian-friendly walkways. Park Forest would need to wrok with Metra on this project.
- Within six months, Park Forest and Olympia Fields could coordinate with Metra to locate and install new wayfinding signage for nearby commuter parking lots as an alternative for local residents' use.
- Within one year, all three Villages could work together to create a multi-municipal transit improvement district that seeks grant funding for station and parking improvements.
- Pending a written request to Metra's Executive Director who would need to review and approve any changes, the Village of Park Forest could potentially increase the fee at the Park Forest (south) commuter lot. The parking fee would need to remain comparable and competitive with commuter parking fees around the area.
- The Villages could market the commuter parking lots at the Olympia Fields and Matteson Stations to local residents in order to reduce local demand from the commuter parking lots at the 211th Street Station.

Station House Interior and Exterior Improvements

- The existing restroom facilities within the station house interior should be reopened and maintained on a regular basis. The Villages should agree on the most appropriate method for regular maintenance costs and staff requirements.

Phase 2: Mid-Term Development and Public Improvements (3-5 Years)

For the mid-term phase, the Villages could focus on minor capital improvements for the station house interiors and exteriors. In addition, the Villages could provide additional parking options through satellite parking. Due to the need for local funding, the Villages should plan in advance to allocate the appropriate funds for these public improvements. In addition, the Villages should begin lobbying efforts for available state and federal funding for station improvements in the short-term phase, so that funding may be allocated and appropriated by the mid-term phase.

Station House Interior and Exterior Improvements

- The Villages could cooperatively fund and initiate an interior design plan for station house improvements that includes new lighting, seating, and wall finishes, such as colored tiles or locally produced murals. The purpose of the interior design plan would be to provide a more welcoming environment to arriving and departing commuters.

- The Villages could cooperatively fund and initiate a landscaping plan for the station house exteriors that includes the entrance areas, the railroad embankments, the bus turn-around area, and the parking lot areas. The purpose of the landscaping plan would be to unify the entire station area through common landscapes and provide a more visually-pleasing environment.
- Any station interior or exterior improvements would have to be funded by the municipalities. There is currently no funding in Metra's capital program for new station house interiors and exteriors. Any improvements should be discussed with Metra, which owns and maintains the station house interiors, and with CSSMTD, which controls the public exteriors west of the railroad embankment.

Station Area Parking Improvements

- The Villages could work with Pace to develop satellite park-n-ride lots for commuters as the station parking lots become fully utilized, including those at the Matteson and Olympia Fields Stations. The satellite park-n-ride lots along bus routes serving the station could take advantage of underutilized sites, such as church parking and large shopping center parking lots, and be arranged through legal agreements regarding use and liability. Timing of the bus routes to maintain connections with the MED trains departing 211th Street Station and other bus routes near the Chicago Heights bus terminal would need to be looked at further.
- The Villages could market the commuter parking lots at the Olympia Fields and Matteson Stations to local residents in order to reduce local demand from the commuter parking lots at the 211th Street Station.

Phase 3: Long-Term Development (5+ Years)

Over the long-term, the Villages could focus on the final components of the Preferred Concept Plan and initiate major capital improvements, such as a new station house and pedestrian tunnel and commuter parking lot redevelopment for a mixed-use parking structure. Due to the need to solve projected long-term commuter parking demand of 500-600 new spaces by 2030, the Villages should begin lobbying efforts for available state and federal funding for parking improvements in the medium-term phase, so that funding may be allocated and appropriated by the long-term phase.

Station House Interior and Exterior Improvements

- The Villages could cooperatively seek funding for a pedestrian tunnel between Park Forest and Matteson, and upgraded platforms and waiting shelters. These major capital improvements could be timed to coincide with station house and platform obsolescence and the need for replacements.
- Matteson could build a new exterior station house outside of the embankment area in order to create a more welcoming station entrance and leasable retail space. This major capital improvement could be timed to coincide with the other proposed improvements within the station house.
- Park Forest and/or Olympia Fields could build a new exterior station house, which could be incorporated as part of the proposed parking structure. The proposed

pedestrian tunnel between Matteson and Park Forest would need to be designed to connect with any exterior new station house in Park Forest.
- Discussions regarding beautification of the overall station facilities or proposed new station facilities, proposed new pedestrian tunnel, and landscaping must include, but are not limited to, the municipalities, Metra, Canadian National Railway, IDOT, and the Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit District.

