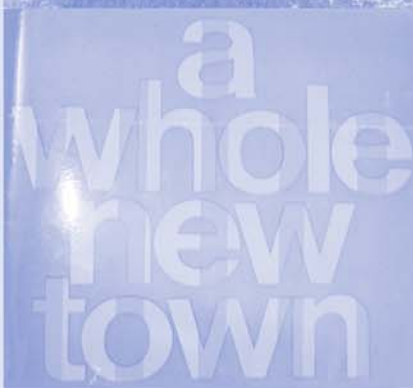
University Park

Transit-Oriented Development Study



Prepared for the Regional Transportation Authority
with The Village of University Park &
Eastern Will County Regional Council

Prepared by

URS
CERC

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Figures

List of Charts

List of Tables

Appendices

I. Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Transit-Oriented Development presented in this report is a unique opportunity for the Village of University Park to launch a New Town development that will be the connecting node of activity between the east and west sides of the Village. The 245-acre proposed mixed-use project is focused around the Metra station and incorporates the natural landscape qualities of the Thorn Creek Watershed into the development. The Plan connects the otherwise separate Village neighborhoods, including Governors State University, while creating a distinct and memorable place for residents, business owners, and Metra patrons.

The Village's History as a Planned Community

The Village of University Park is a growing community in the Chicago metropolitan area, located in eastern Will County just 35 miles south of downtown Chicago. The Village is one of America's storied planned communities that has yet to realize its development potential. It was founded in 1967 as Park Forest South. The nearby city of Park Forest was developed first, and upon great and rapid success, the same development group began plans to extend their planned community concept south. The planned communities of this generation had a few key principals in common: the center of the community is the residential neighborhoods; the residential and civic uses are connected by an integral pedestrian pathway system; the geographic separation of land uses; an employment center that serves flexible business, research and controlled industrial uses, a roadway system that connects major land uses but without an interconnected secondary roadway system; and substantial mass transit options throughout.

The plans for these new towns proposed the South Suburban Freeway that would have transected the present day University Park, expanding a south suburban transportation system. Governors State University, 750 acres within University Park, and its famed Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park were conceived of and implemented as a direct result of this visionary generation. The conservation efforts for the substantial forests, wetlands, and prairies of the area originate during this period also.

In the 1970's, on the wave of the new town momentum, the Illinois Central Railroad agreed to extend the train line south to University Park based on a population projection of 100,000. Unfortunately the growth momentum did not continue. The South Suburban Freeway never came to fruition. Therefore, Village circulation routes traffic around the Village rather than through it, which is one of the major reasons for the lack of success for the struggling commercial corrdiors. University Park has continued to have difficulty reaching its full potential with a population of just under 7,000 residents today. Unfortunately, this population continually patronizes establishments outside of the Village boundaries because of a lack of commercial and retail development.

A Transit-Oriented Development

Chicago's developed metropolitan area has continually grown towards these post-war new towns. University Park faces many of the usual pressures of outer ring suburbs in regulating growth as its farm fields transform into community developments. As the market study will show, the marketplace indicates that today University Park is poised for varied development including employment centers, mixed-use, retail, commercial, housing and University services.

According to the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), the population of University Park is forecasted to grow by 200% by 2020. The need for additional airport capacity in the Chicago area resulted in the proposal for a third airport in the south suburban region. The proposed location being a mere ten miles south of University Park. This proposed South Suburban Airport would substantially impact the Village. An increase in traffic flow would strain its current roadway system, and increasing development pressure would place additional demand on Village services. NIPC forecasts that with the development of the proposed South Suburban Airport, University Park's population and total households will increase by more than 400%.

While University Park's number of households has grown along with other Will County communities over the past two decades, the housing market in University Park has not kept pace with development in neighboring Will County communities. The relatively high age and low vacancy rates for existing housing in University Park indicate a market for increased residential development. Housing development in University Park is poised to take advantage of the changing structure of households and the demand for new housing types that is presented by an aging population and an increasing number of female-headed households and first-time homebuyers. The area around the Metra station represents an opportunity to provide new and varied housing products and create a new transit-oriented neighborhood.

University Park's industrial uses have served as a south suburban model and a development catalyst for a destination-based employment center. Will County's industrial market is strong in spite of the 2001 economic slowdown as compared to competing Chicago metropolitan industrial markets. Will County's 2000 new construction starts represented more than 50% increase over the prior year. Will County's attractiveness to industrial businesses includes:

- Favorable land and construction costs;
- Large lot sizes;
- Available greenfield sites;
- Favorable interest rates;
- Availability of a skilled labor force; and
- Tax advantage over Cook County (industrial property tax rate of 18%, compared to 36% in Cook County).

Development at this site needs to be carefully planned such that the result is not a traditional heavy industrial use, which is highly saturated in the surrounding municipal zoning codes. Instead, the use needs to be oriented toward technology-based research and industrial, flex/office, light manufacturing and high employment

hubs that are in proximity to the commuter rail station. This use will take advantage of the employment objectives of both the Village and Governors State University.

University Park currently lacks a strong retail base for all three categories of retail: comparison goods, eating and drinking, and convenience goods. This forces current residents to travel outside of the village to meet many of their basic needs and causes University Park to have substantially lower per capita sales than its neighboring communities. An opportunity exists for University Park to establish a retail center that fills the current void in retail services and that serves residents of the Village and Metra commuters. Development at this site is well positioned to take advantage of several factors. There is good access to surrounding highways and roads. If developed, this site has the potential to draw from a larger market that will be spurred on by increased visibility and accessibility.

At the center of the Village, and at the center of this extraordinary development potential, lies the final stop of the Metra Electric District (MED) Line. A passenger rail line connecting University Park to downtown Chicago, it serves riders commuting from their south suburban homes to their offices in the Loop. The majority of riders that board at University Park originate in and around the Village, but because it is the last station on the MED Line, a substantial percentage of the ridership is drawn from a region as far-reaching as the Kankakee Township towns 20 miles south.

The station is at the intersection of University Parkway and Governors Highway. Governors Highway is a state route that runs parallel to the tracks. Although the train stop is near these two highly-traveled streets, the parking, station entrance, and platforms are set back a considerable distance from University Parkway, and are not highly visible landmarks. The lack of presence from the public street makes this place seem like a station in a field - a field without a discernable sense of place.

The vision for this property centered around the transit stop, is one of a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood, with an integrated greenway system connecting the far edges of the neighborhood to the center at the station. The Station Area Master Plan overcomes several community-wide planning and design challenges. The existing transit amenities, particularly parking, are over-capacity and require expansion. Due to the substantial existing commuter ridership, the Plan calls for additional commuter parking and intermodal facilities. Governors State University (GSU), an adjacent property to the station area, lacks a connection to the transit stop. GSU is the fastest growing public university in Illinois, with a 22% increase in enrollment in the past four years. The Plan provides for direct connection to GSU including a road network, greenways, bus transit, and curriculum and program expansion through the employment center. The University community - students, faculty, and staff - would benefit from the commercial, residential, and employment amenities of the new development. The Village does not have a road grid or network that weaves the Village together. Therefore, the Plan calls for several major road and infrastructure improvements including a University Parkway grade separation over the railroad and the realignment of Governors Highway.

The Station Area Master Plan is a proposed transit community truly akin to a New Town development. The Master Plan is based on several key development principles, which include:

- Creating a sustainable community that features pedestrian amenities and public transportation;

- Sustainable landscape and stormwater practices that shape the land-use pattern and creates the identity of the neighborhood;
- Market-based development program based on a thorough market study;
- A mix of land uses providing a neighborhood in which to live, learn, work, and play;
- A residential mix of densities and housing typologies, providing for a variety of family structures and living arrangements based on authentic neighborhoods;
- An employment center that combines a variety of flexible industrial uses including research and development, light manufacturing, and flex/office; and
- Internal and regional connections that integrate the neighborhood into the fabric of the Village.

Implementation

An implementation strategy accompanies the Station Area Master Plan to aid the Village in attracting investment in the community and increasing Village revenues. This project has the potential to be an economic engine for the Village. However, making this vision a reality will take a great deal of dedication, time, and financial support from the Village of University Park and the other stakeholders. The planning process that resulted in this Report involved substantial public and stakeholder involvement. The URS Team met frequently with Village staff, Metra representatives, University delegates, landowners, and other concerned residents. The implementation strategy helps to make this process clearer and provides some initial recommendations for development.

The implementation strategy is divided into phases for completion. The projected cost of development for the entire project is estimated to be $796 million.

Phase 1 of implementation:

- Land assemblage
- Roadway development
- Development of Metra parking
- Development of mixed use, townhome, and condominium projects on the east side of the tracks
- Development of the gateway boulevard and employment center on the west side of the tracks.

Total Cost for Phase 1 development projects is estimated to be $191 million.

The first phase projects largely encompass the immediate station area for the retail/commercial uses which benefit from the commuter market when trying to underwrite the deal and attract potential retailers to this location. The accompanying Greenway Boulevard and retail focused at the station will provide the foundation for this envisioned neighborhood in the next 5-10 years.

The URS Consultant Team recommends the ongoing participation and establishment of several organizations:

- This study's Project Advisory Board - a group of public and private sector stakeholders - that have immediate interest in the development of the area and have been involved throughout the entire project process;
- The establishment of the University Park Development Corporation to oversee the University Park Transit-Oriented Development Project;
- The establishment of an Open Space Conservancy, a non-profit organization, dedicated to the long-term protection and management of the Project open space, and also to the health of the entire watershed.

The development recommendations, implementation strategy, and funding tool-kit are designed to help the Village of University Park realize the vision presented in this report. The successful reformation of the area around the University Park Metra station into an attractive transit development will allow the Village to build upon infrastructure improvement and development programs that are already underway.

What is now nothing more than parking lots and scurrying commuters in the morning and evening is envisioned as a complete, dynamic neighborhood, offering goods and services to the entire Village, and a variety of housing and employment options for a diverse community. The Greenway Boulevard extends through the neighborhood with a mix of native forest, prairie, and wetland landscape. The station is the catalyst for a neighborhood centered on the Station Green, a Village gathering space. With infrastructure changes to remove the inhibiting force of the rail line, a prosperous, thriving, authentic neighborhood can be born. A commitment to the Project can transform the Village to become the destination envisioned by its founders, a community that offers vibrant neighborhoods, commuter access, and a high quality of life for all its residents.

II. Findings & Analysis

A. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

The Village of University Park is a growing community in the Chicago metropolitan area, located just 35 miles south of Chicago's downtown loop in eastern Will County (Fig. 1). It was founded in 1967 as Park Forest South, a planned community, by the same group that developed Park Forest. Much of University Park's 14.4 square miles is farmland, wetland, woodland, oldfield, prairie, lakes, and streams. There is vast potential within and adjacent to the Village; part of University Park is developed, while much of it is yet undeveloped. University Park is a young community with a diverse history and an evolving future.

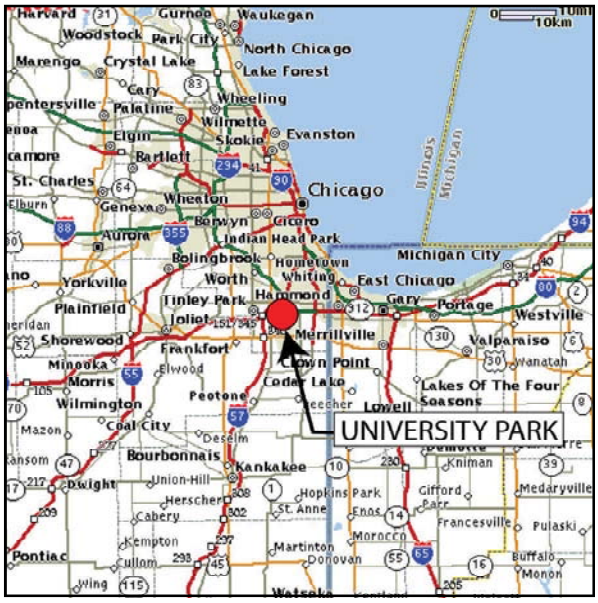


FIGURE 1: CHICAGO CONTEXT

University Park faces many of the usual pressures of outer ring suburbs in regulating growth as its farm fields transform into housing developments. University Park has a unique history as a "planned community." The past is key to understanding the current layout and growth patterns of the area as well as the services provided within it.

Currently there is a population of 6,600, with limited retail amenities, commercial, and industrial development. The residents rely heavily on the retail and commercial establishments in surrounding communities. These residences are located primarily in the southeast corner of the Village with other scattered clusters of condominium and multi-family buildings.

The Village is conveniently located with regard to transportation. It is along I-57, 5 miles south of I-80-94, and 15 miles west of I-65. The Canadian National (CN-IC) Railroad, which took over the Illinois Central in 1999, runs through the Village, near existing commercial and industrial areas. The Metra Electric District (MED) Line connects University Park to downtown Chicago, providing service from University Park to Randolph Street in downtown Chicago. Amtrak's service to St. Louis is also on the CN-IC line.

The Thorn Creek Forest Preserve is located within one mile of the station area. It is a regional treasure including high-quality habitat and stream corridors. There are volunteer stewardship groups that work restoration activities in the Thorn Creek Forest Preserve. These activities can extend into greenways throughout the Village if current open space corridors were to be reclaimed and restored. The Thorn Creek Forest Preserve is a significant natural landscape for the region, and University Park has an opportunity to benefit from its presence in their community.

With foresight and planning to improve the existing infrastructure and roadways, the commuter rail station is in an advantageous location to become the center of an additional node of activity within University Park, and the foundation of an authentic neighborhood to grow over time and become an example of good neighborhood design throughout the Village.

To create a vision for the Station Area Master Plan, a broad range of data was collected, reviewed and analyzed. The data provides an understanding of area history, surrounding influences and actual site conditions. This information is the basis for establishing the primary development opportunities and constraints facing the Village of University Park, Governors State University, primary landholders, and Metra as the project proceeds.

Project Methodology

In 2001, University Park was awarded a grant through the Regional Transportation Authority's Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) to conduct a transit-oriented development study for the area around the Metra station. The Village teamed with the Regional Transportation Authority and the Eastern Will County Regional Council to oversee the RTAP grant. The transit-oriented development study envisioned by the Village was intended to stimulate community reinvestment and increase ridership on the Metra Electric District. The study was coordinated by a Project Committee, which included:

- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
- Village of University Park
- Eastern Will County Regional Council
- Metra
- Pace Suburban Bus Service

A consultant team led by URS Corporation and including Community Economic Redevelopment Corporation (CERC) (URS Consultant Team) was engaged to conduct a study of the area around the Metra station and create a redevelopment plan. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) also participated on the project as a partner and a regional resource during the planning and public outreach process. The URS Consultant Team's approach to revitalization of the area surrounding the University Park Metra Station included the completion of the following tasks:

Task 1: Data Collection

The URS Consultant Team collected and analyzed a variety of data related to environmental conditions, the local residential and commercial real estate markets, existing land use, and transportation access and circulation. The survey of existing conditions included both assets and constraints to development.

Task 2: Public Involvement

The URS Consultant team worked with the Village of University Park to involve identified stakeholders in the redevelopment planning process. Outreach included presentations to the Village, the University, a platform survey, a license plate survey, and the creation of a Project Advisory Board.

Task 3: Environmental Review

The review made reference to the existing site-vegetative community by describing them according to the conservative co-efficient of the Swink & Wilhelm system. The basic tool of this method is an evaluation checklist of the plants of the Chicago region. Each native species on the checklist has been given a coefficient of conservatism ranging from "0" to "10". Quality native plants have a higher value ("10") while non-native aggressive plants have a lower value. Any landscape including those in the University Park TOD, can be evaluated as to the quality of the eco-system by analyzing the plants on-site and rating them according to the check-list. Although not a delineation, this inventory and the associated map was a critical guide for the design team in preparing the concept plan. Not only did the environmental context affect the layout of the TOD, it also highlighted those features as a critical design reference and the "theme" for the development.

Task 4: Market Study

The URS Consultant Team used the analysis of existing conditions in the Village of University Park to identify opportunities for transit oriented development that are consistent with historic, physical, environmental, and economic conditions.

Task 5: Access Plan

Circulation alternatives were analyzed that address multi-modes, particularly pedestrian movement. Shared parking arrangements were identified as well as the alternatives for station location. The configuration of the local road and pedestrian walkway network was evaluated to interweave the transit environment into the community.

Task 6: Develop a Concept Plan & Funding Tool-kit

The URS Team then created a development plan for the station area, based on identified transit-oriented development opportunities and an understanding of the station area's context within the wider Village area. The plan is represented by an illustrative vision of the station area. A matrix developed by the URS Consultant Team outlines potential federal, state, and other public sources of financing for the project, as well as private financing resources.

Task 7: Final Report

This final report is a summary of the planning process and information collected and evaluated by the URS Consultant Team. It also presents the Concept Plan for the station area, which was developed based on these evaluations, and serves as a guide to redevelopment for the Village.

History and Culture

Nearly one hundred and fifty years ago Chicago's south suburban fringe was a prosperous farming area. Villages grew up along the CN-IC Railroad line, Lincoln Highway and Sauk Trail. Small towns and villages were surrounded by family farms, forests, or wetlands that were inappropriate for cultivation. By the late 1800's, the edge of Chicago's development had reached this area. The farmland, cheap in comparison to the land closer in to Chicago, began to disappear and was developed into new manufacturing industrial centers.

The boom years of the 1920's and 30's witnessed the continued disappearance of farmland in favor of housing clustered around new recreational amenities of amusement parks and golf courses. At this time Indian Wood, the first planned community in the University Park area was proposed. In 1926, a developer built a sales office and laid out an 18-hole golf course with the promise of three more to be developed for the private use of the future homeowners. This idea failed with the market crash of 1929 and through the years other concepts were considered. It took World War II and the need for affordable housing to returning veterans for the area's planned communities to actually begin construction.

American Community Builders, formed by Carroll Sweet Sr., Philip Klutznick, and Nathan Manilow, purchased the Indian Woods Golf Course and surrounding lands in 1946. Their goal was to create Park Forest, a planned community and GI town. Building began in 1947, and the first tenants moved in August of 1948. Less than one year later, Park Forest was officially incorporated.

Park Forest offered affordable housing with its rental units. Returning veterans of World War II comprised 85 percent of Park Forest's early residents. As renters looked to buy a dream house of their own, Park Forest offered them affordable homes within a few years of its incorporation. The success of Park Forest encouraged the developers to extend the development south with a subdivision called Wood Hill. In the 1960's this new neighborhood was later renamed and launched as Park Forest South (Fig. 2).

Park Forest South had high aspirations with plans to expand into a community of 100,000 in the near future. Park Forest South was selected as one of sixteen communities in the federal Title IV New Communities Program of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 that was to be developed as an independent municipality. With the award of a $30 million government backed loan, Park Forest South Development Company pursued the dream to develop an urban area complete with an independent transportation system, a thriving downtown section, and a prosperous industrial sector.

A 1972 Chicago Tribune advertising supplement proclaimed "A Whole New Town" (Fig. 3), and Park Forest South mapped out its future. These plans included a

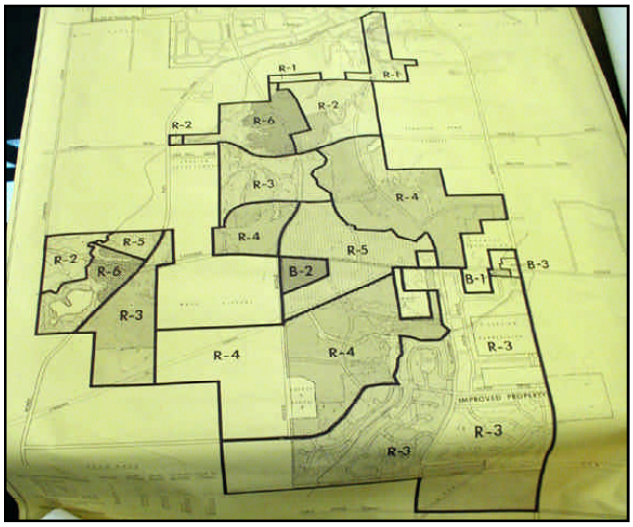


FIGURE 2: PARK FOREST SOUTH ZONING MAP

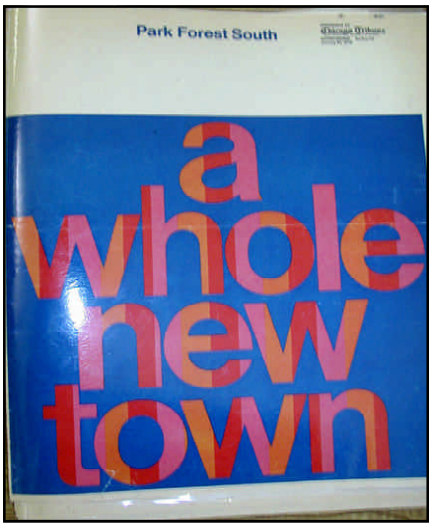


FIGURE 3: CHICAGO TRIBUNE SUPPLEMENT

South Suburban Freeway that cut through present day University Park from I-57 and Steger Road, bending south of Governors State University, and continuing east-west to just north of Crete Monee Road.

In light of the new community project and projected population growth to 100,000, the CN-IC Railroad agreed to extend the train line south for the first time in nearly half a century. The final stop was Park Forest South, and by 1976 a new train station was completed. This was a great success and Park Forest South attracted commercial and residential attention. Shortly thereafter, the state acquired 750 acres of land, 200 of which were donated by the Manilow family, to construct a new university near the train station. Governors State University (GSU) was successfully instated and soon became an instrumental component of the community. Also by this time, I-57 had reached completion to the west of University Park, and the new Governors Gateway Industrial Park bordering the interstate provided a good commercial base for the Village.

Unfortunately the remaining years of the decade did not maintain the earlier growth momentum. Changes in the federal housing financing programs, increased environmental awareness that took many acres previously anticipated for housing out of production, and a slow down in the housing market had the community adjusting its future to suit a population projection of only 25,000.

In 1984, in an effort to distance itself from its parent community of Park Forest, Park Forest South was renamed University Park. The new name was chosen to connect the community with GSU and the successful Governors Gateway Industrial Park (Fig. 4).

