



Transit-Oriented
Development Plan

Section 2:

Planning Area Overview

Downtown Riverside Transit-Oriented Development Plan

PLANNING AREA OVERVIEW

Introduction to Historic Riverside

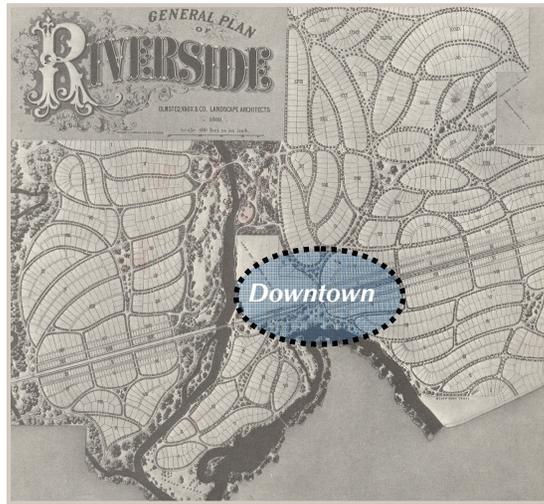


Figure 2-1, Original Olmsted Plan

at least two large trees between the primary house facade and the street. The result is spectacular. Ever-changing vistas are revealed as one travels along curving streets defined by a canopy of trees. Riverside’s residential areas remain some of the most desirable and valuable properties in the Chicago metropolitan area. In 1970, the entire village was designated a National Historic Landmark.

A downtown was not part of Olmsted’s original design. Over the years, however, commercial businesses developed adjacent to municipal buildings and the railroad station, and along the tracks, on small lots originally intended for servant housing. Most of the older buildings include living quarters over shops. The passage of time has institutionalized this informal downtown as part of “Historic Riverside,” and it has grown to become a valued part of the community’s

Riverside, Illinois, is recognized as one of America’s first planned suburban communities. It is the creation of renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and is one of the nation’s earliest and best examples of transit-oriented development. Riverside was laid out around one of the first railroad lines extended from Chicago which permitted family residence in the countryside with convenient access to places of business in the city.

Riverside’s founding dates back to 1869, when a group of businessmen acquired a 1,600-acre site on a bend of the Des Plaines River and formed the Riverside Improvement Company. The group commissioned Olmsted to design a master plan for a new “rural community.” The company constructed a railroad station and developed public utilities in the form of gaslight street lighting and a landmark Victorian Gothic water tower, conceived as the focal point for the community.

Olmsted’s plan features a complex system of curvilinear streets that follow the area’s natural contours. The streets wrap around a continuous park system that includes several large parks and more than 40 smaller, triangular parks formed at intersections. In the development covenant, Olmsted required that every residential property owner maintain



Figure 2-2, Early Photo of the Water Tower

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heritage. The fact that Olmsted provided no guidance for downtown development, however, has proven difficult for residents and leaders, alike, who are committed to preserving the Olmsted legacy while accommodating change.

Regional Setting

Riverside is located approximately eleven miles west/southwest of Downtown Chicago in Cook County, as illustrated in Figure 2-4, *Location*. It is situated close to regional interstate highways including I-290, I-294, I-55 and I-88. Primary regional arterials providing access to Riverside include Harlem, First and Ogden Avenues. The BNSF Railway runs through the Village carrying both freight trains and Metra passenger trains, which provide convenient commuter access to communities located between Chicago and Aurora.

Riverside shares municipal boundaries with North Riverside, Lyons, Berwyn and Brookfield. The western boundary of the Village includes a small portion of Brookfield Zoo. Riverside Lawn, a small unincorporated residential area situated between the Des Plaines River and Ogden Avenue, abuts the southern edge of the Village.

Study Area

The Study Area encompasses all of Downtown Riverside which is bisected by Metra/BNSF line, as well as residential and park areas located within a one-quarter mile radius, or 10 minute walking distance, of the Metra station. It is generally bounded by Longcommon Road/Central School on the north, the Des Plaines River on the south, North Cowley Road on the east, and West Avenue on the west.

