

Richton Park

Town Center and Station Area Plan

Village of Richton Park, IL
Regional Transportation Authority
November 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is committed to assisting communities who are interested in improving their commuter station area environments, through Station Area Planning Studies. This process may include reviewing multi-modal access issues, conducting market assessments, identifying appropriate land uses and densities, assessing commuter market demand and ultimately producing a general concept plan for the station area. At the conclusion of this study, the host community will have a tool to assist in their efforts to improve or revitalize their station area in the future.

This study was a collaborative effort sponsored by the RTA and led by the Village of Richton Park. A study Steering Committee was formed to guide the research and provide input throughout the course of the study. The Steering Committee included the RTA, Metra (Commuter Rail), Pace (Suburban Bus) and key stakeholders representing the Village of Richton Park.



I. INTRODUCTION

In May 2003, the Village of Richton Park, Illinois began the important process of planning for the future of the area of the Village immediately surrounding the Metra Station at Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. This *Richton Park Town Center and Station Area Plan* is the result of a community-driven, consensus-based strategy for capitalizing on the assets of the area, including the Metra Station, to create a revitalized and expanded “Town Center” for the Village of Richton Park.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was undertaken to identify Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities in the area surrounding the Richton Park Metra Station. The station is located on the Metra Electric Line extending through Chicago’s southern suburbs to University Park, located just south of Richton Park. Its primary purpose is to create a new focal point and activity hub for the Village through the development of a mixed-use Town Center.

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is an authority created in 1974 by the Illinois State Legislature to facilitate public transportation in the six counties surrounding Chicago, a roughly 3,500 square mile area. The operation of transit services within this area is provided by three RTA Service Boards: the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA); the Commuter Rail Division (Metra); and the Suburban Bus Division (Pace). The Richton Park Metra Station is located just north of Sauk Trail along the Metra Electric Line tracks. The Metra Electric Line starts in downtown Chicago from the Randolph / South Water Street Station located near Michigan Avenue. The Main Line travels south to the University Park Metra Station with branches at Stony Island and State Street connecting to the 93rd Street Metra Station in South Chicago and the Blue Island Metra Station, respectively. Richton Park is the second to the last station on the Main Line, just before the University Park Metra Station. Pace Bus Route #362 provides connecting service to the Richton Park Metra Station from Park Forest, located east of the Village. The CTA does not operate service in Richton Park.

In pursuing a transit supportive land use program for this station area, the RTA hopes to assist the Village of Richton Park in developing a revitalization concept that utilizes the principles of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and to provide tools and strategies for the Village to pursue implementation. This report is intended to provide a vision for the Town Center and provide detailed direction for implementing improvements within the area surrounding the Richton Park Metra Station.



STUDY AREA

The study area is roughly defined by the Village boundaries on the north, the Helen Jones Park and a private school on the south, Main Street on the east and the Village Municipal Building along Latonia Lane on the west . The study area generally includes a mix of commercial and institutional properties and multi-family residences that are within a five to ten minute walking distance of the Metra Station, and accessed primarily from arterial roadways. It also includes a number of vacant and underutilized parcels that are to be incorporated into the Town Center revitalization strategy. *Figure 1: Study Area Boundary*, depicts the study area overlaid on an aerial photograph of a portion of the Village.

Figure 1
Study Area Boundary



-  Study Area
-  Village Boundary



STATION AREA PLANNING PROCESS

HNTB Corporation and Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc. (AREA) assisted the RTA and the Village during the planning process. A Village-appointed Steering Committee worked closely with the consulting team throughout the process, providing ongoing feedback and direction for the project. The Committee was comprised of representatives of Village staff and commissions, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, local businesses, local realtors, local lenders, local homeowners associations, the RTA, Metra and Pace (see the Acknowledgements for a complete list).

Key activities and milestones during the planning process included the following:

- Data collection, which included surveys of existing land use and building conditions, an assessment of existing physical and landscape amenities within public rights-of-way, an existing parking inventory and an assessment of the current functioning of the Richton Park Metra Station. Existing plan documents and other data sources that addressed the station area were also reviewed. The surveys and research were conducted during the summer of 2003.
- In addition to assessments of existing conditions and data, a market study was conducted to determine the existing and potential marketshed for the Richton Park Metra Station area, and to analyze the potential for increased retail, residential and commercial activity within the area in the future.
- A Planning Workshop was held on December 17, 2003 to present consultant team findings regarding physical conditions in the study area, and to present the results of the real estate market analysis, to seek broad community input on the issues and opportunities surrounding the Metra Station, and to discuss a Preliminary Vision and Preliminary Planning Goals.
- Working with Village staff and transit agency representatives, two Concept Plans were developed to illustrate the development, transit facility and urban design enhancement possibilities within the Richton Park Metra Station area. The Concept Plans include recommendations regarding future land use, conservation and redevelopment opportunities, transit facility upgrades, access and circulation improvements around the Metra Station, and urban design and landscaping ideas to visually unify and beautify the Town Center area.
- Design Guidelines have also been developed which include illustrative sketches of key improvements for the Town Center area, and which outline the Village's level of expectation regarding redevelopment in the area.
- An implementation strategy was also developed, to provide guidance to the Village and its partners as implementation of key Plan strategies is undertaken.
- The Town Center and Station Area Plan was recommended by the Steering Committee on October 21, 2004 for Village Board approval. Village Board concurrence was given on _____.



ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

Chapter II provides an Executive Summary, summarizing key recommendations and implementation strategies. *Chapter III: Planning and Design Influences* provides a summary of the socioeconomic and physical characteristics of the Town Center area in relationship to its marketshed. Chapter III concludes with a discussion of “issues” and “opportunities” within the Richton Park Metra Station area. *Chapter IV: A Vision for Richton Park Town Center* presents an overall Vision along with Planning Principles and Planning Goals and Strategies that form the basis for the land use framework and concept plans. The Land Use Framework, Inaugural Development Concept and Build-Out Vision Concept are described in detail in *Chapter V: Town Center and Station Area Plan*. The document concludes with *Chapter VI: Plan Implementation*, which outlines roles and responsibilities for plan implementation, potential funding sources, and detailed implementation projects.



II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This station area planning study was undertaken to identify transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the area surrounding the Richton Park Metra Station. This report is intended to provide a detailed strategy for undertaking a multi-phased redevelopment of the area, and implementing public realm improvements, in order to establish the Metra Station area as a “Town Center” for the Village of Richton Park.

The Town Center area of Richton Park has long been an important focus of activity within the Village, due to the existence of the Richton Park Metra Station, the intersection of two major arterials (Sauk Trail and Governors Highway), several retail and service businesses, and key civic and cultural facilities. Despite its role as the historic center of the community, it has not grown and developed at the pace nor intensity desired by the Village to truly become an active and vibrant community center. The existing low-density, auto-oriented patterns of land use and circulation in the Town Center area currently do not create the desirable “synergy” between transit facilities and nearby businesses.

In undertaking this focused planning process, the Village has acknowledged the importance, both functionally and symbolically, of recreating a thriving and visually attractive Town Center to serve Village residents and the greater community. In partnering with the Regional Transportation Authority and its service boards, Metra and Pace, to develop this plan, the Village has also acknowledged the key role that public transit services will play in sustaining the Town Center and enhancing the community’s visibility within the region.

The Town Center and Station Area Plan presents a Vision for the Town Center, and includes specific recommendations that address land use and development, transit and access issues, and urban design and image improvements. The Plan also provides clear direction to the Village and its partners with regard to implementation of key projects and other actions.

The Plan reflects community aspirations and consensus for future improvements within the Metra Station area. While the Plan incorporates a broad vision voiced by Richton Park residents, its recommendations have been tempered by the realities of the marketplace, and the financial resources of the agencies involved. The balance of these elements has resulted in an achievable, yet bold, plan for Richton Park’s Town Center. In many respects, the adoption of the Plan is not the end, but rather the



beginning of the planning process. Implementation will require continued planning and coordination in the years ahead to successfully realize many of the Plan recommendations. This summary provides an introduction to many of the actions that will be undertaken to realize this new vision for the Town Center.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Plan presents an overall Land Use Framework for the Town Center area, and a more detailed redevelopment strategy for the core area around the Richton Park Metra Station. This strategy is presented in two concept plans- an “Inaugural Development Concept” and a “Build-Out Vision Concept”- that reflect the need to undertake redevelopment of the Town Center in several stages.

Overall, the Plan advocates a significant reconfiguration and intensification of existing commercial and commuter parking areas. The Village’s goal is to create a more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly “core” that includes more retail and service business activity, new multi-family housing, increased commuter parking capacity, new civic and recreational uses, and new public open spaces. The Town Center redevelopment will result in a stronger connection between the Metra Station and surrounding uses, and create a more visually coordinated and attractive physical environment. “Mixed use” development, with new dwelling units located above commercial businesses, is a key component of the redevelopment strategy.

The Inaugural Development Concept represents an “interim” phase in the overall redevelopment process. The inaugural stage identifies targeted mixed-use redevelopment projects in highly visible locations. These projects will establish an overall visual theme and level of quality for the Town Center, generating interest within the development community to pursue later phases of the Plan. Open space improvements and a new Public Library are envisioned in this phase. The Inaugural Development Concept also provides for the creation of replacement commuter parking capacity, to enable the redevelopment of portions of a key existing commuter parking lot at the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. The Village will need to work closely with Metra to ensure that redevelopment activities at no time result in a loss of commuter parking capacity. External funding sources for the replacement of existing commuter parking capacity will likely not be available, but partial funding can likely be secured for the creation of new commuter parking capacity.

The Build-Out Vision Concept presents the “end state” condition for the redeveloped Town Center, after redevelopment of all major parcels in the area is complete and a significant increase in Metra commuter parking capacity has been achieved. Additional mixed-use structures, along with a new Village Hall, Village Green and



Recreation Center create a vibrant activity core for the community. A multi-level parking structure to accommodate commuters, shoppers and Town Center residents is envisioned as a key component of the redevelopment of the northeast quadrant of the Town Center, to allow for more intensive development near the Metra Station.

TRANSIT, ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

In order to create redevelopment opportunities and facilitate both vehicular and non-vehicular use of the area, key recommendations are the creation of a “loop road” that will connect all four quadrants of the Town Center, and consolidation of access to each quadrant through four “secondary” intersections. This loop road will allow for more effective use of private properties in the area, and for stronger pedestrian connections between commercial businesses, transit facilities and commuter parking lots. Pedestrian amenities and sidewalk upgrades are recommended throughout the area, in addition to improvements along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway to minimize traffic congestion while allowing for high visibility of Town Center businesses.

Transit-related upgrades recommended within the Plan include considering construction of a new Metra Station further south, to improve visibility of the station and increase its presence as a key element within the Town Center. At some point in the future, should Metra proceed with a potential extension of their second main line track through the Richton Park Metra Station area due to the potential construction of a Metra Electric maintenance facility beyond the current terminus at University Park, a new platform and platform access tunnel should also be incorporated into the Town Center. Any transit facility upgrades that are considered prior to this potential railroad construction (expected to occur no sooner than in five to ten years), and/or that are not necessitated by it, will need to be funded by the Village and/or a developer.

A key strategy in the Build-Out Vision Concept for accommodating Metra’s replacement parking and projected future increase in commuter parking needs is the construction of a multi-use parking structure in the northeast quadrant of the Town Center, to accommodate commuters, shoppers and Town Center residents. Intersection and pedestrian crossing improvements will also encourage usage of commuter parking in other quadrants, facilitating a strong “synergy” between Metra commuters and Town Center businesses. Consideration should be given to involving multiple partners (public and private) in order to share the spaces and cost associated with new parking facilities and related road infrastructure.



URBAN DESIGN

There is currently a lack of overall visual consistency and quality of the built environment in the Town Center area. Coordinated streetscape and parking lot improvements, along with appropriately designed commercial and mixed-use development, will establish an attractive Town Center unified with a consistent “theme.” Street trees, attractive landscaping and pedestrian amenities will be key elements of the streetscape on both the primary arterials and the “loop road” within the Town Center. Transit facilities and commuter amenities will be visually related to the overall streetscape theme of the Town Center, as will the Village Green and other passive and active open spaces within the area.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A detailed plan for implementation of the Inaugural and Build-Out concepts is essential to facilitate prioritized and effective implementation of the Plan recommendations. It identifies key actions to be initiated by the Village, many in coordination with partner agencies. The implementation strategy identifies high priority projects that the Village should undertake immediately, in order to demonstrate early successes to both the community and potential developers. A strong commitment to these recommendations from the Village will generate private sector interest in Richton Park’s Town Center. The Development Staging Strategy included in the final Chapter of this report provides a “road map” of sorts to enable the pieces of the Town Center “puzzle” to come together in the most effective and mutually supportive manner, through the efforts of both the public and private sectors.

The Village of Richton Park, in cooperation and partnership with Metra, Pace, the RTA and others as described in the final section of the Plan, is poised to begin the vitally important process of establishing the Town Center as the “core” of the community, both symbolically and functionally. This Town Center and Station Area Plan provides the vision, policy guidance and implementation direction needed by the Village and its partners to capitalize on positive regional development trends, existing transit services, and a strong community desire to make Richton Park a unique and special community.



III. PLANNING AND DESIGN INFLUENCES

This Chapter of the Plan contains summaries of key background information compiled throughout the planning process, organized into the following sections: Socioeconomic Overview, Market Potentials, Existing Conditions Overview, and Issues and Opportunities Summary.

SOCIOECONOMIC OVERVIEW

This section summarizes key demographic and housing characteristics of the Village of Richton Park and the surrounding area, in order to provide an overview of the socioeconomic context within which planning concepts and recommendations have been prepared. Further detail regarding many of these characteristics is available in the complete market assessment report prepared by Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc., under separate cover.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

According to Census data, Richton Park had 12,533 residents in the year 2000. This represented a substantial (19%) increase over the 1990 population of 10,523 people. In the 1980-90 time period, the Village population grew by 12%. In comparison, Cook County's population grew by only 5% in 1990-2000 and had fallen by 3% between 1980 and 1990. Other key demographic characteristics from the 1990 and 2000 US Census are presented below:

Average Household and Family Size – The average household size in the Village grew from 2.65 in 1990 to match the Cook County average of 2.68 in the year 2000. The average family size in Richton Park was, however, slightly smaller in 2000 – 3.25 compared to 3.38 for the whole County.

Age – In the year 2000, the median age in Richton Park was 33.3 years, very close to the median age of 33.6 years for all of Cook County.

Race – In 2000, Richton Park had a majority African American population, accounting for 59% of the population. 36% of the population was White and 4% was Hispanic or Latino (any race). This represented a significant shift from 1990 when African Americans accounted for 22% of the Village's population; 75% were White. Hispanic population, at 3.3%, was marginally less in 1990. In Cook County in 2000,



26% of the population was African American, 56% White and 20% Hispanic or Latino (any race) compared to 26%, 63%, and 14% in 1990.

Education – In 2000, 25.4% of persons in Richton Park (25 years and over) had a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to the Cook County average of 28.0%. However, 90.4% of the Village’s population (25 years and over) were at least high school graduates, whereas for all of Cook County this figure was only 77.7%. This implies that even though Richton Park had fewer college graduates on average than the County, the overall educational attainment in the Village was higher than the County average. Similarly, in 1990, 84.9% of Richton Park’s population (25 years and over) had at least a high school degree compared to 73.4% in all of Cook County. The percentage of college graduates in the Village in 1990 (22.4%) was very similar to the County (22.8%). It is significant to note that the overall educational attainment has increased considerably in the past decade in the Village – more than 90% of the population had high school degrees in 2000 compared to 84.9% in 1990.

Income – The 2000 per capita income in Richton Park was \$22,626, slightly less than Cook County. The median household income of \$48,299 was, however, slightly higher than the county median. In 1990, the same was true – while the per capita income in the Village was slightly lower than the Cook County value, the median household income in the Village was higher. In 1990, the per capita income in Richton Park was \$15,064 compared to \$15,697 in Cook County and the median household income was \$38,271 compared to \$32,673.

To assess how income levels have changed in the Village in the past decade, 1990 dollar figures need to be adjusted for inflation. After the adjustment, the 1990 per capita income of \$15,604 is equivalent to \$19,884 in 2000 and the median household income of \$38,721 is equivalent to \$51,111. This represents a net 14% increase in per capita income in Richton Park and a decrease of 6% in median household income. In Cook County, the net per capita income and the median household income increased by 12% and 6.5% respectively from 1990 to 2000.

Employment and Occupation – In 2000, 35% of Richton Park’s population (16 years and over) were in management and professional occupations, 43% in sales and service, 10% in construction and maintenance and 12% in production and transportation related occupations. The corresponding figures for Cook County were 35%, 43%, 7% and 15% respectively. The 6.3% unemployment rate in Richton Park was lower than the county rate (7.5%) in 2000.

Commute to Work – In 2000, 81% of the working population in Richton Park drove or car-pooled to work, 13% used public transportation and 2% walked to work. For all of Cook County, these numbers were 75%, 17% and 4% respectively. The mean



travel time to work for Richton Park residents was 40.6 minutes, higher than the county mean of 32.6 minutes.

A comparison of these 2000 census statistics on commuting patterns with those of 1990 reveals a gradual shift towards private automobile use in Richton Park, as well as in Cook County as a whole. In 1990, 79% of the people living in Richton Park drove or car-pooled to work, 17% took public transportation, and 4% walked. For Cook County, these numbers were 73%, 19% and 7% respectively.

Vehicle Availability – A significant 11% of the households in Richton Park did not have any vehicle and 39% had only one vehicle in 2000. Although these rates are lower than those of the county (19% and 40% respectively), they indicate that a substantial percentage of the Village’s population is totally or partially dependent upon public transportation.

In 1990, a slightly smaller percentage (10.5%) of households in the Village did not own a vehicle and the number of households with only one vehicle was considerably lower (33% compared to 39% in 2000). This implies that a greater percentage of households in Richton Park had two or more cars in 1990 as compared to 2000.

B. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

In 2000, Richton Park had a total of 4,758 housing units; an 18.2% increase from 4,026 units in 1990. In the same time period, the total housing stock in Cook County grew by only 3.7%. Most of these new housing units in Richton Park are single-family detached homes in new subdivisions. Some key characteristics related to housing conditions in Richton Park are outlined below:

Unit Type – 66% of the housing units in the Village were single family homes, compared to only 45% in Cook County overall. Therefore, Richton Park had a more single family character than many other areas within the county. 2% of the units in the Village were in structures with two to four units, and 32% were in structures with 5 or more units, compared to 22% and 33% respectively for the whole county. The single family character of the Village has become more predominant since 1990, when only 59% of the total housing units were single family units.

Unit Age – Approximately 77% of the current housing stock in Richton Park was constructed between 1960 and 1989, with the maximum number of units (41%) built in the 1970s. Only 7% of the dwelling units in the Village were built before 1960. In contrast, only 37% of the total housing stock in Cook County was built during 1960-



89, whereas almost 57% was built before 1960. Therefore most of the housing stock in Richton Park is comparatively fairly new, similar to adjacent suburbs.

Occupancy and Ownership – In 2000, Richton Park had an occupancy rate of 97%; 66% of these units were owner occupied. In comparison, Cook County had an occupancy rate of 94%, with a home-ownership rate of 58%. Home occupancy and ownership patterns in 2000 have remained relatively similar to 1990. In 1990, 96% of the housing units in the Village were occupied and 60% of them were owner occupied. In 1990, Cook County had an occupancy rate of 93% and a home-ownership rate of 56%.

Value – The median value of a single-family house in Richton Park was \$125,700 in 2000, significantly lower than the median value of \$157,000 for the county as a whole. 19.3% of the homeowners in Richton Park incurred monthly ownership costs that were 35% or more of their income. For the county, this number was less, at 18.4%. The median cost of renting in Richton Park was \$694, slightly higher than the median rent of \$648 for the county. However, only 25% of renters spent 35% or more of their income on rent, compared to 30% in all of Cook County.

MARKET POTENTIALS

This section is summarized from the complete market analysis report prepared by Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc. (provided under separate cover).

A. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Housing

- Richton Park has a fairly stable housing market. Over the years, the Village has realized a modest increase in new housing production and has maintained a low housing vacancy rate.
- The average resale value of an existing single-family home in Richton Park (2004) is approximately \$141,000, and the sales price for new-construction single-family homes starts at approximately \$250,000.
- The average resale value of an existing attached for-sale unit in Richton Park (2004)—including both townhomes and condominiums—is approximately \$85,000. Condominiums generally sell for less than \$75,000 and townhomes built in the 1990s sell for \$110,000 to \$144,000. New construction townhomes, by comparison, are actively selling for approximately \$175,000 to \$195,000.
- A single-family or townhome development with minimal open space might be a feasible alternative for the Richton Park Metra Station Area.
- A new condominium development would probably appeal mainly to younger



first-time home buyers and would have to sell for \$120,000 or less in order to be competitive with area rents; however, the construction costs associated with developing a new condominium development would set the sales price for new units at \$155,000 to \$188,000. Parking costs are not factored into this estimate.

- A rental or condominium development would be a viable housing option for the Richton Park Metra Station area. One and two bedroom dwellings – the most common types of rental units in the market – generally rent for \$555 to \$790 per month.