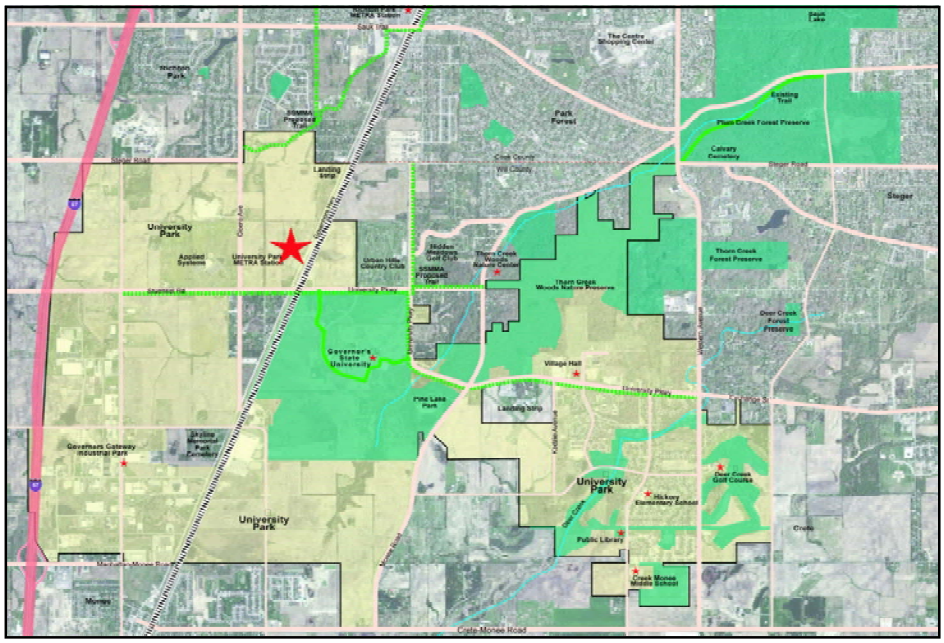


FIGURE 4: UNIVERSITY PARK OPEN SPACE MAP

In recent years, University Park has continued to have difficulty reaching its full potential with a population of just under 7,000. Although the historic Village is witnessing increased residential development, commercial and retail presence is limited. Today it is hoped that University Park can become the culturally rich, self-sufficient community that it always aspired to become by building on its business district, state university, transit system, and expansive recreational facilities and open space networks.

Regional Influences

As the Chicago metropolitan region continues to expand, many of the 1960 era new town plans developed for the south suburban area are now becoming truly viable. Situated 30 miles from the downtown loop, Chicago's suburban fringe is only just reaching University Park. The Village stands poised to capitalize on its existing assets as the region expands.

Easily accessible from throughout the metropolitan area, the South Suburbs owe their transportation networks to the enthusiasm of the new town movement. The 1960's and 70's saw the expansion of the transportation corridors down to the area. University Park was added as the last stop on the MED Line in the 1970's making it a regional hub. In the future the MED Line could be extended south should the proposed South Suburban Airport be built. The MED Line is also being considered as one of the potential travel corridors of the proposed Chicago-to-St.-Louis High Speed Rail Service.

The expansion of I-57 south to Kankakee was also a product of the new town movement. While this expressway provided north-south connections, the area has suffered with incomplete east-west access, a situation exacerbated by at-grade crossings of the CN-IC rail line which runs adjacent to Governors Highway. Several east-west connectors have been proposed beginning with the South Suburban Freeway in the early 1970's through today's planned Illiana expressway (Fig. 5). Each improvement will increase University Park's potential for further development.

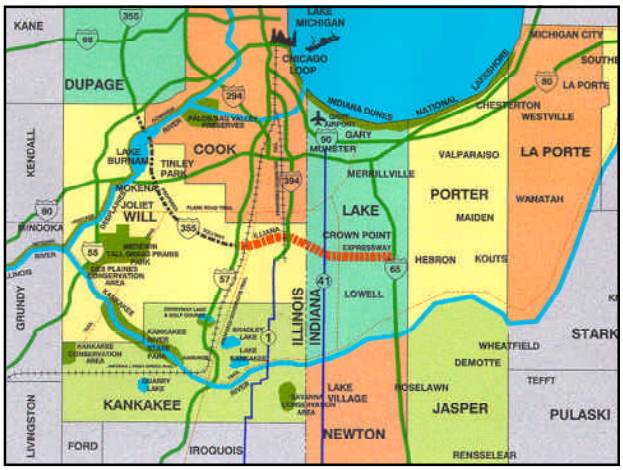


FIGURE 5: ILLIANA EXPRESSWAY CONCEPT MAP

Another regional asset developed as part of the new communities process is the extensive network of open spaces and trail systems primarily associated with Thorn Creek Forest Preserve. University Park is at the headwaters of Thorn Creek, a watershed that flows to Lake Michigan. Local and regional trails that lead into the preserve can be reached from the Metra station through GSU.

Less than ten miles south of University Park is Peotone, a community that has been designated as the site for the proposed South Suburban Airport. A rural farming and bedroom community, Peotone will become a catalyst for change as it develops to alleviate pressures at Chicago's other two airports, O'Hare and Midway. About 2.5 million people live within an hour's drive of the proposed South Suburban Airport site, and a south suburban location could make air travel much more convenient for those who live or work south of the Loop, and those who live farther downstate. The potential site of the airport when fully built will lie adjacent to the boundary of University Park. The proposed airport has prompted many studies about the circulation routes and traffic volumes that would be generated by such a development. Expanded mass transit via bus and train, and the capacities of regional roads I-57 and Cicero Avenue have been under study.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

While the planned community of Park Forest South began in the 1960's, many changes have occurred since the early plans were drawn. The dreams of monorails or street cars traversing the community or even a south suburban freeway with multiple village access points have yet to be realized. Today much of the land in and around University Park is still undeveloped agriculture property. Many of the original forest and wetlands have remained open and have become parks and nature preserves.

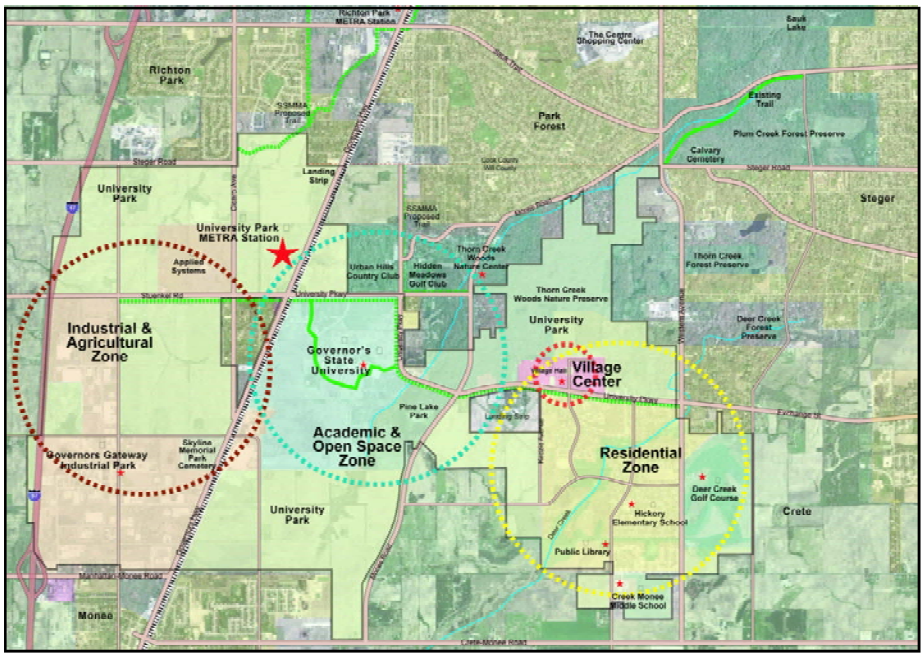


FIGURE 6: UNIVERSITY PARK EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD DIAGRAM

University Park is comprised of three primary districts: residential located in the east, open space (Thorn Creek Forest Preserve and GSU) in the middle, and industrial on the west (Fig. 6). These three districts essentially divide the village into three separate communities. The lack of east-west connections reinforces these divisions and makes village-wide continuity difficult.

The eastern-most section is the historic village center. This area contains most of University Park's residential, civic, municipal, and retail development. The residential district is interwoven with disconnected trail systems which intend to link the housing to Village Hall and Fire Station 1, the Public Library, the elementary and middle schools, and the open space (Thorn Creek Forest Preserve and GSU).

The middle section of University Park is truly the headwaters of the Thorn Creek watershed. The 700 acres of GSU and the 880 acres of Thorn Creek Forest Preserve coupled with Urban Hills Country Club and Hidden Meadows Golf Club combine to create a green swath through the community. While this open space could weave the community together, the absence of east-west roadways or bikeways limits its effectiveness.

The western industrial zone is separated from the other two-thirds of the village by the CN-IC Railroad, disparate land use, and insufficient roadways. Dominated by Governors Gateway Industrial Park, it ties more closely to the I-57 corridor than to the Village center.

The current zoning for University Park reinforces this development pattern (Fig. 7). New areas for residential development are east of the rail line, while most of the current agricultural land west of the rail line is zoned for industrial uses. Retail and commercial zoning occurs in a corridor along University Parkway east of the CN-IC tracks. A tax increment financing (TIF) district has been created along University Parkway between I-57 and Cicero Avenue to capitalize on the future development associated with the building of the interchange. This will ensure that industrial development will continue in this area.

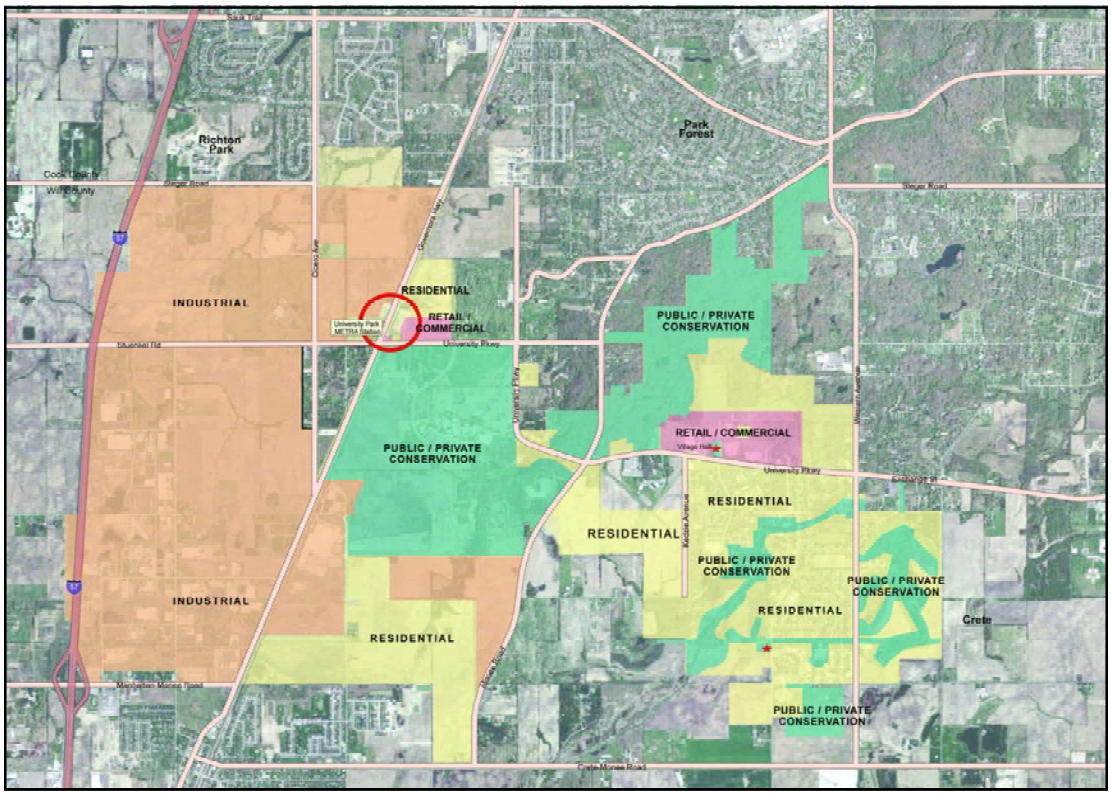


FIGURE 7: UNIVERSITY PARK EXISTING ZONING

Governors State University

Part of the dream of Park Forest South was that residents could live their entire lives within the community. To achieve this dream, the master plan incorporated everything from work and home linked by bikeways or mass transit to the ability to have elementary through higher education. The initial success of Park Forest South and astute political maneuverings brought a new state college to the community in 1969. The State of Illinois acquired 750 acres of land, 200 of which were donated by the Manilow family, to construct a new school of higher education on what was once open farmland.

FIGURE 8: GSU CAMPUS PLAN

Physical planning for the university began in 1969 and drew upon many of the popular

movements in campus development of the times (Fig. 8 & 9). While GSU was still in the planning phase, its famous Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park (Fig. 10) was established by Lewis Manilow, successor to his father following his death in 1971 as the head of the Park Forest South Development Corporation. Lewis Manilow established the Park Forest South Cultural Foundation that commissioned and maintained the first sculptures in the park. He conceived of the Sculpture Park as a living legacy to his father who had shaped the area. In 1978 GSU assumed responsibility for maintenance of the park, publicity, and commissioning new works, made possible by a donation by a group of friends and associates of the late Nathan Manilow. The Sculpture Park is now recognized internationally and is a source of pride for the University and community alike.

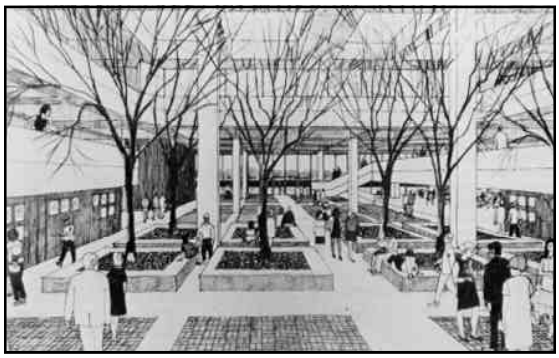


FIGURE 9: GSU'S HALL OF GOVERNORS

FIGURE 10: NATHAN MANILOW SCULPTURE PARK

Today the campus open space is another prized facility. GSU has taken on the role of research in an academic manner, through research focusing on its ecological treasures. The Biological Experiment Station located just south east from the main building is an outdoor classroom.

GSU is a fully accredited senior level university. It meets the needs of those with two years of college coursework providing Bachelor or Master of Arts degrees. This unusual status makes GSU the only university in Illinois serving juniors, seniors and master's students exclusively. Additionally, with a 22% increase in enrollment in just the past four years, GSU is the fastest growing public university in Illinois.

As GSU continues to evolve, some of the tenants for its creation have remained constant. The initial emphasis on the arts and culture has been reinforced with the 1995 completion of the $7.1 million Center for Performing Arts (Fig. 11). This is a premiere facility dedicated to presenting a wide array of quality popular, fine art, and educational programming that serves the entire Chicago Southland community. The Center seats just under 1,200 and has continued to expand its offerings each season.

FIGURE 11: GSU'S CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

The success of the Center in expanding GSU's role in the cultural life of the area has prompted its board to consider expanding the venue throughout the year. The addition of an outdoor amphitheater is now being explored as a means of developing a summer season and exposing more people to the benefits of the

university (Fig. 12). Envisioned to seat 2,500 people, the amphitheater would accommodate an additional 5,000 on an informal grass bowl overlooking the campus and prairie landscape.

As time passes, GSU proves to be everything the new town planners could have imagined and has become an instrumental component in the lives of the community.

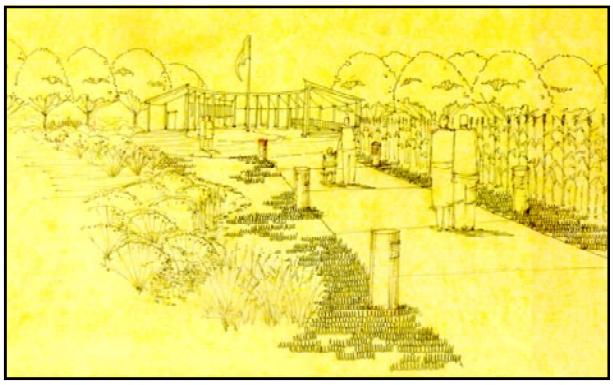


FIGURE 12: CONCEPT SKETCH FOR THE PROPOSED "PRAIRIE PAVILION" OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER AT GSU

Station Area

The University Park station is the last stop on the MED Line, and acts as a regional hub for transit. The station is located at the intersection of Governors Highway and University Parkway and is comprised of two parking lots on either side of the tracks (Fig. 13). The station is accessed from within the parking lots on either side of the tracks. At these points, the commuter circulates down under the track level via a pedestrian underpass where the ticketing and turnstiles are located. Stairs and an elevator are located on the paid side of the turnstile that directly access the platform and passenger waiting shelters, located between the tracks at grade.

FIGURE 13: STATION AREA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH WITH METRA PARKING EXPANSION

The station area is divided not only by the tracks but also by the presence of Governors Highway, a state route with a 55 mile per hour speed limit. It runs parallel to the tracks and the western-most commuter lot lies west of it. The extreme distance between the two parking lots provides little continuity to the station as a place. While the station is expanding its capacity, and spaces being

added to the western lot, little in the form of retail, or commercial activity has developed in western University Park (see Figure 17 "Existing Commercial Property," page 35) . Governors Highway suffers from lack of development potential because of land being available on only one side. Its adjacency to the tracks complicates the at-grade rail crossing just south of the station. The station feels rural and isolated from the surrounding street system, GSU, and the Village.

The area around the station is primarily agricultural land. The immediate 245 acres around the station are owned by two entities (Fig. 14). Lewis Manilow, the last director of the Park Forest South Development Company, controls the land from Cicero across the tracks to encompass the station area. The acreage just east of the Manilow property spanning to Urban Hills Country Club is owned by USG, a manufacturer of building materials.

FIGURE 14: LAND OWNERSHIP DIAGRAM FOR THE STATION AREA

Conclusion

The vision of the early Park Forest South new town plan sought a better community through interconnected residential, educational, cultural, commercial, industrial, and recreational components. This dream should still be the goal for the area's future development. Single family housing developments are consuming the south suburban fringe, creating bedroom communities with no discernable commerce center. Apart from those neighbors, with a diverse and balanced growth and development strategy, University Park has the unique characteristics to differentiate itself and become the community Nathan Manilow envisioned almost fifty years ago.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The open space and environmental quality of the south suburban region largely influenced the Station Area Master Plan for the neighborhood. Although the 245-acre station area currently contains minimal high-quality ecological features, it has ample restoration opportunities and is located adjacent to several high quality open spaces.

The Master Plan should conserve open space and respect both environmentally sensitive areas and the rural character. A series of recommendations are made, which supports the Master Plan design and outlines several long-term management ideas. These recommendations are consistent with the guiding principles of Will County and should serve as a smart growth demonstration for community development.

This new neighborhood center at the station area should not occur independently of its surroundings for it is located within a carefully balanced ecosystem and an already established rural and natural landscape. By embracing the living, organic and dynamic environmental systems of the region and the site, the growth of the entire Village of University Park, including the neighborhood center, can be managed and interwoven into the landscape.

Environmental Legacy - A Historical Perspective

The station area is rich in environmental and cultural history and is a part of the vision of the Master Plan. The natural ecosystem that existed prior to settlement was likely a series of prairie, wetland, wet prairie and other ecosystems. Much of this is preserved in the Thorn Creek Forest Preserve as a result of the planned communities and Lewis Manilow's efforts (See Illustration Sheet 1). While the area is poised for additional paths and greenways, there are already two historic trail corridors of national acclaim, the Sauk Trail and the Vincennes Trace, which intersect nearby.

There are 174 sites of archeological and historical importance within proximity to the station-area, including Native American burial mounds and an 'underground railroad' system with safe houses remaining from the days of slavery. The historic Lincoln Highway (Route 30) is the first transcontinental highway for the automobile.

It runs through 13 states from New York to San Francisco and is promoted as a historic national corridor by The Lincoln Highway Association.

Watershed

The proposed Station Area Master Plan is in the Thorn Creek watershed (See Illustration Sheet 1). It includes northeastern Will County and southern Cook County Illinois, and is approximately 107 square miles with 115 miles of stream channel. About forty percent of the land in this watershed is developed with another thirty percent used for agricultural purposes. The rich natural and cultural features of this watershed include a varied landscape of upland forest, rare bog, sand and seep communities, and wetlands.

This watershed is significant as it forms the mid-continental divide between the Lake Michigan, North Atlantic and Mississippi, and Gulf of Mexico drainage basins. It is also the divide between two landscape features: the forests of the eastern United States and the prairie of the western United States. Although the larger percentage of the watershed has been disturbed and developed, the Thorn Creek area retains 83 percent of its estimated pre-settlement forest cover. In pre-settlement times there was approximately 16,000 acres of woodland; about 13,000 acres remain wooded today.

Flora, Fauna, Open Space and Greenways

In 1994 the Illinois Critical Trends Assessment Program designated the GSU campus and Thorn Creek Forest Preserve (Fig. 15) among the top 30 natural areas in Illinois. This natural area is an important flyway for migrating birds on their way to summer breeding grounds. The nearby Calumet wetlands and the large amount of agricultural areas to the south and west provide refuge to layover during migration. Ninety percent of these migratory birds can be seen in the station area.

The flora and fauna of this area is not only diverse but also significant. Thirty percent of the vascular plants of Illinois are found within the Thorn Creek watershed. The fauna includes the River Otter and Massasuga Rattlesnake among its residents. Also called the Pygmy Rattlesnake, the Massasuga is an endangered species native to eastern United States and Thorn Creek generally is its western habitat limit.

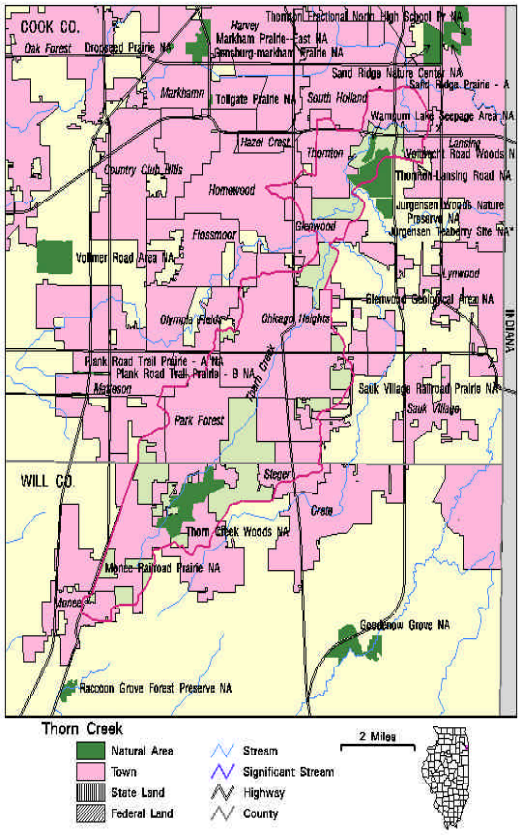


FIGURE 15: THORN CREEK FOREST PRESERVE MAP

Over seventy percent of the birds listed on the *Illinois list of Threatened and Endangered Species* are found in the Thorn Creek region. Such diversity occurs due to the jet stream, which pushes migratory birds east of the Mississippi towards Chicago. Although this watershed borders heavily industrialized areas, the open spaces in combination with the agricultural fields to the south of Will County are important to this migratory flyway between breeding grounds. Many of the region's communities have acknowledged the habitat value. For example, Chicago's Mayor Daley has signed the Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds, which encourages the creation of open space and enhancement of habitats. The same opportunity exists for the new neighborhood at Thorn Creek. The *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan* highlights the Thorn Creek corridor as a priority to the development of a regional greenway system. The station area neighborhood plan should extend this greenway system into the new development.