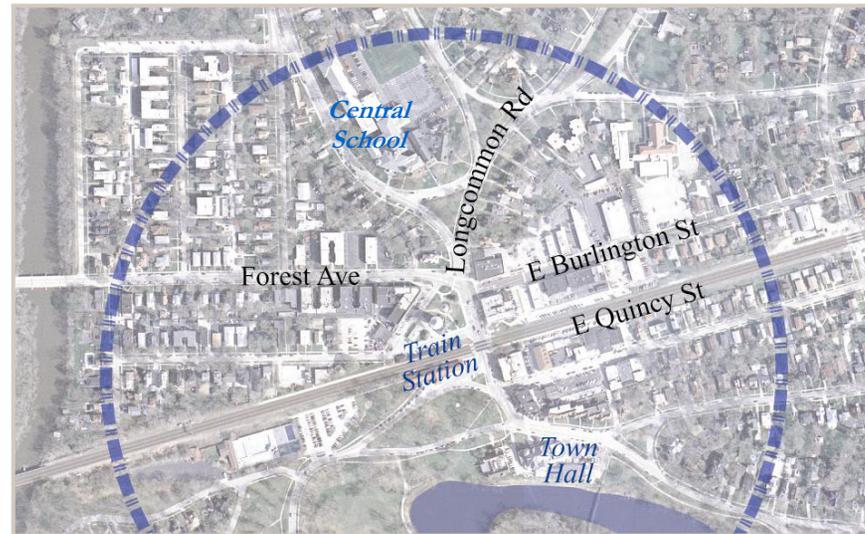


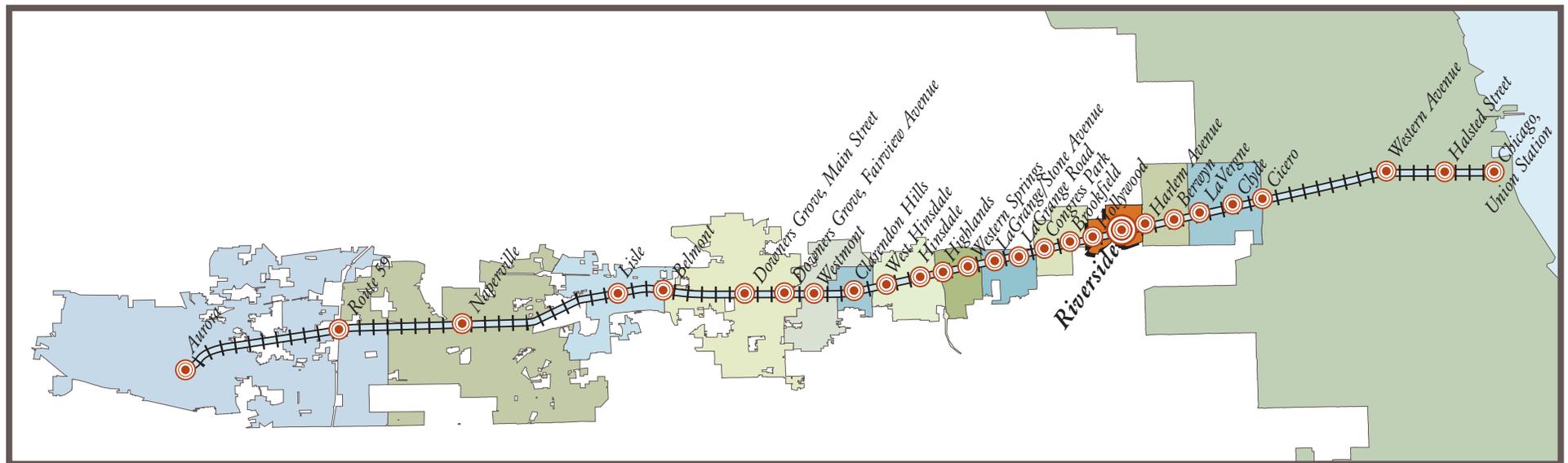
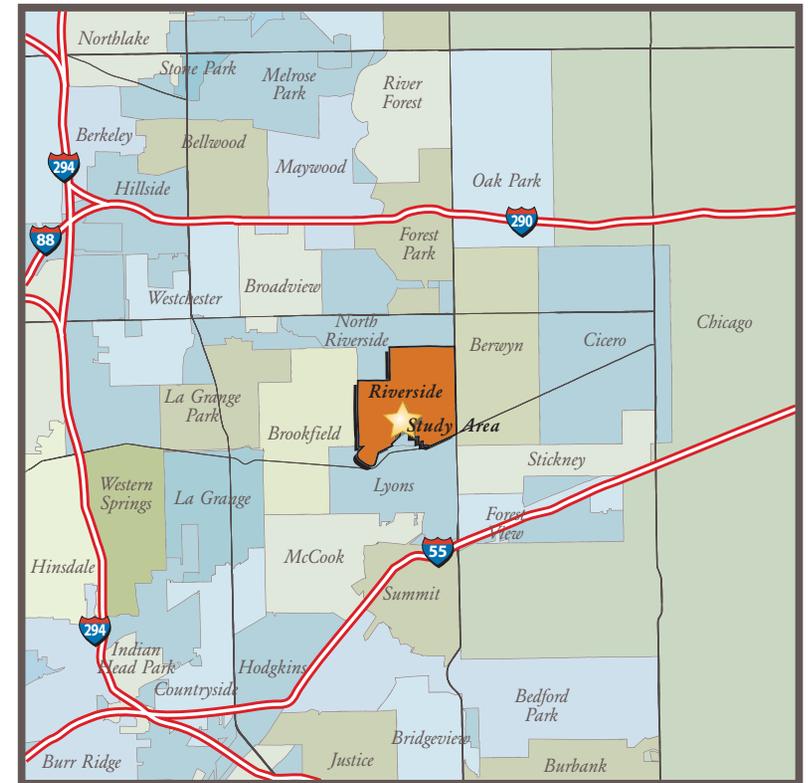
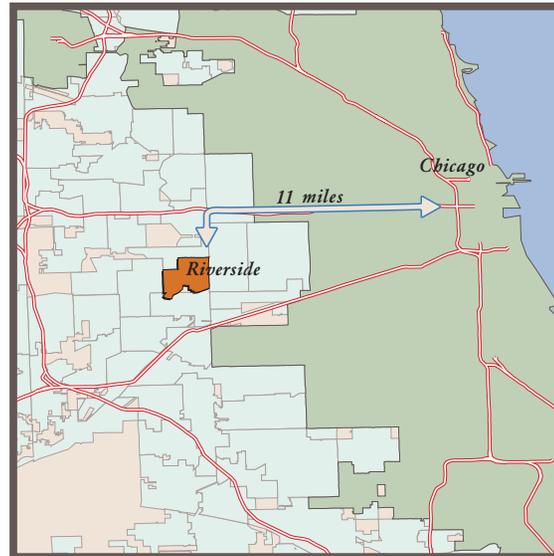
Figure 2-3, Study Area Boundary

Figure 2-4: Location

Riverside is approximately 1.9 square miles and is located in Cook County, approximately eleven miles west of downtown Chicago. Riverside is conveniently located along the Metra/BNSF Line which provides easy access to communities between Chicago and Aurora. The western boundary of the Village includes a small portion of Brookfield Zoo.