Commercial

- The retail environment in Richton Park consists largely of small independent retailers and small professional businesses, many of which have a long-standing presence in the area.
- Business owners generally stated that the primary advantage of being in Richton Park is location. They specifically mentioned Interstate 57 as a locational asset, since it provides access to other communities and is convenient and accessible from all retail areas in Richton Park. In characterizing Richton Park, they said that increased housing development, higher priced homes and more racial diversity were the most evident changes in the market. These were all viewed as positive changes.
- Governors Plaza is the largest existing shopping center in the vicinity of the Richton Park Metra Station. It provides a mix of “big box” and smaller lease space totaling about 100,000 square feet. Currently, only about 20,000 square feet in the center is occupied.
- National retailers in the adjacent Village of Matteson offer the most direct competition to Richton Park’s retail base. Although Matteson’s primary shopping center, Lincoln Mall, has lost major anchor tenants in recent years, Matteson still serves as a small regional shopping area providing “comparison” goods (e.g., clothing, electronics and housewares) as well as convenience retail uses (grocery stores, restaurants etc.) that draws residents from Richton Park and adjacent communities. New big box retailers and major stand-alone retail stores also attract shoppers to the area. Orland Park and Calumet City offer an even greater mix of retail goods and draw from a regional market area.
- While the Richton Park market area does not currently support the creation of a new retail concentration of sufficient scale to serve as an alternative to the aforementioned regional retail areas for comparison goods, the Richton Park Metra Station area is already a viable location for convenience-oriented and specialty retail, professional office space, and restaurants. As the population of the Village and surrounding communities increases in the coming years, as NIPC projects, this dynamic will likely be subject to change, with a wider variety of commercial uses becoming marketable in the Town Center.



- Restaurants and entertainment-related destinations could serve as a catalyst for attracting more people to the Richton Park Metra Station area. In the short term, a modest capture of the available food-away-from-home expenditures would be sufficient to support two to four additional restaurants / eateries.

B. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing, retail uses, civic uses and commuter/pedestrian traffic are four elements essential to transit-oriented development (TOD). To create a viable transit-oriented development node at the Richton Park Station area, it is important that the area attract sufficient day and evening traffic to support the retail base.

AREA’s recommendations for the study area are as follows:

- In order to create sufficient pedestrian traffic throughout the day, the Richton Park Metra Station Area should be developed not only with housing, but also with public uses such as a village hall, library and/or recreation center.
- The Village must create a pedestrian-friendly environment containing retail storefront spaces for a convenience store, sandwich shop, dry cleaners, coffee shop, florist, a small casual dining restaurant and card/gift shop or similar uses. These uses will serve workers and visitors to the public facilities, as well as commuters and surrounding residents.
- The type of retail space recommended is also suitable for retail service businesses and small offices – such as real estate brokers, insurance agents, small legal and accounting firms, and medical and dental offices – which form the core of much of Richton Park’s existing commercial space.
- In the near term, the Village should plan for development comprising approximately 50,000 to 60,000 square feet of commercial space. The Metra Station area should also include additional space for small to mid size office users.
- The Village should plan for additional housing, retail and commercial space in the Metra Station area and surrounding parcels to enhance the overall development activity and to ensure the long-term viability of a future Richton Park Town Center.

EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

This section of the Plan provides a summary of existing conditions within the study area. It is important to consider existing physical, economic and development relationships to determine how to direct the resources of both public and private funds in the future. It begins with a “locational framework” that highlights various Village-wide factors that represent influences external to the study area. It then addresses the



existing distribution of land uses in the area and identifies transit facilities and services, along with other methods of access to / from, and circulation through, the study area. It concludes with an examination of important environmental and natural features that can either serve as focal points or constrain development.

Additional information on existing conditions and planning influences in the study area can be found in the “Inventory and Vision Memorandum” (dated December 2003 and available under separate cover).

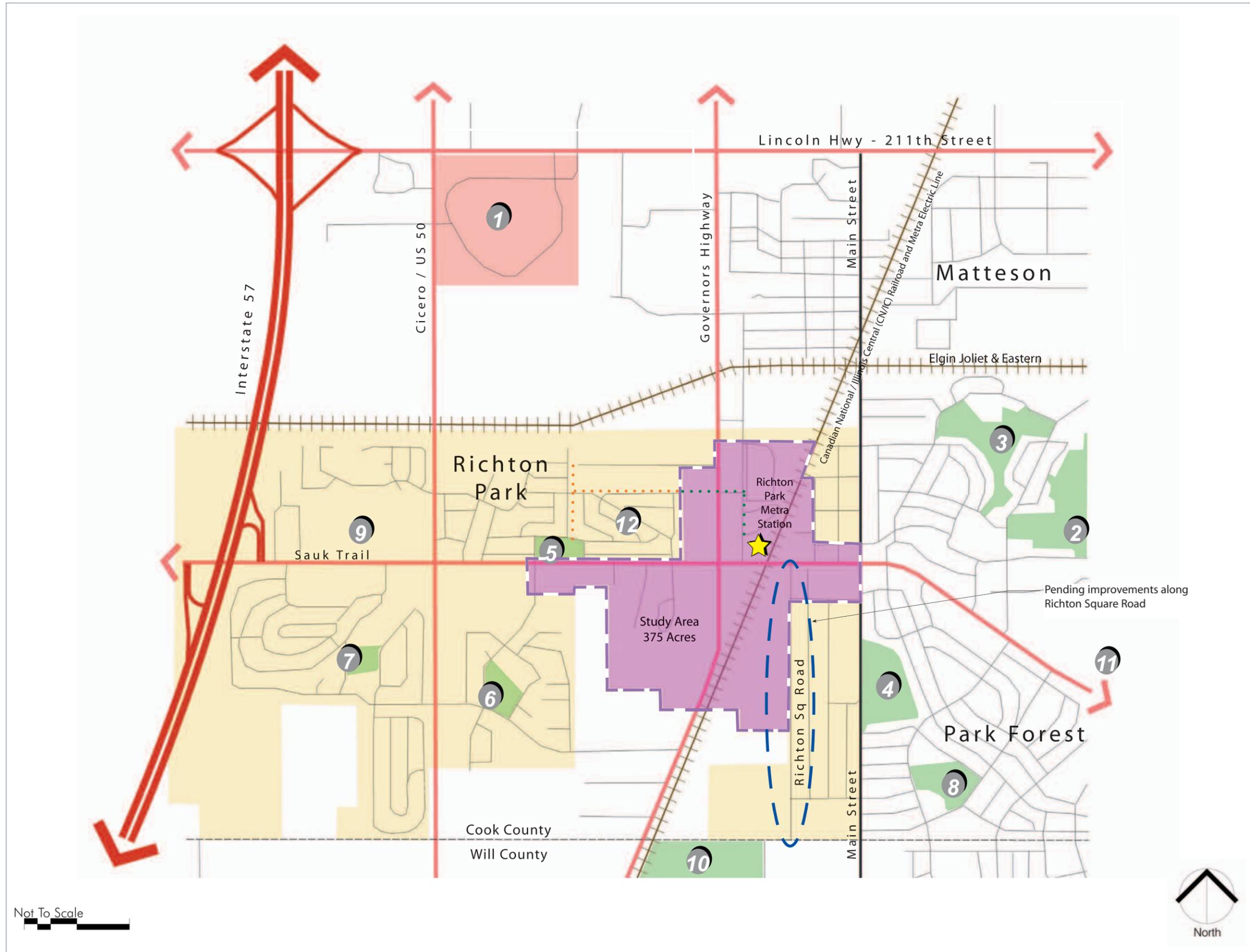
A. LOCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

While planning recommendations and concepts for physical improvements will focus on the immediate study area, it is important to consider the implications of the greater area surrounding the Town Center. *Figure 2: Locational Framework* highlights several planning considerations that may impact the development of concept plans and recommendations. These considerations include the following:

- Two regional thoroughfares, Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, create a “transect” through the center of the study area. Both roadways function as regional arterials and carry traffic destined for other locations. Major nearby intersecting roadways include Highway 57 and Cicero Avenue to the west, giving the Town Center a high level of regional roadway accessibility.
- Key nearby “activity nodes” include Lincoln Mall and the IL 30 / Lincoln Highway commercial corridor to the north, in neighboring Matteson.
- Proposed improvements within the study area include:
 - A new bike path, connecting the existing bike path at Poplar and Karlov Avenues to the Metra Station, via Poplar Avenue and Richton Road. The ten foot wide bike path is proposed as off-street, but within the street right-of-way. Between Karlov Avenue and Governors Highway the bike path is separated from the traffic lanes by a 2 foot grassed shoulder, and beyond that by curb and gutter.
 - Planned improvements to Richton Square Road from Steger Road to Sauk Trail include a center turn lane from Steger to Lee, a parking lane on the east side, curb and gutter, sidewalks and improving the Sauk Trail intersection.
- Village officials have discussed possible facility expansion and relocation of the Village Hall and the Richton Park Public Library.



Figure 2:
Locational Framework



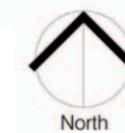
Legend

- Village Boundary
- Study Area
- Parks / Open Space
- Interstate
- Regional Throughway
- Road
- Metra Electric Line and CN/IC
- Existing Bicycle Trail
- Pending Bicycle Trail

Areas of Interest

- 1 - Lincoln Mall
- 2 - Central Park
- 3 - Winnebago Park
- 4 - Keokuk Park
- 5 - Sauk School & Park
- 6 - Pierce Park
- 7 - Klawitter Park
- 8 - Somonauk Park
- 9 - Rich South High School
- 10 - University Club Golf Course
- 11 - Rich East High School
- 12 - Tower Park

Not To Scale



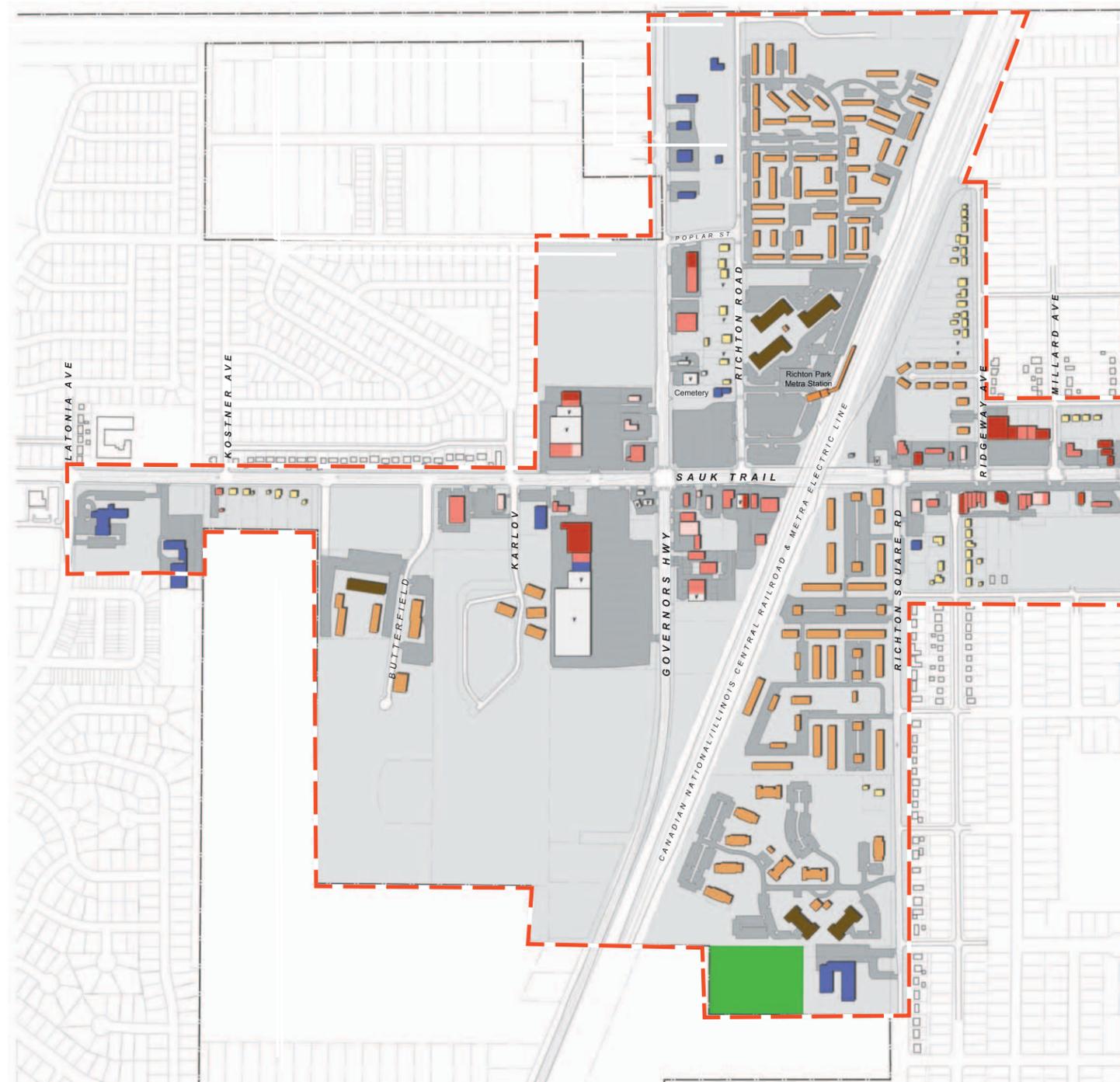
B. EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land use is a strong influence on future land use patterns. An inventory of existing land uses within the study area was completed in May 2003. Existing land use is illustrated in *Figure 3: Existing Land Use*, and briefly described in the following paragraphs.

- **Single Family Detached Residential:** This category includes detached single family homes. Most single family residential areas in the Village are in residential neighborhoods buffered from the immediate Town Center and Metra Station area. Because it is located in the central portion of the community, residential stock in this area is generally modest in size, but well maintained.
- **Multi-family Residential:** This category includes all densities of existing multi-family dwellings. It is the dominant housing type within the study area. While the multi-family units differ considerably in style, size and age, most are located within planned communities, and are two to three stories in height. These communities have limited vehicular access from main roadways, with just one or two primary entrances.
- **Commercial-Retail:** This category includes businesses selling consumer goods on-site. Most of the retail businesses in the study area are located along Sauk Trail east of the railroad tracks and along Governors Highway near the Sauk Trail intersection. Retail businesses in the area include a general merchandise store (Dollar General) a grocery store (Valley Fresh Foods), florist shop, comic store, thrift shop, furniture store and other stores. Several buildings have vacancies and show signs of deferred maintenance.
- **Commercial-Service:** This category includes personal, financial and other services, including auto services, provided to customers or clients at the place of business. These businesses are non-retail operations. The study area has a fairly large number of commercial service establishments, located mostly in strip centers along with retail establishments, along Governors Highway and Sauk Trail.
- **Commercial-Restaurant:** There are several restaurants in the study area along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. The area includes both national chain and locally owned restaurants.



Figure 3:
Existing Land Use



Legend

-  Project Boundary
-  Single Family Detached
-  Multi-Family Medium Density (1-3 floors)
-  Multi-Family High Density (4-6 floors)
-  Commercial - Retail
-  Commercial - Service
-  Commercial - Restaurant
-  Public / Institutional
-  Park / Open Space
-  Parking
-  Vacant

Scale 1" = 800'-0"
0 200 400 800



- **Public:** The Richton Park Metra Station is located in the center of the study area off Richton Road. Several of the most significant public facilities in Richton Park, including the public library and the post office, are also located within the study area but distant from the Metra Station. The Village municipal building is located at the west end of the study area near Latonia Lane.
- **Institutional:** This category includes publicly accessible uses that attract vehicular and pedestrian traffic similar to public facilities. The study area contains several churches and schools.
- **Parks and Open Space:** The only public park in the study area, Helen Jones Park, is located at the south end of the study area. The park is approximately 7.8 acres in size and includes a baseball field and a play lot.
- **Rail Right-of-Way:** The Metra Electric Line runs diagonally through the study area. The west half of the right-of-way from University Park north to Chicago is owned by Metra whereas the eastern half is owned by the Canadian National / Illinois Central Railroad. The combined main line right-of-way (ROW) varies in width from 200 feet south of Sauk Trail to 250 feet north of Sauk Trail. Currently, the Metra Electric Line in the Richton Park area consists of one main track and one yard lead track to the Richton Yard, and one main track between the Richton Park Metra Station and the University Park Metra Station.
- **Vacant Buildings and Lots:** There are several vacant buildings and lots scattered throughout the study area. The most significant vacancies are at the southwest corner of Governors Highway and Sauk Trail.
- **Parking / Loading:** Parking lots of varying size, and with varying levels of physical improvements, are scattered throughout the study area. The most significant of these are commuter lots near the Metra Station.

C. TRANSIT, ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

A strong understanding of the current state of public transit in the Village of Richton Park as it impacts the study area, along with an assessment of vehicular access, circulation and parking facilities, is essential for the implementation of the Town Center and Station Area Plan. *Figure 4: Transit, Access and Circulation* illustrates many of the transit services, circulation modes and parking areas described in this section.



Transit Service and Facilities

Richton Park is served by Metra commuter rail, providing service to downtown Chicago, and by a Pace bus route. The Richton Park Metra Station is located off Sauk Trail just east of Governors Highway. Pace Bus Route #362 provides connecting service to the Metra Station from Park Forest, located east of the Village. While these services provide excellent connections to Chicago and other communities along the rail line, there is no service providing local trips within Richton Park.

Metra Electric Line Commuter Rail Service

Metra's Electric Line is a commuter rail line which terminates in Chicago at the Randolph / South Water Street Station. The Main Line travels south to the University Park Metra Station with branches at Stony Island and State Street connecting to the 93rd Street Metra Station in South Chicago and the Blue Island Metra Station, respectively. Richton Park is the second to the last station on the Main Line, just before the University Park Metra Station.

The travel time to downtown Chicago from Richton Park varies from 46 minutes to a little over one hour depending upon the time of the day. During morning and evening peak periods, trains stop at a limited number of stations, reducing travel time. During non-peak periods, trains make a greater number of stops, including stops on demand, resulting in longer travel times.

On weekdays, 28 inbound trains to downtown Chicago stop at the Richton Park Metra Station between 4:23 am and 11:43 pm, and 26 outbound trains from downtown Chicago stop between 6:21 am and 1:53 am. Some of the weekday peak time trains do not operate on Saturdays resulting in slightly reduced service – 23 inbound and 23 outbound trains stop at Richton Park on Saturdays. On Sundays, 10 inbound and 10 outbound trains stop at Richton Park.

An analysis of the weekday ridership counts at Richton Park indicates that the vast majority of passengers use Metra to travel to Chicago during the morning peak periods and for their return commute to Richton Park in the evening. *Table 1* summarizes the results of a ridership count conducted by Metra in the Fall of 2002. Over 99% of the total 1,579 daily boardings from Richton Park occurred in the inbound direction (to Chicago) and approximately 88% of the total boardings happened during the AM peak period. 100% of the total 1,587 alightings for the day occurred in the outbound direction (from Chicago) and approximately 77% of them occurred during the PM peak period.



Figure 4:

Transit, Access & Circulation



Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Residential Parking
- Commercial Parking
- Public / Institutional Parking
- Metra Parking
- Metra Station / Pace Bus Stop
- Signalized Intersection
- Regional Through Route
- Primary Access Route
- Secondary Access Route
- Pace Bus Route #362
- Metra Electric Line and CN/IC
- Existing Bicycle Trail
- Pending Bicycle Trail

Station Area Enlargement
Scale - 1" = 400'-0"



**Table 1:
Richton Park Station Boardings /Alightings by Time of Day and Direction (Fall 2002)**

Time of Day	Inbound (To Chicago)		Outbound (From Chicago)	
	On	Off	On	Off
AM Peak	1,384	0	11	27
Midday	124	0	0	173
PM Peak	31	0	0	1,217
Evening	28	0	1	170
Totals	1,567	0	12	1,587

Source: Metra

The number of boardings at the Richton Park Metra Station is considerably lower on weekends than on weekdays. Based on a ridership count conducted by Metra in the Fall of 1999, the Richton Park Metra Station had 314 boardings on Saturday and 122 on Sunday, which is approximately 20% and 8% respectively of the average weekday boardings in the Fall of 2002.

Metra has estimated the need for new parking at the four stations located in Fare Zone F of the Metra Electric Line, based on household forecasts provided by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), for the year 2030. Based on NIPC's forecasts, Metra predicts an additional 2,780 riders per day by the year 2030 and a projected need for between 980 and 2,600 new commuter parking spaces to accommodate the new riders. A significant number of these spaces will be provided at the Olympia Fields Station using land recently acquired by Metra; the rest would be provided at the three other stations in Zone F – 211th Street, Matteson and Richton Park. For the Richton Park Station, Metra estimates needing approximately 600 additional parking spaces by 2030.

According to a platform survey conducted by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in February 2002, approximately 43% of the people that boarded the trains at the Richton Park Station were residents of the Village. Another 23% resided in neighboring Park Forest, while the remaining were scattered in several nearby municipalities including Steger, Crete and Frankfort. These responses are generally consistent with the results of the system wide Origin-Destination Survey conducted by Metra in Fall of 2002 which showed that 42% of the riders reside in Richton Park, and 29% reside in Park Forest.

