

A TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

for the
RIVERDALE METRA STATION AREA
in the Village of Riverdale, Illinois

Prepared for:

The Regional
Transportation Authority

&

THE VILLAGE OF
RIVERDALE

August 2001

Prepared by:

CAMIROS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Transit-Oriented Development Plan for the Riverdale Metra Station Area in the Village of Riverdale, Illinois, was prepared through the efforts of the Village of Riverdale, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra, Pace and the project planning consultants, Camiros, Ltd., and Infrastructure Engineering, Inc.

Many citizens, staff and officials of the Village of Riverdale, too numerous to mention here, participated in several Public Forums and a Community Workshop in the spring of 2001. Their involvement and insights are sincerely appreciated.

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Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transportation. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, or the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transportation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was undertaken to identify transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the area surrounding the Riverdale Metra station within the Village of Riverdale, Illinois. This report will help the Village of Riverdale effectively address redevelopment within the study area in a manner that builds upon the advantages that transit access provides. The study was funded by the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP).

The station is located on the Metra Electric line extending through Chicago's south suburbs to University Park. The study area is bounded by Stewart Avenue on the west and the IHB railroad tracks on the south. The study area extends east to Indiana Avenue (which is also the Village's eastern edge) and to the north to the utility easement running east-west just north of Patton School and the School District office complex. It then extends north along the Metra Electric/Canadian National tracks to the Little Calumet River and east again along the river's edge to Indiana Avenue.

The planning process for this study consisted of five activities: 1) data collection; 2) public participation; 3) preparation of a redevelopment concept plan for the Riverdale station area; 4) preparation of a circulation and streetscape plan for the Riverdale station area; and 5) preparation of design criteria for new development in the station area. In addition, detailed prototype sketches were developed for key redevelopment sites and public realm improvements.

Study Area Characteristics

The study area contains the oldest part of Riverdale, now referred to as the "Centennial" area. The Centennial area was the center of

retail activity in the Village until the community expanded south and the commercial corridor along 144th Street was developed. The area, like all of Riverdale, has long been a solid middle-class residential area. However, several conditions are apparent that will make a significant resurgence of the retail market in the Riverdale Station area challenging, including: an influx of renters, a lack of through traffic in the neighborhood, and a weak relationship between the Metra station parking facilities and retail offerings in the area. This study will seek to reverse this trend through TOD strategies.

One of the goals of this TOD study is to find ways to better capture Metra commuter traffic, and through-traffic on 138th Street, to reintroduce a node of convenience-oriented commercial activity that can both enhance the quality of life for nearby residents who currently lack convenient retail and services and encourage longer-term sustainability of the area through an increased population.

Residential properties, predominantly single-family, make up a majority of the area. Riverdale Park and Mohawk Park (immediately to the north of Riverdale Park) sit squarely in the center of the study area and directly adjacent to the railroad embankment upon which the Metra trains operate. Several land uses— including commercial properties, churches, multi-family buildings and single-family homes— co-exist along both sides of 138th Street and the west side of Indiana Avenue. Several of the commercial properties are currently vacant.

One ongoing project and one future project will significantly improve two key areas near the station. Infill single-family housing is being constructed along 137th Street, just west of Heritage Community Bank, by the Regional Redevelopment Corporation

(RRC). Also, a new multi-story retirement facility is planned at the northeast corner of 138th Street and Stewart Avenue.

The study area is extensively impacted by railroad tracks, including the Canadian National railroad that runs on a raised embankment that divides the study area in half from east to west. Metra Electric trains also run along this embankment. CSX operates an at-grade line running diagonally through the northeast corner of the study area that provides access to and from ACME Metals. At-grade crossings occur along this track at 137th Street and in the 138th Street/Indiana Avenue intersection. The Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) line runs east-west at the southern end of the study area, forming the south boundary of the study area. These tracks are crossed via a bridge at School Street or by an at-grade crossing at Indiana Avenue.

For the most part, the predominantly residential quadrants of the study area to the northwest, southwest and southeast are solid and in good condition, with very few vacant parcels and scattered minor deterioration. The oldest, and consequently the most distressed, housing stock in the Village is concentrated around the “Centennial” area in the northeast quadrant. This area contains mostly older wood frame single-family structures that are interspersed with more modern masonry apartment buildings. Many of the older homes have been converted to rental properties. Along 138th Street and Indiana Avenue, several vacant commercial structures and their surroundings are in poor condition. These deteriorated structures are interspersed with vacant lots in several locations, as well.

The Village of Riverdale has taken a proactive approach to addressing the age of the area. Strict code enforcement requires that all properties being transferred be inspected and repaired as needed to comply with building codes, which has kept deterioration to a minor level in predominantly single-family areas. In addition, three Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts have been created that impact the area. While the TIFs are intended to address issues of industrial and commercial development surrounding the study area, the

Village had the foresight to include large segments of the study area within the boundaries of these adjacent TIF Districts to maximize future flexibility in undertaking improvements in the area.

Transit Facilities and Service

The study area is served by the Metra Electric Line that terminates at University Park. The Riverdale station platform, upon which the study area is centered, extends between 137th Street on the north and 138th Street on the south, and consists of a single open-air platform between two tracks atop a solid embankment just west of, and parallel to, Illinois Street. There are a total of six tracks on the wide embankment. Entrance to the platform is gained from stairways leading from sidewalk level under the viaducts at 137th and 138th up to glass-enclosed turnstile and ticket vending vestibules at the platform level. As with all stations along the Metra Electric line, customer service is provided via a phone at each turnstile area and tickets are purchased from vending machines. Signage for the station is minimal, as is signage for the parking lots.

Pace service is available to Riverdale residents, with stops along Halsted Street (Route #352), “flag” stops along Indiana Avenue, and at a designated stop at 138th and Leyden, one block east of the Village boundary (Route #353). Pace routes do not circulate through the Village.

There are two commuter parking lots located just east of the track embankment (between Illinois Street and the embankment). These off-street lots are owned by Metra and maintained by the Village, and are daily fee lots.

Weekly boardings in 1999 averaged 2,995 persons at Riverdale, and typical weekday boardings in 1999 were 580. Approximately 90% of the boardings occurred during the morning rush period (6:15am to 8:30am), with a similar pattern of alightings during the evening rush period (4:30pm to 8:00pm).

A 1999 Metra on-board survey revealed that at the Riverdale station, 30% of responding commuters indicated that they walked to the station, while the remaining 70% indicated that they drove or were dropped off. This is significant for two reasons. First, the percentage of commuters walking to the station exceeds the overall Metra system average of 23% by a considerable margin. Improvements to area sidewalks, lighting and wayfinding signage could further enhance this percentage. Secondly, approximately 375 persons are assumed to be driving or dropped off, while there are only 268 parking spaces available. This suggests that a significant number of commuters (upwards of 100 daily) may be getting dropped off and picked up at the station, despite the lack of a designated drop-off area. This phenomenon bodes well for future retail potential at the station, as commuters waiting for a pick-up may be attracted to patronize nearby retailers while waiting.

Issues and Opportunities

The basic elements upon which to build a successful transit-oriented neighborhood are in place within the Riverdale Metra station area: several convenience-related businesses, both single-family and multi-family housing choices, a community park, and a planned community resource center. However, despite being located in close proximity, these key elements do not currently relate well to the station or to one another, and are in an area that is not considered attractive or secure. The plan must address this perception that the area is unsafe while identifying mechanisms to tie the area together, increase the visibility and accessibility of area businesses, and upgrade the quality of both the public and private realms.

It is important to note that the TOD concept plan to follow attempts to be realistic in assessing and capturing the market potential of the study area. TOD cannot *create* a market by itself, but can significantly *enhance* a market. The focus of business activity in the Village is currently at 144th Street, and major chain retailers who

might be willing to consider a site with less than ideal regional visibility will consider 144th Street preferable to 138th Street. New retail and service businesses along 138th Street are more likely to be small in scale. Commercial development adjacent to the Metra station at 137th/138th Streets will almost certainly be limited to commuter-oriented and resident-oriented convenience retail and services (such as dry cleaners, coffee shops, etc.).

Because of the concentration of land use and zoning frictions and deterioration in the northeast quadrant, coupled with the concentration of institutional and historic resources in the same area, the plan focuses on this area in detail. Any significant future commercial, housing or employment-generating redevelopment will likely occur in this area. Some minor aesthetic issues are addressed in the remainder of the study area, but significant physical changes are not needed in these solid residential quadrants.

Transit-Oriented Development Goals and Strategies

To realize the revitalization of the Riverdale station area and an associated increase in the use of transit facilities, the Village, Metra and Pace should combine efforts and aim to achieve the following *goals* and related *strategies*. They are separated into five general categories: Commercial Development, Housing, Transit Facilities, Public Realm and Quality of Life.

A. Commercial Development

GOAL 1:

Provide needed and desired retail and services for both commuters and local residents.

- a. Acquire, prepare and market commercial development sites.
- b. Develop a retail center adjacent to the Riverdale Metra station.
- c. Solicit a developer/operator for a new day care center near the Riverdale Metra station.

- d. Assist property owners with rehabilitation of existing viable commercial properties.

GOAL 2:

Capture the market potential provided by Metra commuters to support local commercial enterprises.