The Study Area encompasses downtown Riverside and the surrounding one-quarter ring around the Riverside Metra Station. The Study Area is generally bounded by West Avenue on the west, North Cowley Road on the east, the Des Plaines River on the south, and Longcommon Avenue/Central School on the north. Well-established residential neighborhoods lie immediately adjacent to the north, east, and west of the Study Area. The Des Plaines River lies to the south of the Study Area.

The Study Area is accessible from the east by three local/residential streets that intersect with Harlem Avenue, a major north/south arterial to the east of the Village. Harlem Avenue is an established commercial/retail corridor which provides direct access to Interstate 290/Eisenhower Expressway, Interstate 55/Stevenson Expressway and to nearby communities, such as Oak Park. From the west, the Study Area is accessible by Forest Avenue, a local/residential street that intersects with First Avenue. The street network in the Study Area itself is comprised of local streets.



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Existing Land Use

The Study Area consists of a diverse mix of land uses including retail and commercial services, professional offices, auto-related services, public and semi-public facilities, as well as single and multi-family residential, as illustrated in Figure 2-5, *Existing Land Use*. Surface parking is a large land use within downtown though it will be described in detail in a following section.

Land uses include:

- **Retail and Commercial Service:** These uses are primarily focused along Burlington and Quincy Streets, and along East Avenue. Business types include a grocery store, restaurant and coffee shops, bakeries, antique shops and gift stores, among others. These uses are located in both mixed-use and stand alone buildings. Personal service uses include a dry cleaner and laundromat, hair and nail salons, travel services and shoe repair.
- **Professional Office:** These uses are located throughout downtown in both mixed-use and stand alone buildings. A range of professional services are provided including bank and finance, legal, medical, dental, realty, insurance, tax and other services. Conversion of single family homes for office use occurs as downtown transitions back into residential areas.
- **Auto Service:** These uses are located at highly visible downtown locations. An auto maintenance provider is located adjacent to the train station on East Avenue, and two auto body repair shops are located on Quincy Street. Although auto service providers benefit from proximity to commuter vehicular traffic, such uses are best located in less visible perimeter locations.
- **Public and Semi-Public:** These uses include the historic water tower and train station located in the center of downtown, the Township Hall and library located along the river, the swim club and fire station located west of the train station, the Arts Center on Quincy, and Central School, St. Paul and St. Mary’s Church located north of downtown.
- **Residential:** These uses are comprised of single family homes, 4-story multi-family apartment buildings and upper floor rental and condominium units over shops.
- **Open Space:** These uses are located in Centennial Park at the historic water tower, Guthrie Park south of the train station, and the Swan Pond area, west of the library, which extends to the Des Plaines River. The Des Plaines River is an important natural feature that is not strongly connected to the function of downtown. A swinging bridge is located behind the Township Hall that links the north and south banks of the river. There is a limited walkway along the river bank and no other recreational amenities along the river.

Figure 2-5: Existing Land Use

The Study Area contains a diverse mix of residential, commercial, public and semi-public land uses. Since Riverside is a ma-

ture community and most properties are already developed, the existing land use patterns is an important consideration in the

development of the TOD Plan. Land Use is based upon field surveys conducted in April 2005.



Distinctive mixed use commercial buildings and civic landmarks along Longcommon.



Simple mixed use buildings along Burlington and Quincy.



Stand alone commercial buildings with individual parking lots along Burlington.



Railroad corridor bisects downtown.



Historic Water Tower, Centennial Park, and Guthrie Park are important civic features.



Transitional uses include adaptive reuse of housing for offices.



Beautiful schools, churches and multi-family residential abut downtown.

- Single Family Residential
- Multi Family Residential
- Retail
- Commercial Service
- Auto Related Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Professional Office
- Public
- Semi-Public
- Vacant Building
- Off-Street Parking
- Commuter Train Station

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Business Inventory

An inventory was conducted to identify the mix and location of businesses currently in Downtown Riverside. The purpose of this inventory was to assess strengths and weaknesses in the business mix so that complementary business recruitment targets could be identified to “round out” product offerings downtown. In addition, the use of ground level space was assessed to determine if uses other than desirable retail and dining venues dominate downtown store frontage.

Downtown Riverside’s retail core is focused mainly on Burlington and Quincy Streets, with additional commercial uses on Longcommon Road and East Avenue. The majority of the retail establishments are located east of the train station. Burlington Street has a mix of retail establishments and professional service offices located along both sides of the street. Quincy Street has a smaller business area than Burlington, but also contains a mix of uses. Quincy Street is less retail and restaurant focused as it is comprised of the Riverside Arts Center, a mix of auto service establishments, bank parking, and other uses. East Avenue contains a mixed use building with a nice mix of shops, restaurants and offices.