Regarding mode of access to the Metra Station, a majority of the responding commuters (62%) drove alone to the station, 4% car-pooled and 14% got dropped off



at the station. Approximately 4% of the people took the bus and 16% walked an average of 3 blocks to get to the station. Similar responses were obtained during the Origin-Destination Survey conducted by Metra in the Fall of 2002.

Pace ‘362 South Park Forest’ Suburban Bus Service

Pace Route #362 provides weekday rush hour bus service to the Richton Park Metra Station from Park Forest, the community directly east of Richton Park. Within Richton Park, the bus runs along Sauk Trail, entering the station area via Richton Road. It then loops back on to Sauk Trail via Poplar Avenue and Governors Highway to return to Park Forest. During the morning rush hour, the bus makes 6 stops at the Richton Park Metra Station between 5:45 am 8:21 am. During the afternoon rush hour, it stops five times between 5:10 pm and 7:06 pm. The bus arrival and departure schedule is synchronized with Metra’s train schedule to facilitate easy connections.

Table 2 presents a summary of average weekday ridership for Route #362 over time. The ridership shows slight fluctuations with both increases and dips in different years; the greatest change was a 13% decrease in year 2001.

Table 2: Average Weekday Ridership over Time – Pace Route #362

Year	Average Weekday Ridership	Percent Change (over previous year)
1997	96	
1998	105	9.4%
1999	104	-1.0%
2000	107	2.9%
2001	93	-13.1%
2002	89	-4.3%
2003	96	7.9%

Source: Pace Suburban Bus

Note: Yearly averages have been calculated from monthly averages for each year

Year 2003 average is based on monthly averages up to April

Access and Circulation

Governors Highway, an unmarked State Route, and Sauk Trail, a County highway, are the two major arterials within the study area. The intersection of the two is signalized. While the east leg of the intersection has the greatest capacity, it does not have the greatest Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume. Sauk Trail west of Governors Highway has the greatest ADT at 29,600, nearly 9,000 more cars than Sauk Trail east of Governors Highway. Overall, there is less traffic on Governors



Highway. North of Sauk Trail the ADT volume is 18,900. South of Sauk Trail ADT is only 8,900.

Improvements are planned along Richton Square Road from Sauk Trail on the north to Steger Road. Signalization improvements are planned for the Sauk Trail / Richton Square Road intersection to better facilitate traffic movement. Current ADT on Richton Square Road is approximately 4,200, with a projected potential increase to 9,000 by 2020.

Vehicles entering and leaving the Richton Park Metra Station commuter parking facilities impact the traffic flow at the intersection. All cars that enter the station access road or the commuter parking lots must come from Sauk Trail and turn onto Richton Road. Richton Road is a one-way street headed north. When a vehicle is leaving the station area, the driver must continue north on Richton Road. The first opportunity to head back to Sauk Trail occurs by turning left onto Poplar Road. Poplar Road connects Richton Road with Governors Highway. A vast majority of the cars leaving the Metra Station take this route, which results in long left turn queues on the north approach of Governors Highway to the intersection with Sauk Trail, due to driving commuters who must “double back” south to get onto Sauk Trail headed eastbound.

Vehicles enter and exit the 271-space commuter parking lot east of the Metra Electric Line and CN/IC via a signalized intersection. The parking lot entrance is located directly north of the north terminus of Richton Square Road.

Parking Facilities in the Study Area

On-street parking is generally permitted only on the local residential streets within the study area. Commuter parking for the Richton Park Metra Station as well as parking for multi-family residences, businesses, and public uses in the area is provided in off-street parking lots. *Figure 4* illustrates the number of parking spaces associated with the various existing developments in the area. All the commercial uses and the public buildings in the area have adequate on-site parking for patrons in off-street lots. Some of these areas currently include substantially underutilized parking lots.

Commuter parking is provided in surface lots close to the Metra Station, both east and west of the railroad tracks. The Village owns the commuter parking lots on the northeast corner of the Sauk Trail and Governors Highway intersection; the linear lot parallel to the railroad and the lot east of the railroad are owned by Metra. IDOT and federal funds were used to construct the Village owned lots. The commuter lots have a combined capacity of 1,069 cars. There is a charge of \$1 / day to park in the daily



lots; permit parking is also available. According to Metra's parking counts for October 2003, 959 commuter parking spaces (91%) are utilized by commuters at the Richton Park Metra Station on a typical day. As mentioned previously, Metra estimates that it will require up to an additional 600 parking spaces at Richton Park for its "park-n-ride" commuters, representing almost a 60% increase in capacity, by the year 2030.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL FEATURES

Butterfield Creek lies within the planning area, running north-south on the west side of Governors Highway. The creek drains northeast to the Little Calumet River. Portions of Butterfield Creek have been depressed underground, and other portions have been channelized. *Figure 5: Environmental and Natural Features* graphically depicts the issues and features discussed in this section.

Topography and Drainage: The land surface elevation within the planning area ranges from approximately 705 feet to 730 feet (mean sea level). It appears that the area west of the railroad tracks drains to Butterfield Creek, and the area east of the tracks drains to Thorn Creek (east of the study area). A study done by the Village in 1990¹ states that the natural drainage is poorly developed, due to the area's irregular land surface. As such, the slight depressions on the upland are poorly drained and retain pools of water for long periods after heavy rain or snowmelt.

Periods of ponding and poor drainage were reported in the southeast quadrant of the Sauk Trail/Governors Highway intersection. This is likely due to the elevation changes in this area, from 730' west of Governors Highway to 710' east of Governors Highway. The problem is exacerbated due to the elevated railroad embankment just to the east. Any future redevelopment in this area would need to address this drainage issue.

Floodplains: Butterfield Creek is surrounded by floodplain². Much of this area has already been developed with commercial businesses, primarily in the areas where Butterfield Creek has been modified. The northern and southern portions of the floodplain within the planning area remain primarily undisturbed.

If development is proposed within the floodplain, it must be elevated above the 100-year floodplain elevation. Compensatory storage must also be provided in close proximity to the improvement. Floodplain permits are needed from the Metropolitan

¹ Environmental Constraints for Planning in Richton Park, November 5, 1990.

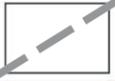
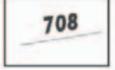
² Flood Insurance Rate Map, Map #17031C0802 F, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Nov. 6, 2000.

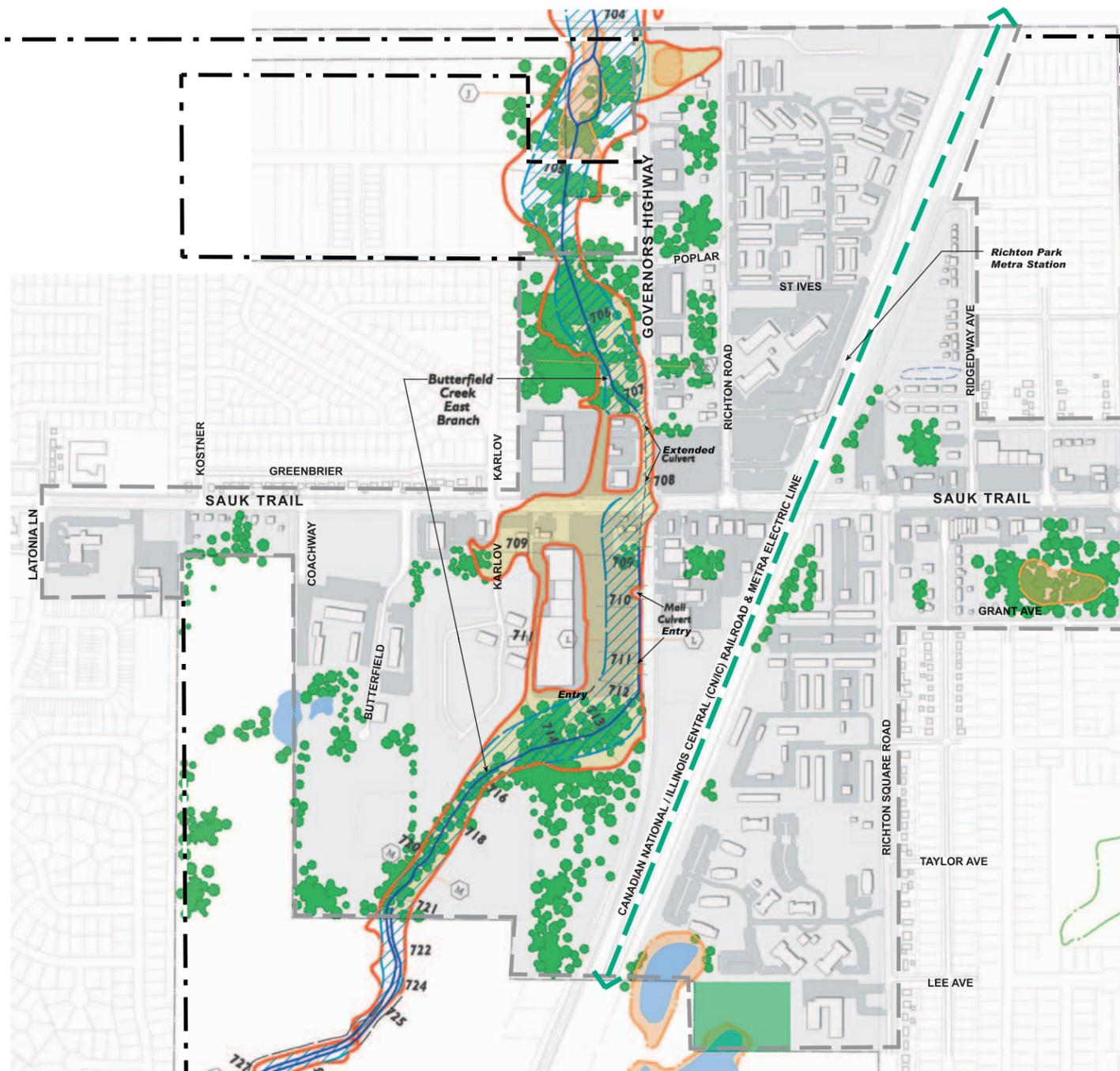


Figure 5:

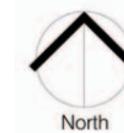
Environmental & Natural Features

Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Stream
-  Water Body
-  Floodway
-  100 Yr Floodplain
-  Wetland
-  Forested
-  Contour Line
-  Metra Electric Line and CN/IC
-  Vacant Gas Station



Scale - 1"=800'-0"
0 200 400 800



Water Reclamation District, and from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources if there is work in the floodway.

Wetlands: The National Wetlands Inventory³ identifies portions of four wetland areas that lie within the planning area. Of most significance are two wetlands located at the southeastern limits of the planning area, near Helen Jones Park. The Village's Parks and Recreation Department, in its 1999 Master Plan, recommended that these be developed for aquatic purpose usage. It is also possible for these areas to be developed as part of a natural area and conservation education program.

Development of wetlands, even for natural areas, typically requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps), as well as a Section 401 Water Quality permit from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). The Corps must review any development proposals in wetland areas and make a determination if the federal government will take jurisdiction over the wetland. Wetland mitigation will be required, usually at a 1 to 1 1/2 ratio, but it may be higher depending on the quality of the wetland. Mitigation can consist of replacing the wetland on site, enhancing other wetland areas within the same watershed, or purchasing credits at a wetland bank.

If a wetland is not hydrologically connected to another body of water, it would be considered isolated, and the Corps would not take jurisdiction over it. However, any project that impacts a wetland should be submitted to the Corps for their review and jurisdictional determination.

If state funding is used for a project that impacts a wetland (for example, a state grant for developing the wetland into an education area), a permit from the Illinois Department of Resources would be required even if the Corps does not have jurisdiction.

Potentially Contaminated Site: The vacant, southwest corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway intersection was previously occupied by a gas station. Before this site can be redeveloped or reused, an environmental assessment will need to be conducted to identify potential hazardous materials that might be located on the site, above or below ground level. There are no other sites suspected to contain hazardous residue within the study area.

³ National Wetlands Inventory, Steger Quadrangle, US. Department of the Interior, April 1984.



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

Data review and physical inventories, combined with community and Steering Committee perceptions, provide a basic level of understanding of the study area and the dynamics at play within and around it. The previous sections of this Chapter, together with the complete background memoranda included in the Appendix, summarize the various elements of the Plan analysis.

This section provides a summary of the key Issues and Opportunities identified within the study area. The Issues and Opportunities have been divided into four categories: Land Use and Redevelopment; Transit, Access and Circulation; Urban Design; and Economic Development.

A. ISSUES SUMMARY

Land Use and Redevelopment

1. Vacancies in the existing shopping centers
2. Lack of retail uses desired by the community – grocery store, for example
3. Current configurations of retail uses (set back far from the street behind large parking lots) discourages walking, and does not help create vibrant streets or a “town center” environment
4. Lack of linkages between the Richton Park Metra Station and adjacent development – shopping centers, post office and most residential developments
5. Major water main underneath commuter parking lot immediately northeast of the Sauk Trail / Governors Highway intersection (as per Village Engineer)
6. Floodplain and drainage issues throughout the study area
7. Potential need for an additional 600 commuter parking spaces for Metra by the year 2030 (as per Metra’s internal projections)

Transit, Access and Circulation

1. Not amenable to walking – discontinuous sidewalks, lack of well defined pedestrian crossings at roadway intersections, no pedestrian “refuge areas”
2. Lack of bike path connections
3. Traffic congestion during peak hours – lack of alternate routes to/from station
4. Lack of local Pace bus service

Urban Design

1. Lack of a focal point
2. No distinguishing or consistent character or design theme
3. Few streetscape improvements
4. Appearance / maintenance of some commercial structures



B. OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

Land Use and Redevelopment

1. Vacant areas and properties within the area
2. Possible relocation of high-use public facilities into the area – Public Library and Village Hall
3. Possible addition of new public facilities – public plaza or “Village Green,” recreation center, outdoor recreation amenities etc.
4. Possible extension of Metra Electric Line’s second main track from Matteson to University Park - potential opportunity to relocate and redesign the station building and platforms to better integrate with proposed future development

Transit, Access and Circulation

5. Pending reconstruction of Richton Square Road – opportunity to set standard for streetscape design and pedestrian amenities in the area
6. Poplar Avenue bike path proposal – bike connection from west side neighborhoods to the Metra Station. Opportunity to expand to provide better connections to all adjacent residential areas, incorporate streetscape amenities (tree plantings, sidewalk paving material, light fixtures etc.) during bike path construction
7. Potential improvements to circulation through upgraded or new roadways, to alleviate station area congestion

Urban Design

8. Ample parkways along Sauk Trail to accommodate streetscape and pedestrian amenities
9. Existing mature street trees in some areas
10. Natural areas and waterways that can serve as attractive amenities
11. Renovation of Klawitter House to provide a transit supportive use

Economic Development

12. Existing TIF districts that can help finance public improvements and provide incentive packages to attract developers



IV.

A VISION FOR RICHTON PARK “TOWN CENTER”

Throughout the planning process, Richton Park has focused on developing a “Vision” of what the Metra Station area and Town Center might become in the future. This Vision has helped to guide the development of specific planning policies and recommendations for the Town Center. It is supported by the Planning Principles, Planning Goals and Strategies that follow.

The “Town Center” Vision has been written to describe what will occur within the Richton Park Metra Station area over the next ten to twenty years as a result of implementation of the *Richton Park Town Center and Station Area Plan*.

THE “TOWN CENTER” VISION

Over the next ten to twenty years, the Richton Park Town Center will become both the symbolic and functional center for the Richton Park community. It will be a hub of both civic and commercial activity, serving as a primary gateway and source of community pride for Richton Park. It will be a thriving commercial area supporting a variety of businesses and activities oriented to the south suburbs, Village residents, commuters and visitors. Functional improvements will enhance access and circulation in the area, and urban design enhancements will establish a clear identity for the community.

Retail stores, coffee shops, restaurants, small specialty shops, and convenience retail and services will operate within a cohesive and pedestrian-friendly environment at the Sauk Trail / Governors Highway intersection, with a strong physical and visual connection to the adjacent Richton Park Metra Station. Professional office spaces will provide for convenient access to needed services for Village residents. A variety of businesses will operate within mixed-use structures, with new condominiums on the upper floors. The historic Klawitter House will be renovated to support a commercial business. A “synergy” will exist between the businesses, making the Town Center a desirable destination for local residents and visitors from throughout the region.

A civic use cluster will also develop, creating additional activity within the Town Center. The Village Hall will relocate into the area, along with an expanded public library and a community center for Village residents of all ages. An outdoor plaza and “Village Green” will reinforce the importance of civic uses in the area and will



accommodate cultural and educational events that draw both Richton Park residents and visitors from a wide area.

Ample and attractive parking facilities will be provided for the Richton Park Metra Station, businesses and public facilities. Where feasible, these parking facilities will be shared to maximize efficiency. Additional parking for bicycles will also be provided throughout the area. New Pace bus routes will provide access to the Town Center and the Metra Station from throughout the Village, allowing more commuters to access the Metra Station without driving. During busy periods and special events, a local trolley service will provide additional access to the Town Center from nearby neighborhoods. An improved sidewalk and trail network will provide a safe and pleasant means of accessing the Town Center on foot or by bicycle, from both the east and west sides of the railroad tracks.

Varied types of new medium to high density residential housing will be developed within and surrounding the Town Center, providing housing for young professionals, families, empty-nesters and senior citizens. Within the core of the Village, mixed use development (with residential uses above retail uses) will be strongly encouraged. Both new and existing residential areas will include highly integrated pedestrian facilities, and neighborhood oriented parks will be incorporated into new residential developments.

High quality urban design and landscape improvements will be implemented to visually unify the area, encourage pedestrian activity and improve pedestrian safety. A new streetscape program will be implemented to provide a clear identity to the area, beautifying the Town Center and Metra Station facilities while incorporating comfort amenities for shoppers, commuters and visitors. A unified Town Center design theme will facilitate the renovation of existing buildings and the design of new buildings to reflect the high standards of the community. Butterfield Creek and other natural areas will be protected during development, and highlighted as community amenities.



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

In support of the community's Vision, Planning Principles have been prepared for the Town Center. These principles embrace several key elements of the Vision, and are "operationalized" through the Planning Goals and Strategies that follow.

1. Develop the Metra Station area as Richton Park's "Town Center," encouraging a mutually supportive mix of varied land uses.
2. Create a new "identity" for the Village of Richton Park based upon the Town Center, highlighting its convenient location, commercial and civic amenities and varied housing options.
3. Ensure that development follows an integrated and unified development plan for the Town Center.
4. Improve and coordinate the overall image, appearance and function of the Town Center through consistent visual treatments and upgrades to both public areas and private properties.
5. Implement design guidelines that reflect the Village's desired future appearance for the Town Center.
6. Improve pedestrian safety and comfort throughout the Town Center.
7. Strengthen the connection between the Richton Park Metra Station and the surrounding Town Center.
8. Strengthen the connection between the Town Center and other areas of the Village, through pedestrian and bicycle access improvements and bus/trolley services.
9. Bring additional civic uses into the Town Center to create a stronger "activity hub."
10. Facilitate an increased level of Town Center commercial activity, including restaurants, specialty and convenience retail, and local and commuter oriented services.
11. Facilitate varied types of housing, to meet the future needs of all Richton Park residents.
12. Add publicly accessible open spaces where feasible and functional as redevelopment occurs.
13. Implement "catalyst" projects to jump-start private sector efforts, generating interest and excitement in implementing Town Center improvements.



PLANNING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Planning Goals transform collective community values into operational guidelines; they describe a desired end state toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad based and long range in focus, representing a desired outcome. The Strategies that follow each Goal are designed to guide the implementation of each, identifying the means by which to achieve the desired outcome. Several of these Strategies are addressed in greater detail in the following Chapter, within the detailed descriptions of the “Inaugural” and “Build-Out” Concept Plans.

The Town Center Planning Goals and their related Planning Strategies include:

A. TOWN CENTER AREA IMAGE

- 1. *Create a “Town Center” identity through consistent visual treatments.***
 - a. Delineate arrival to the Town Center through the use of “gateway” features at roadway intersections that serve as main entry points.
 - b. Create a unified streetscape image within the commercial core through the use of coordinated and recurring visual elements such as signage, lighting, street furniture and landscaping.
 - c. New development should be designed to reinforce the concept of a “traditional” Town Center, with grid-based blocks, buildings built up to the sidewalk, and commercial uses at street level.

- 2. *Increase awareness of the assets and advantages of the Richton Park Town Center, both locally and regionally.***
 - a. Encourage coordination between the Village and the local Chamber of Commerce to market the Village’s assets and generate interest in the community and among potential investors. Marketing efforts could include: an overall “branding strategy,” informational maps and brochures about Town Center businesses and amenities, unique special events, and consistent use of the term “Town Center” in describing the area.
 - b. Organize community-wide events in the Town Center area, so that residents and others begin to understand it as the “heart” of the community.
 - c. Utilize the Richton Park Town Center and Station Area Plan as a marketing tool for attracting investment.