- a. Increase awareness of area businesses through marketing and promotion to commuters and local residents.
- b. Ensure the visibility and accessibility of station area businesses.

GOAL 3:

Provide employment opportunities within the station area.

- a. Bring in technology-related businesses along Indiana Avenue north of 137th Street.

B. Housing

GOAL 1:

Provide new housing near the Metra station to attract a commuter-oriented population base.

- a. Acquire, prepare and market residential development sites.
- b. Develop new medium-density housing on selected sites.
- c. Convert non-viable commercial properties along 138th Street to residential use.

GOAL 2:

Stabilize existing housing stock where feasible to maintain affordability.

- a. Encourage appropriate rehabilitation of existing residential properties in the station area.

C. Transit Facilities

GOAL 1:

Make the station more inviting and easy to use.

- a. Undertake improvements to existing commuter parking lots.
- b. Improve commuter amenities at the sidewalk and platform level.

GOAL 2:

Increase multi-modal accessibility of the station area.

- a. Increase pedestrian accessibility between the station and adjacent areas.
- b. Provide adequate and convenient parking and “kiss and ride” areas.
- c. Improve bicycle access to the station area.
- d. Assess the feasibility of establishing a Pace bus route through Riverdale.

D. Public Realm

GOAL 1:

Tie the neighborhood together with a unified visual theme.

- a. Implement coordinated streetscape and landscape improvements within public rights-of-way.
- b. Implement landscape upgrades at railroad rights-of-way and utility easements.
- c. Enforce design standards for renovations and new construction that respect the existing context.

GOAL 2:

Improve traffic flow into the area and along 138th Street.

- a. Reduce congestion at at-grade railroad crossings where feasible.
- b. Ensure that new development in the station vicinity does not create congestion problems.
- c. Accommodate bicycle routes through the area in cooperation with regional efforts.

GOAL 3:

Create and enhance public open spaces.

- a. Implement Riverdale Park improvements.
- b. Create a neighborhood park at 138th Street and School Street.
- c. Create a community gathering space east of the Riverdale Metra station.

- d. Provide pedestrian comfort amenities near CSX railroad crossings.

E. Quality of Life

GOAL 1:

Increase the sense of security in the station area. Increase the police presence at the Riverdale Metra station and in Riverdale Park.

- b. Eliminate physically isolated and under-lit locations during redesign of the station area.

GOAL 2: **Educate residents and visitors about the history of Riverdale.**

- a. Create a walking tour and printed information regarding the historic resources in the area.
- b. Stabilize the exterior of the Old Calumet Hotel, restoring its historic appearance, if feasible.

GOAL 3:

Increase community involvement in the neighborhood.

- a. Organize community members to undertake additional youth programs.
- b. Organize volunteer efforts to address litter control and maintain landscaped areas.

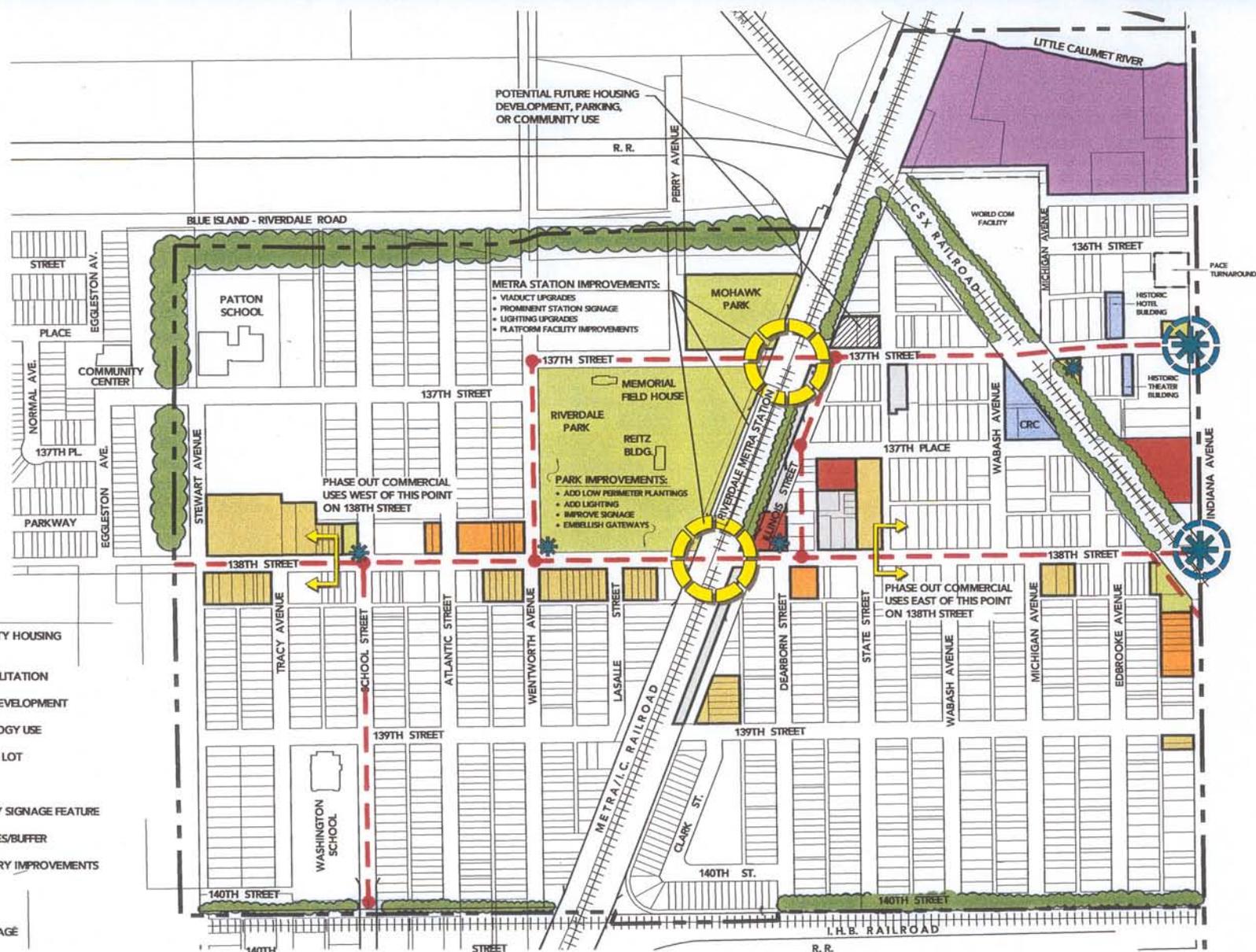
- c. Consider establishing a YMCA or community center within the neighborhood.

Many of the strategies and projects listed above are summarized graphically in the Concept Plan and Focus Area Plan on the following two pages.

Plan Implementation

A detailed “Implementation Work Program” is provided at the end of this report to facilitate prioritized and effective implementation of the plan recommendations.

A strong commitment to these recommendations from the Village and the RTA will generate private sector interest. The Village and transit agencies must set the stage for these improvements, and the private sector must then step up and meet the challenge with its own efforts at improvement. If efforts initially focus on the immediate station area, a natural progression will begin that will expand the positive impacts of redevelopment outward, eventually contributing positively to the quality of life throughout Riverdale.



LEGEND

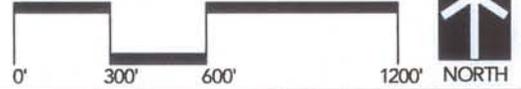
- NEW MEDIUM-DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
- COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION
- NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
- NEW HIGH TECHNOLOGY USE
- COMMUTER PARKING LOT
- PARK/OPEN SPACE
- LANDSCAPE/IDENTITY SIGNAGE FEATURE
- LANDSCAPE UPGRADES/BUFFER
- METRA STATION ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS
- KEY TRAFFIC ROUTE
- VILLAGE ENTRY SIGNAGE

CONCEPT PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'