Downtown Riverside has a 2005 inventory of approximately sixty-five commercial establishments plus a number of public and semi-public establishments. Most downtown businesses are service-oriented establishments rather than traditional retailers. Many of these occupy first floor space, and several mixed-use buildings contain residential units and offices above the ground floor. There are no national retailers, chain stores or chain restaurants currently in downtown. However, there are numerous fast food chains, convenience stores, dining establishments, and grocery stores located along Harlem Avenue, the eastern boundary of Riverside.

Figure 2-6, Business Inventory, documents the names and locations of existing businesses in Downtown Riverside. A summary of the generalized use mix follows:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Square Footage</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Shopping and Dining	50,505 sf	34%
Office	50,595 sf	36%
Service	34, 135 sf	22%
Public Semi-Public	11,580 sf	8%

Although there is a good number of retail and food-related businesses downtown in 34% of its ground level space, downtown is dominated by office and service uses, which together take up 58% of the ground level space. When combined with public/semi-public uses, the total of non-traditional retail uses equates to approximately two-thirds of the business district. Downtown Riverside does not have a well balanced business district to attract daily pedestrian convenience spending in its current state.

Figure 2-6: Business Inventory

Downtown Riverside's business mix includes restaurants, retail shops, professional services, residential units, and public/semi-public uses that primarily serve the residents of Riverside and nearby communities.

- 1 Masonic Temple
- 2 Dentist
- 3 4D Services Professional Billing; Chmell Orthopedics
- 4 Henninger's/vacant
- 5 Hatem Galal MD, Cosmetic Surgery
- 6 Coveny Lane Gifts

- 7 MidAmerica Bank
- 8 Riverside Foods
- 9 Century 21; Sundstrom Insurance
- 10 Charter One Bank; Riverside Post Office; Roche Dietitians; Maria Roche & Associates Architecture; Edward Jang Hypnosis
- 11 Aunt Diana's Candy Store; Provo's Bake Shop; Travel with Tower; Fresh Express Café; Salon D' Amore; Village Laundromat
- 12 Pringles Flowers; Little Bohemia Restaurant; Pest-Away Inc; Maytag
- 13 Burlington Realty
- 14 Riverside Bank

- 15 Heavenly Hot Dogs
- 16 Riverside Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling; Basili's Hair and Nail Salon; 1st Advantage Mortgage; 1 Hour Cleaners; Sylvester Realty
- 17 Angelo's Barber Shop
- 18 Fleur de Lis Antiques; Blue Parrot Café; Arcade Antiques; J.P. Antiques; Parallel 42 Wine & Cheese; Fra Angelica Art Foundation & Gallery; Fullerton Tax and Planning, Fathers and Sons Contractors; Law Office
- 19 Riverside Garage
- 20 Edward Jones Investments; Ruby Dry Cleaning; Grumpy's Café and Ice Cream; Salon Cherie; Al's Shoe Service; Chew-

- 21 MLC Logistics Inc.
 - 22 Jeff's Auto and Truck Repair
 - 23 Riverside Arts Center
 - 24 Metal Mites Auto Body
 - 25 Barr Systems Inc
 - 26 Higgins Glass
 - 27 First American Bank
 - 28 First Service Realtors
- Chew Café; Allstate Insurance; David Newman/Joseph Dvorak; J. Newton Stainless; McKerin Design/Forsyth Prop.; Musial Appraisal Co.; Plastics Distributor & Fabricator Mag.; PS Services; Robroy Restaurants/Midwest Fab. Signature



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Historic Resources

The entire Village of Riverside is designated a National Historic Landmark. It is the responsibility of the Riverside Preservation Commission (responsible for Historic Landmarks) and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (responsible for contributing structures) to review and approve proposed changes to the structures and public landscape within the district. The Riverside Preservation Commission is empowered to *advise* property owners on appropriate ways to renovate structures that are not designated Landmarks, and binding authority to *regulate* proposed changes to locally designated landmarks.

Riverside is home to a number of structures listed on the *National Register of Historic Places* in addition to local landmarks nominated by the Riverside Preservation Commission and designated by the Village Board of Trustees. These structures contribute to the unique quality and character of the Village and are located throughout Riverside, including portions of downtown. It is important that new development take into account the significance of Downtown Riverside’s historic resources and seek to complement them by utilizing similar massing, construction materials and articulation

To be designated a historic structure the following criteria must be satisfied:

- **Criteria 1:** Significant value as part of the historical, cultural, artistic, social, architectural, or other heritage of the Village, State or nation.
- **Criteria 2:** Association with an important person or event in the history of the Village, State or nation.
- **Criteria 3:** Association or representation as a notable work of a significant or influential master builder, designer, architect or artist.
- **Criteria 4:** Representation of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.
- **Criteria 5:** Identity as an established and familiar visual feature in the Village owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.
- **Criteria 6:** Identity with other similar architecturally designed buildings having a significant influence on a particular era or period of construction representative of the character of the Village.