B. LAND USE, ZONING AND REDEVELOPMENT

1. Establish the “Town Center” as a civic “activity hub” for the entire Village.

- a. Civic uses are essential to the vitality of the Town Center. The Village should encourage community facilities such as the Village Hall to relocate within the Town Center area.
- b. The need for a highly visible public space such as a civic plaza and/or green space for community gatherings, cultural events and educational programs will be important.
- c. Encourage other indoor recreational facilities to locate within the Town Center area, possibly in association with the Village Hall, the public library or a new community center.

2. Encourage a critical mass of retail and service commercial activity to serve local residents, commuters and visitors to the area.

- a. Commercial uses should be initially concentrated near the intersection of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway and the Metra Station to create a critical mass of retailing supported by transit. This location is also the most visible area within the Town Center.
- b. New commercial development should be supported by residential development above first floor commercial uses within the area in a “mixed use” format.
- c. Encourage the reuse of the historic Klawitter House for a commuter-oriented commercial business.

3. Encourage the development of new housing, including mixed use development.

- a. Focus new residential development within walking distance of the Richton Park Metra Station, within approximately one-quarter mile of the station entrance.
- b. Encourage the use of high quality materials and architectural detailing in the design of new housing.
- c. Facilitate the development of market rate, owner-occupied housing of various types within the area (detached, attached, condominium, co-op), to encourage an increased “stake” in the community among residents near the Town Center.



4. *Coordinate future redevelopment projects to result in a cohesive, unified appearance and design.*

- a. Implement design guidelines for the construction of new structures and the renovation of existing structures.
- b. Encourage buildings to be built up to the sidewalk to create a “streetwall” in the Town Center, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- c. Concentrate more “auto-oriented” businesses in contiguous areas away from the core of the Town Center, and encourage them to provide pedestrian connections linking to existing sidewalks and pedestrian walkways.

5. *Maintain the quality of adjacent single family residential neighborhoods and multi-family housing communities.*

- a. Maintain the quality of residential neighborhoods in the area by making the investments necessary for regular maintenance.
- b. Continue to encourage high quality infill housing surrounding the Richton Park Metra Station area in a manner which establishes a strong physical relationship to the Town Center.

6. *Facilitate “catalyst” redevelopment projects within the Downtown, to demonstrate early success and generate interest in Downtown improvements.*

- a. “Jump-start” the revitalization process by developing a new retail / mixed use building at the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, with prior replacement of displaced commuter parking spaces.
- b. Working with businesses, property owners, and real estate professionals, focus on other opportunities to leverage private investment in the Town Center.
- c. Pursue relocation of the Village Hall to the Town Center as a strong statement of community commitment to the program.

7. *Amend the zoning ordinance and other regulations, as appropriate, to align land use regulations more closely with the recommendations of the Town Center and Station Area Plan.*

- a. Review and potentially rezone select areas currently zoned for business uses to encourage mixed use and/or mixed density residential development in the future, per the Land Use Framework to follow.
- b. Review and potentially revise building setback, height and FAR requirements to permit pedestrian-friendly development in the Town Center area.



- c. Require a “build to” setback line along key pedestrian streets.
- d. Review and potentially amend parking requirements within the Town Center area to facilitate appropriate parking (shared lots behind or between buildings).

C. TRANSIT, ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

1. *Strengthen both vehicular and pedestrian connections between the Richton Park Metra Station and its surroundings.*

- a. Create safe and attractive sidewalk linkages and bike routes into the Town Center and to the Metra Station from neighboring residential areas, to encourage greater use of commercial businesses and public transit. Improvements should include medians to provide pedestrian waiting areas within Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, where feasible.
- b. Locate and design new commuter parking facilities such that commercial businesses are easily accessible on foot en-route to the Metra Station.
- c. A key objective of the Village is to establish grade-separated pedestrian access over Sauk Trail, to serve as a visual focal point for the Town Center.
- d. Implement bus and/or trolley transit services to provide access to the Town Center and the Metra Station from other parts of Richton Park.
- e. Facilitate turn lane channelization for left turn movements, and other intersection improvements as warranted, especially on Sauk Trail and Governors Highway.
- f. Upon completion of intersection upgrades to increase capacity within the Metra Station area, remove the “one-way north” restriction on Richton Road.

2. *Emphasize commuter and pedestrian accessibility as an integral part of the improvement program.*

- a. Relocate Metra ticketing and platform access facilities as far south as feasible within the northeast quadrant, to strengthen the connection between the Town Center and the Metra Station.
- b. Install pedestrian-activated crosswalk signals at all signalized intersections in the Town Center.
- c. Develop a hierarchy of streetscape improvements in the Town Center based on functional land use areas.
- d. Encourage the use of wide sidewalks and pedestrian islands for pedestrian comfort and safety, especially along major streets.
- e. Provide ample bicycle parking facilities throughout the Town Center.



3. *Address peak period traffic and parking needs as improvements are implemented.*

- a. Improve traffic flow as redevelopment occurs, including intersection improvements and the re-establishment of two-way traffic movement on Richton Road.
- b. Develop attractive parking lots throughout the Town Center to support commuters, shoppers and visitors to other facilities. This should include landscape and aesthetic improvements to existing Metra parking facilities. While parking improvements and redevelopment projects are underway, commuter parking availability should always remain at least at its current level.
- c. A key objective of the Village is to build a new parking structure to serve long-range parking needs in the Town Center area. The construction timing should be determined relative to the overall demand for parking in the area.
- d. Plan for the addition of approximately 300 commuter parking spaces within the Richton Park Metra Station area by 2030. While these spaces would be designated for commuter use during weekdays, most could be made available during evenings and weekends through a shared parking agreement to support other Town Center activities. An estimated need for an additional 300 spaces (600 in total) by 2030 was projected by Metra. The Village will need to work with Metra to meet this additional projected need as demand warrants it.
- e. Pursue shared parking arrangements to address the needs of the commuters, shoppers and other visitors to the Town Center area.
- f. The redevelopment process assumes redevelopment on land that is currently used to provide commuter parking. The Village and/or developer(s) will need to work with Metra to replace these spaces so that the availability of commuter parking capacity exceeds or remains at its current level at all times.

D. STREETScape AND URBAN DESIGN

1. *Establish coordinated streetscape treatments throughout the Town Center area.*

- a. Implement streetscape and urban design enhancements as other basic infrastructure in the area is upgraded.
- b. Create a strong Town Center image through the strategic placement of high visibility features such as public buildings, plazas and other improvements.
- c. Utilize recurring imagery and physical elements such as benches, streetlights and refuse receptacles in order to visually unify the area.



- d. Implement a consistent Town Center “wayfinding” signage system.
- e. Provide attractive perimeter buffer treatments and internal landscaping at Town Center parking lots.

2. *Facilitate pedestrian and commuter comfort throughout the Town Center and at the Richton Park Metra Station.*

- a. Create a complete pedestrian circulation network, including sidewalks and crosswalks.
- b. Provide amenities at public sidewalks, platforms and plaza areas, including shelters, benches and refuse receptacles.
- c. Where feasible, incorporate neighborhood oriented open spaces at new residential developments.

3. *Address safety issues and concerns as Town Center improvements are designed and implemented.*

- a. Provide sidewalks of adequate width along all the streets in the Town Center along with well-marked pedestrian crossings. Sidewalks along major streets should be especially wide, and/or set back behind planted parkways to increase pedestrian safety.
- b. Ensure adequate lighting at all public areas as redevelopment occurs.
- c. Ensure adequate visibility into and out of all public spaces.
- d. Avoid tall and dense plantings in public areas.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. *Capture and capitalize upon both commuter and regional traffic within the Town Center.*

- a. Utilize highly visible Sauk Trail frontage for the development of commercial, mixed use and multi-family residential projects.
- b. Relocate existing Village businesses that can benefit from co-location and access to commuters into the Town Center as it redevelops.
- c. Carefully locate new commuter parking facilities to encourage walking into and through the Town Center area, increasing the visibility of existing and future businesses.



2. *Utilize existing and implement new programs to leverage private investment in the Town Center.*

- a. Utilize the existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to attract private investment in the Town Center.
- b. Work with regional partners, including the transportation agencies, to maximize the leverage and impact of public investments.
- c. Develop programs to aid existing Town Center businesses and provide incentives to new businesses.
- d. Offer appropriate incentives and assistance to induce development and redevelopment.
- e. Aggressively market the Town Center area as the Village's "first choice" location for residential and business reinvestment.



V. TOWN CENTER AND STATION AREA PLAN

The redevelopment and public improvement Goals and Strategies discussed in the previous Chapter require a “framework” for decision making – addressing the type, location, organization and intensity of future land uses. The framework will help ensure that new investments are economically sustainable and mutually supporting. It provides guidance regarding physical upgrades and changes over time. First, a *Land Use Framework* that addresses the entire study area is outlined. Second, an *Inaugural Development Concept* is presented, providing more detailed guidance for near-term redevelopment and enhancement within the Town Center, followed by a *Build-Out Vision Concept* that describes the Village’s long-term revitalization intentions. Finally, *Design Guidelines* are presented that describe the Village’s expectations for physical and aesthetic improvements throughout the Town Center area.

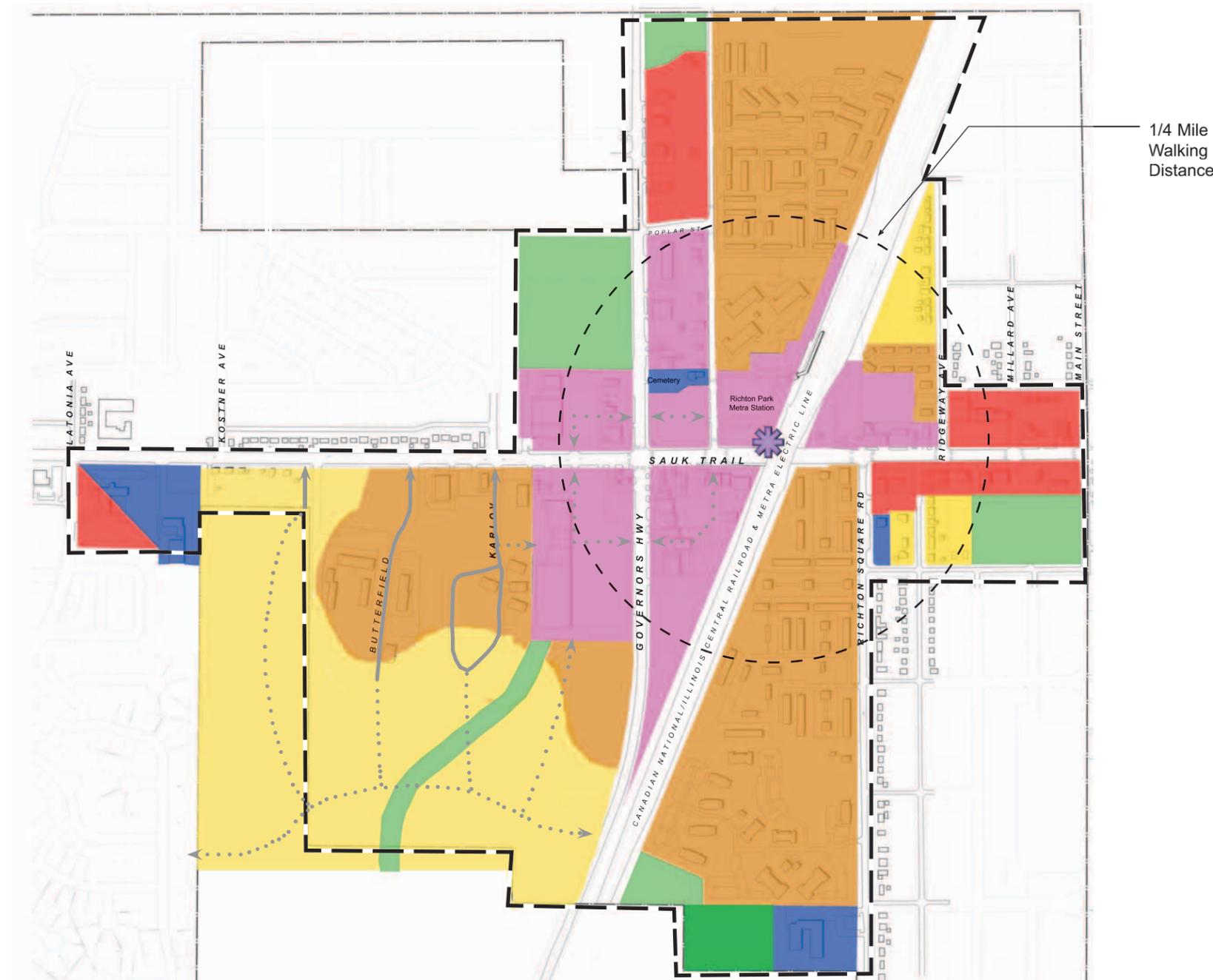
LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The Land Use Framework builds upon the Vision for the Town Center, Planning Principles, and Planning Goals and Strategies, and incorporates community preferences identified as a result of community involvement. It is depicted in *Figure 6: Land Use Framework*.

While the Land Use Framework addresses the future overall development pattern in the Town Center area, it focuses on redevelopment of areas most likely to change due to factors such as building or site configuration, building condition, underutilization (i.e. a small building on a large parcel), incompatibility with neighboring uses, accessibility, visibility and/or proximity to the Richton Park Metra Station. The Plan indicates a “mixed use” focus along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway in the four “quadrants” immediately surrounding the Sauk Trail / Governors Highway intersection, to encourage commercial, residential and civic uses within a contiguous, walkable area proximate to the Metra Station. It focuses auto-oriented commercial activity to the east along Sauk Trail and to the north along Governors Highway, to provide locations for supportive commercial activities that seek to draw more heavily upon regional traffic. Existing institutional and municipal uses are expected to remain, and new municipal uses will be accommodated within the Town Center Mixed Use area. Multi-family and natural resource conservation areas are indicated surrounding the mixed use “core” area, and new single family residential development is anticipated to the southwest.



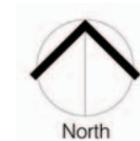
Figure 6:
Land Use Framework



Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Existing Metra Station
-  Town Center Mixed Use
 - Commercial
 - Civic / Recreational Facilities
 - Commuter Parking
 - Multi-Family Residential
-  Auto-Oriented Commercial
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Single Family Residential
-  Civic / Institutional
-  Recreational Open Space
-  Natural Resource Conservation
-  Existing Streets
-  Proposed Streets

Scale 1" = 400'-0"
0 200 400 800



The *Land Use Framework* emphasizes:

1. ***A focused ‘Town Center Mixed Use’ area*** for commercial and mixed uses primarily west of the Metra Electric Line, with an emphasis on mixed use structures coordinated with commuter parking facilities within walking distance of the Metra Station. New civic uses will also be located within this area, to encourage pedestrian activity and a vibrant atmosphere. The Mixed Use designation encompasses the four “quadrants” immediately surrounding the Sauk Trail / Governors Highway intersection, along with commuter parking and commercial properties within the first block east of the CN/IC Railroad, north of Sauk Trail.
2. ***Auto-oriented commercial areas*** fronting onto Governors Highway north of Poplar Avenue and east of Richton Square Road. These areas will allow for both new and existing commercial businesses that can benefit from proximity to the Town Center but that require dedicated parking areas and rely upon regional traffic. Existing businesses should be encouraged to remain in the area and upgrade their facilities in conformance with the Plan. Parking lots should be coordinated, well landscaped and buffered from adjacent non-commercial properties in these areas.
3. ***Multi-family residential*** communities to the north, east and south of the Metra Station will remain. Multi-family residential properties west of the Town Center, accessed from Butterfield and Karlov Avenues, should be “built out” to create a more cohesive atmosphere for residents. Additional multi-family development south of the Town Center along Governors Highway may also be feasible if floodplain issues can be addressed.
4. ***Single family residential*** areas east of the CN/IC Railroad should remain. Single family residential neighborhoods should be created to the southwest of the Town Center if floodplain issues can be mitigated. Green space should remain, and connections to both existing neighborhoods to the west and the Town Center to the northeast should be created, to encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement.
5. ***Civic and institutional uses*** should be incorporated into the Town Center, including a new Public Library, a new Village Hall and a recreation center. Existing institutional uses within the station area should also remain. New civic facilities can potentially share parking with commuters during evenings and weekends, and should project a positive and high quality image.
6. ***Open spaces*** should be incorporated into the Town Center, as community gathering spaces and in conjunction with the new recreation facility. Helen Jones Park should also remain. Pedestrian linkages and safe bicycle access to these facilities will be important.
7. ***Natural resources***, including flood-prone areas and mature tree stands, should be protected and utilized as amenities as the Town Center develops, including providing areas for passive recreation.



INAUGURAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The Inaugural Town Center program is depicted in *Figure 7: Inaugural Development Concept*. It focuses on near-term private, public and transit facility improvements within the Richton Park Metra Station area that capitalize on immediate real estate opportunities within the marketshed of the Town Center. It depicts selected commercial and mixed use redevelopment, while retaining some existing commercial businesses. New multi-family residential opportunities beyond the immediate Town Center area are also indicated. A proposed new Metra Station and platform access entrance would be incorporated into a public plaza space north of Sauk Trail, just west of the Metra Electric Line. Some commuter parking capacity expansion and relocation of existing parking is indicated, along with a new Village Green and outdoor recreation facilities created within the existing Butterfield Creek floodway west of Governors Highway. A new Public Library is planned, well integrated into the new, pedestrian-friendly circulation network created within the Town Center. Following Figure 7, *Table 3: Development Program* and *Table 4: Area of Land Use* summarize the breakdown of land uses depicted in the Concept, for ease of comparison with the Build-Out Vision Concept in the following section.

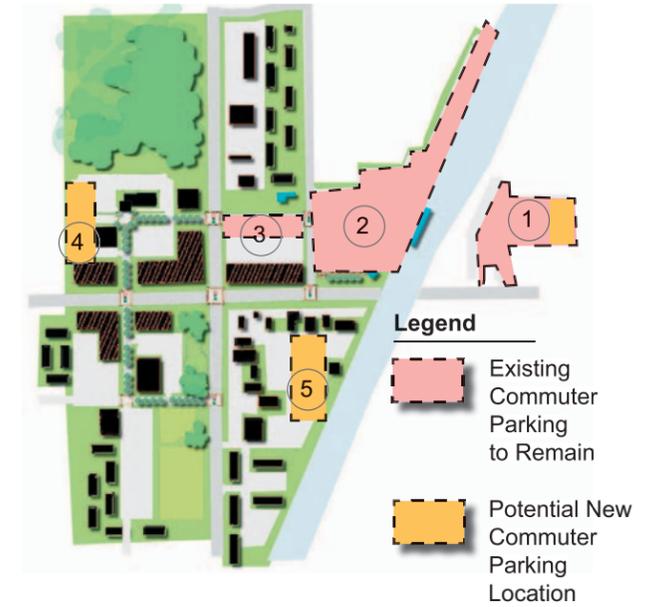
It is important to point out that the Concept reflects an interpretation of how improvements might occur within the area, and is illustrative rather than prescriptive. Key elements of the Inaugural Development Concept include:

A. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. ***Northeast Quadrant-*** *A new mixed-use structure in the two- to four-story range* should be pursued on the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. It should be designed with “in-line” storefronts along the sidewalk with little or no building setback, and dwelling units developed above the first floor. It is important to concentrate new retail space at the intersection of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway in the immediate vicinity of the Metra Station, while ensuring convenient parking facilities for non-commuter customers. Existing Metra commuter parking in this area that is displaced by the new building and dedicated retail-oriented parking spaces can be accommodated by developing a new commuter parking area on Village-owned property behind the existing commercial businesses in the southeast quadrant of the Town Center.
2. ***Southwest Quadrant-*** *A new mixed use and commercial development in the two-to four-story range* should be pursued in the southwest “quadrant” of the Town Center, west of the existing floodway and floodplain and accessed from both Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. Taller structures should front onto Sauk Trail, and parking areas should be placed to the rear. An internal “loop road” should be created which sustains a strong pedestrian orientation, allowing on-street parking and providing controlled access to buildings and parking areas.