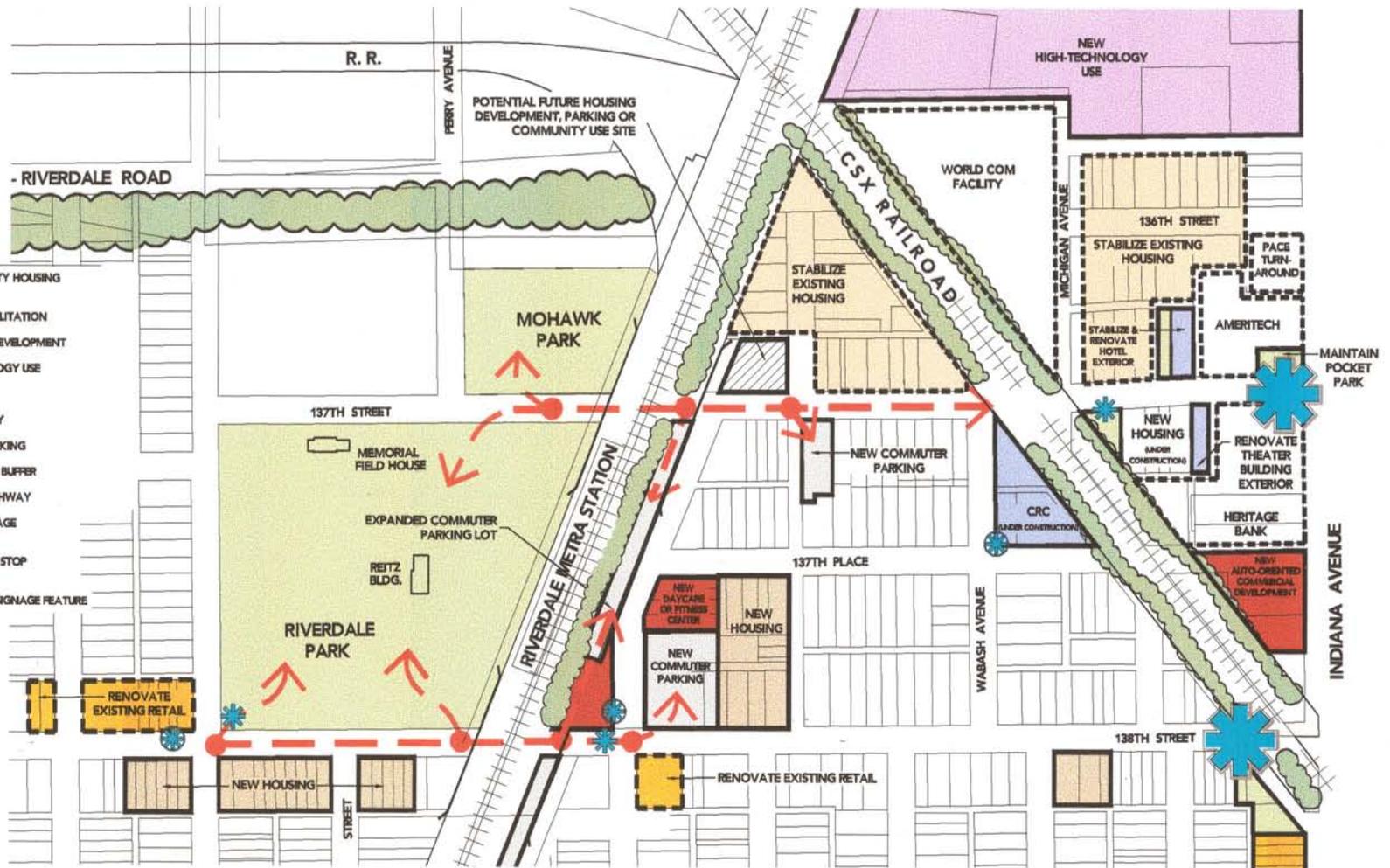


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LEGEND

-  NEW MEDIUM-DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
-  COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION
-  NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
-  NEW HIGH-TECHNOLOGY USE
-  PARK/GREEN SPACE
-  COMMUNITY FACILITY
-  NEW COMMUTER PARKING
-  LANDSCAPE EDGE OR BUFFER
-  KEY PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY
-  VILLAGE ENTRY SIGNAGE
-  POTENTIAL PACE BUS STOP
-  LANDSCAPE/IDENTITY SIGNAGE FEATURE



FOCUS AREA PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 400'



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FOREWORD

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

This study was a collaborative effort sponsored by the RTA and led by the Village of Riverdale. Funding for the study was provided by the RTA through the Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) and by a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transportation. A study Steering Committee was formed to guide the research and provide input throughout the course of the study. The Steering Committee included the RTA, the Village of Riverdale, Metra (Commuter Rail) and Pace (Suburban Bus).

1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken to identify transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the areas surrounding the Riverdale commuter rail station within the Village of Riverdale, Illinois. The station is located on the Metra Electric line extending through Chicago's south suburbs to University Park. The study was funded by the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP).

The RTA is an authority created in 1974 by the Illinois State Legislature to facilitate public transportation in the six-counties surrounding Chicago, a roughly 3,500 square mile area. The operation of transit services within this area is provided by three RTA Service Boards: the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA); the Commuter Rail Division (Metra); and the Suburban Bus Division (Pace). Metra provides commuter rail service from the Riverdale station to the Randolph/South Water Street Station in Chicago's Loop. Pace operates one bus line that travels through Riverdale along Halsted Street, the #352, and one that skirts the eastern edge of the Village along Indiana Avenue, the #353.

The Village of Riverdale applied for funds made available through the RTA's RTAP in order to study opportunities for revitalization of the area immediately surrounding the Village's Riverdale station. In pursuing a TOD study for this station, the RTA hopes to assist the Village of Riverdale in developing a concept plan that will utilize the principles of TOD, providing tools and strategies for the Village to pursue toward implementation.

Study Area Boundary

The study area boundary for this planning effort is indicated on Figure 1: Study Area Boundary. The study area is bounded by Stewart Avenue on the west and the IHB railroad tracks on the south. The study area extends east to Indiana Avenue (which is also the Village's eastern edge) and to the north to the utility easement running east-west just north of Patton School and the School District office complex. It then extends north along the Metra Electric/Canadian National tracks to the Little Calumet River and east again along the river's edge to Indiana Avenue.

The Village of Dolton is located immediately to the east of the study area across Indiana Avenue, south of 138th Street. The City of Chicago abuts the study area to the north across the Little Calumet River and to the east across Indiana Avenue, north of 138th Street.

Several times throughout this report, the Ivanhoe Station area is mentioned in comparison or contrast to the Riverdale Station area. The Ivanhoe Metra Station, one stop further south on the same Metra Electric Line, is located along 144th Street near School Street. It is adjacent to the commercial core of Riverdale that stretches for about two blocks east of the railroad tracks and contains the Riverdale Public Library and the Village's administrative offices. It is surrounded by solid residential neighborhoods. This southern section of Riverdale connects to the northern section of Riverdale (which contains the study area) via bridges over the IHB tracks at School Street and Halsted Avenue, and via Indiana Avenue.

FIGURE 1

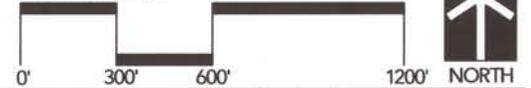


STUDY AREA BOUNDARY TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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The Planning Process

The planning process for this study consisted of five activities: 1) data collection; 2) public participation; 3) development of a redevelopment concept plan for the Riverdale station area; 4) development of a circulation and streetscape plan for the Riverdale station area; and 5) preparation of design criteria for new development in the station area. In addition, detailed prototype sketches were developed for key redevelopment sites and public improvements.

Data Collection

Data collection included surveys of existing land use and building conditions, an assessment of existing physical and landscape amenities within public rights-of-way, and an assessment of the current functioning of the Riverdale Metra station facility. Existing plan documents and other data sources that addressed the station area were also reviewed. These surveys and research were conducted during January and February of 2001.

In addition to these assessments, a site survey of the area was conducted and all utilities having facilities in the study area were contacted to determine, to the extent possible, the condition of the utilities and any plans for future improvements. These surveys were conducted in February and March of 2001.

It was determined at the outset of the study that a survey of Metra riders who use the Riverdale station was not feasible, given the difficulty in retrieving completed survey forms from disembarking commuters in the Loop. The Project Team relied upon recent system-wide survey data regarding commuter use patterns.

Public Involvement

The first element of the Public Involvement process was a series of five Key Stakeholder Interview sessions held in the Memorial Fieldhouse in Riverdale Park on January 18, 2001. The group

interviews involved approximately thirty-five individuals representing the following stakeholder groups: residents, property owners, business owners, realtors, Village departments, the school district, the park district, the library, real estate developers, and a local non-profit organization. General concerns, issues and opportunities regarding the study area were solicited from participants.

The second element of the Public Involvement process was a Public Forum held in the Memorial Fieldhouse in Riverdale Park on February 22, 2001. Existing conditions data was presented, and the issues and opportunities identified at the key stakeholder interviews were presented for discussion and feedback.

The third and fourth elements of the Public Involvement process, a Community Workshop/Charette and a second Public Forum, were held in the Memorial Fieldhouse in Riverdale Park on March 7 and March 8, 2001. A total of approximately twenty-five persons participated in a series of working sessions during March 7 and March 8. The participants included various stakeholders from the Village and representatives of RTA, Metra and Pace. Preliminary plan concepts were presented for discussion and feedback.

The final element of the Public Involvement process, a third Public Forum, was held at the Memorial Fieldhouse in Riverdale Park on April 26, 2001. The refined concept plan was presented for discussion, along with the proposed circulation plan and preliminary design criteria and urban design recommendations. Feedback from this forum was incorporated into plan refinements before this final document was prepared.

Plan Development

After the concept plan and circulation plan were presented to the community, discussion and feedback from Village staff, RTA, Metra and Pace continued during working meetings. Refined plans were presented to the Riverdale Village Board and Village staff on May 1,

2001. As a result of this final input, this final summary document was prepared.

It is expected that the Village and the RTA will continue to work together to assure that aspects of the plan are implemented in a cooperative manner, to the ultimate benefit of both the Village and the transit system.

Organization of the Report

This report begins with a brief overview in Chapter Two of the concept of transit-oriented development as a planning philosophy and strategy. Chapter Three provides brief history of the study area along with a summary of the physical and socioeconomic characteristics of the planning context in the Village of Riverdale. Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of the current transit-related characteristics of the Village. Public input received during

the planning process is summarized in Chapter Four. The issues and planning opportunities within the area are outlined in Chapter Five.