Figure 2-7, *Historic Resources*, depicts the location of historically significant structures and open space within the Study Area. Landmark buildings are located primarily along a view corridor centered on Longcommon Road, as depicted in red. This corridor is anchored by Central School and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church to the north, and by the Township Hall and Riverside Library to the south. Located between these anchors are the historic water tower and train station, along with the Arcade Building, Riverside’s first mixed-use commercial building, and the Tower Building located at Forest and East Avenues. The Driver Block contains another structure, depicted in pink, which meets landmark criteria though it requires restoration and has not yet been designated as such. Other structures throughout downtown, depicted

Figure 2-7: Historic Resources

The Village of Riverside was planned by Frederick Law Olmsted and is recognized as a National Historic Landmark. The Village is home to a number of structures that are listed on the National Register of Historic

Places. Additionally the Riverside Preservation Commission identifies local landmarks.

These structures contribute to the unique

quality and character of the Riverside. New buildings and infill projects should be sensitive to the style and materials of the historic buildings.



5. Tower Building



6 & 7. Historic Water House & Pump House



8. Riverside Train Depot



9. Riverside Improvement Company Building



10. Driver Block



12. Riverside Township Hall



1. Intermediate School
2. Central School* **
3. St. Paul's Episcopal Church*
4. St. Paul's Episcopal Church Rectory*
5. Tower Building*
6. Historic Pump House* **
7. Historic Water Tower* **
8. Riverside Train Depot (North & South)*
9. Riverside Improvement Company Building*
10. Driver Block
11. Riverside Public Library* **
12. Riverside Township Hall* **

*Riverside Landmark

**Illinois Historic Structure

- Illinois or Riverside Landmark
- No Designation (meets criteria)
- Character Structure
- Historic Parkway/Park
- Commuter Train Station

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in orange, contribute to the architectural character of Riverside and should be viewed as important assets for maintaining the architectural character of the Village. Downtown is also home to the Village’s largest concentration of public open space, depicted in green, including Centennial Park at the historic water tower, Guthrie Park immediately south of the train station, and the “Swan Pond” area along the Des Plaines River west of the library.

In planning for Downtown Riverside, it is important to preserve and protect structures that contribute to the architectural integrity of the area, while identifying opportunity areas and building prototypes for historically compatible infill development. Sites that are not identified as historic or contributing within the downtown core were considered candidates for redevelopment in this study.

Transportation and Parking

The existing transportation system in Downtown Riverside consists of local streets and the Metra/BNSF Line. Figure 2-8, *Transportation and Parking*, depicts the location of the train station and commuter facilities, distribution of parking within downtown by type and number of spaces, high traffic intersections and at-grade crossings, as well as gateway connections from surrounding regional arterials.

Business District Parking: There are several privately-owned parking lots throughout Downtown Riverside, shown in orange on Figure 2-8. These parking lots are intended for use by customers and employees of the various related establishments. Parking lot conditions vary. Some business district parking lots are in poor condition, both in terms of pavement condition and landscape maintenance, while other lots are very well maintained. Most of the lots are used primarily in the day and/or early evening hours, depending on the type of business.

Shared parking arrangements should be explored as part of this Study in order to improve business district parking while reestablishing streetwall frontage. Shared parking means that parking spaces are shared by more than one user, which allows parking facilities to be used more efficiently. Shared parking takes advantage of the fact that most parking spaces are only used part time by a particular motorist or group.

Village Permit Parking: Six parking lots are shown in green on Figure 2-8 with the number of parking spaces in each lot depicted in blue. The Village maintains six parking lots. In order to park in these lots, users must obtain a permit from the Village. There may also be opportunities for shared parking with local businesses and the Village of Riverside to use their commuter parking lots in the evenings and on weekends when commuter traffic is light.

Commuter Parking: There are three parking lots which are owned by BNSF and leased by the Village. The table below summarizes existing commuter parking lots in Downtown Riverside. Within the designated commuter lots, spaces are classified as either daily meter or monthly permit. There are 62 daily metered spaces in Metra Lot 1. The remainder of the parking spaces is monthly permit. Riverside’s permit commuter parking spaces are 100% sold, though they average a use rate of 75% (based on Metra’s February 2005 parking counts).

Figure 2-8: Transportation & Parking

The existing transportation system in the Study Area consists of local streets and the Metra/BNSF Line. This figure illustrates the existing transportation network, traffic patterns, circulation, and parking. Access to the Study Area from adjacent communities is usually achieved by using one of five routes. Issues and areas of concern include two at-grade rail crossings and a high-traffic intersection at Longcommon Road and Forest Avenue/East Burlington Street.

The Study Area includes a mix of parking configurations. Shown on this map are the location, number of spaces, and designation of parking lots and number of on-street parking spaces in the Study Area. In addition to dedicated commuter parking lots, there is also a number of privately-owned parking lots that

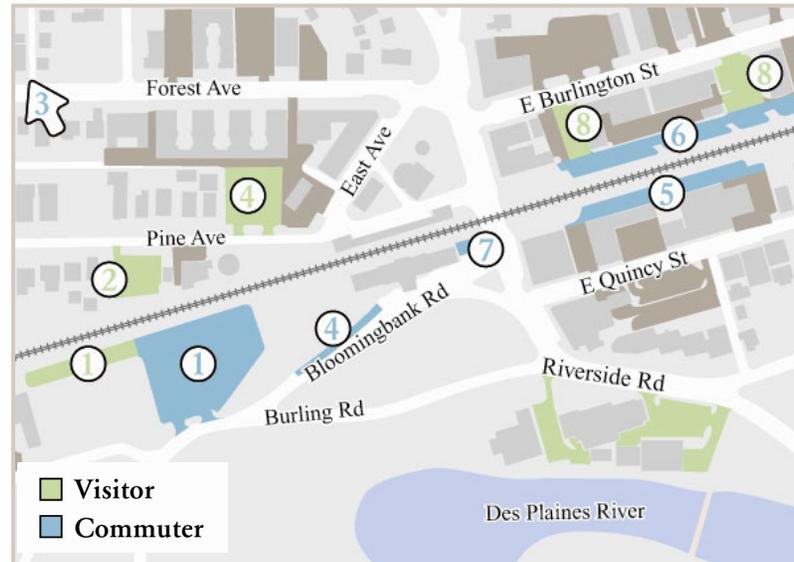
serve the residents, merchants and customers in the Study Area. Along with parking lots, there are on-street parking spaces, some of which are dedicated commuter spaces and some of which are general parking spaces for visitors to downtown Riverside.