Wetlands form only 3.6 percent of the watershed, but four areas identified from the National Wetlands Inventory are in the vicinity of the proposed project area. All are prone to flooding and are dominated by perennial plants. These wetlands are not of the highest quality due to affects by farming. The soil surface adjacent to these wetlands has been mechanically or physically altered for the production of crops. If left to recuperate for an extended amount of time, the wetlands will recover.

Governors State University - An Environmental Laboratory

Located at the headwater, GSU is a very significant part of the Thorn Creek Watershed. It is situated one mile north of the continental divide between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. Of the 700 acres owned by the University, only 20 are developed. One hundred twenty acres of the campus is an Ecological Research Preserve, and three hundred fifty acres are in a crop rotation program managed by the University of Illinois. Stormwater detention areas and old farm ponds are on the campus. There is a 44-acre prairie restoration underway assisted by a grant from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The campus contributes a great deal to the general connectivity of the area, providing the intermediate ground adjacent to the 900-acre Thorn Creek Forest Preserve. The campus ecosystems are of exceptional quality, and they are undergoing restoration in order to promote a greater understanding of landscape preservation.

Thorn Creek Forest Preserve

Existing Forest Preserves of this area include Thorn Creek, Hickory Creek, Raccoon Grove, Tinley Creek and Goodenow Grove. Thorn Creek is the closest forest preserve to the station area and covers 900 acres. Will County Forest Preserve District is active in acquisition and has recently purchased a 10-acre addition. The preserve provides good opportunities for recreation to the whole community, and GSU uses it for projects and research.

The TOD Environmental Amenities

The majority of the station area landscape has been disturbed due to agricultural activities and commercial development. The natural ecosystem that existed prior to settlement was likely a series of prairie, wetland, wet prairie and other ecosystems (see Appendix B). In these systems, water flowed naturally into Thorn Creek, through the vertical infiltration of storm water into the dense root systems of diverse native plants. This infiltration occurred slowly over time, reducing the effects of drought and flood conditions. Since settlement, the site has been farmed, and the land has been dramatically altered with development and row-crop agriculture. The result has been highly advanced erosion, elimination of plant and animal habitat, and increased downstream flooding.

Today, there are several wetlands on each side of the railroad. The wetlands are isolated pockets and offer minimal habitat value. The pond east of the railroad is likely not a natural feature, but instead exists due to soil excavation during an earlier construction project. The pond has developed many native and upland plant species, which has created habitat for wading and migratory birds. The soils on the site are generally silty clay loam, which is a poorly drained soil that allows water and air to move through slowly; therefore, runoff is slow, creating ponds and poor drainage.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Given the outstanding environmental quality of the region and the average condition of the site, the goal should be to develop a Master Plan for this new community center that improves the local environment and demonstrates to the region sound ecological land development principles. This should be evident in the design of all the aspects of the plan including:

Architecture

The architecture should reference the standards of the green building industry that calls for energy-conservation devices, locally derived or recycled construction materials, and the utilization of natural light.

Open space

Open space should be interwoven throughout the site and at gateways in order to establish the image of the development for residents, employees, and visitors. This should be the case whether entering by train, auto, bicycle, or as a pedestrian.

Stormwater management

Stormwater management should be implemented in a sustainable manner by utilizing techniques that ultimately improve the water quality that enters the Thorn Creek or other local tributaries. Hydrology should be a key element of the ecology at the Neighborhood. It is the fundamental natural element that unifies the site during storm events. A site's hydrology and stormwater is the "lifeblood" that in conventional development is collected on roads and massive parking lots and runs into nearby streams and wetlands carrying contaminants and pollutants. The Plan should demonstrate ecological initiatives that address where storm water should go in order to improve water quality and create bio-diversity. Ultimately, the site's hydrology should support the plant and animal bio-diversity that is one of the truest, most accurate measures of an area's ecological health. Combinations of French drains, cisterns, native-planted swales, innovative planted parking lots, and other drainage features will ensure vertical infiltration of water throughout the built environment. The Plan will reinforce concepts of civil engineering without traditional expensive and destructive storm water management systems.

Recommendation

Establish a Neighborhood Conservancy

The protection of the preserve can be ensured through the creation of a Watershed Conservancy. Likely a non-profit organization perhaps in association with GSU, the Conservancy should be dedicated not only to the long-term protection and management of the Village open space, but also to the health of the entire watershed.

C. MARKET STUDY

The URS Consultant Team has conducted a review of existing market conditions for residential, commercial and industrial real estate markets in the Village of University Park and surrounding areas. The Market Study draws upon data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, Claritas Inc., area data, Chicago Board of Realtors Multiple listing service information for the south suburban region, current market data, local field work by CERC staff and interviews with local real estate professionals and developers. The URS Consultant Team then analyzed these market conditions to identify development opportunities and constraints within the TOD study area and the Village of University Park. This understanding of the market was used to create the Station Area Master Plan that meets the Village of University Park and RTA's stated needs and is economically sustainable.

The Project Committee requested that the URS Consultant Team specifically examine the industrial land use opportunities such that the use could be qualified as an employment center. This center could serve as a destination where employees utilize commuter rail and/or are affiliated with GSU. These preliminary findings are contained herein.

Project Market and Feasibility

The Village of University Park has seen a progressive increase in the area's median income (as shown in Table 1) and employment (66.8% of all residents 16 years and over make up the civilian labor force, of which only 4.1% are unemployed. University Park is not demonstrably different in any of these measures from Will County). Recent statistics indicate that the population includes a high number of working age individuals, with more individuals in the age groups that typically have the greatest percentage of homeownership (as shown in Table 2).

Table 1: Median Household Income

		1990	2000	% change
Will County		$41,195	$62,238	51%
Cook County		$32,673	$45,922	41%
University Park	**Will County**	**$34,375**	**$50,652**	**47%**
Crete Village	Will County	$46,283	$67,671	46%
Monee Village	Will County	$31,061	$58,625	89%
Sauk Village	Cook County	$39,014	$46,718	20%
Richton Park	Cook County	$38,721	$48,299	25%
Park Forest	Cook County	$36,995	$47,579	29%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, 1990

Table 2: Population Age Characteristics							
Age (years)	**1980**	***% of Total***	**1990**	***% of Total***	**2000**	***% of Total***	**% Change (1980 to 1990)**
0-9	1300	*20.8%*	1091	*17.6%*	1248	*18.7%*	-4%
10-14	680	*10.9%*	667	*10.8%*	636	*9.5%*	-7%
15-19	522	*8.4%*	621	*10.0%*	555	*8.3%*	6%
20-34	1843	*29.5%*	1414	*22.8%*	1363	*20.4%*	-26%
35-44	945	*15.1%*	1147	*18.4%*	925	*13.9%*	-2%
45-54	435	*6.9%*	603	*9.7%*	975	*14.6%*	55%
55-64	221	*3.6%*	303	*4.9%*	492	*7.4%*	55%
65-74	168	*2.7%*	205	*3.4%*	273	*4.1%*	38%
75+	131	*2.1%*	153	*2.4%*	195	*2.9%*	51%
Total	**6245**	***100%***	**6204**	***100%***	**6662**	***100%***	**6%**
Median Age	26		28		30		13%
Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990 & 2000							

The population of University Park also has a higher level of educational attainment when compared to Sauk Village and Richton Park, other south suburban communities. Compared to Will County, where University Park is located, and Cook County, where both Sauk Village and Richton Park are located, University Park's population has a larger number of individuals with graduate degrees, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Population 25+ by Education Level					
	Cook County	**Will County**	**University Park**	**Sauk Village**	**Richton Park**
Elementary	12%	7%	**4%**	6%	5%
Some High School	15%	13%	**9%**	19%	10%
H.S. Graduate	26%	33%	**26%**	39%	32%
Some College	19%	22%	**31%**	24%	24%
Associate Degree	5%	7%	**7%**	5%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	14%	12%	**13%**	4%	15%
Graduate Degree	8%	6%	**10%**	2%	7%
Source: U.S. Census, 1990					

The housing market in University Park has not kept pace with development in neighboring Will County communities. More than 87 percent of University Park's current housing stock was built prior to 1980, and in 2000 only 27 residential building permits were issued. University Park has a very low vacancy rate for both owner- and renter-occupied housing units, suggesting a market for increased residential development. The few housing units that are being constructed are competitively priced when compared to communities such as Crete, Monee, Richton Park and Matteson.

According to data from the U. S. Census Bureau, population of University Park is aging and the family structure is shifting from married with family households to female-headed households. Both of these groups are looking for a specific type of housing product and the Village of University Park should be sensitive to the needs of these households when speaking to potential residential developers. University Park should also specifically target the development of owner-occupied housing and implement first-time homebuyer programs targeting its substantial renter population, given the low rate of owner-occupancy (58.8%) in University Park when compared to Will County (95.5%).

Our findings show that University Park's retail market is underserved. There is substantial leakage from the community as existing residents go elsewhere to

shop for basic goods and services. The majority of University Park's retail is located in the center of the Village, away from important traffic arterials limiting visibility to a broader market. There is both a clear need and market support for additional retail that could serve the community as well as transit riders and automobile traffic traveling through the village.

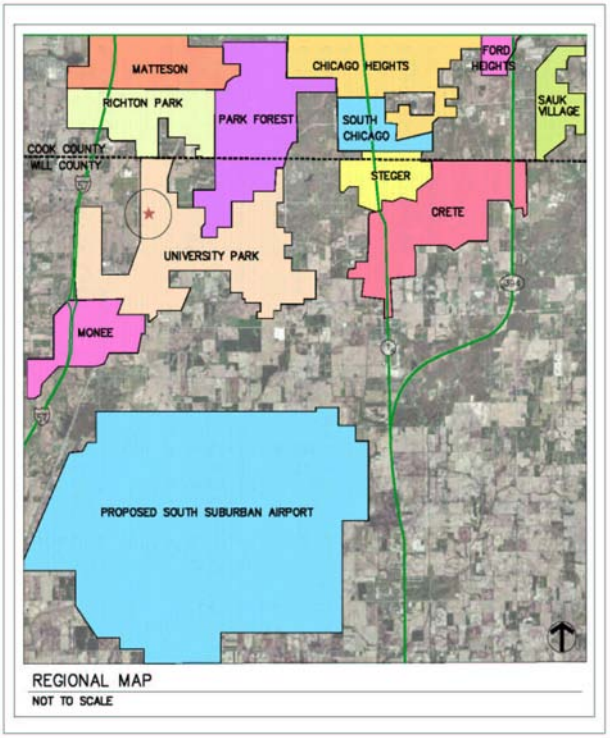


FIGURE 16: REGIONAL MAP

An important economic driver for University Park and neighboring communities is the development of the proposed South Suburban Airport. The proposed South Suburban Airport will be located in the southern part of the Chicago Metropolitan area and encompass approximately 23,845 acres between the villages of Beecher, Crete, Monee, Peotone, and University Park, in Will County. Figure 16 shows the location of the proposed South Suburban Airport in relation to University Park and neighboring communities.

Forecasts prepared by Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) indicate that with the development of the proposed South Suburban Airport, between 1990 and 2020, University Park's population and total households will increase by more than 400% to 27,999 and 9,790, respectively. Without the development of the proposed South Suburban Airport, NIPC forecasts that between 1990 and 2020, University Park's population and total households will increase by more than 200% to 17,822 and 6,010 respectively. University Park is poised for expansion. This TOD project will enable the village to take advantage of and be prepared for the growth forecasted for this region and municipality by NIPC regardless the status of the proposed South Suburban Airport.

Transit-Oriented Development at the University Park Metra Station

The market demonstrates support for both residential and commercial retail development. The creation of a transit-oriented development project at the University Park Metra Station enhances and strengthens the opportunities for both types of development from the perspective of market demand. Enhanced visibility for commercial retail provided by a location that is adjacent to major arterials and the added commuter market enhances the viability of neighborhood-based commercial retail development. The creation of a residential product that is uniquely positioned within walking distance of transit and neighborhood retail services offers a housing product that is finite in supply and unique in this market area. Given the fact that University Park residents are primarily employed in white-collar jobs, access to downtown Chicago via Metra makes this location especially attractive.

Housing

University Park Housing Overview

The 2000 Census results indicate that between 1980 and 2000, the population of University Park increased by 417 to 6,662, which represents a 6.3% increase. At the same time, total housing units increased by 2,380 units representing an increase of 8% between 1980 and 2000.

Out of all six counties in Illinois, Will County showed the biggest increase in housing stock at 30% compared to Cook County's 3.7% between 1980 and 2000. University Park, located in Will County, has not experienced the same level of new housing construction, as have other communities within the County. Only 15.4% of the total housing units in University Park (361 units) were built between 1980 and March of 2000 according to the 2000 Census. In contrast, during that same period of time 67.1% of Monee's total housing units were constructed (863 units); 34% of Richton Park's total housing units were constructed (1,617 units); and 40.5% of Crete's total housing units were constructed (1,120 units) (Table 4).

Table 4: Year Structure Built Comparison

		Percentage of Total Housing Units Constructed Between			
	Total Housing Units	**1995-Mar 2000**	**1990-1994**	**1980-1989**	**Before 1980**
Monee	1,287	52.4	13.0	1.7	32.8
Richton Park	4,758	11.1	5.0	17.9	65.8
Crete	2,766	8.9	11.5	20.1	59.4
University Park	**2,348**	**5.5**	**3.9**	**6.0**	**84.6**
Sauk Village	3,516	4.9	1.0	7.5	86.5
Park Forest	9,394	1.6	0.2	3.1	95.2

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Census 2000 data indicates that in University Park, 59% of total occupied housing units are owner-occupied compared to 53% in 1990; Table 5 illustrates the change in housing stock. The 2000 median home value increased by 55% from $60,700 to $94,000. Newer dwellings are largely accounted for by single-family homes priced from $170,000 to $200,000 on the southeast side of the village and condominiums priced at around $100,000 located on the northwest side of University Park. The largest concentrations of multifamily dwellings are in the center of University Park and near I-57 by the Governors Gateway Industrial Park.

Housing Characteristics

A larger percentage of University Park residential units are renter occupied when compared to neighboring communities. 41.2% of University Park's units are renter occupied while 34.3% of Richton Park and 18.9% of Sauk Village units are renter occupied. According to the 2000 Census, all three communities are experiencing relatively low vacancy rates in their housing stock. University Park's vacancy rate is 5%, Richton Park's is 3% and Sauk Village's is 5%. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a tight housing market as one in which vacancy rates fall below 6%. According to that measure, University Park and surrounding communities are all experiencing tight housing market conditions, indicating opportunity for increased residential development.

University Park's housing stock is aging. More than 84% of the current housing stock was built prior to 1980. Only 361 new units have been added since that time. In 2000 there were only 27 residential building permits issued for the construction of single-family buildings. The number of total housing units in University Park increased between 1990 and 2000 by only 6%. University Park has not benefited from new construction of housing units to the extent that nearby communities have. Both Richton Park and Sauk Village experienced 15% increases in housing units between 1990 and 2000. And Will County's housing stock increased by 30% during that same time (Table 5).

Table 5: Housing Characteristics: Percentage Change in Units 1990-2000

	Cook County	Will County	University Park	Richton Park	Sauk Village
Change in total housing units (1990 to 2000)	4%	30%	**6%**	15%	15%
Occupied units	5%	30%	**8%**	16%	15%
Owner-occupied	9%	35%	**17%**	23%	17%
Renter-occupied	-6%	6%	**-4%**	2%	6%
Vacant	-14%	26%	**-21%**	-10%	13%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 & 2000

According to the Monee Township Assessor, the 2000 property tax rate for University Park was 11.5166%. This is much higher than neighboring Will County communities such as Crete whose rate was 8.5753% and Monee whose rate was 8.0307%. Neighboring Cook County communities have more comparable tax rates when compared to University Park. Park Forest's 2000 rate was 10.4607% and Richton Park's 2000 rate was 12.0470%. The higher tax rate may explain why University Park did not experience the level of growth in units of housing that Will County did from 1990 to 2000.

It is likely that the high tax rate is due to the lack of major commercial business in the Village. Commercial businesses, and particularly retail businesses, generally provide sales tax revenues to local municipalities in addition to property tax revenue. The Village of University Park lacks substantial commercial and retail development business, and University Park residents are shopping in other communities. This results in a fair amount of leakage of sales tax revenue to neighboring communities. As a result, the assessor relies heavily on residential development and increases in land values to meet the fiduciary needs of the Village of University Park, and property tax rates remain high in order to help offset the lack of sales tax revenue in the Village.

Housing Demand

Population and Households

Between 1980 and 2000 the Village of University Park experienced an increase in the number of households. The increase coincides with the rising number of both housing units and population size. It is estimated that by 2006, both will increase by 3.5% (Claritas, Inc). In fact, between 1990 and 2000 the increase in households outpaced the increase in housing units in University Park. If this trend continues, there will be a definite need and demand for increased residential development (Table 6).

Table 6: Comparison of Population Changes in Households 1980-2000					
	1980	1990		2000	
	Number	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
Total Housing Units	2,186	2,227	1.8%	2,380	6.9%
Total Households	2,062	2,056	(0.3%)	2,253	9.7%
Total Population	6,245	6,204	(0.7%)	6,662	7.4%
Avg. Household Size	3.0	3.0		2.94	
Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, & 2000					

Between 1990 and 2000, University Park households decreased in size from 3.0 people per household to 2.94 people per household. In 2000, of the 2,253 total households, 75.2% were family households consisting of 42.9% married couples with families versus 28.1% female-headed households with families. This is in contrast to Monee Township and Will County where female-headed households with families make up a smaller percentage of total family households. In Monee Township, of 4,786 total households 75.4% are family households with 53.2% of households being married couples with families versus 18.5% female-headed households with families. In Will County, of 167,542 total households, 78.2% are family households where 82.9% are married couples with families versus 9.6% female-headed households with families (Table 7).

Table 7: Family Characteristics and Change over Time						
	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Total HH	2062	100%	2066	100%	2253	100%
Total Family HH	1569	76.1%	1514	73.3%	1695	75.2%
Total Married HH w/ Family	1227	59.5%	944	45.7%	968	42.9%
Total Female-Headed HH w/ Family	286	13.9%	498	24.1%	632	28.1%
Source: CERC						

Table 7 shows that the population increase is also bringing with it a change in family structure. In fact, the population increase is largely due to an increase in female-headed households with families. Female-headed households with families in University Park have increased from 286 in 1980 to 632 households in 2000. When taken as a percentage of total households, female-headed households with families have increased from 13.9% of total households in 1980 to 28.1% of total households by 2000. Meanwhile, married with family households have decreased in University Park from 1,227 in 1980 to 968 in 2000. When taken as a percentage of total households, married with family households decreased from 59.5% of the total households in 1980 to only 42.9% of total households in 2000.

There are two important trends happening in University Park. First, we see that its population is aging, with the distribution of those 55 and older as a percentage of total population increasing from 8.4% in 1980 to 14.4% in 2000. Second, the family structure is shifting from married with family households to female-headed households with families. Both of these trends impact the housing market demand in University Park in unique ways. Those 55 and over are looking for a specific type of housing product as are female-headed households with families.

Income and Employment

Per the 2000 Census, the 1999 median household income for University Park is $50,652 (Table 1). The majority of University Park residents in the workforce hold white-collar jobs with 34.6% in sales and administrative positions; 32.1% in management and professional positions; and 14.2% in service positions. More than 66% of the population is in the civilian labor force and the unemployment rate is a low 4.1%.

Despite the employment statistics for University Park residents, 26.7% of owner occupied households in University Park are paying more than 30% of their income on housing. University Park, when compared to neighboring communities, has the largest percentage of households stretching that housing affordability threshold (Table 8).

Table 8: Housing Affordability Owner-Occupied

County	2000 Median Mortgage	Percent HH paying more than 30% income toward mortgage and related costs
Cook County	$1,324	25.1
Will County	$1,365	22.8
Community		
University Park	**$1,096**	**26.7**
Monee	$1,398	25.4
Richton Park	$1,197	24.8
Crete	$1,434	20.6
Sauk Village	$847	19.9
Park Forest	$978	19.7

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Per the 2000 Census, the median gross rent within University Park is $663. Of renter households in University Park, 34% of them are paying more than 30% of their income on rent. When compared to neighboring communities, only Sauk Village and Richton Park demonstrate decreased ability to afford housing in the rental market (Table 9).

Table 9: Housing Affordability Renter-Occupied

County	2000 Median Gross Rent	Percent HH paying more than 30% income toward rent
Cook County	$648	37.1
Will County	$630	32.4
Community		
Sauk Village	$716	39.0
Richton Park	$694	37.3
University Park	**$663**	**34.0**
Park Forest	$689	30.6
Crete	$654	29.9
Monee	$620	11.7

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Housing affordability, whether for rental or for-sale housing, is critical to maintaining a healthy housing market within any community. Median income is important in determining the relative buying power of households to rent or purchase housing

within any community. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines the housing affordability threshold as 30% of income. When this percentage is applied to the 1999 median household income of $50,652, monthly total housing costs should not exceed $1,266 in order to remain within HUD's affordability index. A summary of household income buying power and household income distribution for University Park is included in Appendix C.