Transit-oriented development goals are summarized in Chapter Six. Redevelopment strategies within five key categories are presented in Chapter Seven. The redevelopment concept plan and circulation and streetscape plan developed for the Riverdale station area are then described in Chapters Eight and Nine. Chapter Ten presents a list of the Key Projects resulting from the plans, and Chapter Eleven compiles all of these initiatives into an Implementation Work Program to guide the Village in moving forward. The report concludes with an Appendix, in which information is provided about the Key Stakeholder Interviews and the Community Workshop, and contact information for local utility companies is provided.

2: TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is an approach to the design and development of land around transit stations that encourages and facilitates the use of mass transit. Transit-oriented development has been occurring in the United States since the beginning of urban passenger rail systems in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Until the introduction of the automobile, communities centered around transportation hubs—whether rail, water way, or trolley line—out of necessity. Accessibility—the ease with which people and goods move into, through, or within a given area—was the key to a community’s survival and success. Original TOD patterns are still evident in many older communities surrounding Chicago.

After automobiles became the primary mode of transportation, patterns of development emerged that were designed to accommodate the car, significantly altering traditional neighborhood and community development patterns. Streets were widened, sidewalks became less important and sometimes were eliminated. Often, land uses became so spread out that cars were an absolute necessity for mobility. Recent trends in urban design and planning have suggested a return to traditional neighborhood design, where defined neighborhoods are limited in size and encouraged to contain mixed uses—such as retail, services, employment, and residential—all within walking distance of one another. TOD builds on traditional neighborhood design by including a focus on transit for accessibility not only within a neighborhood but also between neighborhoods and to the larger region. The implication of TOD is that development is more efficient and desirable for pedestrians, resulting in an exciting and complex environment, and a heightened sense of community.

Most transit-oriented areas can be considered as either a place of origin (i.e., a neighborhood of strong residential uses with transit

users departing from the neighborhood station) and/or place of destination (i.e., an employment, commercial, retail, or entertainment center which draws people in from outside of the community). TOD-based neighborhoods and communities, while having their own histories and characteristics, follow a general set of design principles that can be adapted to fit the area, whether as a destination or place of origin.

Transit-Oriented Development Principles

As discussed in popular literature and various past studies on transit-oriented development, successful TOD neighborhoods generally follow these *planning and design principles*:

- The immediate, transit-related neighborhood tends to be limited to one-quarter to one-half of a mile in radius, reflecting a five- to ten-minute walk distance. Advocates of traditional neighborhood design have pointed out that most people will only walk approximately 1,300 feet (two blocks or about one-quarter of a mile) to reach a destination, with the exception that work-related trips can sometimes be longer.
- A neighborhood center generally contains a major public space surrounded by a mix of uses (such as retail, churches, parks, and schools) and focuses on a transit access point. Both daytime and nighttime pedestrian activity is encouraged.
- Within the neighborhood, a mix of land uses provides for essential daily needs (such as convenience shopping, schools, recreation, and entertainment) and, when possible, employment.
- Land uses closest to the transit facility are those that benefit the most from access to transit, such as businesses, schools, and high-density residential development. The overall

density is highest in the ring around the transit stop and becomes less dense towards the edges of the neighborhood.

- Population density is high enough to support the local retail, services and transit facility.
- When possible, developments include mixed uses, typically with commercial uses on the first floor and residential or office uses above.
- Activities for transit-using nonresidents (such as retail, services, neighborhood institutions or employment sources) are encouraged, in order to increase outside contact with the neighborhood.
- Pedestrian accessibility is emphasized, but adequate auto access is also accommodated. Entrances to buildings occur at or very near the sidewalk, with parking lots located between or behind buildings and shielded from view with landscaping where feasible.
- Streets and paths follow a clear grid system accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Circulation paths for these different transportation modes are separated where possible and clearly delineated.
- Neighborhood landmarks are used for orientation purposes.
- Streets and public spaces feel secure both during the day and at night, and are visually appealing. Signage and lighting are coordinated and prominent, allowing for nighttime activity.

Within the immediate station area, several *planning and design guidelines* are used to implement the principles above, increasing the efficiency and attractiveness of the transit station and adjacent retail, commercial, and other development for commuters and nearby residents. These guidelines are intended to stimulate and focus community activity around the station area:

- Commuters and nearby residents should have direct access to a variety of goods and services. Transit users should be able to buy more than just coffee and newspapers in station areas. They typically will patronize convenience-oriented

businesses such as dry cleaners, restaurants, ATMs, auto repair shops, beauty salons, video stores, and grocery stores.¹

- The close proximity of businesses to a station should create convenient shopping opportunities, which are of primary importance to commuters. Convenience is so important to commuters' shopping decisions that they will often pay a premium for that convenience. The average commuter will spend \$20 to \$30 per week at station-area stores, which can translate into additional sales tax revenue for the community and a potential increase in local employment opportunities.²
- Visibility is as important as proximity for drawing commuters into nearby stores. Transit users often have a greater awareness of businesses around their stations than of those in a commercial center on a nearby arterial street. If commercial, retail, or other convenience services cannot be developed adjacent to the station or stop, strong linkages should be made between the station and the nearest commercial center.
- Commuters prefer to shop in the evening, when not pressed for time. Therefore, station area businesses should stay open later in the evening to take advantage of commuter business.
- Structures and/or landscaping should be utilized to maintain a defined street edge. Generally, commercial or mixed-use buildings should not be set back from the street.
- Commuter parking should be designed and located to complement the entire station area land use scheme and enhance pedestrian circulation, seeking to place retail and service uses between the transit user and his/her ultimate destination.
- Pedestrian paths should be provided for transit users between stations and commuter parking lots or residences that make nearby stores easy to see and reach.

1 From a survey of Metra riders conducted by Camiros, Ltd. in 1994.

2 From a survey of Metra riders conducted by Camiros, Ltd. in 1994.

- The station area should be maintained as an attractive and vibrant environment.

Transit facilities themselves are central to any successful transit-oriented development. The following *station planning and design recommendations* focus on integrating transit stations into TOD neighborhoods:

- The station should relate to the rest of the neighborhood, contribute to street life and promote development of adjacent sites. Stations that are vital parts of the community tend to be less vulnerable to misuse and vandalism.
- The station should be safe for transit users and nearby pedestrians, with adequate light and security provided. The platform area should not feel isolated from its surroundings.
- Accommodations should be made to encourage transfer between modes of transportation. The location of circulation paths to bus shelters, “kiss and ride” areas and bike racks is crucial, and they should be as close to the station entrance as possible.
- Station signage, and the station design itself, can act as a “beacon” for residents and non-residents alike. Signage should be clear both from a distance and upon arriving at the station by all transportation modes.
- Adequate space and landscaping should be provided around the transit station to allow for easy circulation and orientation, especially during rush hour periods.

Through the use of these planning principles and recommendations, TOD can effectively improve how existing neighborhoods function and create more efficient and sustainable new development. Through TOD, new development can effectively utilize existing infrastructure, build upon strong existing land use patterns, and help to alleviate the inefficiency of separate land uses. TOD ultimately seeks to enable the creation of a larger regional community consisting of numerous small-scale neighborhood centers, each with

an “origin” and/or a “destination” function, efficiently linked together through mass transit, pedestrian access and the automobile. In this way, each individual development project can serve to strengthen the entire system.

The Realities of Transit-Oriented Planning

The principles and guidelines mentioned above help to establish a context for encouraging the emergence and maintenance of transit-oriented development (TOD). However, their application is not a guarantee of success, for the realities of existing physical, market and regulatory conditions often limit the degree to which TOD can affect the rejuvenation or improvement of developed areas. For example, prior experience indicates that:

- The historic structure of many Chicago suburban commercial cores is based on TOD principles. TOD planning is often not an issue of *rearranging* the existing development pattern, but rather of *refocusing* development around this pattern.
- Often, much of the built fabric that created historic TOD patterns is missing because of clearance and more recent attempts to reorient development toward the automobile. Some retrofitting back to this original structure is often necessary.
- Present intermodal transfer facilities and/or linkages (such as bus to train, automobile to train, and bicycle to train) tend to be very weak or nonexistent. A key function of TOD planning is to correct this weakness.
- Present pedestrian linkages between transit stations and the surrounding community are also often very weak or nonexistent. Another key function of TOD planning is to establish (or reestablish) these links.
- Even in a community that has a historic TOD orientation, it is not axiomatic that rejuvenation of the transit system will foster significant growth. Moreover, it may be that transit facilities are no longer located at the “center” of the

community at all. Neighborhood centers can relocate due to increased automobile dominance or competing transit facilities nearby.

- TOD is not a substitute for market demand. It can serve to organize an existing market but can only, by itself, create a modest enhancement to the market base of an area. Improving a transit stop and its immediate surroundings is not a guarantee of major development attraction.
- Transit service levels will have a significant effect on the ability of transit to spur redevelopment activity. If transit-generated traffic occurs only at the “commuting” rush hours, non-transit customers must be lured to the area at other times.
- Many TOD-conducive areas boast private property owners with interests in development, but who lack a sense of how to capitalize on transit-generated customer traffic. TOD planning is a tool which can provide a sense of direction and market for such property owners.