Metra/BNSF Passenger Boardings, Select Stations				% Change, 1997- 1999	% Change, 1999- 2002
Station	1997	1999	2002		
Aurora	1,387	1,467	1,646	5.8%	12.2%
Hollywood (Zoo Stop)	133	144	129	8.3%	-10.4%
Riverside	492	466	438	-5.3%	-6.0%
Harlem Avenue	676	698	532	3.3%	-23.8%
Union Station	24,200	25,355	25,114	4.8%	-1.0%
Total BNSF	50,454	53,314	52,479	5.7%	-1.6%



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Village or Metra Assigned Lot Number	Use	Owner	# of Spaces
1	Visitor	Village of Riverside	24
2	Residential	Village of Riverside	20
3	Visitor	Village of Riverside	46
4	Residential	Village of Riverside	48
8	Visitor	Village of Riverside	56
1	Commuter	BNSF	129
4	Commuter	Village of Riverside	13
5	Commuter	BNSF	25
6	Commuter	BNSF	32
7	Commuter	BNSF	1
TOTAL =			394



Source: Metra’s February 2005 Parking Counts, Village of Riverside and URS

Figure 2-9, Existing Parking Table and Map

On-Street Parking: In addition to dedicated business parking lots and commuter parking spaces, the Village of Riverside provides free on-street parking within the downtown. Most of these spaces are used by business patrons, though on-street commuter spaces are located on Barry Point Road.

High Traffic Intersection: The intersection of Longcommon Road/Forest Avenue/E Burlington Street is difficult for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists to maneuver. This is due to offset alignment configurations and the convergence of multiple streets from several directions, and the presence of the BNSF rail traffic which stops north/south movement along Longcommon. This intersection is also dangerous due to the high number of children that pass through the area on their way to and from school, as well as to visit destinations in downtown.

Riverside and Harlem Metra Station Use Characteristics: Many stakeholders felt that Downtown Riverside was not able to attract higher ridership due to the lower fare at the Harlem Station. According to Metra’s most recent (Fall 2002) Origin Destination Survey and Metra station market area data, riders are not bypassing the Riverside Station to pay lower fares at the Harlem Avenue Station. Geo-coded responses that track riders from their home addresses show that, in fact, some riders leave the Harlem Avenue and Hollywood Station

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market areas to board at the Riverside Station in Downtown Riverside. Although speculation, this may be because Downtown Riverside is less congested and easier to navigate auto access and parking than the station located on Harlem which is a major arterial. This is beneficial for Riverside in that it provides riders the opportunity to shop and dine in downtown. At present, there are approximately 450 daily boardings at the Riverside station. There are 200 parking spaces at the Riverside station. Based on Metra’s Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey, 54% of the Riverside Station riders reside in Riverside, 12% reside in Lyons, 10% reside in North Riverside, and 2% reside in Brookfield, and 15 other communities comprise the remaining 22%.

Station Mode of Access Analysis

Mode of Access	Riverside Station	Harlem Avenue Station
Walk or Bike	50%	52%
Drive or Carpool (Driver)	36%	35%
Drop off or Carpool (Passenger)	14%	11%
Take Transit	0%	2%
Total =	100%	100%

At-Grade Crossings: There are four at grade-crossings in Riverside, two of which are in the Study Area. Longcommon Road bisects the BNSF on a north/south axis. The street configuration at the at-grade crossing consists of a single lane of traffic in each direction. There are no plans currently to upgrade this crossing.

Train Station Tunnel: There is a pedestrian tunnel that provides access between the north and south platforms at the train station. The tunnel is dilapidated and in need of repair to fortify its structural integrity and to bring it into ADA compliance. The Village is responsible for this tunnel and the related improvements. If funding is not identified for the tunnel then abandonment and backfill may be required.

Gateway Conditions: There are five main gateways into Downtown Riverside. To the east, there are two gateways at Harlem Avenue, a major north/south arterial. Harlem Avenue is an established commercial/retail corridor which provides direct access to Interstate 290/Eisenhower Expressway, Interstate 55/Stevenson Expressway and to nearby communities, such as Oak Park. The western gateway to downtown is located off First Avenue. To the south, Ogden Avenue serves as the gateway. Since Downtown Riverside is not located on major collector roadways, travelers passing near Riverside may not be aware of the attractions that downtown offers. These gateway

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locations present opportunities for Riverside to attract new visitors through the use of entryway and wayfinding features, as well as informational signage.