Applying the average supportable mortgage by the estimated percentage of households within a given income range, the estimated mortgage affordability by household distribution would be as follows:

Table 10: 2000 Estimated Mortgage Affordability by # of Households Distribution				
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	2,168			
1999 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	$50,652			
			Mortgage Affordability Range	
Household Income	**# of HH**	**% of # HH**	**Low**	**High**
Less than $10,000	172	7.93%	$ -	$ 14,301.00
$10,000 - $14,999	118	5.44%	$ 14,301.00	$ 32,178.00
$15,000 - $24,999	175	8.07%	$ 32,178.00	$ 67,930.00
$25,000 - $34,999	268	12.36%	$ 67,930.00	$ 103,684.00
$35,000 - $49,999	327	15.08%	$ 103,684.00	$ 143,014.00
$50,000 - $74,999	541	24.95%	$ 143,014.00	$ 218,099.00
$75,000 - $99,999	305	14.07%	$ 218,099.00	$ 286,032.00
$100,000 - $149,999	189	8.72%	$ 286,032.00	$ 464,804.00
$150,000 OR MORE	73	3.37%	$ 464,804.00	
Source: CERC 2002, U.S. Census 2000				

Given a median home value of $94,000 and based on these estimates the majority of households within University Park (72.4%) could affordably support a mortgage at or above the level necessary to own homes priced at the median level without stretching their affordability threshold.

Table 11: 2000 Distribution of Owner-Occupied Property Values	
	2000
Property Value	**Percent of Total**
Less than $50,000	2.5
$50,000 - $99,999	58.7
$100,000 - $149,000	28.4
$150,000 - $199,999	5.9
$200,000 +	4.5
Median Property Value	**$94,000**
Source: U.S. Census 2000	

Table 11 outlines the estimated market value of homes within University Park per the 2000 Census data report on owner-occupied housing statistics.

In 2000, approximately 97.5% of properties in University Park are valued at or above $50,000. We estimate that approximately 82.5% of households in University Park can support a mortgage of $50,000 or above. Generally speaking, University Park homes are affordable to its current population. However, only 2.5% of total homes are valued below $50,000, yet approximately 17.5% of total households

are not able to afford a mortgage of $50,000 or higher. This calculation indicates a need in this market for housing priced at or below $50,000.

Single-Family

University Park's housing stock consists primarily of detached and attached residential dwelling units with fewer than four units. These units make up 74.9% of all structures. Housing tenure in University Park reveals that 58.8% of all occupied housing units are owner-occupied. Vacancy of owner-occupied housing units is 3.1%. In Will County 90.0% of all structures are detached and attached residential dwelling units with fewer than four units. Housing tenure in Will County reveals that 83.1% of all occupied housing units are owner occupied. Vacancy rate of owner occupied housing units is 1.7%.

Table 12: Housing Tenure – Owner-Occupied

County	Percentage of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Owner-Occupied Vacancy Rate
Will	83.1	1.7
Cook	57.9	1.4
Community		
Crete	88.9	1.8
Monee	87.2	2.7
Sauk Village	81.1	2.4
Park Forest	74.4	2.4
Richton Park	65.7	1.7
University Park	**58.8**	**3.1**

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Table 12 illustrates that when compared to neighboring communities, University Park has the lowest percentage of owner-occupied housing units and the highest owner-occupied vacancy rate. This suggests the impacts of obsolescence of current housing stock and an inability or lack of desire of current residents to purchase available for-sale housing.

Unit Make-up and Price Points

Seventy percent of University Park's single-family units are three-bedroom split-levels and thirty percent are bungalows. In University Park, between September and December of 2001, there were 21 home sales recorded with a median price of $70,000. This represents a 17% increase in median price over sales for that

Table 13: Price Point Comparison

Community	County	2001 3rd Qtr Median Home Value	Number of Sales	% Inc/(Dec) same period 2000
University Park	***Will***	***$70,000***	***21***	***17%***
Sauk Village	Cook	$77,200	28	19%
Park Forest	Cook	$85,900	91	16%
Matteson	Cook	$115,000	59	17%
Richton Park	Cook	$135,000	48	18%
Crete	Will	$159,500	54	1%
Monee	Will	$160,000	15	11%

Source: Chicago Tribune Price Pulse

same period in 2000. University Park had the lowest median housing price when compared to its neighboring communities.

According to the Multiple Listing Service of Northern Illinois (a list of for-sale properties used by area realtors), from January 1, 2002 to May 4, 2002, there were a total of 78 single-family detached homes listed for sale. Of these, 71% were 3-bedroom units with an average list price of $105,042 and an average days on market of 103 days. There were 62 single-family attached units listed for sale (condominiums & townhouses), of which 55% were 3-bedroom units averaging a listing price of $59,693 with an average market time of 133 days (Coldwell Banker, May 5, 2002).

New Construction

There is very little new construction of single-family homes occurring in University Park. The largest concentration of new housing within the immediate area is in the southeast side of the village. A combination of tax abatements incentives provided to developers has made this area a more attractive market for developers and potential homebuyers. There are no barriers, other than high real estate taxes, to single-family development in University Park. There is plenty of land available for development and the village has an open arm policy for negotiation.

Rental Housing

Key indicators for demand in housing are population and employment growth. Will County has witnessed dramatic expansion in recent years, but the rental housing market has not kept up with the growth in population and employment. Between 1990 and 1998, Will County experienced 26.7% growth in employment and 28.5% growth in population. The population in Will County has grown by over 110,000 in the last decade and 47,600 new jobs have been created, but only 3,438 new apartments have been added to the housing stock. In 1999 there were 84,000 entry-level jobs in Will County, yet there were only 32,100 rental units and Will County's vacancy rate was 5%. Table 14 provides an overview of the rental housing market. The market is particularly tight for two- and three-bedroom units, with vacancy rates of 3.7% and 4.5%, respectively. The average rent in Will County is $660 per month. A one-bedroom unit averages $473 per month; a two-bedroom unit averages $640 per month; and a three-bedroom unit averages $884 per month (Metropolitan Planning Council, RRMA Key Findings - Will County).

Table 14: Housing Tenure - Rental

County	Percentage of Renter-Occupied Housing Units	Rental Vacancy Rate
Will	16.9%	7.0
Cook	42.1%	5.3
Community		
University Park	**41.2%**	**4.0**
Richton Park	34.3%	3.3
Park Forest	25.6%	2.9
Sauk Village	18.9%	4.0
Monee	12.8%	6.1
Crete	11.1%	5.1

Source: U.S. Census 2000

When compared to Will County, University Park has a substantial supply of rental housing when taken as a percentage of occupied housing units. Per the 2000 Census, 41.2% of University Park's occupied housing units were renter-occupied (929 units). The median rental rate in University Park was $663 in 2000. In 1990 the median rental rate was $523. In 2000 there were no building permits issued for multi-family buildings.

Age

University Park's multifamily housing stock was built entirely before 1980. There has been no new multifamily housing construction in over twenty years.

Make-up and Price point

Per the 2000 Census, median gross rent in University Park is $663. Of the total renter occupied units, 42.2% maintain rents between $500 and $749 and 33.5% maintain rents greater than $749.

Based on the limited information available on multi-family housing in University Park, the URS Consultant Team identified rental ranges between $450 and $625 for studio and one bedroom apartments; between $645 and $760 for two bedroom apartments; and between $760 and $925 per month for three bedroom apartments (Table 15).

Table 15: University Park Multifamily Housing Survey Results

Property	Total Units	Vacancy Rate	Studio/One Bdrm Rents	Two Bdrm Rents	Three Bdrm Rents
Brittany Woods Apts	372	0.5	$545-$625	$645-$760	No response
Burnham	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response
Dynasty Apts	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response
Governors House Apts	No response	No response	No response	No response	
Thornwood House Apts (Senior Housing)	183	1.6	$450 and up		

Source: CERC

Per our affordability analysis, these apartments surveyed are affordable to the 17.5% of the population that is estimated to be priced out of the for-sale market. However, with vacancies sitting below 5%, there is question as to whether there is an adequate supply of housing at this price point in University Park.

New Construction

Some new construction is currently underway in University Park. There are plans for additional multifamily developments - a few hundred condominiums. While the high real estate tax rate within University Park would be a development barrier, other factors suggest sub-market issues. This sub-market, which includes Monee, Crete, Park Forest, Richton Park, and Matteson, has had some new multifamily developments constructed in the last ten years. Additionally the higher property tax rate in University Park and the relatively inexpensive homeownership opportunities suggest a shift towards homeownership for traditional renter populations.

Retail

University Park has a very small number of retail uses within its borders. There is no consumer center in the village, it lacks the traffic to support a national type store, and the community is not big enough to support it. Currently, retail is not visible to through traffic and the stores are not located in major traffic paths.

There have been proposals for the development of retail establishments between Cicero Avenue, Governors Highway and the railroad tracks. The area currently lacks a retail business presence and with the industry that is currently in the area, retail establishments could serve as complimentary services. This area gets good traffic flow, it sits at the end of the MED Commuter Line, and is near GSU. The area has acres of undeveloped land and would need more anchoring type of stores.

University Park's current retail largely consists of community and service based retailers. The potential for development activity at the University Park Metra station increases the potential for retail development within this community. This section will look at retail within University Park, the sub-region and within the key service clusters that currently serve University Park residents. This investigation will look at identifying potential market opportunities for retail development and the extent to which the specific retail uses can be supported by existing consumer demand.

University Park Commercial Inventory

University Park currently has approximately 32 operating commercial establishments. A list of businesses can be found in Appendix C. Figure 17 on the following page shows the location of existing University Park commercial establishments in relation to the University Park Metra station.

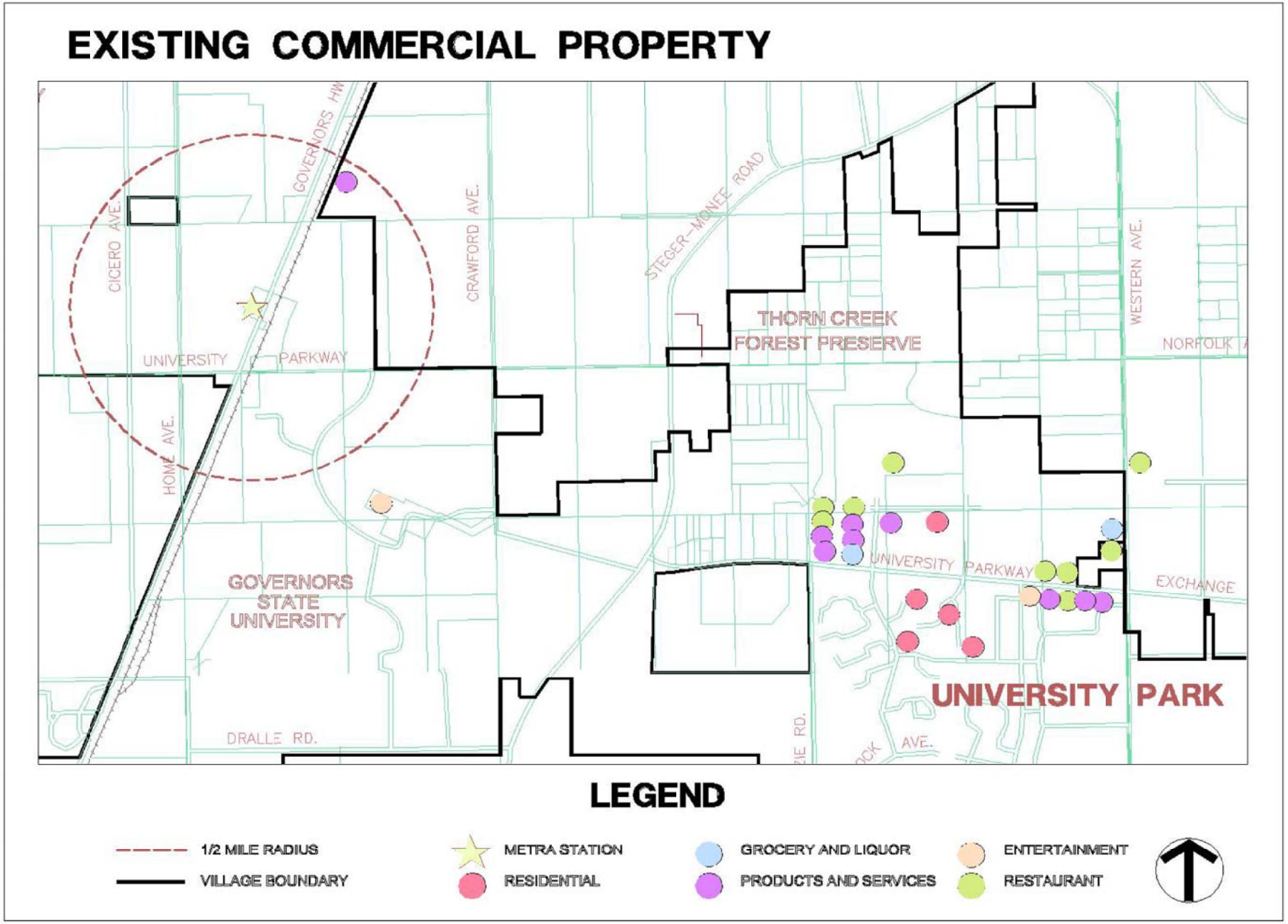

EXISTING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY
GOVERNORS HWY
CICERO AVE.
CRAWFORD AVE.
STEGER-MONEE ROAD
WESTERN AVE.
THORN CREEK
FOREST PRESERVE
NORFOLK
UNIVERSITY PARKWAY
HOME AVE.
GOVERNORS
STATE
UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY PARKWAY
EXCHANGE
UNIVERSITY PARK
DRALLE RD.
AVE.
LEGEND
1/2 MILE RADIUS
VILLAGE BOUNDARY
METRA STATION
RESIDENTIAL
GROCERY AND LIQUOR
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
ENTERTAINMENT
RESTAURANT

FIGURE 17

University Park currently lacks a strong retail base for all three categories of retail: comparison goods, eating and drinking, and convenience goods. This forces current residents to travel outside of the village to meet many of their basic needs. This is evident when analyzing University Park's per capita sales in comparison to neighboring communities and Will and Cook counties. Per capita sales is a way to measure local retail market performance. It measures the average amount of retail sales per person in a specific location. When compared to other counties, communities, or the state, a community can identify local retail strengths and opportunities. Per our analysis (Table 16), University Park lags substantially behind all its neighboring communities as well as Cook and Will county in per capita sales. Crete, whose population is comparable to University Park, enjoys a per capita sales of more than 2.8 times that of University Park's.

Table 16: University Park per Capita Sales Ratio Comparison

	2000 Population	1997 Total Retail Sales	Per Capita Sales
Cook County	5,376,741	$ 42,547,231,000	$ 7,913
Will County	502,266	$ 3,286,191,000	$ 6,543
Matteson	12,928	$ 470,103,000	$ 36,363
Park Forest	23,462	$ 94,765,000	$ 4,039
Crete	7,346	$ 24,850,000	$ 3,383
Richton Park	12,533	$ 19,390,000	$ 1,547
University Park	**6,662**	**$ 7,987,000**	**$ 1,199**

Source: CERC

The proposed redevelopment at the University Park Metra station offers an opportunity for retail expansion that will capitalize on both the primary trade area and the supplemental consumers passing through the area or traveling to and from the Metra station. Development at this site enables University Park to establish a retail center well positioned to take advantage of access to major highways and roads enabling it to draw from a larger market area due to increased visibility and accessibility. Integrating the buying power of neighboring communities and commuters with that of the primary trade area improves the viability of any proposed retail expansion.

Competing Centers

There is only one sub-regional shopping cluster that serves University Park. It is located in nearby Richton Park. Richton Park has small amount of retail centers at Cicero and South Trail, Governors Highway and South Trail, Richton Road and South Trail. Presently, the only retail being built in University Park is located on University Parkway. Richton Park provides for a large variety of retail uses typical to community shopping centers and main street retail. Because this community is twice the size of University Park (12,533 versus 6,662), has a slightly higher median household income, and has well-established retail districts, University Park does not currently compete favorably against its retail clusters.

Consumer Expenditures and Market Potential: Trade Area Analyses

The trade area analysis that follows is based upon 2000 census statistics on population, income and expenditure levels. The specific consumer items distribution

is based upon historical expenditure levels by category for this geographic region, taking into consideration certain consumption trends.

The primary trade area for University Park is contained with census tracts 8836.04, 8836.03, 8836.02 and 8838.07. We have also calculated the supplemental trade area calculation for consumers who would be brought into the area as a result of the Metra station, or Metra riders. The population of the supplemental trade area is equal to the 1,000 Metra riders using the University Park station daily. The median income for the supplemental trade area was calculated based on the median income for each of the communities where users of the University Park station originate; these communities were identified by a survey of license plates in the station parking lot, conducted by CERC. The median was then weighted based on percentage of riders originating in each of the various communities and a median income for riders using the University Park station was identified as $51,368. Profiles of the primary and secondary trade area are provided in Table 17. Currently, potential sales income from the 1,000 person supplemental trade area population could only be considered if the retail development were within a quarter mile radius of the Metra station or within walking distance from its parking lot, preferably both.

Table 17: Trade Area Demographics for 2000			
Primary Trade Area Population Profile			
Population	Households	Median HH Income	Average HH Size
6,662	2,253	$50,652	2.94
Supplemental Trade Area Profile			
	Population	Median HH Income	
Commuters	1,000	$51,368	
Source: U.S. Census 2000			

Primary Trade Area

What follows is an evaluation of the amount of retail supported by the primary trade area population alone, without factoring in the added expenditures of outside consumers such as Metra commuters. The retailers represented in Table 18 fall under one of the following categories: comparison goods such as apparel and furniture that consumers tend to shop around for; eating and drinking, which includes restaurants and carry-outs; and convenience goods such as those found in a major drugstore. Table 18 also presents the estimated square footage of each type of retail supported, given consumer expenditure estimates determined by Market Statistics. The methodology used to develop Table 18 is provided in Appendix C.

Table 18: Retail Potential in the Primary Trade Area				
	Total Consumer Expenditures	Captured Expenditures (a)	Median Sales per sq ft (b)	Net Retail Potential in sq ft (a/b)
Comparison Goods				
Apparel and Services	$4,367,923	$174,717	$150	1,165
Footwear	$611,453	$24,458	$200	122
Other apparel products and services	$552,006	$22,080	$150	110
Entertainment	$5,777,661	$231,106	$184	1,256
TV, Radios, Sound Equipment	$1,687,156	$67,486	$142	475
Reading	$458,589	$18,344	$170	115
Household furnishings and equipment	$4,679,311	$187,172	$134	1,397
			Subtotal	***4,640***
Eating and Drinking				
Food at home	$8,696,215	$2,174,054	$200	10,870
Meals at Restaurants, Carry-Outs & Others	$6,165,481	$1,541,370	$178	8,659
			Subtotal	***19,529***
Convenience				
Personal Care Products/Services	$1,239,890	$49,596	$150	331
			Subtotal	***331***
			Total Net Retail Potential	**24,500**
Source: CERC				

Although Table 18 only represents a sample of retailers, it does suggest that the primary trade area can support retail expansion. However, many retailers require higher square footage amounts than are supported by the primary trade area population. Retail viability is increased when one larger store provides a variety of goods, attracting consumer expenditures on a number of retail items. Small department stores and major drugstores are common examples of these types of stores.

Supplemental Trade Area

The following analysis evaluates total consumer potential in the primary and supplemental trade areas, relying on industry standards to estimate expenditures on comparison, eating and drinking, and convenience goods. Industry sources include Urban Land Institute's *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers 2000* and Market Statistics *Survey of Buying Power 1998*. Chart 1 on the following page illustrates the percentage of income typically spent in each retail category.

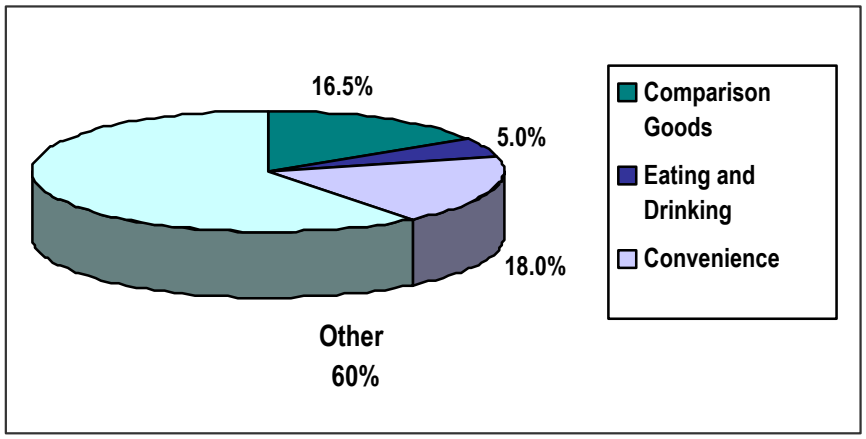


CHART 1: PERCENTAGE OF INCOME SPENT FOR DIFFERENT RETAIL CATEGORIES *(SOURCE: CERC)*

These percentages are then applied to the 2000 median household income in the primary and supplemental trade areas. The median 2000 household income in the supplemental trade area is estimated at $51,000. This estimation is based on the weighted average household incomes of origins of parkers at the University Park Metra station parking lots as surveyed December 12, 2001.

Table 19: Consumer Expenditures and Net Retail Potential

	Captured Household Expenditures Primary Trade Area	Captured Household Expenditures Supplemental Trade Area	Median Sales Per Square Foot	**Net Retail Potential (sq ft)**
Comparison Goods	$753,185	$42,379	$150	**5,303**
Eating and Drinking	$1,426,486	$385,260	$255	**7,105**
Convenience	$4,108,282	$462,312	$250	**18,282**
Net Retail Potential (including supplemental trade area)				**30,690**

Source: Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers 2000, Survey of Buying Power 1998, U.S. Census 2000.

Table 19 summarizes the findings for consumer expenditure and net retail potential in each of the trade areas, derived by the methodology described in Appendix C. The captured household expenditures in each retail category reflect the estimated consumer expenditures adjusted by the appropriate capture rate. This value is then divided by the median sales per square foot expected for each category, and adjusted to account for existing retail to determine the net retail potential.

The opportunities for retail expansion are not impacted greatly by including the supplemental trade area of current Metra commuters parking at the University Park Metra station. Total Net Potential for the primary trade area is approximately 25,000 square feet. The supplemental trade increases this by only 5,000 square feet. While the retail located at the University Park Transit-Oriented Development should be aimed at serving the needs of the commuters, it is important to remember that it will be mostly supported by the primary market trade area and therefore should aim to serve the needs of the University Park residents.

TOD Retail Opportunities

Transit-Oriented Development is a general description implying higher density land uses and activities designed to encourage ridership on public transit. TOD retail refers to any of a number of retail uses that are complementary to public transit use in that they either directly encourage or directly benefit from public transit use. TOD retail ranges from newsstands to department stores. Their placement within transit centers is driven by the market demographics surrounding the transit centers and market competition within those same markets. A listing of common TOD retail stores and their typical square footage is included in Appendix C.

Commercial and Industrial

Regional Overview

According to the industrial market update released by Colliers B & K, as of midyear 2001, the Chicago Metropolitan Market, encompassing Chicago south suburbs, went through an economic slowdown. Speculative construction was reduced to 2.4 million square feet, the lowest rate since early 1990's.