- TOD can succeed only with strong coordination between the public sector, the private sector, and the community. There is a need for the municipality and transit agencies to initiate contact and coordination with the private development market so that public sector and private sector initiatives become mutually supportive.
- The standard TOD “area of influence” will vary in certain areas, at times being smaller or larger than the generally accepted range of one-quarter to one-half of a mile. Large institutional or entertainment-related uses falling outside that range may in some cases allow TOD principles to extend beyond the traditional range. In other situations, where barriers exist that affect circulation and activity in the neighborhood, residents may be unable or unwilling to walk even a short distance to access transit.

3: THE VILLAGE OF RIVERDALE

This chapter provides a brief overview of the existing conditions and trends in the Riverdale station study area, to provide a background and context for the *redevelopment strategies* that are presented later in this report.

A Brief History

Note: Information in this section was summarized from the "History of Riverdale, IL" available on-line through the Riverdale Public Library, at <<http://www.sls.lib.il.us/RDS/Community/history.html>>.

The study area contains the oldest part of Riverdale, now referred to as the "Centennial" area. Originally inhabited by the Potawatomi Indians, George Dolton arrived in the area around 1835 and was followed soon after by others. Dolton's original homestead was on the site of the current Acme Steel facility. Dolton and another early settler, J.C. Matthews, began operating a toll ferry across the Little Calumet River in 1836, at a location near the current Indiana Avenue that they named "Riverdale Crossing." In 1842 a toll bridge known as "Dolton Bridge" was erected across the Little Calumet River near the current location of Indiana Avenue and 135th Street. A Riverdale school district was formed in 1867, and the Riverdale post office was founded in 1873. The first major industries, including a distillery and a lumber yard, located near the river crossing in 1878. A cluster of commercial activity formed near the current location of Indiana Avenue and 137th Street in 1891, including the erection of the Old Calumet Hotel (which still stands today, although it is vacant, much altered and in disrepair). The commercial area along 137th Street contained grocery stores, a bakery, a general store, a meat market, several service businesses, and also eventually included a small theatre erected in 1914 which still stands today (and is currently in use as a storage facility by a construction company). Riverdale Bank started operations in the area in 1917. The hotel and the theatre

building are the two remaining historically significant structures within the study area.

By the 1890s the many railroads through the Centennial area were in place. The Village of Riverdale was incorporated in 1892 after an election held at the Old Calumet Hotel, and a Village Hall was erected at Wabash and 137th Place in 1895. Acme Steel Company located in Riverdale in 1918, and the Village got telephone service in 1900. The corner of Indiana and 137th Street has housed a telephone facility continuously since 1928. In 1905 the Village expanded to 1,700 acres in size through annexation. In 1905 Washington School was constructed (originally called Highlawn School) and the Riverdale Park District was formed. Curbs, street paving and a sewer system were constructed throughout the Village by the WPA in the late 1930s. 1921 saw the beginning of speculative residential development in the Village, but most of the present housing found within the Village outside the Centennial area was constructed in the post-war period of 1945 to 1960. It was this residential development that gave most of Riverdale the character it still has today, including the south and west portions of the study area.



The vacant Old Calumet Hotel is currently in a state of disrepair, and is in need of exterior stabilization and removal of modern additions.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Note: Data presented for the “Riverdale station area” encompass a half-mile radius around the Riverdale Station (roughly approximating the study area), and data presented for the “Ivanhoe Station area” encompass a half-mile radius around the Ivanhoe station. Data presented for “study area census tracts” encompass census tracts 8215, 8266 and 8267. This area is larger than the study area, encompassing the Pacesetter residential neighborhood to the west and residential areas between Halsted Street and Indiana Avenue extending south to 146th Street.

Demographics

The Village of Riverdale exhibits characteristics that are likely similar to several other older inner-ring suburbs in the Chicago metropolitan area. While population had been on the decline for a few decades, data from the 2000 Census indicates that the Village population has rebounded since 1990 (see [Table 1: Population](#)). This table indicates the population in the study area census tracts over the last decade, when the population increased approximately 10.2%.

The number of households in the study area census tracts, however, has decreased a total of 6.7% over the past decade (see [Table 2: Households](#)). Average household size during this period increased from 2.56 in 1990 to 3.02 in 2000, for an increase of approximately 18.0%.

The data suggest that the Village is gaining more households with school-age children. As with many other older and traditionally middle-class suburbs, as the population transitions from older “empty nesters” to a new generation of young families, inner-ring suburbs are attracting former Chicago residents who find their better schools and park facilities, as well as their modestly priced and solidly built housing, appealing. In addition to this trend, the Riverdale Station area appears to be absorbing a large number of renters who are migrating out from the city. The Riverdale station area has several apartment properties, and older single-family homes are also being converted into rental properties to accommodate this growing rental market.

TABLE 1:

POPULATION*

	#	% change
2000 total	14,947	4.9%
1997 total	14,253	5.1%
1990 total	13,566	n/a

* for census tracts 8215, 8266, 8267

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 2:

HOUSEHOLDS/ OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS*

	#	% change
2000 total	4,947	-1.8%
1997 total	5,037	-5.0%
1990 total	5,302	n/a

* for census tracts 8215, 8266, 8267

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Projections indicated that in the year 2000, 42% of households in the Riverdale Station area would have household incomes below \$30,000 (compared to just under 38% in the Ivanhoe Station area). Just over 42% of households were projected to fall between \$30,000 and \$75,000 (compared to just under 44% in the Ivanhoe Station area). The median household income in 1990 in the Riverdale Station area was \$26,255 with a projection of \$36,576 for 2000 (compared to a 1990 figure of \$28,536 and a projection of \$40,518 for the Ivanhoe Station area).

In 1990, approximately 41% of workers from the Riverdale Station area commuted less than 30 minutes to get to work, suggesting that these persons were either commuting via Metra to the Loop or working in the south suburbs. 38% were commuting between 30 minutes and one hour, a group that likely includes most persons utilizing Pace and the CTA to reach the Loop. Just over 20% were commuting for over one hour. Just over 70% of households had one or two vehicles in 1990, whereas 22% had no vehicle and 8% had access to three or more vehicles.

Housing

In 1990, the Riverdale station area had 778 owner-occupied housing units (51.4%) and 658 renter-occupied housing units (43.5%), for a total of 1,520. Projections for 2000 indicated a reduction to 1,431 housing units. By contrast, in 1990 the Ivanhoe station area had 1,699 owner-occupied housing units (57.7%) and 1,113 renter-occupied housing units (37.8% in 1990), for a total of 2,953. Projections for 2000 indicated a reduction to 2,800 housing units. These projections are verified by data for the study area census tracts over the past decade, which indicate a reduction in occupied housing units of 3.2% (see [Table 3: Housing Units](#)). Over this same period, the percentage of all housing units that were occupied in the study area census tracts decreased from 95.1% to 91.6%.

The median housing value in the Riverdale Station area was \$58,292 in 1990, and in the Ivanhoe Station area it was \$60,656. Median gross rent in 1990 was \$445 in the Riverdale Station area, and \$448 in the Ivanhoe Station area. Real estate transactions filed in December 2000 indicate that during that month nine properties changed hands in the study area, including four condominium units at the Riverwoods complex and one multi-tenant property on 138th Street. Prices for single-family homes ranged from a high of \$93,000 for a home in the 13800 block of Dearborn to a low of \$52,000 for a home in the 13800 block of Edbrooke Avenue. Condominiums at Riverwoods ranged in sale price from \$58,500 to \$57,000.

TABLE 3:

HOUSING UNITS*

	#	% change
2000 total	5,399	-1.1%
1997 total	5,458	-2.2%
1990 total	5,578	n/a

* for census tracts 8215, 8266, 8267

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In the Riverdale Station area in 1990, 64.4% of occupied housing units were single-family detached or attached, and 32.3% were in structures with 2 to 19 units. In the Ivanhoe Station area, by contrast, 69.2% of occupied housing units are single-family detached or attached, and 27.7% are in structures with 2 to 19 units.

Retail Market Characteristics

For this study, the most useful purpose for collecting and analyzing socioeconomic data is the ability to gain an understanding of the market potential of the study area. The area, like all of Riverdale, has long been a solid middle-class residential area. However, several conditions are apparent that will make a significant resurgence of the retail market in the Riverdale Station area challenging, including: an influx of renters, a lack of through traffic in the neighborhood, and a currently weak relationship between the Metra station parking facilities and retail offerings in the area. This study will seek to reverse this trend through TOD strategies.