Pace Bus Service: Four existing bus routes currently serve the Riverside community though no service connects directly with the Riverside Station. The Pace routes include:

Route 304 provides weekday service between the 54th Avenue CTA Blue Line Station terminal and LaGrange Metra/Amtrak Station at the LaGrange Road/Hillgrove Avenue in LaGrange. On weekends, service operates between North Riverside Mall and LaGrange. Route 304 serves North Riverside Park Mall, Riverside-Brookfield High School, Morton West High School and Brookfield Zoo.

Route 331 provides service between the Cumberland CTA Blue Line Station in Chicago and the Brookfield Village Hall. Route 331 serves Brookfield Zoo, Brookfield, River Grove and Maywood Metra Stations, Triton College, Hines, Gottlieb Memorial and Loyola Hospitals.

Route 302 provides service between Cermak/Cicero in Cicero and LaGrange Road/Hillgrove Avenue in LaGrange. This route serves MacNeal Hospital, 54th Avenue CTA Blue Line station (Cermak Branch), Morton East High School, and LaGrange Road Metra/Amtrak Station. The area served is primarily residential and commercial.

Route 307 provides service between Grand Avenue/Thatcher Avenue in River Grove and 63rd Street/Archer Avenue in Summit. This route serves North Riverside Park Mall, Oak Park's Central Business District, Oak Park Hospital, Morton West High School, the CTA Green and Blue Lines. Certain trips start and end in downtown Elmwood Park and others operate to the east campus of Triton College.

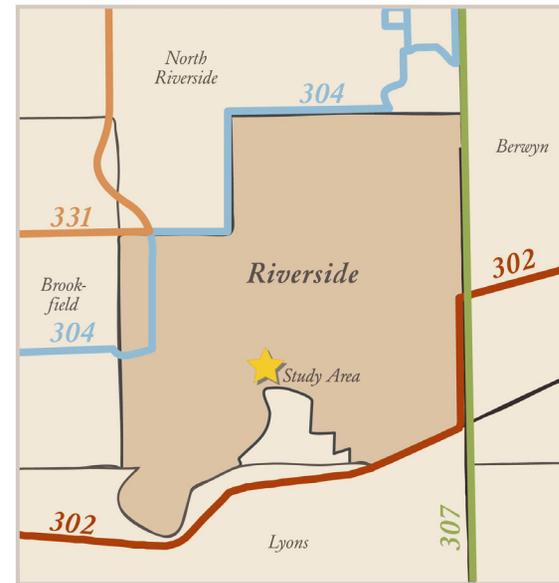


Figure 2-10, Pace Bus Routes

Downtown Zoning

In March 2003, Riverside established a new zoning district for the downtown central business district, depicted in Figure 2-11, B2 Zoning District. The goal of this district is to enhance the economic vitality of Downtown Riverside by preserving its historic character while allowing for compatible redevelopment. It provides the regulatory means by which the mixed-use, small-scale and pedestrian-oriented character of downtown may be strengthened through improvements to existing properties and construction of new infill development that is consistent with the district's historic architectural character.

Figure 2-11: B2 Zoning District (Central Business District)

The Village of Riverside created a new B2 zoning district for downtown in March 2003. Shown on this map are the properties included in the B-2 Central Business District. The purpose and intent of the B-2 Central Business District is to sustain the economic viability of the Riverside Central Business District by preserving its historic character and allowing for compatible redevelopment. It is intended that the mixed-use, small-scale, and pedestrian-oriented character associated with the Central Business District will be strengthened through improvements to existing properties and new infill development that is consistent with its distinct historic scale, architecture, and landscape architecture. The desired mix of uses shall consist of retail, service, office, and residential.

Retail Core: Designed to encourage a “critical mass” of retail and service uses centrally located to serve the Village. The Retail Core allows retail and service uses on the ground floor and office and residential uses on upper floors.

Mixed Use Periphery: The Mixed Use Periphery accommodates existing residential uses that surround and support the Retail Core. The Village encourages continued maintenance of these existing residential uses and establishment of additional new medium density residential uses in this subdistrict.

Public Use Zone: The Public Use Zone, located at the heart of the Village, significantly contributes to the unique historic identity and character of Riverside. The Public Use Zone contains a significant number of public historic landmark buildings.



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The B2 Zoning District defines three zones described as follows:

- **Retail Core:** Establishes a centrally located area for the concentration of retail and service uses. This sub district allows for retail and service use on the ground floor, and office and residential use on upper floors. Ground level retail is required for 80% of new building frontage in order to shift use concentrations from service to retail dominance.
- **Mixed-Use Periphery:** Designed to accommodate new retail and service uses downtown while permitting residential use as an option for ground level development. In doing so, it accommodates existing medium density residential uses that surround the retail core and provides development options for properties where ground level retail may not be market feasible. This zone also allows for the reuse of residential structures for commercial use.
- **Public Use Zone:** Identifies properties within downtown that are dedicated for public use. This zone is anchored by the water tower, train station, fire station, Township Hall and Riverside Library, and includes Centennial and Guthrie Park.

Allowable building height was the most contentious issue debated in the rezoning process. There was strong support for establishing a three story maximum, with the third floor designed to look like a roof. This approach delivers buildings that appear to be two and one half stories tall. The landmark Arcade Building is a good example of this design strategy.