In 2000, Will County's industrial market led in new construction starts equal to $5.5 million. This expenditure represents more than a 50% increase over the prior year. However, the region also led in vacancies, with a 12.7% industrial and commercial vacancy rate, similar to University Park's vacancy rate of 12.51% (Colliers B & K, June 2001, CB Richard Ellis Report 2001 & Crain's Chicago Business 2/26/01).

Despite the flat market for industrial and commercial space, companies are expanding beyond the Chicago-area boundaries to establish warehouses and distribution centers. As these companies seek to streamline their operations and create more efficiency, we find a movement toward the consolidation of several distribution facilities into one regional facility. The Chicago collar counties are attractive to these industries for a number of reasons. Leading the way are favorable land and construction costs, bigger lot sizes (averaging between 200,000-500,000 square feet), favorable interest rates, and the availability of a skilled labor force.

A study conducted by Deloitte & Touche Realty Consulting Group in 1994 found three main factors that contribute to a locational decision made by a company. These factors are (1) real estate costs, (2) availability of a good labor force, and (3) transportation costs. Ranking almost last were public incentives (i.e., TIFs, Enterprise Zones, Sales Tax Rebates, and County Provided Low Interest Loans). Companies are more concerned with the top three factors because they realize that incentives are temporary economic boosts as opposed to the three main factors that impact operating costs over the long term. Despite these findings, less prestigious communities often find economic development incentives a necessary component of business attraction (Crain's Chicago Business 6/19/01, 3/26/01 & 3/21/94).

University Park Industrial Market

University Park is home to Governors Gateway Industrial Park, located mostly on the west side of the CN-IC tracks. Governors Gateway houses a total of 54 diverse companies ranging from manufacturing to service companies and

employing over 3,876 individuals. Fewer than 2% of those employees (75) are University Park residents. The majority of those employed by Governors Gateway reside in Joliet, Kankakee and surrounding areas. One significant concern expressed by University Park is the need to ensure that the businesses it does attract are businesses that are willing to hire more residents from University Park - or rather, businesses that require the skills and experience held by University Park residents. Per the 2000 Census, more than 80% of University Park residents are employed in white-collar jobs such as management, professional, service and sales occupations. Only 12% of its residents are employed in blue-collar production, transportation, and material moving occupations. And it is these blue-collar jobs that are provided by the type of industrial and commercial development that is occurring in the Chicago collar counties.

Governors Gateway encompasses approximately 1,600 acres and is surrounded by farmland. Some of this farmland located in the center of the industrial park was just recently annexed. The park has no scarcity of industrial space. Within this industrial park, 90% of the companies are taking advantage of the four Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF) that have been in place since 1987. TIF benefits extend out for 23 years, and are utilized as an incentive to attract businesses to University Park. Because of these TIFs, the Village has not benefited from increasing tax collections from expansion of the industrial park. Until the TIF expires, the increase in tax revenue as a result of increasing assessed values are reinvested in the TIF to cover the cost of improvements to the area.

Interviews conducted by CERC indicate that the vacancy rate in the industrial park is 0%. The average lease rates in the park run from $6 to $7 per square foot. Land, with access to both water and sewer services for industrial users is priced from $3 to $4 a square foot, or $130,680 to $174,240 per acre. Farmland acquired for industrial uses is priced at $45,000 per acre. Twenty years ago this same land was priced at $8,000 per acre.

As a place to do business, University Park offers the top three factors impacting locational decisions in companies.

1) University Park's real estate costs, both land and taxes, are reasonable. Will County's industrial tax rate of 18% is extremely competitive when compared to Chicago's rate of 36%.

2) University Park has a skilled labor force. 25 percent of its residents have graduated college with a bachelors degree or higher and 92 percent of its residents have graduated high school or higher.

3) University Park has excellent access to various modes of transportation such as I-57, I-50, commuter rail service, and is adjacent to the site of the proposed South Suburban Airport.

Current Inventory and Competing Centers

Looking at the surrounding communities of Matteson, Monee, Crete, Park Forest and Richton Park, only the south suburban community of Monee, located in Will County, has an industrial corridor. Regarding competing industrial parks, the only other village with an industrial park is Crete, also located in Will County.

Monee has a strong industrial corridor located just off I-57. This corridor is currently serving mostly light industrial uses and only recently has begun to expand its focus toward serving the heavy industry sector. Monee has three TIF districts: TIF 1 is located on Court Street; TIF 2 is located in an industrial park just off of Governors State Highway; and TIF 3 is located along I-57 and is the only TIF of the three with a vacancy. Most of the industries located in Monee take advantage of the TIF and will continue to do so for at least 10 more years at which point TIF benefits will expire for some.

The only other community with an industrial park is Crete. Crete actually has two industrial parks. One, located south of Crete, is 600 acres and takes advantage of a TIF and annexations in the south and west of the industrial sector. The second, located north of Crete along the rail corridor is 100 acres. While it runs along a rail corridor, it is not a strong industrial corridor. Presently, the corridor serves manufacturing, assembly and distribution industries. The Village of Crete offers participation in the TIF along with land write down and tax rebates. Crete maintains four TIF districts. Fifty percent of the industries participate in the TIF program. Despite the presence of industry in Crete, it does not have a strong industrial base in which to compete with University Park's Governors Gateway.

Findings and Recommendations

The market demonstrates support for both residential and commercial retail development. A transit-oriented development around the Metra station provides an opportunity to capture the market demand for retail development with good visibility and access and a unique residential product that is within walking distance of transit and caters to target homeowner markets. Specific recommendations for housing, retail and industrial development are summarized below.

Housing

- University Park has lagged behind many of its neighboring communities in terms of residential development over the past two decades. Low vacancy rates for both owner- and renter-occupied housing suggests a market demand for both housing products.
- However, given University Park's low percentage of owner-occupied units, when compared to Will County, the village should specifically target the development of owner-occupied housing marketed to first-time homebuyers.
- Furthermore, University Park's existing single-family housing stock was primarily constructed before 1980, suggesting the emergence of issues such as functional obsolescence and deferred maintenance. In order to remain competitive in the housing market, University Park needs to attract the development of new units of owner-occupied housing.
- The Village should take advantage of the unique opportunity to target emerging markets within the University Park population. Specifically, a portion of the TOD housing products should be designed to cater to the needs and wants of empty-nesters, senior, and female-headed households with children.

- The opportunity to combine housing and retail within a single building or cluster of buildings creates complimentary uses in a TOD. Housing near transit increases potential ridership, lessens the need for cars and provides natural surveillance of the station area. The housing can be combined with open space development and parking to enhance the station area and offset some development costs which might otherwise make such a development cost prohibitive.
- A program to provide financial incentives to new home purchasers in University Park is needed to create a competitive advantage over other competing communities to combat the higher property tax rate in University Park. Low cost second mortgages, tax rebates or other similar programs could be initiated. This would lower the cost of home ownership in University Park and likely attract purchasers whom without the program would not consider University Park as a place in which to purchase a home.
- To encourage residential development in University Park, the Village should also consider providing financial incentives to developers. This would offset the perceived market disadvantage of higher property tax rates in University Park, as compared to nearby Will County communities.

Retail

- University Park is currently underserved by its existing retail. The development of neighborhood based commercial retail at the University Park Metra Station will benefit from a location that is easily accessible by a wider market, visible from heavily traveled roadways, and easily accessible to Metra commuters and future residents of the TOD.
- Retail developed at the University Park TOD should be sited so that commuters are required to walk past it on their way to and from the station area. This will maximize commuter expenditures on goods and services provided as part of the TOD development.
- University Park needs to seek neighborhood-based retail stores to occupy new commercial developments. By actively working to recruit businesses, University Park can craft an incentive package as it learns what economic barriers it must overcome to attract development. This also gives the Village's development corporation hands-on experience as it works through the RFP/RFQ process for other development initiatives on behalf of the village.
- The Village, or a development authority, should begin the land acquisition and site preparation necessary to attract developer interest in this TOD project.
- The retail should be targeted towards University Park's residents and Metra riders and located in a way to maximize rider expenditures.
- The initial facility should be phased to create only enough square footage as supportable by the current market. Later phases can be added as subsequent housing development occurs in and around the Metra station.

Industrial

Overview

The URS Consultant Team reviewed the subject site and overall market trends in

the larger industrial/business park marketplace in the south Cook County/east Will County, and Northwest Indiana submarket to determine the potentials for doing a specialty type of park as part of the larger TOD development in University Park. We have also had conversations with representatives of GSU and the Village of University Park to determine their vision for the site.

The consensus coming from the preliminary research, our knowledge of similar competitive situations in other communities, and the vision input from community representatives is to pursue the creation of a business park or "employment center" on approximately 50 acres of the TOD study area.

Competitive Environment

The initial thinking of the TOD was to create a "research and development" (R & D) concept on the site. Several factors work against the concept of a pure R & D park including the following:

- The few successful R & D parks in North America have been located in proximity to major university research clusters - GSU does not have this concentration of research.
- Competitive R & D parks in the Chicago area, such as Evanston and the Illinois Medical District, have taken 10-50 years to reach their current size and in the case of Evanston this represents a substantial downsizing of the early concepts.
- Most importantly, R & D represents less than 10% of the tenant base of the industrial/business park market in the larger Chicago metro area.

The overall composition of the industrial/business park market needs to be considered in positioning any new development of this type in the Chicago market. Over a sustained period of time, and particularly in the 1990's, Chicago has been a distribution oriented industrial space environment with some additional components of light manufacturing, flex/business services, and limited R & D. Based on our experience, we approximate the continuing market shares for these segments to be as follows:

- Distribution/Warehouse 60-65%
- Light Manufacturing 20-25%
- Flex/Office 10-15%
- R & D 5-10%

With this type of market composition, a park of even moderate size is difficult to support with R & D space alone. It would be possible, however, to support a high employment oriented park appealing to the R & D, flex/office, and the non-transportation intensive types of light manufacturing. This increases the share of the market from which to attract tenants from 5-10% to 30-35%.

A final competitive consideration is that the VIllage, and nearby municipalities, have a significant amount of space zoned and site-developed for heavier manufacturing and distribution users. The Station Area site would have a difficult time competing with these more mature established industrial park locations.

Another factor favoring University Park's "controlled" industrial opportunity is that it is difficult for communities located in Cook County (Richton Park, Park Forest and Matteson) to compete with Will County communities for industrial development because Will County has a much more favorable tax rate for industry, 18% versus 36% in Cook County. While there is land available to develop and redevelop in Cook County for industrial uses, it is difficult to attract users when the tax rate is so much higher. University Park has a lot of land still available for annexation into its Industrial Park, as well as land available for development for commercial purposes.

Conclusion

The submarket has seen a net decrease in the number of commercial and industrial users. The new commercial development has been small storage or distribution facilities for small to midsize companies including construction-related trades and assembly facilities. These companies are attracted by low construction costs and minimal real estate taxes. If University Park is to be successful in attracting commercial/industrial uses, despite the regional decline in commercial/industrial development, it will need to make a concentrated effort to facilitate this type of development. Additionally, focused study of the industrial market in University Park is necessary to determine the development potential for industrial uses in the station area, and in particular, the potential synergies between technology programs sponsored by GSU.

D. PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD AND SURVEYS

In order to develop a comprehensive Station Area Master Plan that represented the goals and objectives of the community, commuters, and local stakeholders, the URS Consultant team facilitated a public involvement process. The process included Project Advisory Board (PAB) workshops, a platform survey, and a license plate survey. In order to fully inform the planning process, the URS Consultant team completed this range of activities, which included interactive workshops (Project Advisory Board workshops) and data collection (Metra parkers license plate survey). The outcome is the Station Area Master Plan, an improved plan due to ideas and opinions gained throughout the process. The open and participatory PAB process has set the stage for stakeholder and public input as the station area develops.

Project Advisory Board Summary

The objective of the public involvement process was to engage public and private sector stakeholders. The process was very successful measured against the large turnout for each meeting, the passionate insight from each participant, and the desire to continue to participant beyond the completion of the RTAP study. NIPC was instrumental in facilitating and providing a regional perspective for each session. Drawing from its success in developing capacity building workshops aimed at training local citizen officials and empowering communities, NIPC assisted in this highly inclusive public participation process. NIPC also assisted in developing an initial list of community contacts and key stakeholders. Given the goal to maximize public participation to develop momentum and support for the project, and to ensure that local needs are articulated and incorporated into the project, the URS Consultant team facilitated four distinct workshop sessions. Information from each of the PAB Workshops and a PAB Directory are located in Appendix D. The following is a summary of the workshops:

- August 28, 2001: Town Hall Introductory Meeting

  The purpose of the Town Hall Meeting was to present the project to the general public to explain goals and desired outcomes, and to announce the PAB structure and invite the public to contribute through these facilitated group discussions.

- September 26, 2001: PAB Workshop #1 - Values, Vision and Priorities

  The URS Consultant team facilitated a group discussion including a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The purpose of the exercise is to get direct community input regarding community heritage, values, connections, and development issues. The result was recognition that the heritage of the community was founded in the earlier failed community plans. The PAB valued several community assets including GSU, the Metra station, and the open space system including the Thorn Creek Forest Preserve system and the GSU campus. Community transportation and connections are problematic, particularly east-west circulation. Finally, the opportunity for development is ripe given the proposed South Suburban Airport, and the fact that the Village is underserved regarding retail, commercial and housing.

- December 17, 2001: PAB Workshop #2 - District & Neighborhood Charrette

  The URS Consultant team facilitated a focused district charrette with the PAB in order to define the surrounding context. The objective was to characterize the surroundings, both the existing and desired conditions, in order to provide a context reference for adjacent relationships to the proposed TOD. The areas were the neighborhood district, the University district, and the I-57 corridor. The positive and negative impacts of the proposed I-57 interchange were discussed. The participants then gathered for a discussion regarding the perceived planning and design opportunities, or local character, for the TOD.

- April 12, 2002: PAB Workshop #3 - Review Preliminary Master Plan

  The URS Consultant Team presented preliminary land-use, circulation, and station area concepts. There was general consensus by the PAB for all of the plans. A detail discussion occurred regarding the major transportation projects inherent to the TOD master plan. These projects included a University Parkway grade separation at the railroad, the realignment of Governors Highway, and the internal road network of the TOD. Other projects were discussed outside of the scope of the TOD, which included a grade separation at Cicero Avenue and Dralle Road, and the extension of Exchange Road on the south end of the GSU campus. The TOD plans also called for circulation improvements to the University including a new southerly gateway and the realignment of the north gateway entry road to connect to the TOD.

- Pending: Town Hall Final Meeting

  The URS Consultant team will make a presentation of the TOD final report to the Village Board to discuss next steps and implementation.

License Plate Survey Overview

A License Plate Survey is a useful tool to investigate the origins of Metra passengers. System-wide, of the passengers who arrive at any given station by car not all are residents from that municipality, but instead drive from surrounding areas. The License Plate Survey is conducted by recording the license plate numbers from automobiles parked in Metra lots on a given day, then these numbers are matched through the Department of Motor Vehicles to find the city and address of registration. Using this information, an origin point can be mapped.

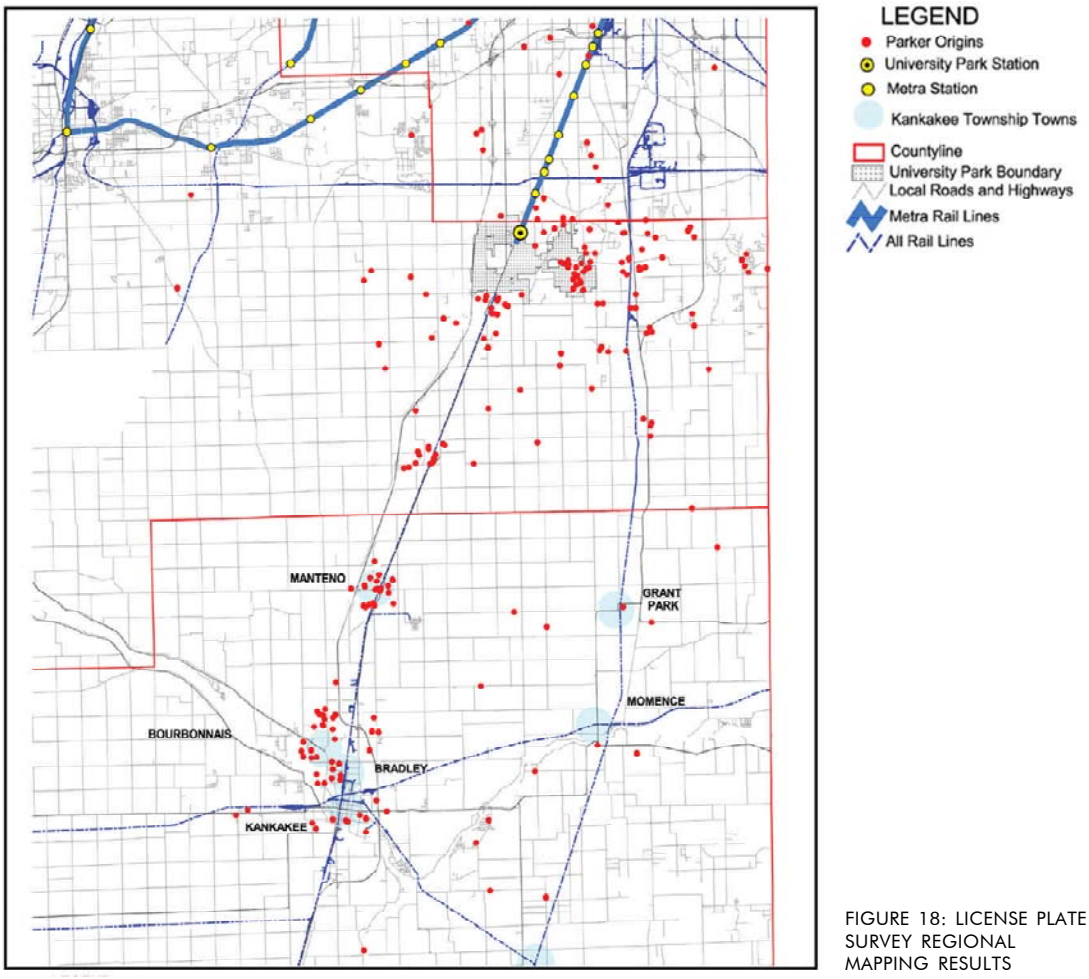
A License Plate Survey was conducted December 12, 2001 of the parkers at the University Park MED station parking lots. Of the current 709 spaces available, the total number of license plates recorded was 648: 510 daily fee, 125 monthly permit, 7 handicap, and 6 employee. The daily fee lots (Lots 3 and 4) were 99% utilized, the monthly permit lots (Lots 1 and 2) were 89% utilized, and the handicap spaces were 100% utilized. Overall, the lots were 96% utilized on the day the survey was conducted. Metra strives to size parking capacity to meet 85% of a typical day's parking demand, which allows for a variation in the number of used spaces of up to 15% of the typical day's demand. Given this, Metra plans to add an additional 766 spaces to the west lot. Construction will be complete in 2002.

A total of 648 license plate numbers were collected, including license plates from Indiana, Wisconsin, and Iowa. In addition to the out of state license plates, a

number of Illinois plates could not be correctly address-matched, resulting in 268 reasonable matches. Of these, the most riders (38) originated in Crete. University Park had the second-highest ridership with 31. Bourbonnais (26), Monee (26), Manteno (22), Peotone (20), and Kankakee (14) all had a high number of license plates recorded. The complete table of License Plate Survey findings is located in Appendix E.

When the complete list of reasonable matches was mapped, the regional view indicates that the University Park station has a considerable regional draw (Fig. 18). Riders are driving from as far as the Kankakee County towns of Kankakee, Bradley, Bourbonnais, St. Anne, Momence, Grant Park, and Manteno. The origin points of the majority of these riders are clustered along the I-57 corridor, which provides easy access to the general area; however, there is not a direct path from I-57 into the station area.

Looking at the mapping of the local station area (Figure 19), the ridership in University Park is clustered within the single family subdivisions on the southeast side near the historic village center. The Crete ridership is clustered within the nearby subdivisions to the east of University Park.



University Park Park-n-Ride Origins
Regional View (December 2001)

Prepared by : Metra Office of Planning & Analysis
Source: Special License Plate Survey 12/12/01

FIGURE 18: LICENSE PLATE SURVEY REGIONAL MAPPING RESULTS

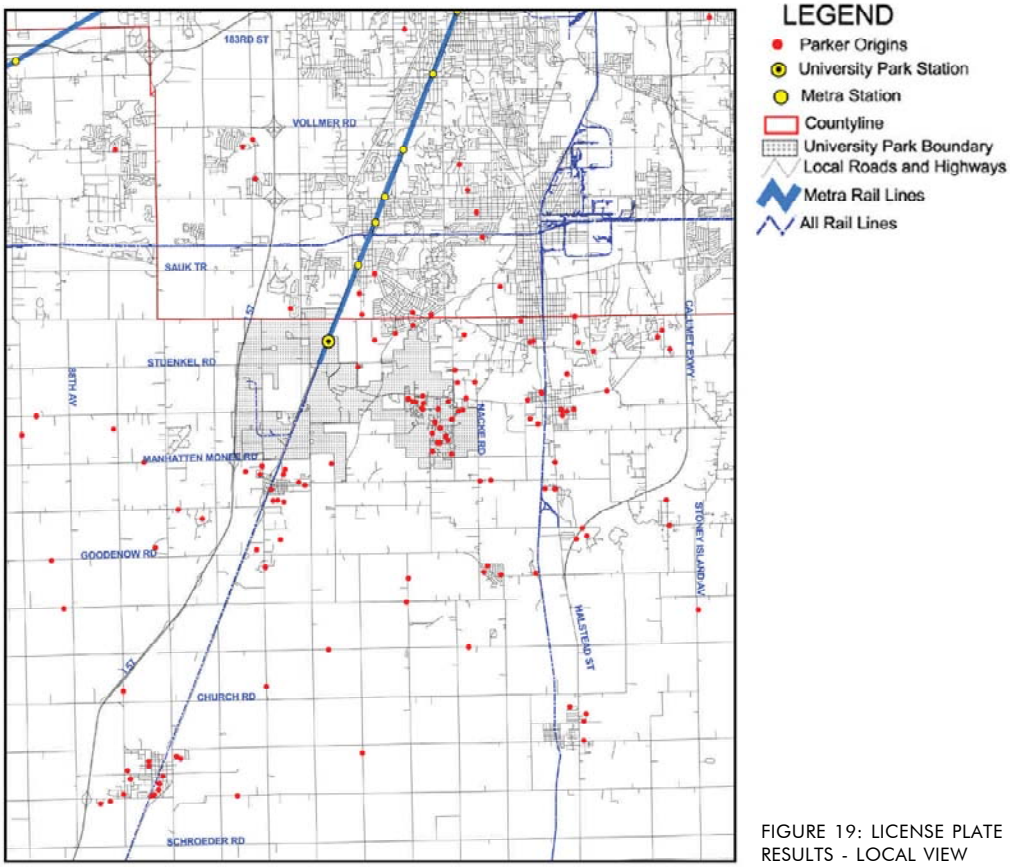


FIGURE 19: LICENSE PLATE SURVEY RESULTS - LOCAL VIEW

Platform Survey Overview

A Platform Survey was conducted on February 20, 2002 for the University Park and Richton Park stations on the MED line. Richton Park, the next station north on the MED line, was surveyed also in order to get an indication of the number of University Park residents that are utilizing the station, and why it was preferred. The Platform Survey was distributed in the morning at both stations. Drop boxes were placed on the platforms for completed surveys or the survey could be mailed. The drop boxes remained on the platforms for a few days, although most of the responses were returned the day of survey distribution. The survey results include 520 responses out of 1,800 distributed for a 30% return rate.