Over the years the amount of commercial activity in the Riverdale Station area has dwindled considerably. Although it was the historic center of business activity for the Village, it no longer is the Village hub. As businesses have left the area in recent years, they have not been replaced. The owner of the small “strip center” on 138th Street



This small “strip center” is located on the northwest corner of 138th Street and Wentworth Avenue, two blocks west of the Metra station.

not generate pedestrian activity or pedestrian-oriented retail spin-off potential. Very little walk-in customer traffic is generated at the bank, although it does have a drive-through facility, and the switching facility has few, if any, on-site employees. Retailers considering a south suburban location have tended to gravitate to higher-volume thoroughfares that provide high visibility and accessibility. Smaller, destination-oriented retailers that might consider Riverdale as a business location are likely to gravitate to the 144th Street commercial core nearer to the Ivanhoe Station because of the existence of offices, the library and a more accessible Metra station from which to draw customers. Table 4: Retail Activity in the Riverdale Station Area and Table 5: Retail Activity in the Ivanhoe Station Area offer a comparison of the level of retail activity at the two stations in 2000.

just west of Riverdale Park has been experiencing long-term vacancies in recent years, despite being only two blocks away from the Metra station. The two largest land users in the area, Heritage Community Bank (south of 137th and west of Indiana) and a large Ameritech switching facility (north of 137th and west of Indiana) do

TABLE 4:

Retail Activity in the Riverdale Station Area (2000)

1 food store (eg: convenience, small grocery)
4 eating and drinking establishments (eg: restaurants, taverns, take-out fast food)
2 miscellaneous retail (eg: office supplies, videos, hardware, cards/gifts, clothing, etc.)
11 total establishments (all types)
1 establishment with over 20 employees

Source: Claritas Inc. and Village of Riverdale

TABLE 5:

Retail Activity in the Ivanhoe Station Area (2000)

3 food stores (eg: convenience, small grocery)
5 auto-related businesses (eg: filling stations, repair shops)
8 eating and drinking establishments (eg: restaurants, taverns, take-out fast food)
1 building materials store
1 home furnishings/equipment store
4 miscellaneous retail (eg: office supplies, videos, hardware, cards/gifts, clothing, etc.)
26 total establishments (all types)
2 establishments with over 20 employees

Source: Claritas Inc.

One of the goals of this TOD study is to find ways to better capture Metra commuter traffic, and through-traffic on 138th Street, to reintroduce a node of convenience-oriented commercial activity that can both enhance the quality of life for nearby residents who currently lack convenient retail and services and encourage longer-term sustainability of the area through an increased population.

Physical Characteristics

Land Use

The distribution of land uses in the study area is indicated in [Figure 2: Existing Land Use](#). Residential properties, predominantly single-family, make up a large majority of the area. Riverdale Park and Mohawk Park (immediately to the north of Riverdale Park) sit squarely in the center of the study area and directly adjacent to the railroad embankment upon which the Metra train operates. Two elementary schools, Patton and Washington, as well as a school district administration facility are also located in the western half of the study area. The northeast corner of the study area is anchored by an active fiber-optic equipment facility operated by WorldCom, and by an industrial facility (P.M.Ag Products) that sits north of the residences on 136th Street and is accessed only from Indiana Avenue.

Several land uses— including commercial properties, churches, multi-family buildings and single-family homes— co-exist along both sides of 138th Street and the west side of Indiana Avenue.



Single-family homes in most of the study area are single-story masonry structures built from the 1940s through the 1960s, with garage access from rear alleys.

Several of the commercial properties are currently vacant. Conflicting land uses situations in the study area are limited to: 1) the juncture between the uses fronting both 138th and Indiana, and the residences separated from these frontages by public alleys; and 2) the area just north of 137th Street and

east of the CSX railroad tracks where the large WorldCom facility sits directly across Michigan Avenue from single-family homes.

One ongoing project and one future project will significantly improve two key areas near the station. Infill single-family housing is being constructed along 137th Street, just west of Heritage Community Bank, by the Regional Redevelopment Corporation (RRC). Also, a new multi-story retirement facility is planned at the northeast corner of 138th Street and Stewart Avenue.

On-street parking is allowed on most streets in the study area, and both the strip mall just west of Riverdale Park and Herman's Deli just east of the Metra railroad tracks provide off-street parking lots. Dedicated off-street lots also occur for most properties along Indiana Avenue. Within the residential areas some multi-family properties provide ample off-street parking, usually accessed from the rear alleys that serve each property. However, many tenants in



A former apartment complex at Stewart Avenue and 137th Street was converted into the Riverwoods condominiums.

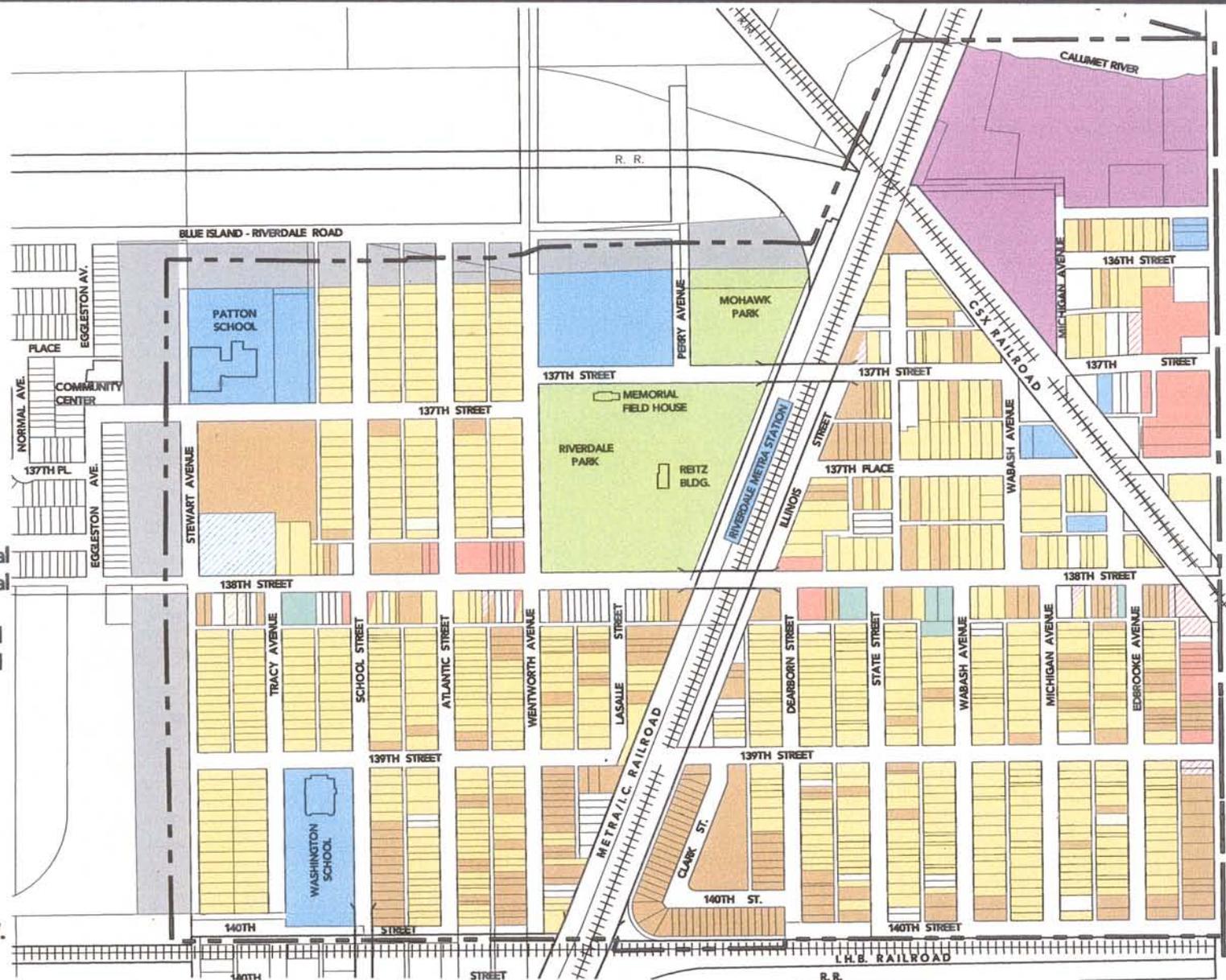


These brick apartment buildings are typical examples of the multi-family housing found in the study area.

FIGURE 2

LEGEND

- Single Family Residential
- Single Family Residential Vacant
- Multi-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential Vacant
- Commercial
- Commercial Vacant
- Industrial
- Public
- Public Vacant
- Church
- Parks
- Utility
- Vacant/Railroad R.O.W.



EXISTING LAND USE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

R.R.
DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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Riverdale Park (above left) and Washington School (above right) are the two primary open spaces in the study area where children play and community events occur. Riverdale Park is located immediately adjacent to the railroad embankment and Metra station entrances.

neighborhood buildings park on the street, as do many single-family homeowners with more than one or two cars in the household.

ACME Metals, the largest industry in Riverdale, is located immediately north of the study area and is physically buffered from residences and institutional uses to the south by a wide right-of-way that accommodates high-voltage power lines. This wide utility easement also extends to the south just west of Stewart Avenue, buffering properties on the western edge of the study area from industrial facilities further west. The activity at ACME Metals is well isolated from the study area, with the exception of some traffic generated along 137th Street by employees and trucks accessing the facility from the south via Perry Avenue.

The study area is extensively impacted by railroad tracks, including the Canadian National railroad that runs on a raised embankment that divides the study area in half from east to west. Metra Electric trains also run along this embankment. CSX operates an at-grade line running diagonally through the northeast corner of the study

area that provides access to and from ACME Metals. At-grade crossings occur along this track at 137th Street and in the 138th Street/Indiana Avenue intersection. The Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) line runs east-west at the southern end of the study area, forming the south boundary of the study area. These tracks are crossed via a bridge at School Street or by an at-grade crossing at Indiana Avenue.