Station Area Parking Improvements

- Metra's parking guidelines on page 7-21 should be reviewed and consulted.
- The Villages could cooperatively seek funding for two shared-use parking structures to replace a portion of the commuter surface parking in Park Forest and in Olympia Fields. The potential for two structures will be dependent on demonstrated parking demand and available funding from local, state, and federal sources. Metra projects a need for 500 to 600 spaces by 2030 to accommodate anticipated household growth in the area.
- The two-level shared-use parking structure for commuters and other uses (commercial, residential, etc.) in Park Forest would provide approximately 575 spaces, including 458 replacement spaces and 117 new spaces. A commuter surface parking lot would also provide 142 new parking spaces. The total commuter parking would be 717 spaces.
- The four-level, shared-use parking structure (commuters and commercial uses) in Olympia Fields would provide approximately 550 spaces, including 269 replacement spaces and 281 new spaces. A commuter surface parking lot would also provide 106 new parking spaces. The total commuter parking would be 656 spaces.
- The grand total number of commuter spaces proposed in the Park Forest and Olympia Fields locations is 1,373 spaces.
- Both shared-use parking structures are proposed to contain a percentage of leasable ground-level retail space, which could increase based on future market conditions as long as there is no impact to the net number of commuter spaces. Private revenue will be needed to offset construction and maintenance costs.
- The proposed shared-use parking structures should be designed to allow for additional levels of parking to be added as demand and funding warrant.

Metra Commuter Parking Guidelines

The following Metra parking guidelines should be noted with regard to funding for new or structured commuter parking on the existing commuter lots in the long-term.

- Throughout each step of the redevelopment process, the amount of commuter parking in the 211th Street Station area should remain at its current level, resulting in no net loss of spaces during any of the phases.
- Commuter parking that may be displaced as a result of proposed development should not be replaced within other existing commuter parking lots in any of the

nearby station areas.

- Grant dollars, including Metra's, are not available for financing the replacement of commuter parking spaces that are displaced from designated and/or historical commuter parking facilities. Thus, the communities and/or developer(s) would need to finance the replacement of any commuter spaces that are displaced due to development.
- The land for both lots at the 211th Street Station was purchased with state and federal funds, thus this will need to be discussed with IDOT. The financial obligations of both commuter parking lots proposed for redevelopment will need to be honored and reinvested in a new commuter parking facility or facilities. The use of federal funds for the construction of new parking facilities may be restricted, if parking spaces that were federally funded, are removed or altered during redevelopment.
- It is also important to note that the commuter lot north of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and west of the MED Line in Olympia Fields has split owership between IDOT and Metra. The Chicago South Suburban Mass Transit District (CSSMTD) leases the land in the IDOT-owned portion. Through two separate maintenance agreements with Metra and the CSSMTD, the Village of Olympia Fields maintains the entire north lot. Metra owns the improvements to the commuter lot south of Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 and east of the MED Line. Park Forest owns the land and maintains this lot, while Metra owns the improvements to the lot.
- Metra only participates in building new parking spaces where demand warrants and funding is available.
- Metra encourages the exploration of shared parking opportunities where the commuter parking can be used by others in the evenings and on weekends.
- Parking structures are extremely costly to build, operate, and maintain.
- Grant dollars for the construction of structured parking has been limited to date and securing these funds is a highly competitive process.
- Metra does not have funds to build structures for commuter parking. While Metra has participated in funding new commuter parking spaces within structures, the level of participation has generally equated to the cost of building an equivalent number of surface spaces.
- Consideration should be given to involving multiple partners (public and private) in order to share the spaces and costs of a proposed parking structure and any new infrastructure associated with the facility (roads, sidewalks, etc.)
- Commuter parking fees within the proposed parking facilities need to remain comparable and competitive with commuter parking fees within the Metra system.
- Surplus parking fees are generally accumulated for parking improvements and renovation, as required to keep a commuter parking lot in good operating condition, and to insure that the lot is properly maintained to standards acceptable to Metra. Surplus fees cannot be used for any other purposes (i.e. station interior and exterior improvements) without approval from Metra's Executive Director.
- The communities would need to discuss the proposed parking structures with Metra's Executive Director.