Figure 7:
Inaugural
Development Concept



Area	Existing spaces	New/replacement spaces	Total
1	271	82	353
2	445		445
3	111		111
4		151	151
5		310	310
Total	827	543	1370

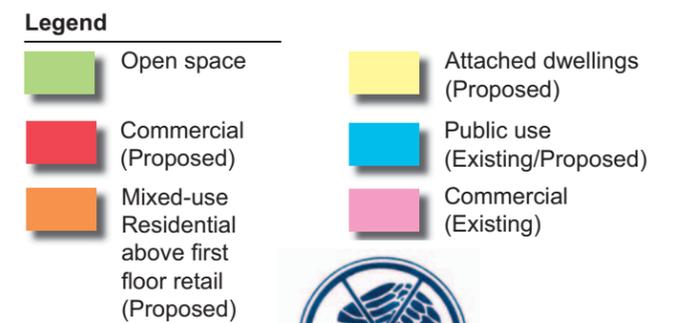


Table 3: Development Program
Inaugural Development Concept

	Sq. Ft.	# DU's	# Spaces
Commercial Land Use			
Commercial buildings (approximate gross leasable square footage)			
occupied	183,000		
unoccupied	110,000		
total area of existing space	293,000		
less commercial removed	190,000		
Existing space retained	103,000		
new	301,000		
total	404,000		
Commercial parking spaces *			
new surface**			1,187
new structured			0
existing			240
total			1,427
Residential Land Use			
Residential development (number of dwelling units)			
new townhomes		192	
new condominiums		150	
existing		0	
total		342	
Civic / Institutional Land Use			
Civic / Institutional buildings and facilities (square footage)			
new	15,000		
existing	0		
total	15,000		
Civic / institutional parking spaces			
new surface			50
existing			0
total			50
Commuter Parking Lots / Structures			
new spaces in surface lots			301
replacement spaces in surface lots			242
existing surface lot spaces (to remain)			827
new spaces in parking structure			0
replacement spaces in parking structure			0
total			1,370

* one parking space per 250 square feet of commercial use

** includes on-street parking

Table 4: Area of Land Use
Inaugural Development Concept

	Acreage
Commercial *	16.6
Residential *	10.0
Civic/Institutional *	0.8
Commuter Parking Lots / Structures	14.0
Public Right-of-Way	3.5
Open Space / Recreation	10.1
Total Acreage of "Town Center Mixed Use" on Land Use Framework	55.0

*includes buildings and parking areas



3. ***Northwest Quadrant- A commercial and mixed-use redevelopment in the two- to four-story range*** should be undertaken in the northwest quadrant of the Town Center, creating a continuation of the loop road occurring to the northeast and southwest. The existing “strip mall” configuration of the shopping center could be replaced with a more pedestrian-friendly and attractive development with multi-story structures built up to the street along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, with single-story commercial “outlots” and parking lots to the rear. The owner of this site has expressed an interest in redevelopment. Because this is one of the better tenanted locations in the Town Center area, redevelopment should be especially sensitive to retaining existing businesses.
4. ***Southeast Quadrant- Existing commercial buildings*** should remain in the near term in the southeast quadrant of the Town Center, and also extending north along Governors Highway. Portions of this quadrant will serve as an interim commuter parking location, so that redevelopment can proceed in the northeast quadrant with no net loss in commuter parking capacity. Redevelopment of the southeast quadrant can commence in a later phase of redevelopment, after interim parking facilities are no longer needed.
5. ***A new public plaza and proposed new Metra Station*** are indicated east of the new mixed-use structure northeast of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. This facility would provide attractive access to the underground passageway linking to the boarding platform. The proposed new Richton Park Metra Station would create a higher profile for Metra within the Town Center. The public plaza should be attractively designed to be used for community events such as a farmer’s market or art fair, which can be readily accessed by both Village residents and Metra commuters.
6. ***A new “Village Green” and public open space*** should be accommodated within the existing Butterfield Creek floodway adjacent to Governors Highway in the southwest quadrant. The Village Green should have defined edges along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, while remaining visible from the roadways, and should be visually coordinated with streetscape improvements throughout the Town Center.
7. ***A new Public Library*** should be integrated into the commercial redevelopment of the northwest quadrant, accessed from the loop road. The entry to the building should be prominent and on axis with the loop road, to ensure visibility from Sauk Trail.
8. ***New attached housing in the two- to four-story range is recommended at the perimeter of the Town Center.*** New housing could include a mixture of low-rise buildings and small townhouse developments incorporating shared green spaces. Residents of these new residential communities should be able to easily access the Town Center and Metra Station on foot.



Initial redevelopment of the northeast and southwest quadrants takes advantage of development parcels that are readily available, and minimizes the short-term displacement of commercial businesses. During this inaugural phase of Town Center development, approximately 40,000 square feet of existing commercial space would remain in the northwest quadrant, and approximately 60,000 square feet of existing commercial space would remain in the southeast quadrant.

Up to approximately 190,000 square feet of existing commercial space could be removed during redevelopment of the northwest and southwest quadrants of the Town Center (including currently vacant commercial space), with a total of just over 300,000 square feet of new commercial proposed within the redevelopment of the northwest, northeast and southwest quadrants. The Inaugural Development Concept, therefore, reflects a potential *net increase* of just over 100,000 square feet of commercial space, in line with projected real estate market demand over the near term.

Due to the reconfiguration of commercial space in a more pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive format within the Town Center, this net increase in commercial space could occur despite an approximately 17% decrease in overall acreage dedicated to “tax-generating” land uses. With an increased intensity of land use, capacity can increase even though less acreage is devoted to commercial uses and more is devoted to public uses. *Table 5: Summary of Tax Generating Potential* summarizes these changes. Note that the acreage in civic / institutional land use decreases due to the expectation that parking for the new Public Library will be shared to some extent with commuters and the adjacent commercial development.

Table 5: Summary of Tax Generating Potential
Inaugural Development Concept

	Concept		Existing *		Difference	
	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent
Total acreage subject to redevelopment **	55.00	100.0%	55.00	100.0%		
Total acreage in commercial land use	16.60		32.00		-15.40	
Total acreage in residential land use (incl. parking facilities for each unit)	10.00		3.90		6.10	
Total acreage in tax-generating use	26.60	48.4%	35.90	65.3%	-9.30	-16.9%
Total acreage in civic / institutional land use	0.80		1.90		-1.10	
Total acreage in commuter parking use	14.00		10.30		3.70	
Total acreage in public ROW	3.50		2.36		1.14	
Total acreage in open space	10.10		0.00		10.10	
Total acreage in vacant land	0.00		4.54		-4.54	
Total acreage in non-tax-generating use	28.40	51.6%	19.10	34.7%	9.30	16.9%

* Commercial land use category includes currently vacant commercial property

** Approximate; includes only areas designated as 'Town Center Mixed Use' on Land Use Framework



B. PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

1. **Gateway elements, parkway and median plantings, and streetscape treatments** along Sauk Trail, Governors Highway and new roadways within the Town Center, including elements such as upgraded paving, decorative lighting, planters, street trees, etc. Enhancements at Metra facilities or within the Metra and Canadian National / Illinois Central Railroad rights-of-way will be subject to discussion and compliance with appropriate Metra and CN/IC Railroad guidelines. Guidelines in this regard are included as the final section of this Chapter.
2. **New public spaces, including the public plaza and Village Green** (as described above) should be coordinated visually with the streetscape treatments used at both primary and secondary roadways. Guidelines in this regard are included as the final section of this Chapter.
3. **Parking lot landscaping** should be utilized to enhance the overall image and quality of the Town Center, at the perimeter of lots to define the “street wall” and internal to lots to break up large areas of pavement.
4. A **“wayfinding” system** should be developed, incorporating recurring visual elements and informational signage visible to both drivers and pedestrians, to aid in orientation when visiting the Town Center. Further, signage in remote locations should guide visitors to the Town Center from elsewhere in the Village.
5. **Preservation and enhancement of natural areas**, including floodplain and wooded areas north and south of the Town Center, should be undertaken to create visual relief and passive recreation amenities (such as walking trails).

C. TRANSIT, CIRCULATION AND PARKING

1. **Creation of an internal “loop road” access system** for the northeast, northwest and southwest quadrants of the Town Center. This loop road will consolidate and define vehicular access to each quadrant and allow for easier movement of pedestrians and bicycles within the area. The loop road should be developed with a landscaped boulevard cross-section.
2. **Upgrades to Sauk Trail and Governor Highway** should include intersection traffic movement improvements, parkway landscaping, and planted medians where feasible. Other improvements will include new “loop road” intersections, removal of private access curb cuts within the core area, and pedestrian-activated signals throughout the Town Center.
3. **One-way travel on Richton Road should be eliminated** as intersection capacity is increased with the creation of the loop road access system, so that the existing one-way northbound restriction that routes departing Metra commuters north to Poplar Avenue can be discontinued.



4. **Ample sidewalks and signed bicycle routes** will be provided throughout the Town Center, together with pedestrian “refuge” seating and designated bicycle parking areas to encourage multiple modes of travel. Bicycle routes will connect to the regional bike route system, to maximize access from surrounding neighborhoods. This should include pedestrian access improvements at existing auto-oriented commercial businesses within the area.
5. **A new Metra Station, platform access tunnel, and platform with weather shelter** are proposed, to create a stronger visual and physical connection to the Town Center. Platforms and platform access should be located as far south as possible to increase visibility from Sauk Trail. Informational kiosks could be placed near the station facility to provide train and bus schedule information. If undertaken prior to Metra’s potential construction of a Metra Electric District maintenance facility beyond the current terminus at University Park, these new facilities will need to be funded by the Village and/or a developer.
6. **Small-scale parking lots** should be located throughout the Town Center, to provide convenient commuter, commercial and public facility parking. See *Table 6: Parking Analysis* for more detail. During off-peak periods (evenings and weekends) it is possible that certain commuter spaces could be made available for other users through shared parking arrangements. The Inaugural Development Concept provides for 301 additional commuter parking spaces, in addition to the relocation of 242 spaces to accommodate commercial development in the northeast quadrant. Note that these replacement spaces should be provided prior to the start of construction, to ensure no net loss in parking capacity during Town Center development. The inset map on Figure 7

Table 6: Parking Analysis
Inaugural Development Concept

	Public	Private	Total
Dedicated commercial parking spaces			
new surface		1,187	1187
new structured		0	0
existing		240	240
<i>total</i>			1427
Dedicated civic / institutional parking spaces			
new surface	50		50
existing	0		0
<i>total</i>			50
Commuter Parking Lots / Structures			
new surface spaces	301		301
replacement surface spaces	242		242
existing surface spaces	827		827
new structured spaces	0		0
replacement structured spaces	0		0
<i>total</i>			1,370



highlights the location of commuter parking lots. Directional signage and fare collection mechanisms (meters and collection boxes) will need to carefully coordinated with parking lot design.

7. **Dedicated commuter “kiss-n-ride” parking spaces** are planned immediately north of the proposed new Metra Station (included in the “existing surface spaces” in Table 6 above).
8. **A Pace bus pullout** north of the proposed new Metra Station will provide a safe boarding location for transferring commuters. As Pace bus service is increased to and within the Town Center, curb-side bus stops at the “far side” of intersections should be provided, including weather shelters within the core of the Town Center.
9. **Traffic signal prioritization (TSP)** technology should be considered as signalization is added and adjusted on Sauk Trail and Governors Highway to facilitate bus movement during peak travel periods.

COMMUTER PARKING DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COSTS

The costs of developing, operating and maintaining the parking facilities indicated in the Inaugural Development Concept have been estimated, for ease of comparison with the Build-Out Vision Concept and to aid in Plan implementation. *Table 7: Commuter Parking Development Costs* quantifies the approximate cost of developing 301 new surface spaces and 242 replacement surface spaces within the Town Center. As noted in the Table footnotes, not all potential costs are included as some cannot be estimated until engineering analysis is undertaken. The Village will also need to investigate its legal standing with IDOT regarding potential financial obligations related to removing commuter parking spaces originally developed with government funding assistance from active use. These potential obligations could impact project costs.

Table 7: Commuter Parking Development Costs
Inaugural Development Concept

	#	\$	Total
Land Acquisition * (A)	120,400	\$5.50	\$662,200.00
Construction ** (B)			
new and replacement surface spaces	543	\$5,000.00	\$2,715,000.00
Funds Received (C)			
sale of existing parking area(s) for development *	30,000	\$5.50	\$165,000.00
Total gross cost of commuter parking facilities (A+B-C)			\$3,212,200.00

* # refers to square footage; \$ refers to cost per square foot
Refers to both parking and public uses

** # refers to number of spaces; \$ refers to cost per space and includes:
design, engineering, demolition, site preparation, construction.
Does not include potential costs to address environmental or infrastructure relocation issues.



Operating costs and revenues that the Village can expect to incur from commuter parking facilities have also been estimated. *Table 8: Commuter Parking Operations and Maintenance / Costs and Revenues* indicates an estimated revenue shortfall in the initial year of operation, based upon current commuter parking permit rates, current annual maintenance costs, and an estimate of the annual repayment burden on financed capital costs. Note that this analysis assumes that all 543 spaces are constructed simultaneously at the outset of Plan implementation. In all likelihood spaces will be constructed over a period of years. For ease of comparison with the Build-Out Vision Concept, however, phasing of construction was eliminated from consideration in this analysis.

Table 8: Commuter Parking Operations and Maintenance / Costs and Revenues
Inaugural Development Concept

	# Spaces	\$/Space	Total
Commuter Fee Revenues (annual) * (A)	1,370	\$270.00	\$369,900.00
Operations and Maintenance (annual) (B)			
existing, new and replacement surface spaces**	1,370	\$238.00	\$326,060.00
new and replacement structured spaces ***	0	\$100.00	\$0.00
Capital Cost repayment (annual) **** (C)			\$280,054.00
Annual Surplus or Shortfall (A-B-C)			-\$236,214.00

* Assumed to be \$270 per space annually (\$22.50 monthly fee x 12 months) with 100% utilization

** Source: Village of Richton Park

*** Source: Victoria Transport Policy Institute- "Parking Costs, Pricing and Revenue Calculator"

**** One annual payment at 6% interest for 20 years on "total gross cost" above

Finally, costs and revenues were projected in *Table 9: Commuter Parking Cost and Revenue Projection* for a period of twenty years, in order to ascertain to what extent future increases in commuter fee revenues and operations and maintenance costs might impact parking facility management. Note that this analysis assumes current dollars, with future year adjustments as noted in the Table footnotes. This projection serves primarily to allow for comparison of the Inaugural Development Concept with the Build-Out Vision Concept. The projection in Table 9 indicates that revenue shortfalls can be expected in each year of operation, despite periodic permit fee increases.



Table 9: Commuter Parking Cost and Revenue Projection
Inaugural Development Concept

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Commuter Fee Revenues (annual) *	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$443,880	\$443,880	\$443,880	\$443,880	\$443,880
Operations and Maintenance (annual) **										
existing, new and replacement surface spaces	\$326,060	\$335,842	\$345,917	\$356,295	\$366,983	\$377,993	\$389,333	\$401,013	\$413,043	\$425,434
new and replacement structured spaces	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Capital Cost repayment (annual) ***	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054
Annual Surplus or Shortfall ****	-\$236,214	-\$245,996	-\$256,071	-\$266,449	-\$277,137	-\$214,167	-\$225,507	-\$237,187	-\$249,217	-\$261,608
	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Year 15	Year 16	Year 17	Year 18	Year 19	Year 20
Commuter Fee Revenues (annual)	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$639,187	\$639,187	\$639,187	\$639,187	\$639,187
Operations and Maintenance (annual)										
new and replacement surface spaces	\$438,197	\$451,343	\$464,884	\$478,830	\$493,195	\$507,991	\$523,231	\$538,927	\$555,095	\$571,748
new and replacement structured spaces	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Capital Cost repayment (annual)	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054	\$280,054
Annual Surplus or Shortfall	-\$185,595	-\$198,741	-\$212,282	-\$226,228	-\$240,593	-\$148,858	-\$164,097	-\$179,794	-\$195,962	-\$212,615

* Revenues assumed to increase by 20% in years 6, 11 and 16 (permit fee increases)

** Costs assumed to increase at a rate of 3% annually beginning in Year 2

*** One annual payment at 6% interest for 20 years on "total gross cost" above

**** If a shortfall exists, this represents the amount of "subsidy" Village-owned commuter parking areas will require annually from other revenue sources.

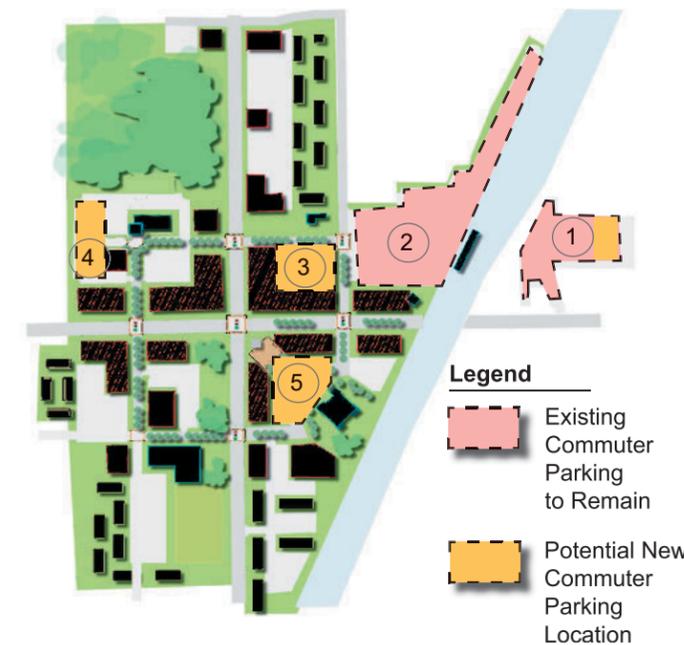
BUILD-OUT VISION CONCEPT

The Build-Out Vision program, depicted in *Figure 8: Build-Out Vision Concept*, builds directly upon the Inaugural Development program by focusing on longer-term private, public and transit facility improvement opportunities within the Richton Park Metra Station area that will become feasible to pursue as interest in the Town Center as a commercial and civic activity hub solidifies due to the Village’s marketing and redevelopment efforts.

A new mixed use structure will be developed directly west of the proposed new Metra Station and platform access entrance, replacing the public plaza north of Sauk Trail and west of the Metra Electric Line. The mixed use development on the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway is intensified with the addition of another mixed use building and a parking structure to accommodate commercial, residential and commuter parking. The southeast quadrant of the Town Center is redeveloped to complete the “loop road,” incorporating a permanent Village Green and plaza, the visual axis of which is terminated with a new Village Hall. The southwest quadrant is also intensified with additional development that holds the key corner, and a new recreation center immediately to the south. Streetscape and urban design features in the overall area are completed. *Table 10: Development Program* and *Table 11: Area of Land Use* summarize the breakdown of land uses depicted in the Concept, for ease of comparison with the Inaugural Development Concept.



Figure 8:
Build-Out
Vision Concept



Area	Existing spaces	New/replacement spaces	Total
1	271	82	353
2	445		445
3		311	311
4		151	151
5		110	110
Total	716	654	1370

Legend

- Open space
- Attached dwellings (Proposed)
- Commercial (Proposed)
- Public use (Existing/Proposed)
- Mixed-use Residential above first floor retail (Proposed)



Table 10: Development Program
Build-Out Vision Concept

	Sq. Ft.	# DU's	# Spaces
Commercial Land Use			
Commercial buildings (approximate gross leasable square footage)			
occupied	183,000		
unoccupied	110,000		
total area of existing space	293,000		
less commercial removed	293,000		
Existing space retained	0		
new	535,000		
total	535,000		
Commercial parking spaces *			
new surface**			2,140
new structured			0
existing			0
total			2,140
Residential Land Use			
Residential development (number of dwelling units)			
new townhomes		192	
new condominiums		190	
existing		0	
total		382	
Civic / Institutional Land Use			
Civic / Institutional buildings and facilities (square footage)			
new	60,000		
existing	0		
total	60,000		
Civic / institutional parking spaces			
new surface			200
existing			0
total			200
Commuter Parking Lots / Structures			
new spaces in surface lots			301
replacement spaces in surface lots			42
existing surface lot spaces (to remain)			716
new spaces in parking structure			0
replacement spaces in parking structure			311
total			1,370

* one parking space per 250 square feet of commercial use

** includes on-street parking

Table 11: Area of Land Use
Build-Out Vision Concept

	Acreage
Commercial *	18.6
Residential *	10.0
Civic/Institutional *	0.8
Commuter Parking Lots / Structures	13.0
Public Right-of-Way	4.5
Open Space / Recreation	8.1
Total Acreage of "Town Center Mixed Use" on Land Use Framework	55.0

*includes buildings and parking areas



It is important to point out that the Concept reflects an interpretation of how improvements might occur within the area, and is illustrative rather than prescriptive. Key elements of the Build-Out Vision Concept, building directly on the Inaugural Development Concept, include:

A. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. ***Northeast Quadrant- Mixed-use development in the two- to four-story range*** is expanded on the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, designed as “in-line” storefronts along the sidewalk with little or no building setback with dwelling units above. A parking structure is anticipated behind the mixed use buildings to accommodate shopper, commuter and resident parking. An additional mixed-use building is indicated just west of the proposed new Metra Station, providing a key retail location to “capture” commuters as they enter and exit the station.
2. ***Southeast Quadrant- A new mixed use and commercial development in the two-to four-story range*** should be pursued in the southeast quadrant of the Town Center, replacing existing auto-oriented businesses and accessed from both Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. Taller structures should front onto Sauk Trail, and parking areas should be placed to the rear. This development will complete the loop road through the Town Center.
3. ***Southwest Quadrant- Flood Plain Mitigation*** studies should be pursued to allow the recommended development pattern to take shape. The western frontage of Governors Highway south of Sauk Trail is currently within a 100-year flood plain as well as a floodway. The Village should immediately explore whether the flood plain can be mitigated to allow development consistent with the Concept for the area. If this proves to not be feasible, then the frontage along the west side of Governors Highway south of Sauk Trail will then be utilized for off-street parking, open space, or other uses allowed in and compatible with regulatory flood plain locations.
4. ***Commercial redevelopment in the one- to two-story range*** should be undertaken north of the Town Center, along Governors Highway extending north to Poplar Avenue. The existing “strip mall” configuration of the shopping center should be replaced with a more pedestrian-friendly development with structures built up to the street and parking lots to the side and rear.
5. ***A new “Village Green” and public plaza*** should be accommodated within the southeast quadrant, in conjunction with the mixed use redevelopment. The Village Green and plaza should be visually coordinated with streetscape improvements throughout the Town Center. The plaza should incorporate a strong design feature, and can be used for community events such as a farmer’s market or art fair, which can be readily accessed by both Village residents and Metra commuters.