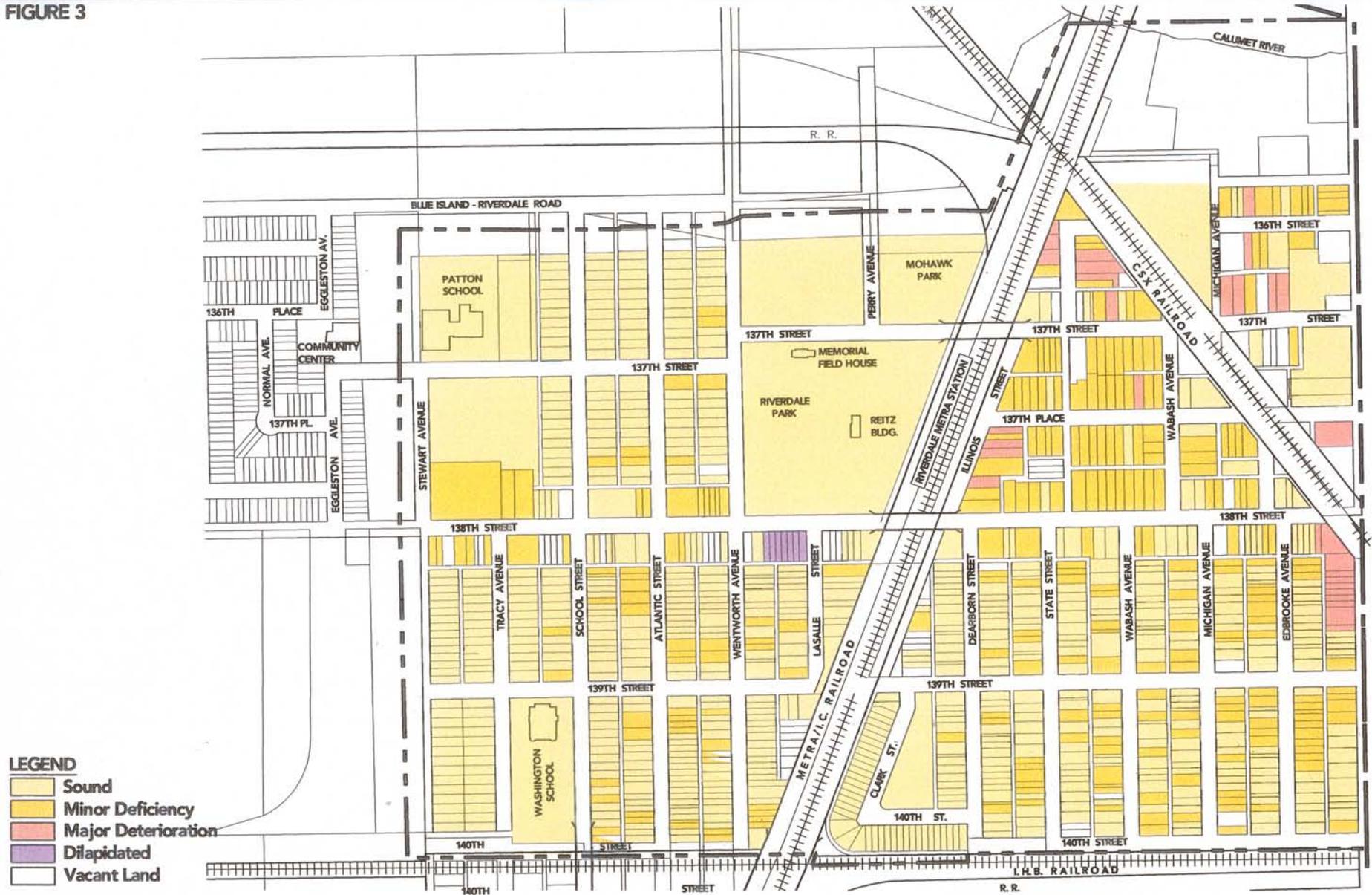
Building Conditions

Figure 3: Building Conditions indicates the pockets of deterioration that exist in the study area. For the most part, the predominantly residential quadrants of the study area to the northwest, southwest and southeast are solid and

in good condition, with very few vacant parcels and scattered minor deterioration. The oldest, and consequently the most distressed, housing stock in the Village is concentrated around the “Centennial” area in the northeast quadrant. This area contains mostly older wood frame single-family structures that are interspersed with more modern masonry apartment buildings. Many of the older homes have been converted to rental properties. The infrastructure in this area is also older than in other parts of the Village; curbs, gutters and sewers in the area were originally constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s. They have since been upgraded on an as-needed basis.

Other examples of deterioration occur along 138th Street and Indiana Avenue, where several vacant commercial structures and their surroundings are in poor condition. These deteriorated structures are interspersed with vacant lots in several locations, as well.

FIGURE 3



- LEGEND**
- Sound
 - Minor Deficiency
 - Major Deterioration
 - Dilapidated
 - Vacant Land

BUILDING CONDITIONS TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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The Village of Riverdale has taken a proactive approach to addressing the age of the area. Strict code enforcement requires that all properties being transferred be inspected and repaired as needed to comply with building codes, which has kept deterioration to a minor level in predominantly single-family areas. In addition, three Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts have been created that impact the area. While the TIFs are intended to address issues of industrial and commercial development surrounding the study area, the Village had the foresight to include large segments of the study area within the boundaries of these adjacent TIF Districts to maximize future flexibility in undertaking improvements in the area. Figure 4: Existing TIF Districts indicates the relevant boundaries of the three TIF Districts that encompass portions of the study area.

Zoning Incompatibility

The study area encompasses properties with the following zoning designations: R-1 (Single-family Residence); R-3 (Limited General Residence); R-4 (General Residence); B-2 (Service Business); CR (Conservation/Recreation); and, I-1 (Restricted Industrial). The areas that are impacted by the planning recommendations to follow fall within the R-3, R-4 and B-2 districts. Figure 5: Zoning Incompatibility outlines the areas where existing land uses do not comply with their current zoning designation. Two situations exist on isolated lots throughout the study area: 1) residential properties that occur within business-related (B) zones, and 2) commercial properties that occur within residential (R) zones.

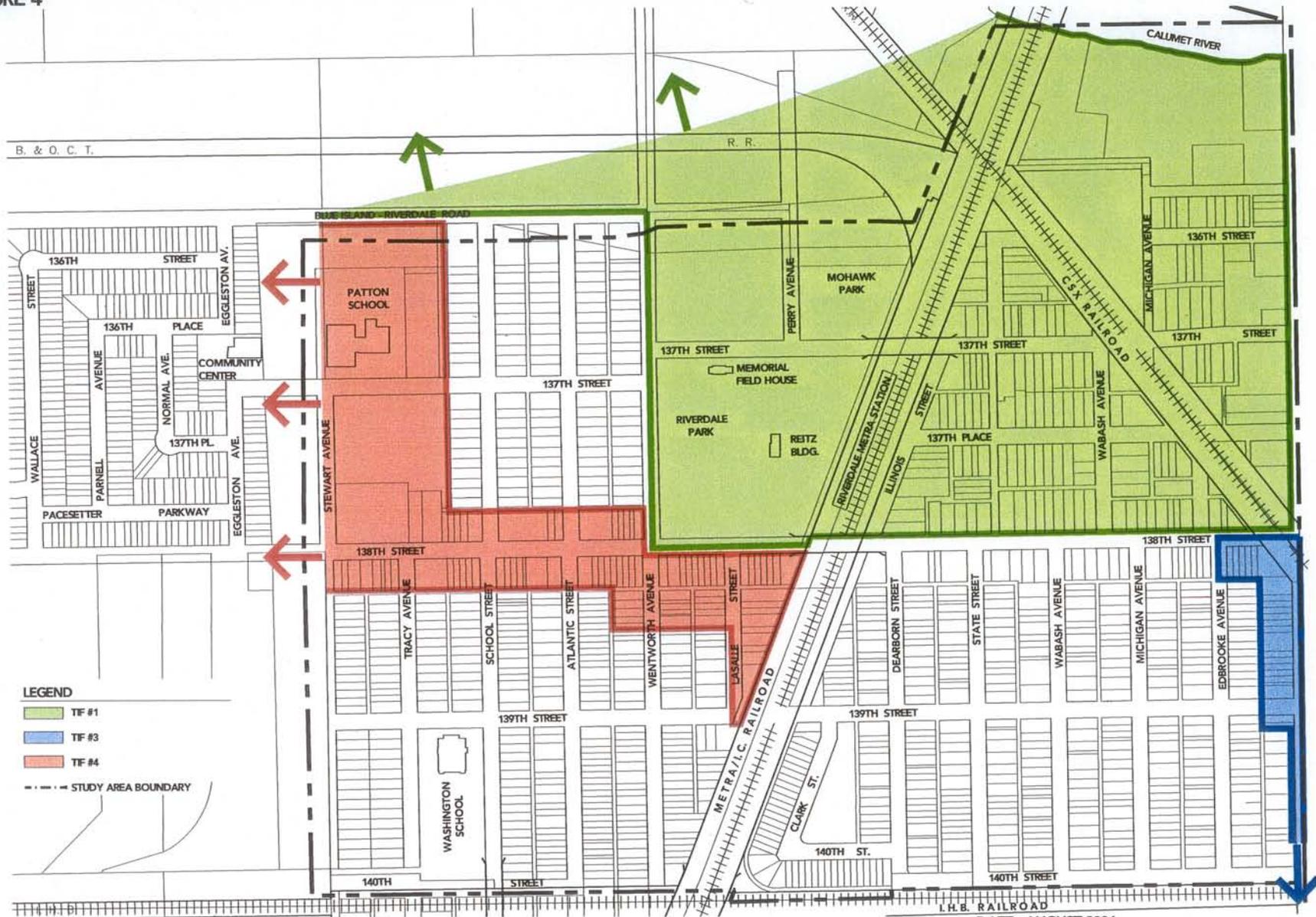
Some rezoning may be appropriate to bring desirable existing uses into compliance, while leaving others to transition to desirable uses in the future. The zoning map should be adjusted to reflect the desired future land use pattern in the area, per the Concept Plan to follow, requiring some changes primarily to the frontage along 138th Street.