The following is a summary of findings from the completed surveys. A copy of the Platform Survey as distributed is included in Appendix E.

- Most Metra commuters at these stations are regular users. Results of the Platform Survey indicated that 70.8% of commuters boarding at University Park and 79.4% of commuters boarding at Richton Park have used Metra services for over three years and 77% of commuters boarding at University Park and 70.6% of commuters boarding at Richton Park purchase monthly tickets. Destinations are generally in the downtown Chicago area.

- Eighty-five percent of respondents boarding at University Park and 63.5% of respondents boarding at Richton Park stated that they access Metra at their particular station because it is less travel time from their point of origin.
- Peak times for both stations run somewhat parallel with rush hour times: 6:40 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. during the morning and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. during the evening (Note: the times are when commuters board the train, not destination time).
- Roughly 3% of University Park and Richton Park riders are from Indiana.
- Overall, 11.7% of respondents say that the University Park station is closest to their homes but they generally use the Richton Park station. Although the majority of individuals drive and park at both stations, there may be direct correlation between the 11.7% that use the Richton Park station despite the fact that the University Park station is closer and the 12.5% of respondents that choose Richton Park station because of more available parking. The 709 total spaces are utilized at a 96% rate (Metra License Plate Survey, 2001), which is tight.
- University Park has a more diverse consumer base than Richton Park in terms of geography. Less than half (43.8%) of the individuals who use the University Park station are from University Park, Crete, and Monee. As a result, a large portion of University Park station's ridership comes from more distant communities. This is in direct relationship with travel times to the University Park station being higher than those in Richton Park. Since the largest consumers at the Richton Park station are from Richton Park and Park Forest (these two villages represent 66.6% of the station's ridership), travel times to the station are less for Richton Park.
- Sixteen percent of Richton Park Metra commuters walk to the station compared to zero for University Park. This suggests that the distance of housing from the station is much greater in University Park than in Richton Park. However, the people in University Park are, as a whole, not interested in having owner-occupied or rental housing within walking distance of the station. When riders boarding at the University Park station were surveyed, 58.2% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would move to the station area if owner occupied housing were built within a short walk, and 66.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with a similar statement about rental housing.
- Most University Park and Richton Park rail commuters agree to some degree that a Metra station would help support and make local business adjacent to the station more desirable. At the University Park station, 75.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this idea and at the Richton Park Station 78% agreed or strongly agreed. Three quarters of respondents (75.1% boarding in University Park and 72.2% boarding in Richton Park) say that they would patronize business if they were located near the station. However, the strength of this response is less consistent with the data that supports that individuals are slightly more likely to patronize similar businesses near their home rather than near the station. (Over 30% of respondents at both stations agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they would rather shop at businesses near home than at similar businesses near the Metra station.)
- Since approximately 70% to 75% of respondents agree that there is a market to support business near the station, the types of businesses are important.

Most respondents feel that developers should focus on commercial development over residential development, as indicated by the percentages in Table 20 below. Store space, restaurant space, office space, and parking ranked as better uses of development over medical/dental facilities and housing. Favored uses for commercial space included fast food restaurants, ATMs, convenience stores, coffee stands, grocery stores, and gas stations. Condos and townhouses were not highly favored by University Park commuters (42.8% favored condos and 45.8% favored townhouses), but Richton Park commuters were somewhat in favor of this type of development (64.8% for condos and 65.8% for townhouses). However, as stated earlier commuters overall admitted that they would be unlikely to relocate to housing developments in the station area.

Table 20: Preferred Development Types

Uses Developers Should be Encouraged to Add	Percentage of Respondents Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing	
	University Park	Richton Park
Store Space	75.5	80.5
Restaurant Space	71.7	71.8
Structured Parking or Deck	64.9	65.4
Office Space	57.4	64.7
Townhouses	45.8	65.8
Condominium Housing	42.8	64.8
Medical and/or Dental Office Space	40.0	51.3
Senior Housing	32.1	49.0

Source: Station Area Survey, 2/20/02

- Respondents mentioned that they would patronize business both in the mornings and in the evenings. However, peak times for stops (times when people think they would patronize business in the area) were concentrated in the evening. (When asked when they would patronize these businesses, 6.4% boarding in University Park and 9.9% boarding in Richton Park selected AM, 24.5% boarding in University Park and 21.5% boarding in Richton Park selected PM, and 65.3% boarding in University Park and 66.3% boarding in Richton Park selected Both.)
- Businesses that University Park and Richton Park Metra commuters would most likely patronize are listed in Table 21 (Note: These are the highest ranked uses taken from University Park Station Area Survey, prioritized by percentage in University Park).

Table 21: Businesses Most Likely to be Patronized

Function:	University Park	Richton Park
Gas Station	10.5%	7.0%
Fast Food Restaurant	10.1%	11.2%
Grocery Store	9.9%	9.4%
Coffee Stand	9.8%	9.0%
ATM	9.3%	10.6%
Convenience Store	9.2%	8.9%
Source: Station Area Survey, 2/20/02		

- Businesses such as those listed in the above table, can be made available and have business hours adhering to the consumption patterns of the respondents. Therefore, businesses should be opened around peak times of travel in both mornings and evenings and perhaps staffed more heavily in the evening to meet the evening rush, when most consumption will take place (estimated operational times: 6:40 a.m. to 7 p.m.).
- Most respondents (64.7% of respondents boarding in University Park and 85.3% boarding in Richton Park) agreed to some degree that GSU should develop connections between the stations and the campus.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The University Park MED station has a significant regional draw, which makes regional circulation extremely important, especially as this south suburban area continues to grow. The station parking utilization is currently at a maximum now, but upon completion of the new expanded parking lot within this year, significant ridership increase is expected due to the additional spaces. This may draw additional University Park residents who are currently patronizing other stations, primarily Richton Park. With potential development in and around the station area to provide coffee in the morning and groceries, quick dining options, and gas in the evening, the University Park station can continue to grow its ridership. As the region develops and the regional roadways and connections are improved the station will continue to grow.

E. TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Circulation Overview

The new town plan for Park Forest South always included a prominent mass transit component. (Fig. 20 & 21) The extension of the Metra Electric District (MED) Line to the area in the mid 1970's was to be the catalyst for an extensive system of monorails or streetcars. Additionally, the new town plans also saw the South Suburban Freeway connecting I-57 east to the Indiana border, passing through University Park. None of these materialized, and circulation difficulties plague not only the community of University Park but the entire south suburban area. Throughout the public workshops and interviews associated with the TOD study, traffic - mainly, cross-village circulation impeded by trains - was continually cited as the number one deterrent to growth. The future of the University Park Metra station is closely linked to issues of community accessibility.

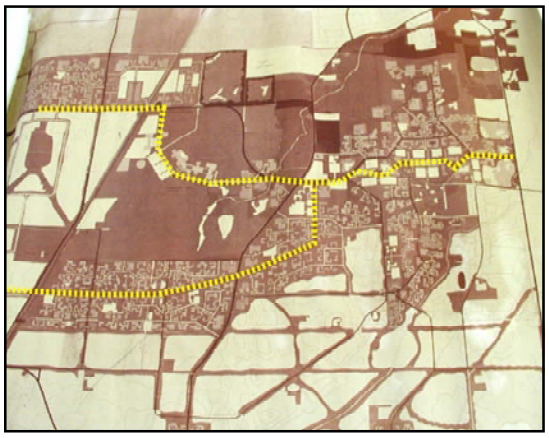


FIGURE 20: PARK FOREST SOUTH'S PROPOSED PUBLIC TRANSIT MAP

FIGURE 21: PARK FOREST SOUTH'S PLAN FOR A TRANSPORTATION HUB

Station Overview

The MED Line is a commuter passenger railroad line that runs from University Park to Randolph Street in Downtown Chicago. Metra acquired the assets of the commuter line, including the right-of-way, in 1987 from the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad. The west half of the right-of-way from University Park north to Chicago is owned by Metra whereas the eastern half of the right-of-way is owned by the Canadian National Railroad (CN), which took over the Illinois Central in 1999. The CN-IC route is used by both freight and Amtrak trains, including Amtrak's "City of New Orleans."

The future of the MED Line may change with the introduction of the proposed South Suburban Airport in Peotone. The plans call for a possible service extension to the new airport. In 1998 Metra studied 12 alternatives, considering both bus service from the current end of the line in University Park or an extension of the MED line (Fig. 22). Five main alternatives are under consideration, two of which include a grade separation at both University Parkway and Dralle Road. The CN-IC tracks could be the route selected for High Speed Rail in the Midwest. The

current Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the introduction of high-speed rail service from Chicago to St. Louis shows one alternative using the CN-IC tracks from Kankakee to Chicago, including service to University Park. Should this route be chosen, the report calls for vehicle arresting barriers to be installed at this at-grade crossing.

Although the station is near the highly-traveled University Parkway, the parking, station entrance, and platforms are set back a considerable distance from the street, and are not highly visible landmarks. Without already knowing the station location, it would be possible to travel past on University Parkway without knowing it exists. The lack of presence from the public street makes this place seem like a station in a field - a field without a discernable sense of place.

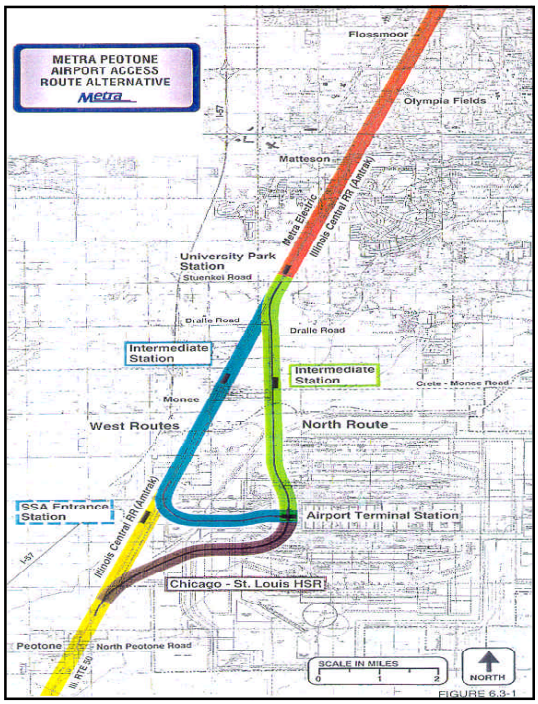


FIGURE 22: METRA DIAGRAM OF ALTERNATIVES FOR SERVICE TO THE PROPOSED SOUTH SUBURBAN AIRPORT

The CN-IC Railroad, Metra tracks, and Governors Highway run parallel to each other in University Park. The University Park train station is located just northeast of the intersection of University Parkway and Governors Highway. Almost all access to this station is by car. Eighty-two percent of the riders arrive at the station by car, either alone or in a carpool (Metra 1999 Survey). There are two parking lots serving the train station. The west lot, comprised of Metra Lots 2 and 4, is located across the street on the west side of Governors Highway directly west of the station. Access to this lot is off Governors Highway. Lot 2 is a monthly parking lot with a capacity of 60. Lot 4 is a Daily Fee lot with a capacity of 211.

The east lot is located adjacent to the tracks and north of University Parkway. The entrance drive is off of University Parkway. The east lot is comprised of Metra Lots 1 and 3. It also is a combination of daily fee and monthly permit spaces, with 90 monthly spaces in Lot 1 and 348 daily fee spaces in Lot 3.

Current parking capacity is 709 total, with plans for expansion. In summer 2002 an additional 766 spaces will be added, all of which will be located on the west side. It is a substantial expansion, increasing the lot dimensions to the north, south and west. Total capacity after construction will be 1,475 spaces.

A pedestrian tunnel under the tracks and Governors Highway connects the two lots to the platform area (Fig. 23). There is a pedestrian access stairway in both the east and west lots. Directly under the tracks is the

FIGURE 23: STATION ACCESS PAVILION

ticketing area and fare array. Once on the paid side of the turnstiles, either stairs or an elevator is available to access the track level above. A large canopy lines the platform, complete with lighting and seating. No enclosed or partially enclosed shelter exists currently.

Inbound weekday and Saturday service (to Chicago) is 38 trains daily from 4:20 a.m. to 11:40 p.m.; outbound weekday service (from Chicago) is 26 trains daily with the first train arriving at University Park at 6:25 a.m. and the last train arriving at 1:56 a.m. Sunday service is less frequent, with 10 inbound trains and 10 outbound trains.

The train station is serviced by Pace route 367 (Fig. 24), which has an average daily ridership of 233 (Pace, 2001). On the weekends, this route links downtown Park Forest to the University Park's village center via Western Avenue, but does not enter the station area. During the week the service is expanded to include GSU and terminates at the train station. This schedule is coordinated with both the arrival and departure of Metra trains at the University Park station, which works well for commuters to downtown Chicago or other stops along the MED line. The first weekday bus arrives in time to transfer to the 5:53 a.m. train, arriving in Chicago at 6:53. For commuters returning home to University Park, the schedule is as well coordinated, although bus service extends only into the early evening hours, covering the rush hour. The last bus departs the train station at 6:53 p.m.

The last bus arrives at the station at 6:56 p.m. While this Pace schedule works well for daytime commuters to and from Chicago, it does not work as well for GSU students because more than 50% of their classes are at night. GSU augments the Pace service with their own shuttle service to and from the university to correspond to their class schedule. The university shuttle is operated by the University Police,

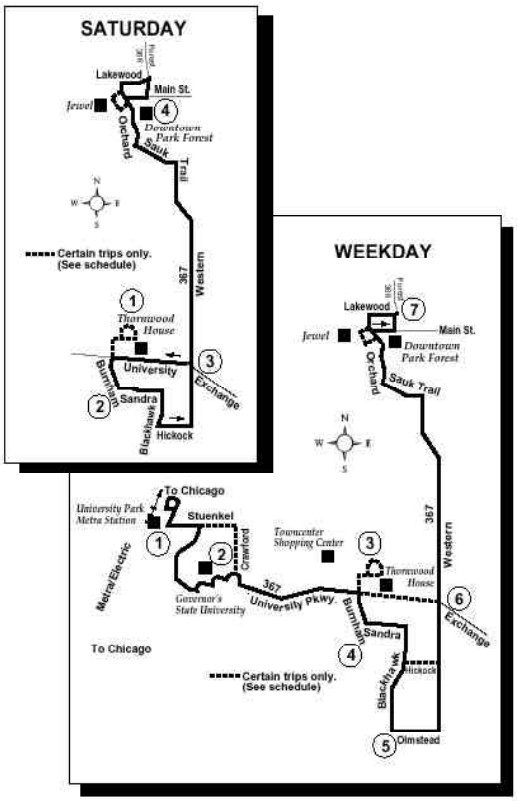


FIGURE 24: PACE MAP OF ROUTE 367

Table 22: License Plate Survey Results

CITY	2001 PLATES	%
CRETE	38	14.2%
UNIVERSITY PARK	31	11.6%
BOURBONNAIS	26	9.7%
MONEE	26	9.7%
MANTENO	22	8.2%
PEOTONE	20	7.5%
KANKAKEE	14	5.2%
BEECHER	11	4.1%
PARK FOREST	9	3.4%
BRADLEY	8	3.0%
GRANT PARK	6	2.2%
ST ANNE	5	1.9%
MOMENCE	4	1.5%
STEGER	4	1.5%
CHICAGO HEIGHTS	3	1.1%
FRANKFORT	3	1.1%
MATTESON	3	1.1%
RICHTON PARK	3	1.1%
ASHKUM	1	0.4%
CHEBANSE	1	0.4%
MANHATTAN	1	0.4%
SOUTH CHICAGO HTS	1	0.4%
WILMINGTON	1	0.4%
INDIANA	27	10.1%
TOTAL	**268**	100.0%

Source: Metra Office of Planning & Analysis
Special License Plate Survey, 12/12/01

and has four round trips, departing from the university beginning at 6:55 p.m., with the final bus departing at 10:20 p.m. On Saturday, the university shuttle service is more limited, with one bus picking up at the train station at 8:35 a.m. and dropping off at the university, and a bus returning to the station at 4:20 p.m. to drop off.

In the local area, the University Park train station services the towns of University Park, Monee, and the southern part of Park Forest. It also acts as a regional collector since it is the southern terminus of the MED Line. According to the License Plate Survey conducted in December 2001 (Table 22), there was a heavy concentration of riders from Manteno and as far south as Kankakee, with a few isolated points of origin out east towards St. Anne, Momence, and Grant Park (all Kankakee Township towns). Most of the origins outside of University Park are clustered along the I-57 corridor, which provides good access to the general area, but there is no direct access to the train station from I-57 and limited east-west access across the rail lines. This is an even larger problem for those people coming from the east, as there is no north-south road on the east side of the tracks.

Regional Influences

Existing Conditions at the University Parkway and Governors Highway Intersection

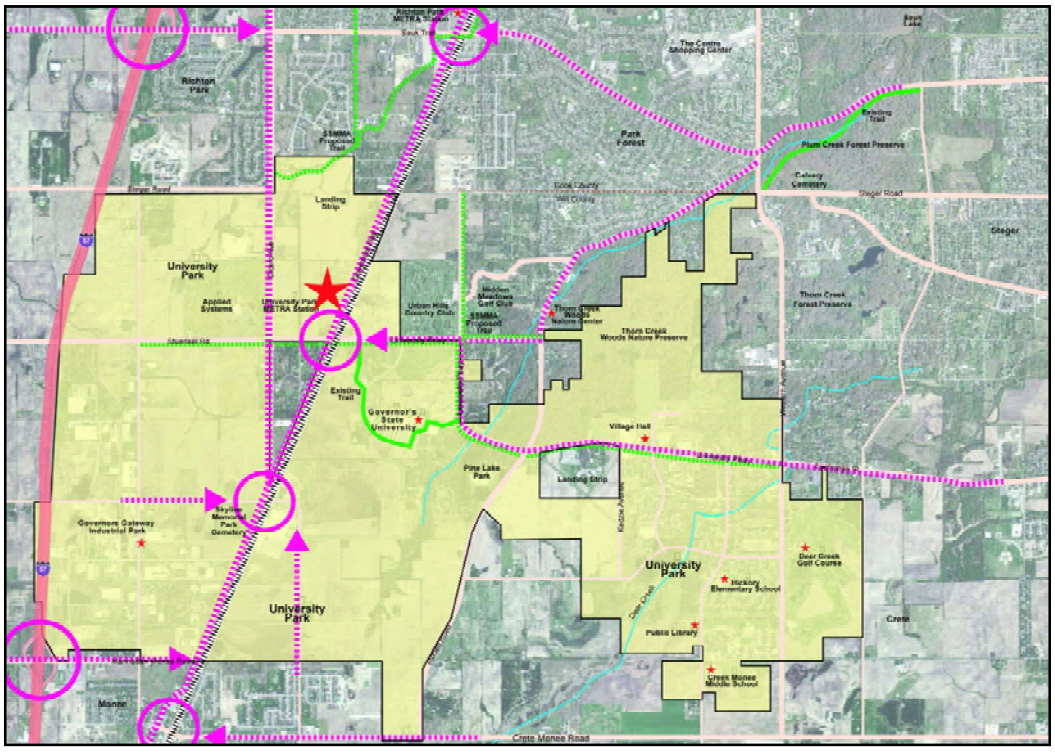


FIGURE 25: VILLAGE CIRCULATION

One major complication affecting access to the station is the proximity of the CN-IC tracks to University Parkway and Governors Highway intersection. Throughout this Transit-Oriented Development Study, this has been the concern of highest interest.

The idea of having the major north-south road be adjacent to the CN-IC tracks is flawed, as all intersections between Governors Highway and cross streets are

automatically intertwined with the railroad crossings (Fig. 25). This problem is especially bad at this intersection because of the peak hour volumes on both Governors Highway and University Parkway. This situation is further complicated by the fact that GSU is located east of the tracks, and the primary regional north-south circulation is west of the tracks. The majority of the school's students are commuters with night classes beginning 6 pm and 7:30 pm. The increase in traffic volume due to the start or end of classes at GSU combined with the gate closures for freight and Amtrak service at the rail line, create serious traffic delays. This situation not only creates traffic conditions, but also greatly impacts the school's ability to attract and retain students.

Proposed I-57 Interchange

For many years, the Village of University Park has been requesting the installation of an interchange at Stuenkel Road/University Parkway and I-57. Due to its location halfway between existing interchanges at Sauk Trail and Manhattan-Monee Road, this interchange is currently being investigated by IDOT and is in the Feasibility Study Phase. Construction of an interchange will be no sooner than 5-10 years.

Traffic at the University Parkway and Governors Highway intersection will only increase as the south suburban corridor develops and will greatly increase if the I-57 interchange is constructed. The interchange is greatly desired by the Village of University Park and in anticipation of its construction, the Village has recently designated the area from I-57 to Cicero along University Parkway as a TIF district for official industrial development.

Regional East-West Movement in and Around University Park

Travelling in the east-west direction is limited throughout the southern suburbs because of the CN-IC Railroad line. This circulation issue has been a major concern throughout the Project Advisory Board meetings. The conflict between north-south rail and east-west vehicular traffic was cited as an obstacle to University Park's future growth.