APPENDICES: COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Most Important Problems/Issues

1. Accessibility – vehicular/pedestrian traffic
2. Parking
3. Commuter and retail amenities at station
4. Lack of landscaping/maintenance
5. Station should be multi-modal
6. Underutilization of commercial opportunities
7. Lack of station and neighborhood transition
8. The name of the station -- 211th Street
9. Public safety/security, relating to vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists
10. Tax delinquent properties
11. Embankment poses visibility issues for potential businesses
12. Needs better lighting and signage
13. Lack of complimentary TOD land use mix
14. Traffic signal needed at U.S. 30 and Indiana
15. Redevelopment potential of surface parking
16. Capitalize on commuter and highway traffic market potential
17. Poor quality of station facilities overall
18. Need for destination uses, both commercial and cultural
19. Bridge crossing could be a major gateway

Three Most Important Issues (from list above)

- Accessibility – vehicular/pedestrian traffic
- Public safety/security, relating to vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists
- Lack of complimentary TOD land use mix

Improvements Identified for Train Station Area

- Structure parking to take better advantage of development opportunities
- Higher quality commercial development – both destination and TOD
- Traffic signal at U.S. 30/Indiana St.
- Parking expansion
- Improve pedestrian access to station
- Mixed-use developments
- Public safety improvements
- Commercial development
- Development of vacant land and buildings
- New station facility, parking lot, and lighting improvements
- Construction of a protected crosswalk
- Station area continuity and identity
- Better transition to the neighborhood

Primary Assets of Train Station Area

- Commercial development can take advantage of neighborhoods, commuters, and vehicular markets
- Both land and buildings available for development and redevelopment
- Nearby residential neighborhoods create built-in demand for commuter station and commercial uses
- Location near U.S. 30/Lincoln Highway
- Frequent, reliable transportation to/from Chicago
- Potential for development of available land
- Parking utilization
- Visibility from vehicular traffic to support retail
- Transit connections
- Surrounding property values and property upkeep
- Bike path connections along Kedzie
- Number of commuters
- Opportunity to work with partnering communities to overcome issues
- Urban identification rather than mini-downtown
- Station enhances residential and retail development opportunities
- Multi-use development potential

KEY PERSON INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

1. What are the key assets and opportunities?

- Commuter rail service to Chicago
- Route 30 is a major arterial
- Easy access to the station from Route 30/Lincoln Highway
- Convenience is a key asset of the station
- High-visibility location
- Approximately 40,000 vehicles along Route 30 is good for potential business
- Vacant parcel at Rt. 30 & Main St.
- Many residents in the area
- Matteson has been having a 5-year building boom at price points about $200K
- Park Forest is experienced at acquiring tax-delinquent properties; vacant property at Indiana & Rt. 30 has $1.2 million in back taxes
- Olympia Fields is focused on maintaining high property values
- Maynegaite community adjacent to station in Olympia Fields has a good reputation
- 32 attached single-family homes approved in Olympia Fields along Rt. 30 (The Reserve)
- 13 detached single-family homes approved in Olympia Fields across from the Reserve
- Walk to train convenience for station area residents
- New commercial and condominiums proposed for "gateway site" in Olympia Fields
- CVS is approved for "gateway site" at Olympian Way and Rt. 30
- Old Plank Trail multi-use path is a regional amenity
- Opportunities for condominium development
- Per capita income is positive for the 3-, 5-, and 7-mile market trade areas
- Multi-modal transportation center with the station, bus service, and major highway network
- Racial diversity and culture

2. What are the main issues and concerns?

- Route 30 & Cicero is a better retail location
- Not enough density of upper-income homeowners to support high-end retailers
- Station is not in a destination location
- Sterile, uninviting corridor
- Immediate station area is not pedestrian-friendly
- Retail is skewed negatively based on race; there's a perception that "retail red-lining" is occurring in the local area
- Regional competition for retail
- Lincoln Mall is supposed to be a hub, but there isn't a lot of activity there
- Lack of pedestrian/bike trails into the station area
- Lack of service-oriented businesses within short walking distance
- No businesses within walking distance to serve area residents
- Need businesses or services at the station
- Park Forest has older housing stock, although they have a rehabilitation program
- Public school district is an issue for families
- Olympia Fields wants new commercial uses due to lost car dealership to bring in sales tax dollars
- Outsiders don't know what is beyond the Metra station
- Station has poor access for seniors and less able-bodied people due to its pedestrian ramps
- Need express train after 5:50 a.m. and before 6:50 a.m.
- Station needs modern amenities
- Cleanliness of the station is a concern
- Traffic is an issue during the commuter rush when people are accessing the station
- Hard to access anything beyond the station
- Existing residential areas along Route 30 preclude commercial development
- High taxes, especially in Park Forest
- Reluctance of Park Forest to regard current parking lot as being dedicated permanently to parking