6. *A new Village Hall* should be integrated into the redevelopment of the southeast quadrant, accessed from the loop road and taking advantage of a high profile site on axis with the Village Green.
7. *A new recreation facility* should be developed south of the commercial development in the southwest quadrant, adjacent to the sports fields and accessed from the loop road. The placement of this facility will depend upon the Village's ability to secure development permits to construct within the floodplain and/or mitigate current floodplain conditions.

During these subsequent phases of Town Center development, approximately 100,000 square feet of existing commercial space within the Town Center would be replaced. This would bring the complete total of removed space to approximately 300,000 square feet.

A total of approximately 535,000 square feet of commercial space is proposed to complete the Town Center. The Build-Out Vision Concept, therefore, reflects a *net increase* of approximately 240,000 square feet of commercial space (or the addition of 140,000 square feet of commercial space beyond the Inaugural Development Concept). This level of development assumes a long-term market investment strategy, beyond typical market estimation techniques, under which careful control development staging over time will lend strongly to its success.

Due to the reconfiguration of commercial space in a more pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive format within the Town Center, this increase in commercial space could occur despite an approximately 13% decrease in acreage dedicated to “tax-generating” land uses, allowing for an increase in area dedicated to open space, public rights-of-way and commuter parking. *Table 12: Summary of Tax Generating Potential* indicates this breakdown. Note that the acreage in civic / institutional land use decreases due to the expectation that parking for the new Public Library and Village Hall will be shared to some extent with commuters and adjacent commercial developments.

Table 12: Summary of Tax Generating Potential
Build-Out Vision Concept

	Concept		Existing *		Difference	
	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent
Total acreage subject to redevelopment **	55.00	100.0%	55.00	100.0%		
Total acreage in commercial land use	18.60		32.00		-13.40	
Total acreage in residential land use (incl. parking facilities for each unit)	10.00		3.90		6.10	
Total acreage in tax-generating use	28.60	52.0%	35.90	65.3%	-7.30	-13.3%
Total acreage in civic / institutional land use	0.80		1.90		-1.10	
Total acreage in commuter parking use	13.00		10.30		2.70	
Total acreage in public ROW	4.50		2.36		2.14	
Total acreage in open space	8.10		0.00		8.10	
Total acreage in vacant land	0.00		4.54		-4.54	
Total acreage in non-tax-generating use	26.40	48.0%	19.10	34.7%	7.30	13.3%

* Commercial land use category includes currently vacant commercial property

** Approximate; includes only areas designated as 'Town Center Mixed Use' on Land Use Framework



B. PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

1. **Gateway elements, parkway and median plantings, and streetscape treatments** are continued west along Sauk Trail and north and south along Governors Highway, and added at new loop roadways within the Town Center, including elements such as upgraded paving, decorative lighting, planters, street trees, etc. Guidelines in this regard are included as the final section of this Chapter.
2. **New public spaces, including the permanent public plaza and Village Green** (as described above) should be coordinated visually with the streetscape treatments used at both primary and secondary roadways. Guidelines in this regard are included as the final section of this Chapter.
3. **Parking lot landscaping** should be utilized to enhance the overall image and quality of the Town Center, at the perimeter of lots to define the “street wall” and internal to lots to break up large areas of pavement.
4. **The “wayfinding” system** should be expanded as needed due to additional redevelopment, incorporating recurring visual elements and informational signage visible to both drivers and pedestrians, to aid in orientation when visiting the Town Center.

C. TRANSIT, CIRCULATION AND PARKING

1. **Upgrades to Sauk Trail and Governor Highway**, including intersection traffic movement improvements, parkway landscaping, and planted medians where feasible. Intersection improvements will include new “loop road” intersections, removal of private access curb cuts within the core area, and additional pedestrian-activated signals where needed.
2. **Completion of the internal “loop road” access system** at the southeast quadrant of the Town Center. This loop road will consolidate and clarify vehicular access to each quadrant and allow for easier movement of pedestrians and bicycles. The loop road should be developed with a landscaped boulevard cross-section.
3. **A pedestrian bridge** could be installed over Sauk Trail immediately adjacent to the west side of the Metra Electric and CN/IC Railroad overpass, to serve as a focal point for the Town Center. The pedestrian bridge will need to be an independent structure, with its location contingent upon potential alterations to the Metra Electric and CN/IC Railroad overpass if a second main line track extension is undertaken. Direct access to Metra platforms cannot be provided by the bridge. Configuration of the bridge to ensure that commuters do not bypass commercial businesses will be important.
4. **Ample sidewalks and signed bicycle routes** will be further expanded throughout the Town Center, together with pedestrian seating and designated bicycle parking areas to encourage multiple modes of travel. Bicycle routes will connect to the regional bike route system, to maximize access from surrounding neighborhoods.



5. Continue to implement appropriate improvements to facilitate *increased Pace bus service* and/or *a local trolley service*, increasing access to the Town Center.
6. *Small-scale parking lots in new development locations* throughout the Town Center, to provide additional and convenient commuter, commercial and public facility parking. See *Table 13: Parking Analysis* for a complete breakdown of parking areas in the “build-out” phase of the Town Center. At off-peak times (evenings and weekends) it is possible that designated commuter spaces could be made available for other users through shared parking arrangements. The Build-Out Vision Concept provides for 301 additional commuter parking spaces, in addition to the relocation of 353 spaces to accommodate commercial development in the northeast and southeast quadrants. Note that these replacement spaces are primarily located in the parking structure, which must be completed before existing surface spaces are eliminated, to ensure no net loss in commuter parking capacity during Town Center redevelopment. The inset map on Figure 8 highlights the location of commuter parking lots. Directional signage and fare collection mechanisms (meters and collection boxes) will need to be carefully coordinated with parking lot design.

Table 13: Parking Analysis
Build-Out Vision Concept

	Public	Private	Total
Dedicated commercial parking spaces			
new surface		2,140	2,140
new structured		0	0
existing		0	0
<i>total</i>			2,140
Dedicated civic / institutional parking spaces			
new surface	200		200
existing	0		0
<i>total</i>			200
Commuter Parking Lots / Structures			
new surface spaces	301		301
replacement surface spaces	42		42
existing surface spaces	716		716
new structured spaces	0		0
replacement structured spaces	311		311
<i>total</i>			1,370

COMMUTER PARKING DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COSTS

For ease of comparison with the Inaugural Concept, the costs of developing, operating and maintaining the parking facilities indicated in the Build-Out Vision Concept have been estimated with the Inaugural Development Concept. *Table 14: Commuter Parking Development Costs* quantifies the approximate cost of developing 343 new and replacement surface spaces and 311 replacement spaces in a parking



structure within the Town Center. As noted in the Table footnotes, not all potential costs are included as some cannot be estimated until more detailed engineering work is undertaken. The Village will also need to investigate its legal standing with IDOT regarding potential financial obligations related to removing commuter parking spaces originally developed with government funding assistance from active use. These potential obligations could impact project costs.

Table 14: Commuter Parking Development Costs
Build-Out Vision Concept

	#	\$	Total
Land Acquisition * (A)	120,400	\$5.50	\$662,200.00
Construction ** (B)			
new and replacement surface spaces	343	\$5,000.00	\$1,715,000.00
new and replacement structured spaces	311	\$15,000.00	\$4,665,000.00
Funds Received (C)			
sale of existing parking area(s) for development *	30,000	\$5.50	\$165,000.00
Total gross cost of commuter parking facilities (A+B-C)			\$6,877,200.00

* # refers to square footage; \$ refers to cost per square foot
Refers to both parking and public uses

** # refers to number of spaces; \$ refers to cost per space and includes:
design, engineering, demolition, site preparation, construction.
Does not include potential costs to address environmental or infrastructure relocation issues.

Operating costs and revenues the Village can expect to incur from commuter parking facilities have also been estimated. *Table 15: Commuter Parking Operations and Maintenance / Costs and Revenues* indicates a significant estimated revenue shortfall in the initial year of operation, based upon current commuter parking permit rates, current annual maintenance costs, and an estimate of the annual repayment burden on financed capital costs. Note that this analysis assumes that all 654 spaces are constructed simultaneously at the outset of Plan implementation. In all likelihood spaces will be constructed over a period of years. For ease of comparison with the Inaugural Development Concept, however, phasing of construction was eliminated from consideration in this analysis. The analysis also does not consider the financial implications of constructing, and then later replacing, the temporary commuter parking lot in the southeast quadrant indicated in the Inaugural Development Concept, as development timing is not known.

Finally, costs and revenues were projected in *Table 16: Commuter Parking Cost and Revenue Projection* for a period of twenty years, in order to ascertain to what extent future increases in commuter fee revenues and operations and maintenance costs might impact parking facility management. Note that this analysis assumes current dollars, with future year adjustments as noted in the Table footnotes. This projection serves primarily to allow for comparison of the two development concepts. The projection in Table 16 indicates that significant revenue shortfalls can be expected in each year of operation if a parking structure is utilized to address parking capacity needs, despite periodic permit fee increases.



**Table 15: Commuter Parking Operations and Maintenance /
Costs and Revenues
Build-Out Vision Concept**

	# Spaces	\$/Space	Total
Commuter Fee Revenues (annual) * (A)	1,370	\$270.00	\$369,900.00
Operations and Maintenance (annual) (B)			
existing, new and replacement surface spaces**	1,059	\$238.00	\$252,042.00
new and replacement structured spaces***	311	\$100.00	\$31,100.00
Capital Cost repayment (annual) **** (C)			\$599,586.00
Annual Surplus or Shortfall (A-B)			-\$512,828.00

* Assumed to be \$270 per space annually (\$22.50 monthly fee x 12 months) with 100% utilization
 ** Source: Village of Richton Park
 *** Source: Victoria Transport Policy Institute- "Parking Costs, Pricing and Revenue Calculator"
 **** One annual payment at 6% interest for 20 years on "total gross cost" above

**Table 16: Commuter Parking Cost and Revenue Projection
Build-Out Vision Concept**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Commuter Fee Revenues (annual) *	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$369,900	\$443,880	\$443,880	\$443,880	\$443,880	\$443,880
Operations and Maintenance (annual) **										
existing, new and replacement surface spaces	\$252,042	\$259,603	\$267,391	\$275,413	\$283,675	\$292,186	\$300,951	\$309,980	\$319,279	\$328,858
new and replacement structured spaces	\$31,100	\$32,033	\$32,994	\$33,984	\$35,003	\$36,053	\$37,135	\$38,249	\$39,397	\$40,578
Capital Cost repayment (annual) ***	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586
Annual Surplus or Shortfall ****	-\$512,828	-\$521,322	-\$530,071	-\$539,083	-\$548,365	-\$483,945	-\$493,792	-\$503,935	-\$514,382	-\$525,142
	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Year 15	Year 16	Year 17	Year 18	Year 19	Year 20
Commuter Fee Revenues (annual)	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$532,656	\$639,187	\$639,187	\$639,187	\$639,187	\$639,187
Operations and Maintenance (annual)										
new and replacement surface spaces	\$338,723	\$348,885	\$359,352	\$370,132	\$381,236	\$392,673	\$404,453	\$416,587	\$429,085	\$441,957
new and replacement structured spaces	\$41,796	\$43,050	\$44,341	\$45,671	\$47,042	\$48,453	\$49,906	\$51,404	\$52,946	\$54,534
Capital Cost repayment (annual)	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586	\$599,586
Annual Surplus or Shortfall	-\$447,449	-\$458,865	-\$470,623	-\$482,734	-\$495,208	-\$401,525	-\$414,759	-\$428,389	-\$442,429	-\$456,890

* Revenues assumed to increase by 20% in years 6, 11 and 16 (permit fee increases)
 ** Costs assumed to increase at a rate of 3% annually beginning in Year 2
 *** One annual payment at 6% interest for 20 years on "total gross cost" above
 **** If a shortfall exists, this represents the amount of "subsidy" Village-owned commuter parking areas will require annually from other revenue sources.

ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT SKETCHES

The following two images, *Figure 9: Sauk Trail Urban Corridor* and *Figure 10: Richton Park Square*, graphically depict the cohesive and attractive image intended for the Richton Park Town Center. Streetscape and median treatments, along with parking lot and station area amenities, are highlighted in Figure 9. Figure 10 depicts the plaza and Village Green that create a grand civic presence for a new Village Hall in the southeast quadrant. Please note these concepts reflect only one of many solutions that can be achieved under these design guidelines, but can be used to demonstrate the intent of the Plan.



Figure 9:
Sauk Trail
Urban Corridor

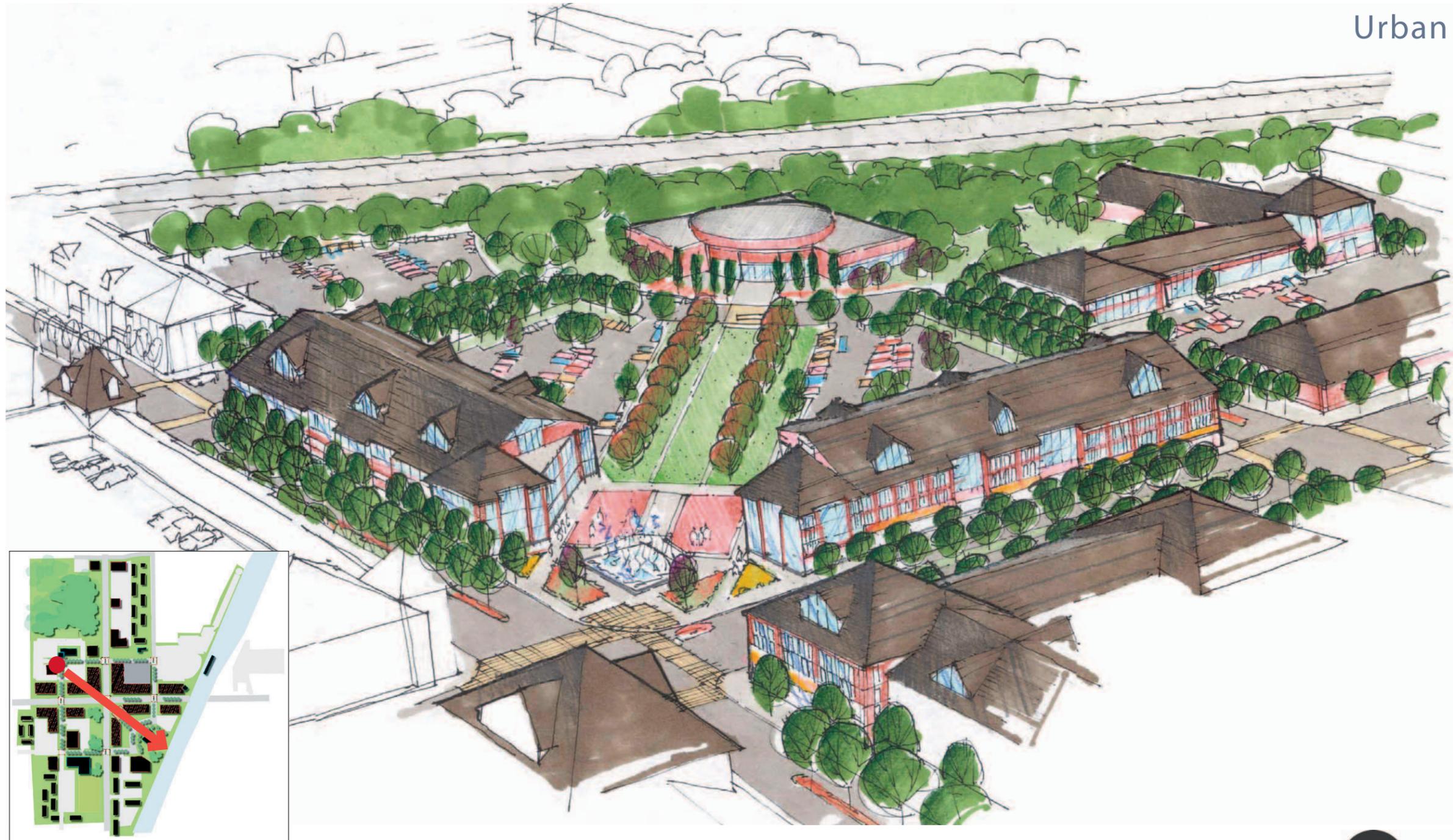


Figure 10:
Richton Park
Square



DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Design Guidelines provide an important tool for the Village of Richton Park to achieve its “build-out” vision for the Town Center. These guidelines provide a framework against which the Village can consider and evaluate public and private improvement proposals in the Village Center area. They bring together many of the recommendations of the Plan, including: land use, mixed-use development, the intensity and scale of development, parking, access and circulation considerations, development character, integration of public uses, and streetscape and public improvement design features.

The Design Guidelines are organized in the following four parts: A) Use and Application of the Design Guidelines; B) Richton Park Visual Preferences; C) Design Guidelines; and D) Streetscape and Other Public Areas.

A. USE AND APPLICATION OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design guidelines are applicable within the Town Center, including areas designated for Mixed Use, Commercial, Institutional and Multi-Family uses on the Land Use Framework described in a previous section of this Chapter. They should be used in association with the Village’s various development approval processes, including planned developments and site development plan approval. Virtually all forms of development, except for single family detached residential dwellings, should be subject to review under this Plan and the Design Guidelines. The guidelines are specific enough to be used in the review of development proposals and projects, but are also flexible enough to allow creativity in design ideas to meet the objectives of the Plan. Village administration procedures should be refined to incorporate the Plan and the Design Guidelines as part of the development review process for the Town Center.

B. RICHTON PARK VISUAL PREFERENCES

Early in the planning process, a Visual Preference Survey was completed to identify the appropriate aesthetics and design expectations for the Town Center. Village residents and business owners were asked to review a variety of images to establish an understanding of local preferences and expectations that could be expressed in these guidelines.

Key Visual Preference Survey Findings

The following reflect general characteristics considered desirable by the community, based upon the survey findings:



Commercial and Mixed-Use Buildings

- Traditional materials.
- One to three stories in height.
- Buildings built up to the street, or slightly set back to allow for landscaping and/or outdoor seating.
- Open storefront windows, displays, fabric awnings, landscaping and attractive signage.
- Convenient parking.
- Variety of stores within walking distance in a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Potential mix of uses: retail on the first floor; office / professional services and residential above; civic / recreational uses (park, library).

Housing Types

- High quality materials and construction: brick, stucco, stone; variety of materials.
- Two to three story townhomes, three to five story condominiums.
- Break down scale of buildings with gables, balconies, varied rooflines and architectural details.
- Provide landscaped yards and courtyards.
- Garages and parking lots should not be prominent.
- Potential housing types: market-rate condominiums, lofts and townhouses for young professionals and empty-nesters.

Building Scale

- High quality materials: brick, stone, stucco, wood and metal trim elements.
- Break down building scale with traditional details, material changes, varied rooflines, porches, awnings and landscaping.
- Consistency in design theme.
- Identity features like a tower element or archway(s).
- Inviting storefronts that relate to wide, pedestrian friendly sidewalks.

Streetscape and Parking

- High quality materials; brick and stone accents.
- Parking structures should be comparable in design and quality to nearby buildings.
- Parking structures and lots should be easily accessible, secure, well-lit, clean and landscaped.
- Upgraded streetscape with wide sidewalks, special paving, lighting and landscaping.
- Street trees and planting beds in a small setback or at the curb (not blocking views or the sidewalk “walking zone.”)
- Safe pedestrian street crossing points and routes through parking lots connecting to nearby buildings.
- Block views of parked cars while maintaining pedestrian visibility.
- Include benches, trash receptacles and other comfort amenities.
- Provide medians on wide roadways.
- Below-grade parking, if feasible.



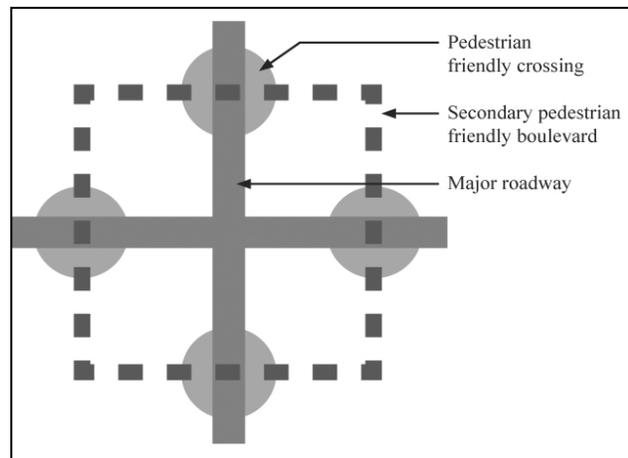
Transit and Pedestrian Facilities

- A clean and comfortable station with amenities including benches, trash cans, bicycle racks, lighting and warming shelters.
- Well defined pedestrian walkways connecting parking lots and drop-off areas to the boarding platform.
- Facilities should include – restrooms, coffee / snack shop, food court, newspaper stand, computer access and meeting facilities.
- Convenient bus access.
- Pedestrian bridges across wide roadways.
- Decorative fencing, landscaping and groundcovers.

C. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Guiding Pattern and Urban Form: The Land Use Framework illustrates several guiding principles for the design and form of the Town Center. The following key principles are supported by more detailed guidelines which follow:

1. Develop a thematic approach to the design and placement of structures and circulation elements within the Town Center.
2. Despite the auto orientation of major streets serving the area, the Town Center will be developed with a strong pedestrian orientation.
3. The current street and roadway access system serving the area lends itself to continued development on a grid street pattern.
4. Encourage development of retail and commercial uses along the major frontages of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway.
5. Establish a unique design image and identity at the intersection of Governors Highway and Sauk Trail.
6. Incorporate urban plazas, open spaces and focal points in the development of the Town Center. Provide for a major open space for community gatherings and special events.
7. Developing an inviting pedestrian environment for commuter facilities as well as other public and private facilities will be important to the success of the Town Center.



Commercial and Mixed Use Buildings:

Commercial and mixed-use buildings should occupy the most highly visible locations in the Town Center. Their character should present the following:



1. High quality materials; preferably use of brick, stone, metal window systems
2. Avoid concrete block, precast concrete and other non-traditional materials.
3. Buildings should generally be three to four stories in height.
4. Taller buildings may be acceptable where compatible with adjoining uses and designed to minimize the appearance of building bulk and mass. This can be accomplished through upper story setbacks , changes in building materials, and the articulation of building details such as base treatments, cornices, lintels and awnings.
5. Structures should be built up to the right-of-way to create a pedestrian oriented “street wall.”
6. Structures should include large and inviting storefront windows, primary entrances, prominent display and showroom areas, and other street level amenities.
7. Building facades should be articulated to address a pedestrian scale.
8. Entrances should be easily identifiable and visible from the street.
9. Building access and entrances should take advantage of adjacent pedestrian corridors, open spaces or plazas rather than being oriented toward parking areas.



Public and Institutional Buildings: Civic use buildings located in the Town Center are key destinations to draw residents into the area.

1. These structures should occupy high visibility locations within the Town Center. Their location should be “framed” by the design of surrounding structures and related improvements.
2. Structures should be no taller than three or four stories in height, but may incorporate taller “focal point” elements to suggest a strong civic presence.



3. These buildings should be designed as memorable “landmarks” of high quality design and materials to demonstrate commitment to the Town Center and the community as a whole.



Residential: A diversity of housing types will be incorporated within the Town Center. A high quality residential environment is critical to generating transit supportive relationships, as well as creating an active pedestrian environment within the Town Center.

1. Mixed-use structures are most desirable along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway immediately west of the Metra Station. These would include high quality condominiums.
2. Wherever possible, parking for residential uses should be provided within the primary structure.
3. Buildings should include finished surfaces on all sides.
4. Consistent with recommended densities, attached dwellings and multiple story condominiums are most appropriate within a one-quarter mile radius of the Metra Station.
5. The use of covered porches is desirable at street level residential entrances.
6. Ideally, structures should reflect traditional architectural styles.
7. Access points to buildings should be easily identifiable and visible from the street.



Structured Parking: Structured parking should be incorporated as an integrated design feature of the overall site development. Parking structures should be situated behind other primary structures, or otherwise concealed with proper architectural design features consistent with nearby building features.



1. High quality and traditional materials as exterior treatments (brick and stone).
2. The facade of parking structures should reflect and blend into the character of adjacent buildings.
3. Treatments should be added to enclose the structure, eliminating wide openings.
4. Stairwells and elevator towers should be well lit and transparent to public view to ensure safety.



D. STREETScape AND OTHER PUBLIC AREAS

The implementation of streetscape guidelines is an essential ingredient to ensuring a strong pedestrian environment, and thus, transit supportive land uses in the Town Center.

Arterial Streetscape: This streetscape recognizes and considers the unique design features and improvements that will be required along the major automobile corridors of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway. Yet, the intersection of these two roadways forms the core of the Town Center. Key to these guidelines are pedestrian safety and comfort, and tools to separate the vehicle and pedestrian “zones.”

1. A comprehensive streetscape treatment is recommended along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway rights-of-way, to present a consistent urban design image.
2. Pedestrian walkways should be exceptionally wide along both sides of both streets, ideally no less than fifteen to twenty feet in width. This will help to accommodate both shoppers and commuters.
3. A pedestrian and vehicle “barrier” should be provided between the pedestrian walkway and the street. This could include barriers designed as seasonal parkway planters, or special two to three foot wrought iron fencing.
4. Sidewalks should create a pedestrian zone directly adjacent to storefronts.
5. Pedestrian crosswalks should be identified with a material change, preferably a decorative paving material.
6. Street lights should combine both a full height fixture and a lower level “pedestrian-height” fixture.



7. Street lights should incorporate mounting brackets for banners, flags, and/or flower baskets.
8. Street trees should be aligned with the street and spaced one every 40 feet, minimum; trees to be within a landscaped parkway when applicable, otherwise protected within a wrought iron tree grate.
9. If possible, landscaped medians should be provided approaching the intersection of Governors Highway and Sauk Trail.
10. Provide a combination of pole-mounted flower pots and surface flower pots located in small clusters or individually within the parkway zone near street corners and parking lot entrances, planted with a consistent colorful array of seasonal flowers.
11. Provide pedestrian amenities, including benches and waste receptacles.



Secondary Commercial Streetscape: Major circulation roadways within the Town Center other than Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, as defined under *guiding patterns and urban form* (above), are included in this classification. While these circulation corridors may be public or private in ownership, it is important they continue a high level of pedestrian continuity throughout the Town Center to help sustain a transit supportive land use environment. The enhancements for this streetscape should include:

1. Landscaped medians should be used in these circulation areas to help define the basic grid circulation network in the Town Center.
2. In many areas, it is possible to include on-street parallel parking. Including on-street parking reinforces the pedestrian character of the area, and functions as a traffic calming feature.
3. Sidewalks should create a pedestrian zone directly adjacent to storefronts.
4. Pedestrian crosswalks should be identified with a material change, preferably a decorative paving material.
5. Street lights should be located at the pedestrian level, and should incorporate fixtures for banners, flags, and/or flower baskets.
6. Street trees should be aligned with the street and spaced one every 40 feet, minimum; trees to be within a landscaped parkway when applicable, otherwise protected within a wrought iron tree grate.



7. Provide a combination of pole-mounted flower pots and surface flower pots located in small clusters or individually within the parkway zone near street corners and parking lot entrances, planted with a consistent colorful array of seasonal flowers.
8. Seek opportunities where small plazas might be created in association with new developments, adjacent to buildings and accessible to walkways.
9. Provide pedestrian amenities, including benches and waste receptacles.



Surface Parking: The Town Center Plan anticipates the importance of surface parking to meet commuter and other parking needs. Because the scale of surface parking in the Town Center will be significant, the appearance of these areas will be extremely important to maintaining an attractive appearance within the Town Center area. The following guidelines will apply:



1. A perimeter planting buffer at least four feet in width when adjacent to public rights-of-way, landscaped with low shrubs and groundcover.
2. A low decorative metal fence should be encouraged within the planting buffer for visual variety and protection.
3. Planting islands should be incorporated within parking areas; these should be landscaped with trees and low groundcover.



Commuter Amenities: Subject to Metra and Canadian National / Illinois Central Railroad policies, the following design guidelines should be applied relative to commuter facilities and amenities in the Metra Station area.



1. When new commuter facilities (including station and platform shelter structures) are proposed for the station area, the Village should work with Metra to help ensure that the architectural style and design of the new buildings and other improvements are consistent with the Town Center as a whole.
2. Benches and waste receptacles should be placed within the shelter structure and at regular intervals along the platform.
3. Bus turnouts should be incorporated, with benches, waste receptacles and appropriate signage; a curbside shelter should also be incorporated when possible.



VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This Chapter identifies critical relationships between the Village and its partners with regard to the implementation of the Goals and Strategies, as described in Chapter IV and graphically depicted in the Concept Plans in Chapter V. It discusses the key partnerships that the Village will need to establish in order to move ahead with implementation, followed by a summary of potential funding sources. “High priority” actions described in the Plan are highlighted, followed by a summary of other action items necessitated by the Plan. These actions are then explained in the context of a “development staging” strategy at the end of this Chapter.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The strategies described in Chapters IV and V will require varying degrees of involvement and/or direct action by the Village in order to facilitate Plan implementation. The Village can act in a variety of roles, as appropriate, in order to move Plan recommendations forward. These varying levels of involvement are described below:

- **Enacting and Enforcing Policies and Codes:** The Village will need to amend the zoning text and map in order to align them more closely with the intent of the Plan. In addition, ongoing enforcement of both amended and existing codes and regulations will be critical to the Plan’s success.
- **Implementing Public Improvements:** The Village should undertake several important physical enhancement projects within the Town Center area in the coming years, as outlined in this Chapter. These projects will be undertaken by the Village alone or in partnership with other public agencies, as appropriate.
- **Providing Development Incentives:** The Village can spur the implementation of other key aspects of the Plan through the offering of appropriate development incentives to the private sector, to effect positive change on private properties within the Town Center and its surroundings.
- **Acting as a Development Partner:** The Village will need to consider taking on a more direct and active role in certain high priority development projects contained within the Plan, in order to overcome development hurdles. For example, the Village may need to take direct ownership of additional key parcels within the study area, conduct environmental studies and assist with efforts to



procure development permits for certain parcels, undertake environmental remediation or other site preparation work, provide publicly funded parking, and/or maintain ownership of key properties to be leased to developers in order to make development projects financially feasible and shorten the overall time frame for development.

A. POTENTIAL PARTNERS

To effectively pursue implementation of the recommendations in this Plan, the Village of Richton Park will need to solicit the involvement of various public and private sector partners. Some of these may include the following:

1. The Regional Transportation Authority Service Boards, **Metra and Pace**, who can assist with the design, coordination and implementation of transit facility and service improvements.
2. **Other Public Agencies**, including the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Cook County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD), who can assist with roadway improvements, and improvements to recreational and natural resource amenities.
3. **The Canadian National / Illinois Central Railroad**, who can work with the Village on railroad right-of-way improvements.
4. **Other Village Departments**, possibly including the Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments, who can cooperate in the improvement of open spaces and recreational amenities.
5. **The Chamber of Commerce, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, local businesses and local property owners**, who can assist with marketing and business recruitment, and can undertake improvements to their own Town Center area properties.
6. **Local Financial Institutions**, who may be interested in providing financing assistance for the implementation of private sector aspects of the Plan.
7. **Local Churches and Cultural / Social Service Organizations**, who can assist in various ways with the implementation of community facility and service improvements.
8. **The Richton Park Public Library**, who should work closely with the Village to implement appropriate plans to replace the existing Library building within the Town Center.
9. **Technical Assistance Providers**, including the Center for Neighborhood Technology (provides assistance in securing business franchises), the Urban Land Institute (provides redevelopment planning assistance) and the Delta Institute (provides assistance and funding for brownfield remediation, should any contamination be discovered at redevelopment sites).



10. **Builders and Developers**, who will be motivated by the existing and future market potential of the area to get involved in implementing aspects of the Plan.
11. **The Citizens of Richton Park**, who can get involved in myriad ways with various Plan initiatives, and can patronize and support Town Center businesses and utilize Town Center community resources whenever possible.

FUNDING SOURCES

Potential funding sources for the implementation of Plan initiatives can be considered as falling into three general categories: resources already in place within the Village, federal and state resources, and private resources. While programs and funding availability at the state and federal level will change over time, those most potentially appropriate to Richton Park are cited below to provide a basis for initiating implementation efforts. Of course, the Plan assumes that the Village will continually remain abreast of funding availability and will leverage all available resources.

A. VILLAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The Village has two Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts currently in place that encompass most of the study area. The presence of these TIF Districts will aid greatly in securing developer interest and investment in proposed development projects, as well as the implementation of public realm improvements that the Plan has identified as high priorities. TIF assistance can include site acquisition and preparation, infrastructure upgrades and low-interest financing, resulting in significantly reduced development costs.

B. FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES

Grants and loans can be secured from a variety of federal and state sources to aid in both public sector enhancement projects and to reduce certain private sector development costs. In some cases, public agencies such as Metra, Pace or IDOT can secure and administer these resources on the Village's behalf for use in local projects. In other cases, the Village can secure funds and administer them independently or in conjunction with a public agency. Annual funding cycles are used to allocate federal funds, often to state and regional agencies who then review applications for funding from local communities. Some funding, however, will be available through direct application to federal agencies.

Although this is not an exhaustive listing, government funding sources to aid in Plan implementation may include the following:



Transportation and Infrastructure Resources

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) includes several programs that can support local transportation, transit and infrastructure projects. TEA-21 will either be extended or replaced with a new program at the federal level, and is likely to still include the following programs, or similar successor programs: ITEP (Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program, administered by IDOT), STP (Surface Transportation Program, for projects sponsored by a regional agency such as CATS) and CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, for projects that can demonstrate regional air quality and congestion improvements, and administered by CATS). Other more focused programs are also available under TEA-21, including programs related to public transit, bicycle access and trail systems.

Operation Greenlight provides funding for transit and transportation projects in Illinois, often through partnerships with regional agencies such as Metra who can assist in securing funding. The Illinois Tomorrow program (or its successor) is a state level initiative to increase the overall “livability” of Illinois communities, and includes the Illinois FIRST (Fund for Infrastructure, Roads, Schools and Transit) program focused on highways and mass transit, along with infrastructure and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Due to current state budget constraints, however, future state funding levels are uncertain. It should also be noted that, in most cases, federal funds cannot be used to replace physical improvements that were originally funded using similar federal sources. For example, the relocation of commuter parking spaces originally funded with federal monies will likely not be eligible for federal funding again.

For communities who can demonstrate eligibility based on income data, federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available for a variety of physical upgrades and other initiatives. Additionally, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers programs to assist with financing public infrastructure projects.

Funding for Commuter Parking and Transit Facilities

Metra may have access to additional funding sources allocated to Metra for use on commuter parking and commuter station improvement projects. These funds could include Operation Greenlight and CMAQ funds, but may also come from other sources. Based upon a preliminary review of agreements between Metra and the Federal Transportation Authority (FTA), it appears that there are no remaining restrictions on the reuse or sale of Village-owned properties currently in use as commuter parking lots (for lots located west of the CN/IC Railroad). However, the Village will need to further investigate their legal standing in this regard with IDOT before more definitive physical planning is pursued. The following should also be



noted with regard to funding for the redevelopment of commuter parking and transit facilities:

- ✓ While Metra has often provided funding for *additional new* spaces, most grant dollars, including Metra's, are not available for financing the replacement of commuter spaces that are displaced from designated and/or historical commuter parking facilities.
- ✓ The displaced commuter parking spaces that may result from the proposed redevelopment cannot be replaced within other existing commuter parking lots.
- ✓ Throughout each step of the redevelopment process, the amount of Metra commuter parking at the Richton Park Station must, at a minimum, remain at its current level, resulting in *no net loss* of commuter parking during any of the phases.
- ✓ Consideration should be given to involving multiple partners (public and private) in order to share the spaces and the costs of the proposed parking structure and new road infrastructure proposed to serve the structure. Commuter parking fees within the proposed parking structure and the proposed new and replacement surface parking lots will need to remain comparable and competitive with commuter parking fees within the Metra system over time.
- ✓ The financial obligations for any commuter parking lots proposed for redevelopment on land purchased with state and federal funds will need to be discussed with IDOT. Also, the use of federal funds for the construction of new parking facilities may be restricted if parking spaces on the same property that were federally funded are removed or altered during redevelopment.
- ✓ If in the future, Metra were to construct a new Metra Electric District maintenance facility somewhere beyond the current terminus at University Park, an impact on the existing station is possible. If the current station building is impacted by railroad construction due to this improvement, Metra will work with the Village to discuss options regarding the station at that time. Given the additional study and funding needed, it is expected that the proposed improvement could occur in five to ten years.

Real Estate and Economic Development Resources

A variety of funding assistance is available for real estate development projects, including grants, loans, bonds and tax credits. These can be used to lower development costs for a municipality directly involved in a project, or for a developer who can demonstrate community support for a project. These funds can be secured from agencies such as the Illinois Development Finance Authority and the Illinois Housing Development Authority, among others.



CDBG funds, mentioned previously, can also be used for projects related to real estate and economic development in eligible areas. In addition, programs are available through the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to alleviate costs for environmental remediation and increased energy efficiency.

Assistance with economic development, including direct support to new businesses through low-interest financing and technical and workforce training assistance, is available through DCEO and the U.S Small Business Administration (SBA), among others.

C. PRIVATE RESOURCES

Private sources of funding can often be secured for specific projects or initiatives, in particular those with a cultural, historical or beautification emphasis. These sources could include grants or loans from philanthropic organizations or foundations, or loans from local financial institutions.

The Implementation Task Force (described below) should reach out to local community organizations and institutions to partner on applications for targeted funding to support various specific initiatives, or to take the lead in securing funding with demonstrated Village support. Examples of specific projects include beautification projects in the Town Center, restoration of the Klawitter House, or the establishment of an annual cultural festival or art fair.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK – CATALYST ACTIVITIES

Plan implementation is a complex process, influenced by many variables – financial resources, community participation, property owner involvement, and intergovernmental relationships, to name a few. While these variables will change over time, it is important to identify key actions, and the relationships among these actions, to begin effective implementation. These strategies include many of the activities described throughout the Plan. Strategies are grouped into two general categories as they relate to implementation: High Priority Actions and Other Important Actions.

- ✓ **High Priority Actions-** These activities should be initiated as soon as possible, ideally within the next year. The Village and its partners should seek to make significant progress on them within a year or two of Plan adoption. These are actions that require strong leadership by the Village and, as a group of activities, are important for creating momentum for change in the Town Center.



- ✓ **Other Important Actions-** These are activities that should be initiated within two to three years of Plan adoption, with significant progress achieved within four or five years. While these actions are important for successful implementation, they can follow behind the “High Priority Actions.”

A. HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

High priority actions require the Village of Richton Park to act as a direct “catalyst,” in order to jump-start implementation and achieve early, visible successes. This will build and sustain momentum in the implementation process. Activities should be initiated immediately. They will serve to demonstrate a sustained commitment to the area by the Village to the private sector and local businesses and residents, thus increasing interest in private investments.

1. Establish an Implementation Task Force

As soon as this Plan is adopted by the Richton Park Village Board, an “Implementation Task Force” comprised of key Village representatives, members of the Steering Committee, and others should be established to move the Plan forward. The group would not only be responsible for helping to initiate and monitor plan activities, but to publicize and visibly advocate for the Town Center, and celebrate successes. Town Center implementation activities should be highly visible to the public. Meetings should be held on a regular basis to review ongoing initiatives and implementation progress. Key actions to be spearheaded by the Task Force will be long-term, involving the full breadth of Town Center revitalization. Activities would include, but not be limited to:

- a. Provide assistance to property owners and developers to ensure that projects meet the standards and intent of the Plan.
- b. Ensure that Village codes, ordinances and enforcement are appropriate and supportive of the Plan.
- c. Seek and secure funding for key initiatives, and coordinate with other agencies as needed.
- d. Identify and acquire sites for new municipal facilities.
- e. Recommend key properties to be acquired or property owner agreements, as appropriate, to the Village Board.
- f. Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to high priority development projects.
- g. Monitor and address the balance of Town Center parking as redevelopment occurs over time.
- h. Establish procedures for the management of shared parking facilities as they occur.
- i. Coordinate Village efforts with Chamber of Commerce marketing efforts.



2. Establish a Town Center Marketing Entity

Establish a marketing entity whose efforts are focused solely on the Town Center, reflecting the Town Center as the Village’s “first choice” location for business and residential reinvestment. This group should work closely with the Implementation Task Force. The focus of activities would be to ensure business community leadership is fully apprised of Town Center development progress and to advocate for business investment in the Town Center.

3. Align Development Regulations to Support the Plan

Working with Village staff, the Task Force should spearhead the preparation of appropriate code and map amendments, outlined below. Additionally, partnerships with other public agencies and districts should be established in order to secure agreement on the relocation or development of new public facilities within the Town Center.

- a. Amend the text and map of the zoning ordinance as needed to align Village regulations more closely with the intent of the Plan as they impact the Town Center. At a minimum, actions will include the following:
 - Consider the creation of an “overlay district” covering the Town Center, creating a mechanism to allow greater scrutiny of proposed projects within the area for compliance with the intent of the Plan.
 - Review allowable densities and height within the B1, B2, B3 and P1 Districts in the Town Center, to ensure transit-supportive and appropriately scaled development. Alternatively, create new zoning districts to accomplish the same, including the creation of a new “Town Center Business District.”
 - Review and amend setback and other bulk requirements for application in the Town Center to more closely reflect the desired “traditional” character within the station area.
 - Review and amend off-street parking requirements within the station area to facilitate appropriately located and scaled off-street parking lots behind and/or between buildings.
 - Rezone selected blocks or portions of blocks currently zoned for public uses to encourage mixed use and/or commercial development within the four quadrants of the Town Center, per the Framework Plan.
 - Review and potentially rezone selected areas in the southwest portion of the station area to facilitate future development of single family residential, per the Framework Plan.
 - Review the mix of permitted and conditional uses within the business zoning districts to ensure a compatible mix of future land uses, as well as including those uses recommended as part of the Plan.