The Village of University Park has only one east-west arterial, and it is a combination of different streets: Stuenkel Road west of the Village, University Parkway within the Village, and Exchange Street east of the Village. This series of roads, which ultimately goes east-west, meanders north-south around Thorn Creek Forest Preserve. The nearest east-west arterial to the north of University Park is Sauk Trail, which is 2 miles north of University Parkway and the nearest east-west arterial to the south is Crete-Monee Road, which is 2 miles south of University Parkway. Sauk Trail has an interchange with I-57 and is grade separated from the CN-IC rail line. Crete-Monee Road has an interchange with I-57 but is an at-grade crossing with the railroad. Dralle Road is a minor east-west road that crosses the railroad at an at-grade intersection with the railroad where Governors Highway and Cicero Avenue intersect.

Regional North-South Movement in and Around University Park

Governors Highway, Cicero Avenue, and Western Avenue are the principal north-south arterials in the vicinity of University Park. Governors Highway runs just west

of the CN-IC rail line and suffers from delays related to intersections with cross streets and the railroad. Cicero Avenue runs due north-south, west of Governors Highway and intersects with Governors Highway just north of Dralle Road. Western Avenue is a north-south arterial that is at the far eastern edge of University Park.

With plans to go ahead with the construction of the proposed South Suburban Airport in Peotone, the future of Cicero Avenue will be to act as the primary north entry into the airport. The proposed South Suburban Airport is to be located less than 5 miles south of the University Park train station. Due to the reliance on Cicero Avenue to provide this local access to the airport, a grade separation for the intersection of Cicero Avenue/Dralle Road and the CN-IC Railroad is appropriate.

Access north-south throughout this region is better than east-west primarily due to I-57, Cicero, Governors Highway and Western Avenue. Primary north-south movement through University Park also includes Steger-Monee Road.

Conclusion

Alternatives to Improve Traffic Flow in University Park

- East-West - Grade Separate University Parkway:

  The intersection of University Parkway and Governors Highway will continue to suffer from the existing traffic problems. These problems will get worse as development increases in the area, especially if the proposed South Suburban Airport is built. One solution is to grade separate University Parkway from Governors Parkway and the railroad (Fig. 26). This will effectively create a situation where the high volumes of trains will no longer create back-ups.

FIGURE 26: CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM OF THE PROPOSED UNIVERSITY PARKWAY OVERPASS

  This alone will not comprehensively solve east-west circulation through the Village. Taking a serious look at the capacity of Governors Highway, Stuenkel Road, University Parkway, and Exchange Street should be under taken with a goal to improve east-west movement through the Village. The alignment of this chain of roads must also be reviewed to make sure that the flow in the east-west direction is primary.

- North-South - Grade Separate CiceroAvenue/Dralle Road:

  Grade separating Cicero Avenue from the CN-IC rail line to ease future traffic problems associated with the proposed South Suburban Airport will not solve the problems at the University Parkway and Governors Highway intersection. Along with grade separating Cicero Avenue, a major north-south route, Dralle Road, a minor east-west road should also be grade separated. Unfortunately Dralle Road does not continue in the east-west direction more than 1/4 mile east of the railroad. In order to reap all of the benefits of this grade separation at this intersection, the capacity of Dralle Road needs to be investigated between

Cicero Avenue and Steger-Monee Road. In addition a new larger entrance road from this section of Dralle Road into GSU is necessary to ease the amount of traffic entering from University Parkway.

- Construct Interchange between Stuenkel Road/University Parkway and I-57:

  The Village has emphasized that in order to enhance the current traffic situation and allow for the proper growth of University Park, an interchange between Stuenkel Road and I-57 is necessary. This interchange should be fully accessible, although its design could be diamond, single point or cloverleaf. This interchange will almost inevitably require improvements to Stuenkel Road/ University Parkway. The construction of this interchange will exacerbate the east-west traffic flow with the Village if the aforementioned improvements are not made.

III. Development Program

A. SUMMARY OF STATION AREA MASTER PLAN

A neighborhood is both a distinct geographic area and the collection of people that live near each other. It is typically characterized as being within a 10-minute walk of a center. At the University Park Metra station, the neighborhood is considered a half-mile radius centered around the MED Line University Park station stop (Fig. 27).

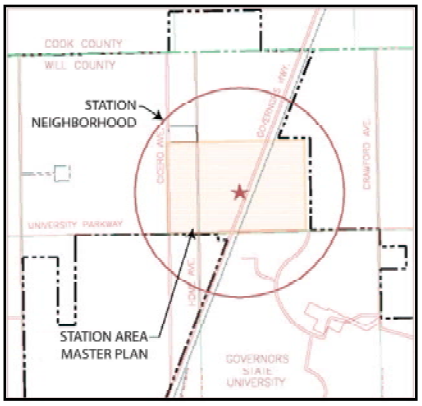


FIGURE 27: STATION NEIGHBORHOOD AND STATION AREA MASTER PLAN BOUNDARIES

The proposed Station Area Master Plan program and new construction is focused within smaller boundaries, although it is a considerable portion of this half-mile neighborhood. This Station Area Master Plan is bounded by Cicero Avenue to the west, the University Park boundary (at the Urban Hills Country Club) to the east, University Parkway to the south, and extending 2,600 feet (one-half mile) north from University Parkway.

This site, nestled within the fields of University Park, has substantial potential to provide a neighborhood with all the amenities of public transit, access to cultural events, and a connection to one of the most substantial nature preserves in the state. This Station Area Master Plan is University Park's Thorn Creek Station neighborhood.

B. PROPOSED CIRCULATION PLAN

The major constraints surrounding circulation in and around the station area are: the traffic stoppage at the railroad tracks on University Parkway, the lack of cross-village circulation options, and the inability for the current roadways to handle the projected traffic volumes that would occur if the proposed South Suburban Airport was to be built.

In order to mitigate these problems as well as ensure the balanced growth of the circulation system in the community, the proposed circulation plan offers the following six major components:

- new University Parkway overpass at the CN-IC railroad tracks
- Governors Highway realignment
- new inter-TOD roadways
- greenway and open space connections
- continuation of Cicero and a University Parkway-Cicero Avenue east-west connection
- improved parking and station access

See Illustration Sheet 2 for the Master Plan Regional Land Use and Circulation diagram.

New University Parkway Overpass at the CN-IC Railroad Tracks

The Station Area site is bisected by the CN-IC rail tracks and Governors Highway, which run parallel to each other at an angle from northeast to southwest. South of the site Cicero Avenue intersects Governors Highway, and it becomes State Route 50, a highly traveled north-south corridor primarily of commercial and industrial character. Where these two right of ways intersect, University Parkway congestion occurs. It makes cross-village travel difficult, interrupted by freight service. In the station area, the CN-IC line lies between I-57 and two particular destinations with scheduled arrivals and departures: the classes at GSU and the passenger rail service to downtown at the Metra station. Because of this, high volumes of traffic pass through in significantly short windows of time. With the planned construction of I-57 entrance and exit ramps at University Parkway/Stuenkel Road, this situation will continue to worsen.

In spite of already existing traffic congestion, this area of the site will be an important center within the TOD. That businesses and residences can and will be supported on this site leads to the issue of what to do to alleviate the pressure at this pinch point, and ultimately makes a more successful development.

An underpass and an overpass were both considered at this location. An underpass has the advantage of less structure because vehicular access under the tracks requires less clearance than the required clearance above the tracks for the railroad. But because of the assumed high ground water level, an underpass was deemed unfeasible.

An overpass allows for continuous traffic flow along University Parkway providing unimpeded east-west cross-village access independent of the CN freight schedule (Fig. 28). This structure becomes an identifiable pathway, complete with sidewalks, a bike lane, low decorative light standards, and carefully designed precast concrete walls and railings. Because the structure will alleviate the traffic congestion, circulation into GSU will be substantially improved. The overpass and associated University Parkway improvements will address the anticipated additional traffic resulting from the I-57 interchange.

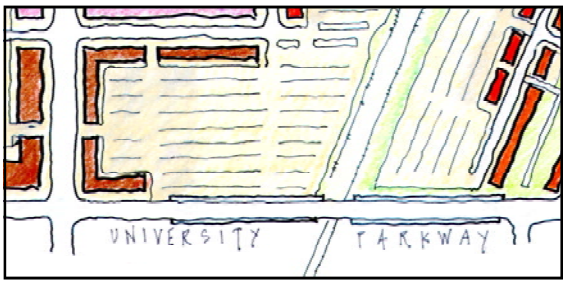


FIGURE 28: NEW UNIVERSITY PARKWAY OVERPASS AT THE CN-IC RAILROAD TRACKS

Governors Highway Realignment

Grade separating University Parkway from the tracks alleviates congestion, but the grade separation would also remove the intersection of University Parkway and Governors Highway. Rerouting Governors Highway to the bottom of the University Parkway overpass ensures the circulation choices remain into and through the new development (Fig. 29). This intersection will be a major commercial location and vehicular maneuverability is important. This commercial development will undoubtedly bring in a significant amount of customers via automobile from

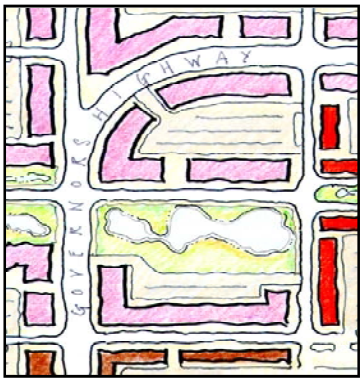


FIGURE 29: GOVERNORS HIGHWAY REALIGNMENT

neighborhoods beyond the typical walking distance. Ease and choice in automobile maneuvering is important in a successful traditional neighborhood business district.

The appearance and potential for development are altered when these two issues - traffic congestion and circulation options - are alleviated in one solution. The realignment of Governors Highway to the west end of the overpass provides the ability of an intersection at University Parkway, allows for the free-flow of traffic at the railroad tracks, and provides highly-developable lots along the realigned Governors Highway. What was a one-sided commercial corridor is now a double-sided, more viable, developable commercial district.

New Inter-TOD Roadways

With the development of the station area, a street system will be developed that links the station to the major streets through the adjoining neighborhoods on the east and west side of the tracks (Fig. 30). This is an interconnected street structure based on a walkable, traditional mixed-use shopping district at the core of the station area. Sidewalks are at least 10 feet wide, and the overall width of streets are wide enough to allow for efficient vehicular flow, but still of a reasonable width to accommodate pedestrian crossing. The streets are designed to allow pedestrians and automobiles to both utilize the street fully. The result will be an energized, lively human-scale environment.

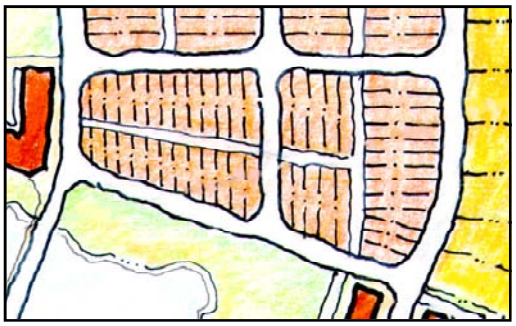


FIGURE 30: NEW INTER-TOD ROADWAYS

Beyond the center on the east side of the tracks is primarily a residential neighborhood. Typical block sizes are about 280'x500'. This depth provides for lots 130' deep with a 20' alley right of way. The lengths of the elongated blocks vary, but it allows for relatively consistent lot layouts while providing ability to vary the lots and alley configurations. This block size allows for reasonable residential development of multiple family, townhouses, or single-family detached homes while providing circulation choices for both pedestrians and automobiles for maneuvering within the neighborhood.

Within the west side of the Station Area, the streets and blocks are of a different character. The blocks closest to the platform access point are of a similar design to the station center as on the east side. Beyond this area toward Cicero Avenue, the streets are laid out to work with the geometry of the realigned Governors Highway. Flexible parcels of approximately 10 acres are planned, each adaptable for office, commercial, and retail development. Although commercial in nature, the streets in this area maintain the walkable character. Commercial and office uses in this area will be able to capitalize on the interconnected nature of the street system and mix of land uses. Pedestrian connection to the train station in this area is as important as it is in the residential area.

Greenway Boulevard and Open Space Connections

The close proximity to Thorn Creek Forest Preserve deserves a simple gesture to expand the ecology of the preserve into the station area, both as a visual and

pathway connection. The result is intended to be an integration of the station area into the larger regional greenway system. This Greenway Boulevard (Fig. 31 & 32) would be a beautifully textured palette of native plants, and an amenity for the community for walking, biking, relaxing, and playing. But it is more than that. It is a continuation of essential habitat for a diverse population of native animal life. Whether it is on a pedestrian footpath or through a migratory bird's flight path, the Greenway Boulevard of the Thorn Creek Station will be an invaluable, unique and beautiful connection to the region. It will create a sense of place at the station equal to the beauty of the University Park community and its visionary beginnings.

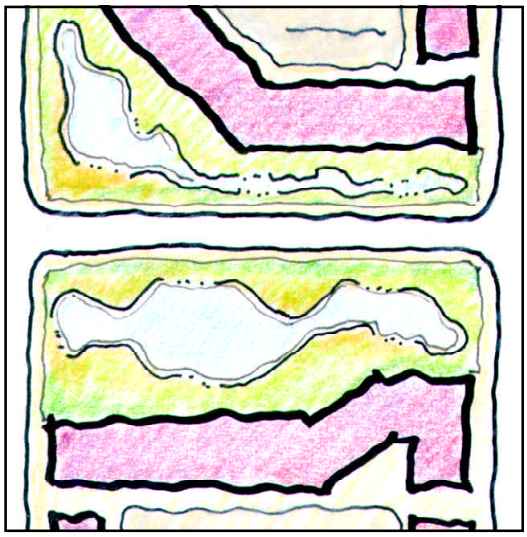


FIGURE 31: GREENWAY BOUELVARD AND OPEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

The presence of this natural regional connection does not preclude the design of additional formal squares, parks, and gardens. Especially at the center, the public open space should be of geometry relating to the buildings and supporting the activity and energy of the mix of uses at the center.

The inclusion of the formal geometries for squares and plazas at the center in combination with the natural landscape of the forest preserve greenways will offer balance and a landscape of variety throughout the neighborhood. It will be an advantageous place to live, work, and shop.

FIGURE 32: PERSPECTIVE SKETCH OF GREENWAY BOULEVARD ENTRANCE AT CICERO AVENUE

Continuation of Cicero and a University Parkway-Cicero Avenue East-West Connection

The proposed University Park overpass aids the lack of cross-village routes, but it alone will not provide the necessary circulation routes with the foreseeable increase in traffic from the regional influences of the I-57 interchange and the proposed

South Suburban Airport. Even today, east-west travel puts too much traffic on University Parkway, or diverts traffic out of the village into other communities. At the southwest corner of GSU, University Parkway bends northward around the campus. At this point, another right of way should be constructed westward connecting to Dralle Road at the other side of the campus. Not designated as a major arterial, this street would be a local street to facilitate circulation within the Village and provide additional options for connecting to the rest of the Village street system.

Just north of this point Governors Highway and Cicero Avenue merge and become State Route 50. Dralle Road is east-west between I-57 and the CN-IC tracks; east of the tracks it bends south. It's at this point it would connect to the new east-west road. This intersection is at a vital point to enhance the street system of the village. This north-south street should connect to SR 50 via a grade separation at the CN-IC tracks. Dralle Road will become a new entrance into University Park. Combined with Governors Highway and Steger-Monee Road, this system will provide efficient vehicular access within the Village as well as to the future development south of the Village.

Parking and Station Access

Allowing for multiple access points to the station on both sides of the tracks will help to alleviate the congestion that occurs due to train arrivals and departures. The current parking access road on the east side will be altered primarily because of the construction of the overpass and the desired distance of an intersection for proper visibility along the curve of the road profile. The main gateway into the station area from University Parkway westward to the station, and from Cicero Avenue eastward to the station is the Greenway Boulevard (Fig. 33) of native landscape, which brings the character of the Thorn Creek watershed through the neighborhood. It is a highly visible and unique marker to a memorable place.

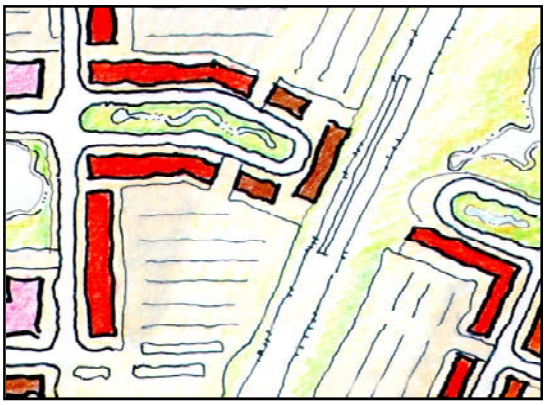


FIGURE 33: PARKING AND STATION ACCESS

Street parking should be allowed throughout the station area. This will be used to supplement the off-street parking for the residential, retail, commercial, and office uses. The station will be served by separate commuter lots, located near the tracks, with the majority of the spaces adjacent to the overpass, a site that is not as advantageous for other development while still being in a close walking distance to the platform entrance. The Pace bus stop and Kiss-n-ride will utilize the Greenway Boulevard entrance, which terminates in a u-drive at the Station Green on the east side of the tracks. Additional drop-off area is available at the station access pavilion on the west side of the tracks also; this may be used for expanded Kiss-n-ride spaces or for future bus bays for expanded service to the proposed South Suburban Airport.

Lots are dedicated for Metra customers, the majority of whom travel to work downtown Chicago in the morning, returning after work in the evening. On the

MED Line, 92% of the alightings occur at the downtown stations, Van Buren Street and Randolph/South Water (Metra, 1999). These lots are underutilized in the evening hours and on the weekends. The adjacent land uses of the Station Area center would be able to utilize this additional parking during those off-peak hours, with cooperation from Metra.

C. PROPOSED LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

The goal of the Station Area Master Plan is to create a vital, active neighborhood and employment center through the mix of land uses, a variety of housing types, interconnected street network, buildings that are close to the street at the neighborhood center, and residential streets that are defined by the house, not the garage, through an integrated alley system. The underlying structure of the Station Area Master Plan (See Illustration Sheet 3) begins with the central spine of the Greenway Boulevard continued from the Thorn Creek Forest Preserve. It is the dramatic entrance to the station area, marking the entrance at both University Parkway and Cicero Avenue. At University Parkway it is a continuation of the great green space of GSU and the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park. It sweeps through the residential neighborhood, station area, and employment area, uniting the neighborhood with the beauty and art of the nature preserve and sculpture park - both quintessential University Park symbols (Fig. 34).

FIGURE 34: PERSPECTIVE SKETCH OF THE GSU CAMPUS AND NATHAN MANILOW SCULPTURE PARK CONNECTION TO THE STATION AREA

The Neighborhood Center

At the center of the new neighborhood is the Metra station. This neighborhood center is the most urban in character. It is characterized by buildings that are set close to the street, and top out at three or four stories. On both sides of the tracks the land use is a mix of retail and housing, with retail on the first floor and apartments on multiple floors above. The retail storefronts face onto the street, and the sidewalks are at least 10 feet wide, which is wide enough to allow for people to walk side by side comfortably in either direction. In this area, the street - that is, the sidewalk primarily - is not merely a pathway, but it is also a gathering place. Street furniture, outdoor seating for cafes, and outdoor display space for shops

should be accommodated and permitted. The sidewalk should be designed with street trees, plantings, lower decorative light standards, benches, bike racks, and decorative paving. This services the adjoining land uses - the storefronts and residences above on the upper floors.

The Station Green adjoining the station access pavilion is a public plaza and green space (Fig. 35). It is not only the geographic center of the neighborhood; it is also the ultimate gathering space. It is a high spot, with views down the green corridor and sculpture park. It is the place for a farmer's market during the day and a jazz concert on blankets in the evening. It's where the children go to run and a Frisbee is tossed. Books are read, conversations are started, and the bicyclist rests along their path. It is the center and heart of the neighborhood at Thorn Creek Station.

FIGURE 35: PERSPECTIVE SKETCH OF THE GREENWAY BOULEVARD AND STATION GREEN

The neighborhood center occurs on both sides of the tracks. Beyond the mixed use core on the west side of the tracks the neighborhood is decidedly more commercial in nature. The greenway that marks the entrance to the station area on the east side visually connects to the greenway through the station to the west side and Cicero Avenue (Fig. 32).

Within this station mix, lies the bulk of Metra commuter parking. The parking lots are interwoven with the mixed use to allow for the uses to work together. These lots are used primarily during the weekday hours, which means that additional parking is available through shared off-peak hours. This parking can be utilized for extra capacity in the evenings or on the weekend, and would be especially useful for special activities and events on the Station Green.

The West Side

On the west side, to the north of the Greenway Boulevard, the employment center dominates the area. Potential uses within the employment center could encompass research and development, flex/office space and light manufacturing. Other complementary land uses should be permitted that provide products or services

that could be of use to the employees and students who spend their day in this area. The businesses will benefit from the mixed use center, providing lunch spots, dry cleaners, or grocery markets for their employees. This is opposed to the typical suburban office campus in which the employer must underwrite such uses as a cafeteria, day care, or health club to attract employees and provide an attractive working environment. In the employment center, restaurants, cafes, and delis will be an integral part of the fabric, important for the employment and student population. Even in the employment center, the walkable street is an important element, and sidewalks throughout are essential. The development as a whole will benefit from promoting pedestrian access and connectivity to all land uses in the Station Area.

In this employment center, with the station mix of retail and residential evolving into office and commercial, there is the potential to develop a mix of office typologies, such as small 800 square foot spaces, live/work spaces, and larger-footprint buildings which accommodate a much larger flexible facility. The live/work unit has been an intriguing concept that is gaining acceptance as the market is explored. Sole proprietors and small businesses are logical tenants to the office and home combination, whether it is an upper/lower or a front/back configuration.

South of the Greenway Boulevard, the development between Governors Highway and Cicero Avenue is valuable commercial property, well suited to medium-box retail such as a grocery store, bookstore, or specialty outdoors shop. While geared toward accommodating the car, this type of space provides a good retail mix for creating an interesting streetscape of storefronts and a lively pedestrian environment. It will be an attractive shopping destination for all of the Village, and the residents on the east side of the tracks. The new University Parkway bridge will not be merely a utilitarian means of transporting auto traffic across the rail lines; it will also be a beautiful pedestrian connection. The bridge can become a landmark in the Village. With a carefully designed precast concrete wall system with ornamental bollards and railings topping the wall, and pedestrian-scaled light standards, the bridge becomes a place - a well-designed pathway and landmark for all of University Park whether traveled by car, bike, or foot.

The East Side

This residential area on the east side of the tracks stretches from University Parkway to the north edge of the station area neighborhood. It's a mix of densities and housing typologies, providing for a variety of family structures and living arrangements, from single-family homes along the golf course, to townhouses edging the greenway boulevard, to apartments at the lively mixed use station center. Generally, the density, lot coverage, and floor area ratio is higher near the station center, and gradually decreases radially out toward the edges of this development.