3. How has the area changed over time?

- Lincoln Mall is undergoing a redevelopment prOcess (Target is a committed retailer)
- Lincoln Mall is doing better; Sears anchor wasn't doing well but that has turned around; future of Carson's anchor is questionable though the mall's leasing and marketing manager said Carson's is staying
- Lincoln Mall area and Lincoln & Western retail area are worse off than 10 years ago
- Builders Square in Matteson has been vacant for seven years
- Matteson Fire Station site was a vacant commercial site for awhile
- 20 + years ago there was a convenience store at the station
- Additional residential units have been added
- Some former businesses have closed
- Tavern existing where the Matteson Fire Station is located
- Additional parking has been added
- Green space has been diminished
- Lincoln Highway was a two-lane road; Lincoln Mall was built in the early 70s
- Lincoln Highway was widened about 10-15 years to increase traffic capacity, but not to address any pedestrian concerns.
- Olympia Fields and Matteson have gotten wealthier; more buying power in local area
- Demographic trends are more stable now than 10 years ago; white flight has ended

4. What businesses are needed in the area?

- Neighborhood commercial would be good for Rt. 30 & Main St.
- "Mom & pop" stores with homemade goods, such as a bakery, deli, coffee shop
- Florist, dry cleaners, shoe repair, card shop
- Drugstore, ice cream parlor, bookstore, bike shop, clothing stores, bookstore
- Unique restaurants (no franchises)
- No chain stores or restaurants
- Area oversaturated with cheap retail
- Restaurants for evening dining
- Family-style restaurants
- Corner Bakery, Gino's Pizza, Panera Bread, Subway, Quizno's
- DSW, Crate & Barrel
- Small commercial uses
- Need a place to eat, drink, and socialize
- Trader Joe's, Whole Foods would be unique commercial uses
- Starbucks (note: previously interested in gateway site)
- Specialty foods
- Office uses
- Bank
- Entertainment uses

5. What public and/or recreational uses are needed?

- Gateway park on vacant parcel at Rt. 30 & Main St.
- Olympia Fields Country Club is a major amenity
- Pedestrian/bike trails; trail markings for runners; fitness course along trails
- Passive recreational amenities (benches, viewing areas)

6. What type(s) of housing are needed?

- Multi-family housing for vacant parcel at Rt. 30 & Main St.
- Townhomes
- Condominium buildings
- Senior apartments
- Garden apartments for young professionals/commuters, though Maynegaite homeowners are opposed to any rental housing
- 3 to 4 story residential buildings are okay
- Mixed-use commercial and residential
- Mixed-use condominium development (ground floor retail/condos above)
- Higher-end housing with amenities

7. Are there physical or urban design issues?

- Gateway site development will require a sewer service agreement between Olympia Fields and Matteson; former restaurant at the site used a sewer service agreement
- Gateway site has natural resource constraints; $1 million sewer upgrade needed
- Route 30 is unattractive
- Need sidewalk along Park Forest side of Route 30 beyond Indiana St.
- Viaduct is home to pigeons roosting
- Area is seen as eastern gateway to Matteson
- Signalized intersection at Indiana and Route 30 is needed
- Commuters do not stop when leaving parking lot; cars typically leave one after another
- Traffic levels along Route 30; seven-foot privacy fence approved for the Reserve subdivision
- Outstanding stormwater and sanitary sewer issues need to be resolved for gateway site
- General area maintains a flat horizontal profile, so high-rise development is not appropriate
- Station needs ADA-accessible improvements; pedestrian ramps are hard to navigate
- Pedestrian/bike trails are needed
- Green space and trees along the roads
- Area is not pedestrian-friendly
- Not a walking area from Cicero to Western; 50 miles-per-hour traffic
- Tunnel connecting the station with the Park Forest parking lot