- b. Conduct an engineering assessment of the 100 year flood plain along the west side of Governors Highway to determine if the flood plain can be mitigated to allow development consistent with the Build-Out Vision Concept for the area. If this is not feasible, then the frontage along the west side of Governors Highway south of Sauk Trail will need to be utilized for off-street parking, open space, or other uses allowed in and compatible with regulated flood plain locations.
- c. Bring additional municipal, cultural and recreational uses into the Town Center. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and general Village revenues, along with appropriate federal and state funding and targeted private funding, should be pursued.
 - Construct a new public library in the northwest quadrant of the Town Center, in conjunction with redevelopment of commercial properties in the area.
 - Pursue acquisition and appropriate zoning of key parcels, per the Build-Out Vision, to locate a future Village Hall, Village Green and recreation facility.

4. Initiate Key Public Improvements

Partnerships with Metra, Pace, IDOT, the CN/IC Railroad and others will be necessary to pursue the actions outlined below. Public improvements will be very visible and effective generators of excitement and support for the Plan. Federal and state funding, secured with the assistance of the Village’s partner agencies, will be an important component of funding for these initiatives, along with TIF and general Village revenues.

- a. Enhance Sauk Trail and Governors Highway through the Town Center area. Streetscape improvements are described in more detail in the Design Guidelines section, and include: planted parkways and medians, crosswalks, upgraded paving and lighting at sidewalks, gateway features, benches, refuse receptacles, pole-mounted banners and flower pots.
- b. Construct a new commuter parking lot on Village-owned property behind the commercial businesses in the southeast quadrant, providing adequate capacity to allow redevelopment of the parking areas fronting on Sauk Trail in the northeast quadrant (see the following section regarding “pilot” projects).
- c. Investigate the opportunity to construct a new Richton Park Metra Station facility in conjunction with a new urban plaza directly west of the Metra Electric Line embankment on the north side of Sauk Trail. Eventually, this facility could coincide with the location of a new platform access tunnel if the boarding platform is reconstructed further south. In the near term, the existing station facility will continue to provide platform access. If in the future Metra were to construct a new Metra Electric District maintenance facility beyond the current terminus at University Park, an impact on the existing station structure is



possible. If the current station building is impacted by railroad construction due to this improvement, options regarding the current station building can be addressed by Metra and the Village. Given the additional study and funding needed, it is expected that this proposed improvement could occur in five to ten years. If undertaken prior to Metra’s potential construction of a maintenance facility, these new facilities will need to be funded by the Village and/or a developer.

5. Initiate “Pilot” Projects

The following key projects should be actively pursued by the Task Force within the first year of Plan implementation, through direct property acquisition and/or securing property owner agreements as needed to issue development RFPs. These projects will capitalize on very visible “high impact” sites to improve the overall perception of the Richton Park Town Center as a desirable redevelopment location. Demonstrating early and highly visible success will generate interest and enthusiasm among the citizens of Richton Park, developers and financiers. While all available funding should be secured for these initiatives, the Village should utilize TIF-related incentives as a catalyst for generating early developer interest. These projects are also discussed in the “development staging” section to follow.

- a. Develop a new mixed-use building on the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, incorporating high quality architectural elements and designed in conjunction with the proposed new Metra Station and urban plaza described above. This project will necessitate the relocation of several existing commuter permit parking spaces into the new commuter parking lot also described above.
- b. Pursue property acquisition in the southwest quadrant of the Town Center, and a flood plain mitigation study, to accommodate new improvements within the floodway and facilitate redevelopment of the western portions of the area for commercial and multi-family residential uses.

B. OTHER IMPORTANT ACTIONS

These actions should be initiated within two to three years of Plan adoption, with significant progress achieved within the following four to five years. They are divided into related groups of actions for ease of reference. Like the High Priority Actions above, they should be undertaken in parallel, as each provides support to the other in the overall Plan implementation process. Should the opportunity arise, of course, they should be initiated as soon as possible.



1. Town Center Image

The Chamber of Commerce, Public Library, Parks and Recreation Department and other entities will be key partners for these initiatives. Some targeted private funding may be secured for these initiatives, to supplement government sources of support. These actions will help to solidify the Town Center's image within the community and beyond.

- a. Undertake focused marketing efforts, to potentially include: informational maps and brochures about Town Center businesses and amenities; coordinated advertising and promotional events such as sidewalk sales; and the recurring use of the term "Town Center" in describing the area.
- b. Organize community-wide events to occur within the Town Center area, so that Richton Park residents and others begin to view it as the "heart" of the community.
- c. Encourage cosmetic improvements to existing commercial properties in the Town Center area in the near term, potentially establishing a "Facade Improvement Program" to offer low-interest financing to property and business owners within the TIF District.
- d. Focus Village efforts on the general maintenance and upkeep of public areas in the Town Center. While the CN/IC Railroad is actually responsible for maintenance of the railroad embankment on the east side of the CN/IC right-of-way, it will be necessary for the Village to periodically supplement these efforts to maintain standards of quality and appearance. Improvements or maintenance activities on the west side of the Metra Electric Line embankment will need to be discussed with and approved by Metra.

2. Land Use and Redevelopment

These actions will build upon the initial activity generated by the High Priority Actions described previously. Early successes will make these initiatives easier to get off the ground, as interest in the Town Center grows. Funding for these initiatives will consist largely of providing support as needed to developers and businesses who are seeking financing and technical assistance available directly to them. TIF incentives and pre-development assistance with Village-secured funds will also be necessary, as will encouraging the use of available state and federal business development and housing assistance programs.



- a. Encourage and facilitate the establishment of additional commercial businesses within the Town Center Station Area.
 - Concentrate pedestrian-oriented commercial uses near the intersection of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway within the four quadrants of the Town Center, per the Build-Out Vision Concept. Business types to encourage in the area include: coffee shop, casual and full-service restaurants, sandwich shop, convenience store, dry cleaner, florist, card/gift shop, other specialty shops (such as a hobby or quilting supply store), and convenience services (such as a hair salon, day spa or photography studio).
 - Other types of uses that can encourage “foot traffic” within the TOD core area include: medical and dental offices, professional office (such as real estate and insurance agents) and business services (such as a copy shop).
 - Relocate existing Village businesses that can benefit from co-location and access to commuters into the Town Center as it redevelops.
 - Relocate auto-oriented businesses to contiguous areas east along Sauk Trail and north along Governors Highway, per the Framework Plan, or encourage relocation to other sites within Richton Park over the longer term.

- b. Facilitate and encourage new housing in the Town Center area.
 - Create incentives and/or secure funding to support the development of market-rate housing of various types within the area (townhomes and condominiums), to encourage an increased residential population near and within the Town Center.
 - Require the creation of shared green spaces in conjunction with new residential developments.

- c. Bring additional municipal, cultural and recreational uses into the Town Center. Tax Increment Finance and general Village revenues, along with appropriate federal and state funding and targeted private funding, should be pursued.
 - Relocate Village Hall to a prominent site in the southeast quadrant, in conjunction with a new Village Green and community plaza at the corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway.
 - Construct a new recreation center in the southwest quadrant, adjacent to the sports fields developed within the Butterfield Creek floodway.
 - Encourage and facilitate the creation of recreational amenities (including walking paths and educational signage) in wooded and wetland areas adjacent to the Town Center.

3. Access, Circulation and Parking

Federal and State funding secured with the assistance of public agency partners will be critical for the implementation of these actions, as will close coordination with



regional and state agencies and impacted property owners. These actions will improve mobility within the area as the level of activity increases due to new development.

- a. Implement the following improvements related to pedestrian access and safety:
 - Create a complete pedestrian circulation network, including sidewalks and crosswalks, throughout the Town Center area.
 - Install pedestrian-activated crosswalk signals at all signalized intersections in the Town Center.
 - Create attractive pedestrian linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and natural areas from the Town Center.
- b. Implement the following improvements related to traffic access and flow:
 - Implement the “loop road” concept as quadrants of the Town Center redevelop, to ultimately result in a cohesive secondary circulation route providing coordinated and pedestrian-friendly traffic movement patterns throughout the area.
 - Implement traffic signal prioritization (TSP) technology at signalized intersections for Pace buses as service is expanded.
 - Create on-street bike routes, with dedicated lanes if feasible, leading into the Town Center and to the Metra Station from surrounding neighborhoods.

4. Public Improvement Projects

In addition to the high priority improvements identified above, several other important public improvement projects should be pursued. Partnerships with IDOT, Metra, Pace, the CN/IC Railroad and others will be necessary to pursue the actions outlined below. Federal and state funding, secured with the assistance of the Village’s partner agencies, will be an important component of funding for these initiatives, along with TIF and general Village revenues.

- a. Enhance the Richton Park Metra Station area. Improvements are described in detail in the Design Guidelines section, and include: a new platform and platform shelter, bus shelters, upgraded lighting, information kiosk(s), benches, refuse receptacles, and decorative fences and landscaping along the railroad embankment.
- b. Explore the possibility of constructing a pedestrian bridge across Sauk Trail, immediately adjacent to the Metra Electric Line and CN/IC Railroad overpass, to serve as a visual focal point for the Town Center. The pedestrian bridge will need to be an independent structure, with its location contingent upon potential alterations to the existing Metra Electric Line and CN/IC Railroad overpass if a second main line track extension is undertaken. Direct access to Metra platforms



cannot be provided by the bridge. As noted in the previous Chapter, configuration of the bridge to ensure that commuters do not bypass commercial businesses will be important.

- c. Pursue an increase in Village-wide Pace bus service or a local trolley service, to better connect outlying neighborhoods with the Town Center and Richton Park Metra Station, especially during peak hour periods and community events. During all phases of redevelopment, it will be important to maintain Pace access to the immediate station area.
- d. Implement Town Center parking improvements. Create new parking lots for shoppers, commuters, residents and civic facility visitors, per the Build-Out Vision. Pursue shared parking arrangements between Metra, the Village and commercial property owners to allow access to designated commuter parking spaces in the evenings and on weekends. The potential for shared parking may ultimately include nearly 290 structured parking spaces in the northeast quadrant, and approximately 150 and 110 surface spaces in the northwest and southeast quadrants, respectively.

5. Urban Design

Building upon the “high impact” actions contained in the High Priority section above, the following actions will continue the aesthetic improvements of the larger area, building upon the improvements completed initially in the most visible locations. Partnerships with IDOT, Metra, the CN/IC Railroad and others will be necessary to pursue the actions outlined below. Federal and state funding, secured with the assistance of the Village’s partner agencies, will be an important component of funding for these initiatives, along with TIF and general Village revenues.

- a. Implement the following improvements related to streetscape and Town Center signage:
 - Create a unified streetscape image at both primary and secondary roadways within the Town Center through the use of consistent and recurring visual elements. Streetscape improvements are described in more detail in the Design Guidelines section, and include: planted parkways and medians, crosswalks, upgraded paving and lighting at sidewalks, gateways, benches, refuse receptacles, pole-mounted banners and flower pots.
 - Announce arrival to the Town Center through the use of “gateway” features at main entry points.
 - Implement a consistent Town Center “wayfinding” signage system.



- b. Implement the following landscaping improvements throughout the Town Center area:
 - Provide attractive perimeter buffer treatments and internal landscaping at Town Center parking lots.
 - Install low maintenance plantings adjacent to and within the Metra Electric Line and CN/IC Railroad rights-of-way, subject to Metra and CN/IC Railroad landscape guidelines to ensure adequate visibility, to improve the appearance of highly visible embankment areas.

- c. Implement and/or create incentives to encourage the following improvements related to architectural design and preservation within the Town Center area:
 - Consider establishing a Design Review Committee to enforce the Design Guidelines contained within this Plan.
 - Support private sector efforts to improve Town Center building facades and business signage to a more traditional and attractive appearance.
 - Encourage the upgrading and landscaping of existing off-street parking lots and loading areas in the Town Center area.

DEVELOPMENT STAGING STRATEGY

Due to the complexity of implementing a large scale redevelopment program which provides critical daily access to Metra facilities and retail and service businesses, a generalized “development phasing” strategy has been developed to guide the general sequencing of activity. This strategy, as outlined in *Figure 11: Development Staging-Inaugural Development Concept* and *Figure 12: Development Staging- Build-Out Vision Concept*, provides guidance to the Village and its partner agencies so that physical redevelopment efforts can proceed in a logical and sequential manner. This strategy clarifies the ways in which the Build-Out Vision phase will build directly upon the improvements to be implemented in the Inaugural Development phase, “completing the picture” of the Town Center as opportunities arise and funding and development partnerships are secured.

This development phasing strategy is to be referred to in conjunction with the more general policy initiatives and ongoing administrative activities that are outlined in the previous section of this Chapter.



A. INAUGURAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Figure 11: Development Staging- Inaugural Development Concept identifies the following sequence of improvement projects:

1. ***Creation of an interim commuter parking facility on Village-owned property located to the rear of existing commercial properties in the southeast quadrant of the Town Center area.*** It will be necessary to construct this parking area and make it available to permit holders prior to removing existing parking spaces in the northeast quadrant from the Village's inventory. Remaining expansion capacity in the existing commuter parking lot east of the CN/IC Railroad should also be constructed at this time, to replace some of the commuter spaces lost to redevelopment in the northeast quadrant.
2. ***Development of the mixed use structure on the northeast corner of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway,*** including reconfiguration of the existing parking area to remain to accommodate both commuter spaces (to the north) and commercial spaces (to the south). Signalization and intersection upgrades should be undertaken at the two loop road intersections with Sauk Trail and Governors Highway so that the one-way traffic pattern on Richton Road can be eliminated. During this stage, the proposed new Richton Park Metra Station and community plaza east of Richton Road and the northeast portion of the "loop road" can also be pursued. If in the future Metra were to construct a new Metra Electric District maintenance facility beyond the current terminus at University Park, an impact on the existing station is possible. If the current station building is impacted by railroad construction due to this improvement, options regarding the current station building can be addressed by Metra and the Village. Given the additional study and funding needed, it is expected that this proposed improvement could occur in five to ten years. If undertaken prior to Metra's potential construction of a maintenance facility, these new facilities will need to be funded by the Village and/or a developer.
3. ***The southwest quadrant of the Town Center should be acquired and prepared for redevelopment in the third stage of Town Center development.*** This portion of the loop road can be completed, along with the interim "Village Green." Mixed use development sites should be consolidated and prepared, then sold to a private developer to undertake a coordinated redevelopment on both sides of the loop road. Bringing these commercial properties "on-line" will allow for the relocation of existing businesses that will be displaced during later stages of development. In anticipation of these improvements, the Village should have addressed any potential environmental issues, and have completed the flood plain mitigation study discussed in previous sections of this Plan.



Figure 11: Development Staging- Inaugural Development Phase



4. ***In coordination with the current property owner, the northwest quadrant of the Town Center should be redeveloped in a more pedestrian-friendly manner.*** This effort should also include development of the northwest section of the loop road and creation of a high-profile site within the quadrant for a new public library. Should interest in relocating the Library occur in the near term, these improvements could occur at any time during the implementation program. Close coordination with the redevelopment of private parcels would be highly desirable.
5. ***The southern end of the southwest quadrant can be developed for recreational purposes once the loop access road is in place, with available remaining property sold for multi-family residential development.*** In parallel with site preparation and sale of this property for residential development, other “peripheral” sites to the south, west and north of the Town Center should also be acquired, prepared and marketed to the development community. One of these sites will be the former location of the Public Library, after the new facility is complete and operational.

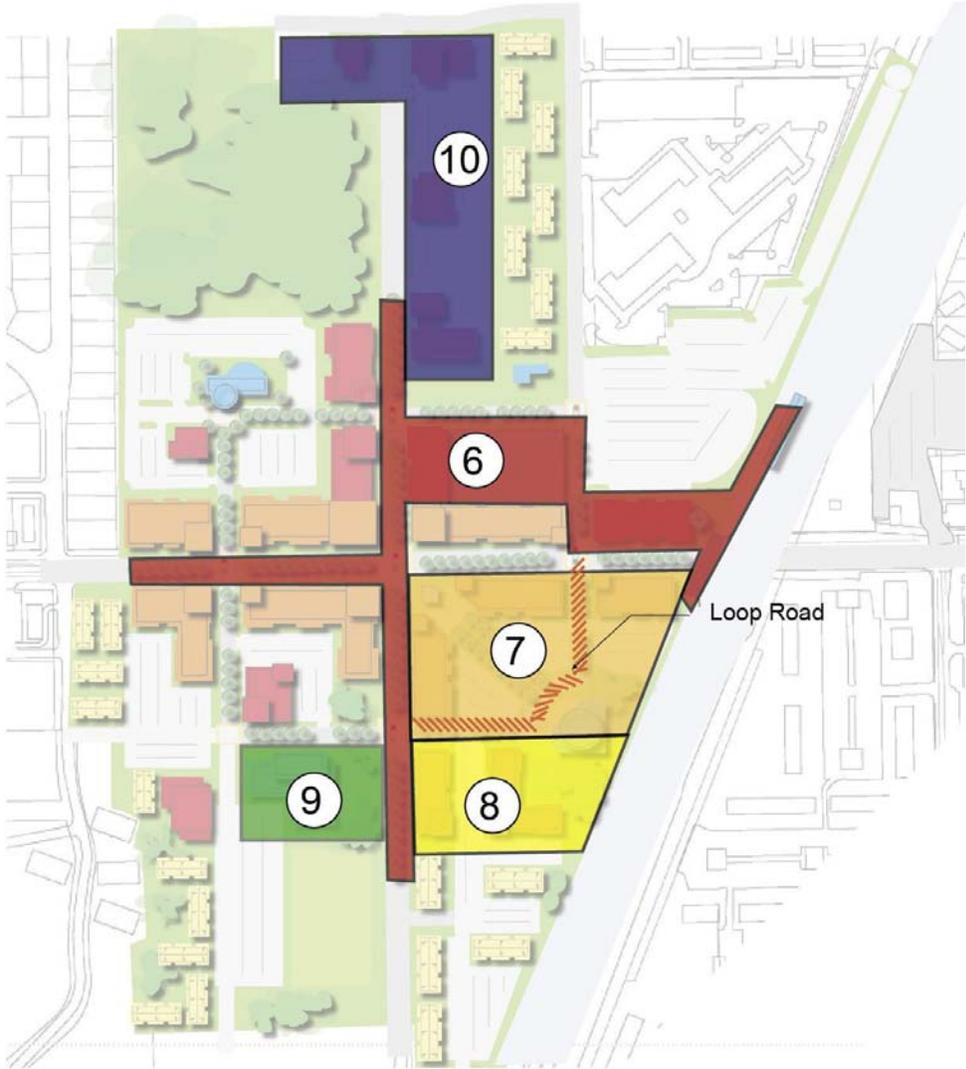
B. BUILD-OUT VISION PHASE

Figure 12: Development Staging- Build-Out Vision Concept identifies the following phased development projects:

6. ***Additional mixed use development is anticipated in the northeast quadrant, in conjunction with the construction of a parking structure to accommodate commercial, residential and commuter parking.*** Once this parking structure is completed, some of the interim commuter parking lot in the southeast quadrant can be taken out of service, as new spaces in the structure will allow for no net loss in total parking capacity. In tandem with this major project, remaining streetscape enhancements along Sauk Trail and Governors Highway should be initiated. At this time, pedestrian bridge and platform access upgrades can be also be explored.
7. ***Commercial properties in the southeast quadrant should be acquired and consolidated to allow for coordinated development of mixed use buildings fronting on Sauk Trail and Governors Highway,*** in conjunction with the development of a permanent Village Green and community plaza. A high-profile site for the new Village Hall will also be created in this area, along with the fourth and final “leg” of the Town Center loop road.
8. ***Once the loop road is complete in the southeast quadrant,*** additional properties immediately to the south can be made available for commercial development.



Figure 12: Development Staging- Build-Out Vision Phase



9. *A new recreation center can be developed in the southwest quadrant*, adjacent to the loop road and in conjunction with the sports fields previously developed in that location.
10. *As demand for commercial space increases within the Town Center*, a final stage of redevelopment will involve acquiring, consolidating and offering for commercial redevelopment the auto-oriented commercial area extending north on Governors Highway to Poplar Avenue. This could include redevelopment of the southwest corner of Governors Highway and Poplar Avenue in a visually compatible manner, to create an attractive commercial “gateway” into the Town Center area.

As noted previously, Metra has identified a projected need for a total of 600 additional spaces by 2030 in the Richton Park Metra Station area. The Build-Out Concept identifies potential locations for approximately 300 of these spaces. The Village and Metra will need to work together to identify additional locations for commuter parking within the Town Center as demand warrants it.

CONCLUSION

The Village of Richton Park, in cooperation and partnership with others, is poised to begin the vitally important process of establishing the Town Center as the “heart” of the community, both symbolically and functionally. This *Town Center and Station Area Plan* provides the vision, policy guidance and implementation direction needed by the Village and its partners to capitalize on positive regional development trends, existing transit services, established civic and natural amenities, and the community’s desire to “raise the bar” in its redevelopment efforts.