The medium density housing between the Greenway Boulevard and University Parkway would be rowhouses, townhouses, or a similar building type. The setbacks are usually less than 20 feet. Front porches, stoops, and gardens encroach upon this setback and create a transition from the sidewalk to the building front. The sidewalks are a minimum of five feet to allow for a couple to walk side by side. Garages are accessed by an alley, typically tucking under the first floor. This keeps the street edge lined by front doors and porches rather than the view of endless garage doors. Lots are generally in the 2,000 square foot range, with the two-

story townhouses ranging from 1,500-3,000 square feet. The densities range from eight to fifteen dwelling units per acre.

North of the Greenway Boulevard are single-family lots. These are one and two story houses set back a maximum of 20-30 feet. Front porches and stoops can encroach into the setback area. The streets are relatively narrow, to accommodate two-way traffic with some on-street parking. Narrow streets are good in residential areas because they help to enclose the street, and with lower speeds, create a safer environment. Once again, the vehicular access to garages is from an alley system. The majority of the lots are between 4,000-5,600 square feet.

Lining the golf course are the exceptional single-family lots that front onto the street and have back views out over the course. The lots are larger, but the basic tenants of the rest of the development hold true here also. The goal is to create a beautiful, walkable community at Thorn Creek Station.

Conclusion

What is now nothing more than parking lots and scurrying commuters in the morning and evening is envisioned as a complete, dynamic neighborhood and employment center, offering goods and services to the entire Village, and a variety of housing options for a diverse community. Art and landscape merge in the stunning Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park extension through the neighborhood within the Greenway Boulevard mix of forest, prairie, and wetland. The station is the catalyst for a neighborhood centered on the Station Green. With infrastructure changes to remove the inhibiting force of the rail line, a prosperous, thriving, authentic neighborhood can be born.

IV. Recommended Implementation Strategy

A. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The 245-acre Village of University Park Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan describes a comprehensive greenfield development project that includes project elements crucial to a healthy community. Our plan includes those elements necessary to support the functions of daily life such as recreation, retail, housing and employment. Of the 245-acres, 52 acres (21%) are dedicated to residential development, 54 acres (22%) are dedicated to controlled industrial or employment development, 24 acres (10%) are dedicated to mixed-use and retail development, 37 acres (15%) are dedicated to Parks and Open Space development, and the remaining space is allocated to the development of roads and parking as needed to support the Metra commuters; the employment, retail and mixed use developments; and residential developments.

We estimate that the total cost for developing this 245-acre site is approximately $796 million dollars. Table 23 provides additional detail on estimated development costs. A large portion of this cost (91%) is associated with the development of the employment center, mixed-use, retail, and residential portions of the plan. The cost of land assemblage and site preparation ($12.5 million) amounts to only 1.6% of the total project cost. The cost of internal roads and parks and open space development ($13.6 million) amounts to only 1.7% of the total project cost. Additional road projects include the Governors Highway realignment and the University Parkway overpass construction. These two projects combined have an estimated cost of approximately $34.4 million and represent 4.3% of the total project cost. The assemblage and preparation of land, road improvements, and the development of roads and parks should be the responsibility of the Village or a designated development authority. These projects will enable the Village to plan for and control the development of the land around the University Park Metra station and to maximize the benefits to the Village. Also, these activities will enable the Village to attract developers to complete the various components of this project. By investing less than 8% of the total project cost, the Village can leverage more than $735 million dollars of private investment into their community.

Phasing and Project Costs

The University Park TOD is an enormous multi-phase development project that will likely take many years to complete. Given the size and scope of this project, we have identified specific development projects and activities that should be completed in the first phase of this project (See Illustration Sheet 4). The phasing plan is based on the principle of a transit-oriented neighborhood design and early development phases are focused near the existing Metra station in order to foster a sense of a new neighborhood with the station at its center. The phasing plan also considers existing market demand and development costs for the project. Early phases of development focus on housing and employment because there is a demand for this type of product. In addition, there are many financial resources that can be accessed for development of housing and to fuel the early stages of

development in the station area. In regards to the employment center, the south Chicago suburban market indicates industrial growth potential that can serve as a catalyst for an employment destination center. As the population around the station grows, this increase can be used to attract and support retail/commercial development to the area.

Table 24 provides additional detail on development costs for Phase 1. At the completion of Phase 1, we project that 24% percent of the total development project will be completed. Phase 1 projects include the following elements:

- Land Assemblage and Site Preparation (245-acres): $12.5 million
- Roadway Development including relocation of Governors Highway and the University Parkway Overpass: $34 Million
- Development of Metra parking (514 spaces): $1.7 million
- Development of 92,125 square foot mixed-use project (68 residential apartments and 8 retail spaces): $15.6 million
- Development of 92,640 square foot townhome project (31 units): $15 million
- Development of 224,000 square foot condominium apartment project (170 units): $37.2 million
- Development of 420,820 square foot employment center project: $70.6 million

In order for this project to continue to move forward from this initial planning stage, key stakeholders will have to take an active role in participating in this first phase. Key stakeholders include the Village of University Park, RTA, GSU, and potential developers and landowners. Following is a description of how these stakeholders can be actively involved in the first phase of the University Park TOD development project.

Land Assemblage and Site Preparation

Land assemblage and site preparation should be the responsibility of the Village of University Park. This will enable the Village to both control development around the station area and attract developers to this site specifically through the expenditure of public dollars to subsidize the cost of development.

Land assemblage and site preparation for the total 245-acre site will cost approximately $12.5 million dollars. The cost of acquisition is approximately $40,000 per acre plus the cost of site preparation including infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, utilities, etc.). The Village of University Park can recoup a portion of this money through the sale of development parcels to developers or subsidize it through the use of TIF proceeds if they establish this area as a TIF district.

Should the Village designate this project area a TIF, they can front-fund the TIF through a bond issue. If the Village can convince the financial community that a TIF district is likely to produce significant new revenues (increment) then it can issue a revenue bond to get those funds in a lump sum up-front rather than waiting for them to come in year-by-year. In other words, the Village receives cash up-front, which it repays over a number of years (with interest) as the TIF generates revenues. (Historically, per the Illinois Tax Increment Association, Illinois TIFs have generated a seven to eight percent return per year over the prior years equalized

TABLE 23
Village of University Park Transit Oriented Development Project
Total Project Development Cost Projections

Phase	Development Site Description	Land Acreage	Building Square Feet	Land Assemblage *(Acquisition, Demolition and Clearance)*		Estimated Construction Costs (hard and soft)	Total Development Costs	Phase 1 Development Costs	Percent Completed in Phase 1
				Total	By Parcel				
Project Components									
A.	Land Assemblage (total development area) [1]	244.80	-	$12,509,280		n/a	$12,509,280	$12,509,280	100%
B.	Total Roads (28,973 Linear Feet) [2]	26.61	-		$1,359,516	$6,663,790	$8,023,306	$1,445,313	18%
C.	Total Parks / Open Space Development [3]	37.00	-		$1,890,700	$3,700,000	$5,590,700	$2,488,617	45%
D.	Total Metra Parking (1,890 spaces) [4]	17.36	-		$886,860	$5,860,750	$6,747,610	$1,723,750	26%
E.	Total Retail Parking (1,050 spaces) [4]	9.64	-		$492,700	$2,766,750	$3,259,450	$0	0%
F.	Total Employment Center Parking (2,666 spaces) [4]	24.48	-		$1,250,988	$9,331,000	$10,581,988	$0	0%
G.	Total Mixed Use Development [5]	15.83	393,159		$808,913	$66,050,712	$66,859,625	$15,598,094	23%
H.	Total Retail Development [6]	7.68	263,100		$392,448	$43,674,600	$44,067,048	$0	0%
I.	Total Employment Center Development [6]	53.90	1,898,900		$2,754,290	$315,217,400	$317,971,690	$70,561,300	22%
J.	Total Residential Development [7]	52.31	1,792,410		$2,673,041	$295,747,650	$298,420,691	$52,145,963	17%
K.	Realignment and Overpass	-	-		$0	$34,400,000	$34,400,000	$34,400,000	100%
	Total Estimated Project Development Cost	**244.80**	**4,347,569**	**12,509,280**	**-**	**$783,412,652**	**$795,922,107**	**$190,872,317**	**24%**

Notes

[1] Land assemblage should be pursued immediately before land costs escalate due to speculation. The village should establish a development agency to administer this and other elements of the project. It is assumed that the cost of land acquisition and preparation will be recouped by the village once the parcels are sold to independent developers for development. For this estimate we assume a $40,000 per acre acquisition cost.

[2] The cost of road development is estimated to be $230 per linear foot.

[3] The cost of developing parks/open space per JRS is approximately $100,000 per acre.

[4] The per space cost for developing surface parking is approximately $3,500 (new) and $1750 (rehabbed).

[5] The cost per square foot for a mixed-use development is approximately $168.

[6] The cost per square foot for retail and commercial development is approximately $166.

[7] The cost per square foot for residential development is approximately $165.

TABLE 24
Village of University Park Transit Oriented Development Project
Project Phase 1 Development Cost Projections

Phase	Development Site Description	Status	Land Acreage	Bldg. Sq Ft	Land Assemblage *(Acquisition, Demolition and Clearance)*		Estimated Construction Costs (hard and soft)	Total Development Costs	Sources of Financing			
					Total	By Parcel			Estimated Mortgage Proceeds [4]	Tax Exempt Financing [4]	Sale of Land to Developers [5]	Gap [6]
Phase 1 Project Components												
A.	Land Assemblage (total development area) [1]	not started	244.80	n/a	$12,509,280		n/a	$12,509,280	$0	$0	$1,606,584	$10,902,696
B.	Metra Parking (514 spaces) [2]	not started	5.00	n/a		$255,500	$1,468,250	$1,723,750	$0	$0	$0	$1,723,750
C.	Mixed-use Development	not started	1.48	92,125		$75,628	$15,522,466	$15,598,094	$2,896,753	$9,058,277	$0	$3,643,064
D.	Townhome Development	not started	1.76	92,640		$89,936	$14,868,540	$14,958,476	$2,084,400	$11,419,350	$0	$1,454,727
E.	Condo Development	not started	3.80	224,000		$194,180	$36,993,307	$37,187,487	$7,636,364	$27,487,966	$0	$2,063,158
F.	Roadway Development (Greenway Blvd.)	not started	2.93	n/a		$149,723	$1,295,590	$1,445,313	$0	$0	$0	$1,445,313
G.	Parks and Open Space	not started	16.47	n/a		$841,617	$1,647,000	$2,488,617	$0	$0	$0	$2,488,617
H.	Governors Highway Realignment [3]	not started	-	n/a		$0	$4,400,000	$4,400,000	$0	$0	$0	$4,400,000
I.	University Parkway Overpass	not started	-	n/a		$0	$30,000,000	$30,000,000	$0	$0	$0	$30,000,000
J.	Employment Center	not started	13.80	420,820		$705,180	$69,856,120.00	$70,561,300	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total Phase 1			**829,585**	**$12,509,280**	-	**$176,051,273**	**$190,872,317**	**$12,617,517**	**$47,965,592**	**$1,606,584**	**$58,121,324**

Notes

[1] To insure that the cost of redevelopment remains as low as possible it is important to secure site control immediately, before land costs begin to escalate through speculation. We estimate land acquisition costs to be approx. $51,000 per acre. based on a $40,000 per acre acquisition cost.

[2] Metra Parking development costs are estimated at $3,500 (new) and $1750 (rehabbed) per space.

[3] Governors Highway Realignment includes removal of existing roadway and construction of new 4 to 5 lane road. Includes signalized intersections and streetscaping.

[4] Estimated Mortgage Proceeds are based on the amortized value of sales or rents collected. All calculated at 8.5% interest over 20 years. Tax exempt financing assumes tax credit syndication. See per project development budgets for more details

[5] It is assumed that the village, through an independent Develoment Agency, will administer the land assemblage and preparation activities. The agency will be reimbursed for the costs of land assemblage and preparation through the sale of assembled land to developers

[6] The gap is filled through the utilization of Grants, TIF, and other municipal, county, state, federal and private resources. See the funding toolkit in this report for an evaluation of sources that could be used to fill the gap by project.

(N/A) Not Available

assessed value.) While TIFs can also be front-loaded through the use of bank notes, the issuance of bonds would be more appropriate for a project of this size. Bonds are appropriate for relatively large sums because they involve significant administrative costs to issue.

Roadway Development

Roadway development in the first phase of this project includes the development of the main entry road into the project area, the relocation of Governors Highway and the development of the University Parkway overpass. Each of these projects is an integral element of the overall University Park TOD development plan and should be considered part of the site preparation activities. The Village should be responsible for the completion of these activities. We estimate that the total cost for roadway development is $35.8 million. Costs associated with land acquisition and site preparation are included in the $12.5 million land assemblage and site preparation cost estimate. These costs are TIF eligible and may also be eligible for county, state and federal transportation funding.

Development of Metra Parking

The development of 514 spaces of Metra parking on the east side of the station is estimated to cost $1.7 million dollars. For a complete review of existing and proposed Metra Commuter Parking, see Illustration Sheets 5 and 6. We estimate that the actual development costs equal approximately $1.5 million and the cost associated with Land Acquisition and Site preparation is approximately $255,500. The Village will bear the $255,500 associated with land acquisition and site preparation; it is included in the $12.5 million land assemblage and site preparation cost estimate.

Development of 420,820 sq ft Employment Center

An examination of the types of users that could be attracted, by space type, can form the basis for positioning portions of the Plan as an "employment center" that accomplishes the employment objectives of GSU and the Village.

In the R & D category, there continues to be demand for medical testing, product testing, software development, and other relatively low-tech laboratory type environments. Some portion of this market could be attracted to the Station Area.

In the flex/office category, there would be opportunities to provide multi-tenant bay type space for a variety of small and medium size businesses of all types. In particular, business services, logistics services, and training facilities find these types of spaces attractive. Some types of small distribution operations and professional services also find the flexibility of this type of space suitable for their business. In the light manufacturing category, light assembly operations that focus on higher value products or packaging operations can be accomodated in a business park environment.

Development of 92,125 sq ft Mixed-Use Project

The mixed-use development project includes 68 residential units with an average

square footage of 900 square feet. These units will be a mix of 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments with an average rent of $650 per month. A potential market for these units could be GSU students. As such, GSU should be considered a potential development partner for the development of this project.

The development of the mixed-use project is estimated to cost $15.6 million dollars. We estimated that actual hard and soft development costs equal $15.5 million dollars with the remaining cost associated with the cost of land assemblage and site preparation. The Village will bear the costs associated with land assemblage and site preparation and can either charge that back to the developer or absorb it as a development subsidy. We estimate that this project can support a mortgage of approximately $3 million and potential low-income housing tax credit equity proceeds are equal to $9 million. We estimate the financing gap in this project to be $3.6 million. This gap can be filled through the utilization of grants and other municipal, county, state and federal resources identified in the funding tool kit included in this report. Once the Village has prepared the site for development, the Village can issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of this project.

Development of 92,640 sq ft Townhome Development Project

The townhome development project includes 31 townhomes with an average square footage of 2,500. Parking is built into the unit and is included in that square footage. These units should sell for approximately $90,000 per unit. These units back into a 6.5-acre park and would be attractive to the growing population of empty nesters and seniors in the University Park market area.

The development of the townhome project is estimated to cost $15 million dollars. We estimated that actual hard and soft development costs equal $14.9 million dollars with the remaining cost associated with the cost of land assemblage and site preparation. The Village will bear the costs associated with land assemblage and site preparation and can either charge that back to the developer or absorb it as a development subsidy. We estimate that this project can support a mortgage of approximately $2.1 million and potential low-income housing tax credit equity proceeds are equal to $11.4 million. We estimate the financing gap in this project to be $1.5 million. This gap can be filled through the utilization of grants and other municipal, county, state and federal resources identified in the funding tool kit included in this report. Once the Village has prepared the site for development, the Village can issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of this project.

Development of 224,000 sq ft Condominium Development Project

The condominium development project includes 170 condominium units with an average square footage of 1,100. These units will be a mix of studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom condominiums and will sell for an average of $50,000 per unit. The development of the condominium project is estimated to cost $37.2 million dollars. We estimated that actual hard and soft development costs equal $37 million dollars with the remaining cost associated with the cost of land assemblage and site preparation. The Village will bear the costs associated with land assemblage and site preparation and can either charge that back to the developer or absorb it as a development subsidy. We estimate that this project can support a mortgage of approximately $7.6 million and potential low-income housing tax credit equity proceeds are equal to $27.5 million. We estimate the

financing gap in this project to be $2.1 million. This gap can be filled through the utilization of grants and other municipal, county, state and federal resources identified in the funding tool kit included in this report. Once the Village has prepared the site for development, the Village can issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of this project.

Next Steps

In order to ensure that this project maintains the momentum it has gained through this initial planning stage, we advise the Village of University Park establish a separate Development Agency to oversee the activities necessary to move this project forward. Initially the Village could dedicate one staff person to this project and utilize an advisory committee process to specifically administer all phases of this project. The ideal person to head and staff the development agency would have experience in real estate development, especially projects involving public-private partnerships and multi-layered financing.

The advisory committees working under the development agency will focus on areas such as housing, transportation, economic development, and parks and open land development. Membership on these committees will be comprised of area residents, representatives from public/private entities such as GSU, RTA, Metra, Pace, banks and financial institutions, area real estate professionals, and others with the common interest of developing this area of University Park. Advisory committee participation insures that all activities undertaken by the redevelopment agency include the participation of a broad constituency. (It also aids a short-staffed redevelopment agency in completing all the steps necessary to keep this project moving forward.) Such broad participation is crucial for such large and long-term plans as this. It ensures ongoing interest and support and keeps the project moving forward.

The development agency is crucial for administering and overseeing the land assemblage portion of the project. We estimate that land assemblage and preparation for development alone will cost $12.5 million dollars. The activities necessary to finance, administer, and monitor this activity require that at least one staff person is dedicated to this project. The position of the development agency relative to the Village is diagrammed on the following chart.

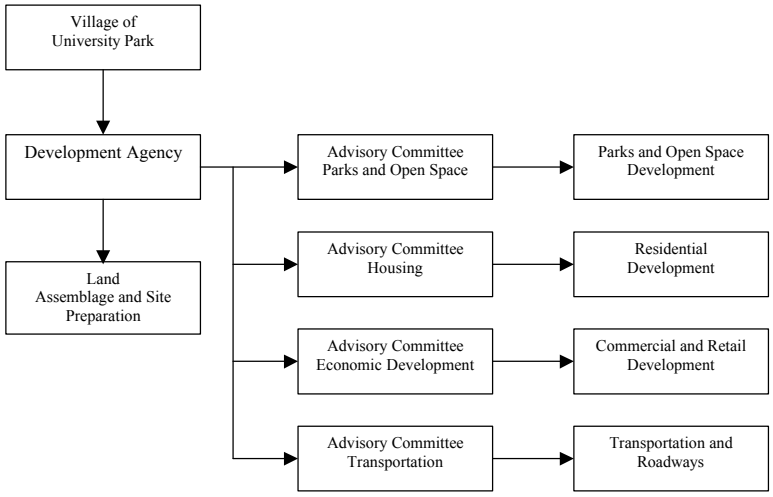


CHART 2: IMPLEMENTATION ORGANIZATION

B. KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Key issues related to the University Park TOD development are listed below. (See Funding Tool Kit - Appendix G) The Village of University Park, the development agency and other stakeholders should consider these issues as they move forward with the development project.

Land Assemblage

To ensure that the cost of redeveloping the area remains as low as possible, it is important to secure site control immediately. Experience demonstrates that once word of a redevelopment proposal hits landowners, land prices escalate making any redevelopment plans cost prohibitive.

Economic Development

The project will accommodate management techniques and scales of construction that can be contracted to local and minority businesses. Additionally, the development of the commercial elements will result in retail and service-related jobs for local residents.

Community Involvement

The implementation plan should include the engagement of residents, neighbors, civic leaders, politicians, developers, and local institutions throughout the process of designing changes for the neighborhood.

Comprehensive Redevelopment

New developments or re-developments should never take the form of isolated "projects", but instead should repair existing neighborhoods or create new ones by including elements crucial to a healthy community. The plan calls for those elements necessary to support the function of daily life, such as recreation, retail, and housing and employment.

Employment Centers

Additional research will be needed to fully develop the concept of an employment center. Issues to be addressed would include:

- Parcelization customized to the footprints required by these types of users;
- Park amenities that would distinguish the park from other “industrial” parks need to be developed;
- Allowance for certain types of personal services and conveniences, such as workforce training, daycare, dining, and other support services; and
- Protective covenants and standards to create the right park tenant mix and “image”

Examples of successful employment center concepts in Chicago and select other

locations would offer valuable lessons in finalizing a vision for this site. This would need to be coupled with creative public regulation and public/private incentives to attract and retain the envisioned tenant mix.

Community Housing

By including housing products at a broad range of price points we are ensuring that current residents will be able to remain in the neighborhood and enjoy an opportunity to own their own home if they so choose.

Ongoing Governmental Support for Infrastructure Improvement

The project requires the ongoing support of the Village of University Park and other various State and Federal agencies. It will take many resources for the Village to realize the vision presented in this report. IDOT and state representatives need to be immediately informed and recruited as champions for the development, particularly to achieve the University Parkway overpass and the realignment of Governors Highway.

Predevelopment Financing

Recognizing that there are costs to bringing a project of this size to the table for redevelopment, it is important to note that certain predevelopment expenditures are necessary. These costs are crucial and will ensure the ability of University Park to attract developers to the various parcels on the site. Predevelopment costs include: site, topographical, landscape and utility surveys; Phase I and Phase II environmental reports; infrastructure inspection and analysis; traffic study and impact analysis; utility improvement analysis; third party market studies; focus area plan; community involvement meetings; schematic architectural drawings; preliminary cost estimates; financing due diligence; bond underwriting; grant application completion; tax district analysis; and financing, acquisition, legal, and marketing fees.

Gap Financing

The initial projects will require substantial resources to fill in the gap between what it costs to acquire and prepare the site and construct the project, and what the market can support. Once substantial development has taken place on the site, the market should be able to support the cost of construction and eventually yield a profit to individual developers and the Village.

Zoning

The Village should immediately revise the zoning ordinance in order to control development, respond to the looming development pressures associated with the proposed South Suburban Airport, and to achieve the vision of the TOD. The Village would need to review park covenants and overlay zoning concepts utilized in other communities to target the types of users that have relatively low truck transportation needs but have relatively high employment densities.