8. Are there any internal or external factors limiting new development?

- High taxes are the biggest drawback; property and sales taxes compared to Will County
- Park Forest taxes are higher than those in Matteson and Olympia Fields
- Massive commercial concentration to the west in the Lincoln Mall area
- Vacant storefronts along Lincoln Highway to the west
- Area is largely single-family residential, and not known for condos or apartments
- Rental units need to be market rate due to perception issues
- Most retailers are looking for incentives
- Housing market is saturated with high-price point, single-family starter homes
- Rich Central School District is not good, but Rich East School District is even worse
- Outside perception that the area is lower income; economic development "red-lining"

9. What is the most pressing issue or recommended improvement?

- Make corridor inviting and distinct
- Create development that generates $100-150,000 in sales tax revenue for Park Forest
- Gateway site would remain open space
- Creation of a tax increment finance district to encourage new development
- Redevelopment for vacant and underutilized commercial properties in Park Forest
- Parking garage is almost necessary in order to attract more development
- Parking facility should be considered on the Park Forest parking lot, with tunnel access to the train station
- Signalized intersection at Indiana & Route 30
- Stop sign at Indiana and Homan Streets to control commuter parking access
- Station needs to be updated with modern amenities (i.e. Laraway Road, New Lenox)
- Safer streets for pedestrians; traffic-calming
- Sidewalk from Maynegaite to the station
- Better lighting at the station
- Create a destination with retail, office, restaurants, and hotel
- Event planning and marketing campaign to help develop a destination image

10. General / Closing Comments

- Niche marketing is needed to attract new development to this area
- Park Forest has many cultural opportunities, such as Live Theatre, Freedom Hall Series, Art Center and Gallery
- Matteson received IDOT funding for landscaped medians on Rt. 30
- Matteson has mixed-use zoning around its Village Hall
- College students take the train to Hyde Park
- Sound-proof building materials will be used for the Reserve subdivision
- Olympia Fields parking lot at 211th Street Station has less daily rider spots compared to Park Forest, because of monthly passes
- Matteson Area Chamber of Commerce is assisting Park Forest on a business retention program
- Will the area's demographic trends support transit-oriented development?
- Star Line Route is proposed through the area just south of Matteson Station
- Matteson, Olympia Fields, Park Forest, and Chicago Heights should consider a combined school district, like Homewood/Flossmoor, in order to improve educational services
- Matteson uses design guidelines for the Cicero corridor north of Route 30 that includes a build-to line, curb and gutter streets, and rear yard parking
- Lincoln Mall area is good for local shopping needs

The following comments represent the consensus from six different groups at the public workshop on January 31, 2007. Each group was asked to list the top three most important ideas or concepts from their group's discussion on potential development and station improvements. The numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses for a particular comment.

Potential development and redevelopment

1. Develop coffee shop, restaurant, and dry cleaners near station (2 responses)
2. Redevelop parking lot in Park Forest (2 responses)
3. 12-acre Olympia Fields site at Rt. 30 and Olympian Way
4. Redevelop parking lot in Olympia Fields
5. Existing parking lot developed into a garage
6. Condos with attached garages
7. Community center/day care center
8. Retail space in southeast corner near station so commuters visit before they get to the parking
9. Small offices or residential units above retail
10. Condominiums and townhomes
11. Shopping center
12. Office park in Park Forest
13. Police sub-station
14. Annex office for Village of Park Forest
15. Library

Access and infrastructure improvements

1. Traffic signal at Indiana and Rt. 30 (5 responses)
2. Access from east parking area direct to station (3 responses)
3. Specific bus lane vs. kiss-n-ride – separate the two (2 responses)
4. New ingress/egress to southeast side parking (2 responses)
5. Overpass or underpass for Rt. 30 (2 responses)
6. Tunnel through to Park Forest side to access parking lot
7. Access from southeast corner development to northwest corner development
8. Parking garage with overpass to station
9. Bike trails connecting to and from Park Forest
10. Improvements to viaduct to create "sense of place"

Commuter facility improvements

1. Elevator access (3 responses)
2. Bathrooms (3 responses)
3. Rehabilitate station
4. Better signage
5. Intelligent transit signage (denotes train arrivals)
6. Glass-enclosed station across Rt. 30 (i.e. Tollway Oasis)

7. More enclosed station
8. New paint and general decorating
9. Improve landscaping
10. Park Forest access
11. Emergency buttons/phones
12. Repair and/or replace station ramps or install elevators
13. Re-name the station to "Park Forest/Lincoln Highway"
14. Improved bus access
15. Artistic expression through murals, art pieces, etc.