Planning Framework

Based upon analysis of physical conditions throughout downtown, and input from resident stakeholders and community leaders, Figure 2-12, *Planning Framework*, was developed to identify specific issues to be addressed in this study. These include opportunities for private sector redevelopment and public improvement needs. Each category is described as follows:

- **Opportunity Sites:** A series of opportunity sites were identified throughout the planning area as depicted by solid red outlines. Agreement upon specific redevelopment sites has been a contentious issue in past planning efforts; therefore the Historic Resources analysis presented earlier in this section of the report was utilized as the basis for opportunity site identification. Redevelopment opportunity sites are parcels where historic landmarks and other contributing structures are not located, and, therefore, may be susceptible to change.
- **Screening/Long Term Opportunity Sites:** These sites, depicted with dashed red lines, are large surface parking lots with very little landscape interest or streetwall continuity. The site located on Burlington is a church parking lot that provides parking for parishioners on weekends, and parking for church school students on schooldays. The site located on Quincy is a bank parking lot. The church lot is a highly visible land use in downtown though it is not used to capacity throughout the week. Meanwhile, parking within the business district is in short supply. Although past conversations with the church regarding shared use of this parking lot have not resulted in agreement, this dialogue should be continued for the good of downtown and the Riverside community.

Figure 2-12: *Planning Framework*



-  Historic Resources
-  Opportunity Site
-  Screening/Long Term Opportunity Site
-  Trainscape Focus Area
-  Explore Pedestrian Connection
-  Explore Use Potential
-  Explore Traffic Management Strategies
-  Enhance Relationship to River

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Arrangements should be made whereby the Village is able to utilize the southernmost portion of the lot for shared business district parking, while the northernmost section is reserved for the church school parking. Rent and liability limitation agreements could be enacted in exchange for use of this important downtown asset. The Village may also consider partnering in the construction of significant landscape and fence screening improvements to restore a pedestrian orientation to the Burlington frontage. This site is envisioned as a long-term redevelopment site for mixed-use, and parking could be maintained as a function within a new structure.

The bank parking lot is of vital importance to the function of that institution. The parking lot, however, creates a large void in downtown and exposes to public view the rear building façade and parking areas of a medium density residential complex. Landscape enhancements are needed to restore a pedestrian orientation to this Quincy Street frontage. This site is envisioned as a long-term redevelopment site for mixed-use, and parking could be maintained as a function within a new structure.

- **Railscape:** One of the main vantage points from which people form impressions of Riverside is from the windows of Metra commuter trains as they pass through the community each day. This is a primary opportunity for Riverside to attract interest from visitors, shopping patrons and potential investors in the community. In its current condition, however, the railroad corridor does not present a high-quality image that reflects the true character of Riverside. There is no unifying landscape treatment along the corridor, no Village gateway or informational signage, and the rear service and trash storage areas of the central business district are not screened from view. Opportunity exists to improve this corridor by identifying improvement projects that visually unify existing buildings, architectural features for new buildings that are oriented towards the tracks, lighting improvements, and landscape treatments for parking areas and open space along the outside edge of the railroad corridor right-of-way. Any proposed trainscape improvements would need to consider safety relative to railscape. Sight lines at crossings, clear markings of grade crossings and keeping pedestrians out of the dynamic envelope of train operations (rather than inviting them to linger at the edge of ties) is of highest priority. Thus, any improvements would need to be discussed with the BNSF Railway. Typically, any proposed landscaping in the vicinity of Metra stations, platforms, and in Metra parking lots are subject to Metra’s Technical Services Station and Parking Design Guidelines as well as the BNSF Railway standards regarding sight lines, clearances of tracks and crossings, and plantings.
- **Pedestrian Connection:** The north and south segments of the business district are physically separated by the railroad tracks, which makes pedestrian and bicycle circulation between the easternmost edges of the business district difficult. Access between the north and south segments are limited to the at-grade crossing located on Longcommon Road. There is also a pedestrian underpass that connects the north and south platforms. The underpass requires substantial reconstruction to meet ADA requirements and both the Village and BNSF are currently considering weather to rebuild or close the underpass. Potential to provide increased pedestrian access was identified as an issue for exploration in this study.
- **Traffic Management Needs:** Although the curvilinear and organic character of Riverside’s streets are a central feature of its overall design, the irregular intersections that result are sometimes difficult to maneuver, both by vehicles and pedestrians. Such conditions are especially prevalent in downtown along Longcommon Road, between Woodside and Riverside Roads. The most troublesome intersection in the Village is located at the intersection of Longcommon with Forest Avenue and Burlington Street. This offset intersection is regulated by a stop sign and is confusing for all parties trying to navigate it. The fact that a school with peak hour

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volumes of children on foot and on bicycles further complicates this intersection. It is a public safety concern. Alternatives for improving traffic flow while mitigating the potential for pedestrian harm is explored in this plan.

- **Des Plaines River Connection:** Riverside was founded and named based upon its relationship to the Des Plaines River. Olmsted envisioned public riverfront access and activities as evidenced in his writings and plan. Unfortunately, downtown has very little physical or functional connection to the river in its present state. In fact, visitors to the community would not even know it was there. Reconnecting Riverside to the river is a key opportunity for improving community life. Opportunities exist for riverbank enhancement and programming for recreational activities. A cable suspended “swinging bridge” is located directly behind the Township Hall. It connects downtown to an unincorporated area known as “Riverside Lawn” on the south bank of the river. Improvements and programming should be explored for development in this area to serve as a user destination and amenity to the community.