Future parking improvements

1. Accessibility to new projects
2. Good lighting to make it well lit
3. Better security to/from parking lots (i.e. cameras, police patrols)
4. Bike parking (enclosed, locked)
5. Two-three story parking garage
6. Consider parking garage at Olympia Fields
7. Three-story parking garage – setback from U.S. 30 to allow retail along U.S. 30
8. Parking structure with mixed-use – consider at U.S. 30 and Indiana

Public open space opportunities

1. Investigate linkage to Old Plank Trail (2 responses)
2. New playground/park (2 responses)
3. Small park on Homan to create buffer for single family homes
4. Creation of a natural buffer along Rt. 30
5. Possible amenities for small concerts
6. Maintain as much green space as possible
7. "Green" the area and incorporate recycled materials

Natural resources protection

1. Bike trail, forest preserve, parks
2. Tree line the length of new projects for a natural buffer
3. Easy and friendly walking to all four quadrants in station area
4. Use/honor watershed drainage

High priority improvement projects

1. New retail businesses (2 responses)
2. Eastside entrance to station (2 responses)
3. Multi-use development in southeast quadrant (2 responses)
4. Development of "Park Forest Village Square" on southeast side
5. Development of common design standards for the four station quadrants
6. Parking expansion
7. Increase availability of apartments
8. Parking garage
9. New traffic lights
10. Biking/walking trails
11. Landscaping
12. Rehabilitate station

The Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields desire improvements to the commuter facilities at the 211th Street Metra Station and new transit-oriented development in the one-half mile station area. In addition, Metra projects the need for 500-600 additional parking spaces in the station area by the year 2030. Based on the market assessment, the station area has the development potential for 45-50 condominiums and/or townhouses; 20,000-30,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, and service uses; and, 20,000-25,000 square feet of office uses over the next seven years. Based on the community's vision and planning principles, this development potential should be used as "catalyst projects" to establish a framework for creating a unified, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use transportation center over the long term. Accordingly, two preliminary concept plans were created to illustrate distinctly different development frameworks and related land use and transportation considerations in order to provoke thought and debate in choosing a preferred concept.

Preliminary Concept Plan 1: Limited Development and Reconfigured Parking

The first concept plan contains limited development and a reconfigured commuter parking lot. The concept plan is based on the premise that a parking structure is not financially feasible due to limited market demand and public subsidies. Since there are two underutilized properties along Route 30 in Park Forest, the adjacent commuter parking lot could potentially be reconfigured to create more viable commercial uses and new residential development. *Figure 11: Preliminary Concept Plan 1* illustrates the proposed development program including a commuter parking lot for new and replacement spaces along Lincoln Highway, a reconfigured commuter lot along the east side of the Metra Electric District – Main Line, new residential uses along Homan Avenue, and new retail at Indiana Street.

INSERT FIGURE 11

Preliminary Concept Plan 2: Mixed-Use Center & Shared-Use Parking Structure

The second concept plan contains a mixed-use center and shared-use parking structure for commuters and other uses (residential, commercial, etc.) within Park Forest. The concept plan is based on the premise that a shared-use parking structure is financially feasible with local financial incentives, federal and state funding, and public-private partnerships. Prior to drafting this concept plan, an illustrative map was created to show potential locations for a parking structure and help determine the optimal location (see Figure 12). Due to the parking structure's size, the recommended location is against the railroad embankment in Park Forest. In addition, the adjacent underutilized and vacant land in Park Forest along Lincoln Highway would allow for a mixed-use development to complement the shared-use parking structure. *Figure 13: Preliminary Concept Plan 2* illustrates the proposed development program including new shared-use parking structure in Park Forest, new mixed-use commercial development along Lincoln Highway, and residential condominiums along Homan Avenue.

INSERT FIGURE 12

INSERT FIGURE 13

Preliminary Preferred Concept Plan: Mixed-Use Centers and Parking Structures

The Village of Park Forest hosted a second public workshop on March 21, 2007 to solicit community feedback on the preliminary concept plans and obtain consensus on a preferred concept plan. After a background presentation, the audience assembled into small working groups to provide feedback on the two preliminary concept plans (see Appendix D for meeting results). Only three of six groups stated a preference for concept plan 2, so a true consensus was not reached. As a result, a new "preliminary preferred concept plan" was created to reflect key public comments, including:

- Station should be named "Park Forest/Lincoln Highway"
- Condominiums and parking garage should be the same height
- Acceptable parking structure height is 40-50 feet
- Add similar garage to north end of Olympia Fields' parking lot
- Need traffic light at Indiana Street and Lincoln Highway

Figure 14: Preliminary Preferred Concept Plan illustrates the proposed development program including new shared-use parking structures and mixed-use commercial and residential developments in both Park Forest and Olympia Fields, as well as mixed-use development in Matteson. Regarding the station's name change, the communities will need to send a letter to Metra's Executive Director to request the proposed name.

INSERT FIGURE 14

The following comments represent the consensus from six different groups at the public workshop on March 21, 2007. Each group was asked to list the top three most important ideas or concepts from their group's discussion regarding the two preliminary concept plans, as well as their overall concept and height preferences. The numbers in parentheses indicate multiple responses for a particular comment.

Concept Plan 1:

Future Land Uses

1. Insufficient retail (two responses)
2. Retail on first floor of condos
3. Retail on first floor and office/residential uses on top floors in Matteson
4. Destination restaurant
5. Want cleaners, coffee shop, convenience store, and take-out deli
6. Uses cannot compete with Lincoln Mall

Future Access, Circulation, and Parking

1. Not enough parking (two responses)
2. Speed bumps at garage and street exits
3. No parking for condo owners' second car
4. Flip parking/condos and put a berm along Homan
5. Must improve current traffic, not make it worse
6. Want surface parking, rather than structured parking; bi-level parking okay
7. Improvements should be designed by LEED certified architect; take advantage of sun and wind direction, solar energy, and geothermal heating

Future Station Improvements

1. Want pedestrian underpass (two responses)
2. Must work with Metra to provide more train capacity since trains are full by the time they reach the 211th Street station
3. Elevator/restrooms/embankment enhancements
4. First floor retail – coffee, newspaper, etc.
5. Instead of tunnel, shield current walkway on U.S. 30
6. Want bathroom facilities
7. Metra schedule needs to improve local service during rush hour
8. Restaurant
9. More lighting, and a camera linked to police station
10. Station should be named Park Forest/Lincoln Highway
11. Underground parking
12. Three smaller parking garages

Future Open Space Improvements

1. Create plenty of park-like green space
2. Prefer evergreens; avoid Elm and Ash trees

Concept Plan 2:

Future Land Uses

1. Condos should not be more than 3 stories
2. Retail on first floor and office/residential uses on top floors in Matteson
3. Condos and parking garage should be same height
4. Retail on first floor and live/work above
5. Sufficient amount of commercial square feet
6. Want cleaners, coffee shop, convenience store, and take-out deli
7. How will design of four-story condos harmonize with ranch and split-level homes

Future Access, Circulation, and Parking

1. Access to condos should be provided off of service road rather than Homan
2. Need to think about additional condo parking; they will have two cars
3. Reduce garage to 400-500 spaces; no taller than embankment
4. Add similar garage to north end of Olympia Fields' parking lot
5. Decrease parking structure to 50'
6. Need stop light at Indiana Street
7. Must improve current traffic, not make it worse
8. Increase Pace bus service
9. Improvements should be designed by LEED certified architect; take advantage of sun and wind direction, solar energy, and geothermal heating

Future Station Improvements

1. Pedestrian tunnel (two responses)
2. Must work with Metra to provide more train capacity since trains are full by the time they reach the 211th Street station
3. Provide retail space on first floor of garage, instead of condos
4. Elevator/restrooms/embankment enhancements
5. First floor retail – coffee, newspaper, etc.
6. Instead of tunnel, shield current walkway on U.S. 30
7. More lighting
8. Want bathroom facilities
9. Metra schedule needs to improve local service during rush hour

10. Include creative landscaping
11. Ensure that Metra service can accommodate expansion
12. Station should be named Park Forest/Lincoln Highway
13. Go to "Project for Public Spaces" website developed by William Whyte

Future Open Space Improvements

1. Create plenty of park-like green space
2. Linkages to existing open space and parks, Old Plank Road Trail, and Spirit Trail

Which plan do you prefer?

#1 – one response
#2 – three responses

Other:

- alternative concept with a garage on each commuter parking lot
- alternative concept with underground parking or three small garages

What height is acceptable for the parking structure?

40' – two responses

50' – one response

40' or 50' – two responses