The Village should consider making the following changes to better comply with the plan:

- ♦ While the B-2 designation is appropriate for areas designated for commercial development along Indiana Avenue, parcels along 138th Street that are targeted to remain or become commercial should be re-zoned to B-1 (Community Shopping District). This is the zoning designation along 144th Street that has allowed for pedestrian-friendly commercial development to occur. Within the B-1 area setbacks are not required and “drive-thru” businesses are not permitted. This conforms to the type of development that is most desirable in a TOD setting.
- ♦ While most of the residential streets in the study area are appropriately zoned R-3 to allow limited multi-family dwellings interspersed with single-family homes, key parcels along 138th Street that are targeted for future residential development should be rezoned to R-4. This designation will allow for higher densities only along 138th Street, allowing for the kinds of medium-density housing that are desirable and marketable in a TOD setting.
- ♦ Parking lot screening is already required within the Village’s ordinance. The ordinance should also make clear the need to buffer loading and outdoor storage areas.
- ♦ Within the study area, the existing parking requirements for multi-family units should be maintained (1.5 spaces per dwelling unit). However, the parking requirements for retail and service uses can be reduced somewhat in the B-1 area (to 3 or 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet) to reflect the likelihood of commuters and nearby residents making up a significant portion of customer traffic. Shared parking arrangements should also be pursued where feasible between businesses and institutions to make effective use of parking areas at all times.

In addition to these recommended changes, it will be important for the Village to utilize the Design Criteria developed as part of this planning process to ensure that new development is of an appropriate design and construction quality.

FIGURE 4



LEGEND

- TF #1
- TF #3
- TF #4

- - - - - STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

EXISTING TIF DISTRICTS TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

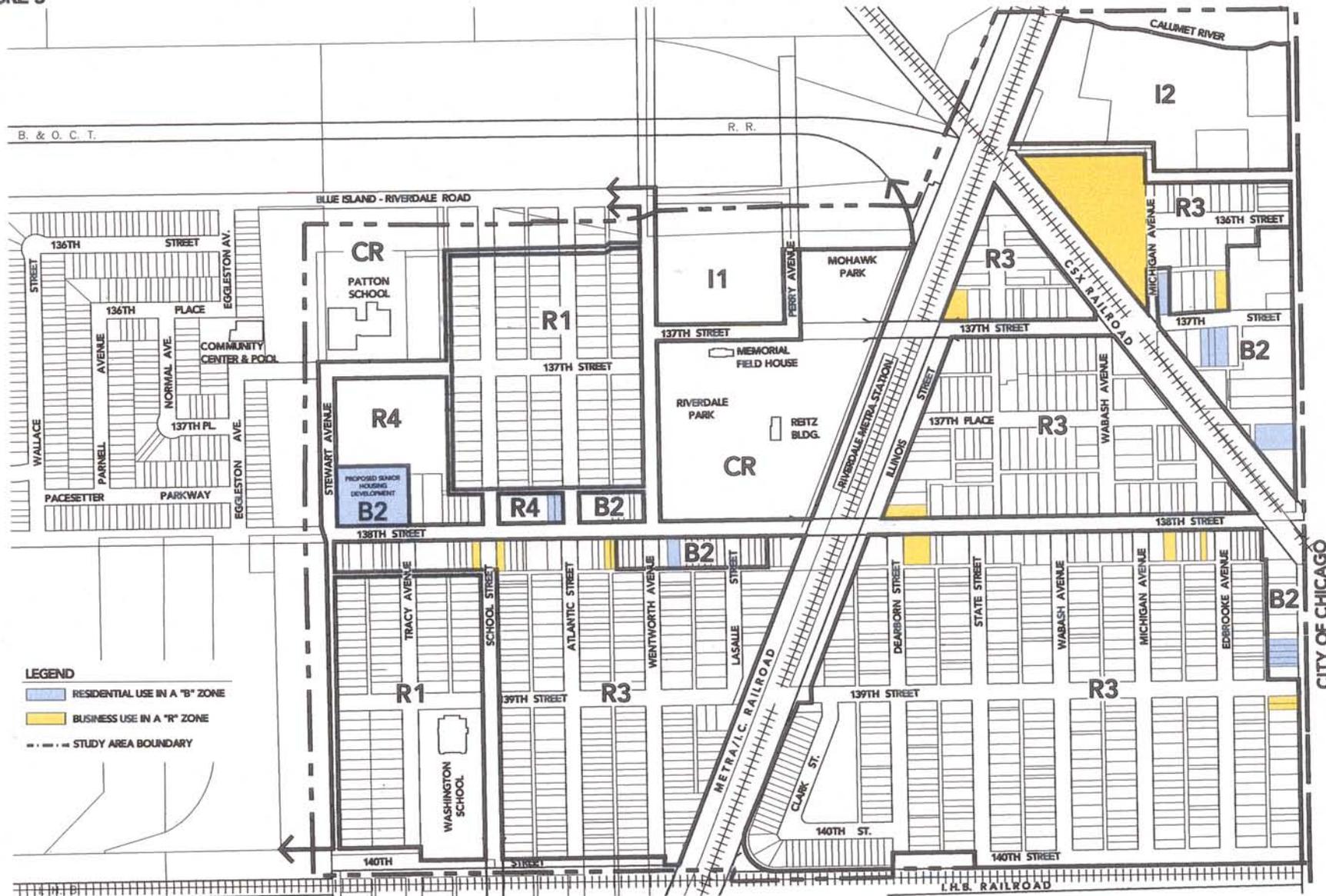
DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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FIGURE 5



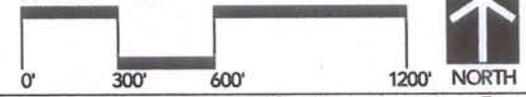
LEGEND
 [Blue Box] RESIDENTIAL USE IN A "B" ZONE
 [Yellow Box] BUSINESS USE IN A "R" ZONE
 [Dashed Line] STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

ZONING INCOMPATABILITY TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
 SCALE: 1" = 600'



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Infrastructure Systems

Note: most information summarized in this section was compiled by Infrastructure Engineering, Inc.

The information in this section provides a context for future development proposals, outlining the current deficiencies in some utility systems and the locations of key public utility lines that could potentially be impacted by redevelopment projects.

In 1990, 99.8% of housing units in the study area were on a public or private water system, 99.0% were hooked up to a public sewer, and over 99% had complete kitchen and bathroom facilities. Of all housing units in the area, 91.9% were using gas heating systems, and 92.2% had telephone service.

The study area encompasses the oldest part of Riverdale, and the water distribution and combined sewer systems date from as far back as 1927 in places. The sewer system is a combined system that is inadequate for current demand, as many single-family homes have been converted to multi-family use over the years. There are reports of basement flooding in the area during heavy rains. The Village of Riverdale, working with Robinson Engineering, has developed a seven-phase plan to upgrade the combined sewer system to a 60" system as funding allows. As this ongoing work is completed, adjacent water mains and affected streets, sidewalks and alleys will also be reconstructed. Currently, the Village is repairing sidewalks and increasing security lighting underneath the railroad viaducts at 137th Street and 138th Street. They are also engaged in an ongoing CDBG-funded effort to replace alleys in the neighborhood.

The following information summarizes the status of other utilities within the Riverdale TOD study area. This information, along with information regarding the water and sewer systems, is summarized graphically in Figure 6: Infrastructure Systems—Water and Sewer

Lines, Figure 7: Infrastructure Systems—Cable and Fiber Lines, and Figure 8: Infrastructure Systems—Gas Lines.

Ameritech Communications

Drawings provided by Ameritech show cables running between Michigan Avenue and State Street west under 136th Street (extended). The cables then extend further west under the Blue Island Riverdale roadway between State Street and Stewart Avenue, just north of the study area. Some of the information regarding the age, condition and maintenance history of cables is proprietary and would be against company policy to release. Information on current conditions, past maintenance, planned maintenance and future upgrades was not made available.

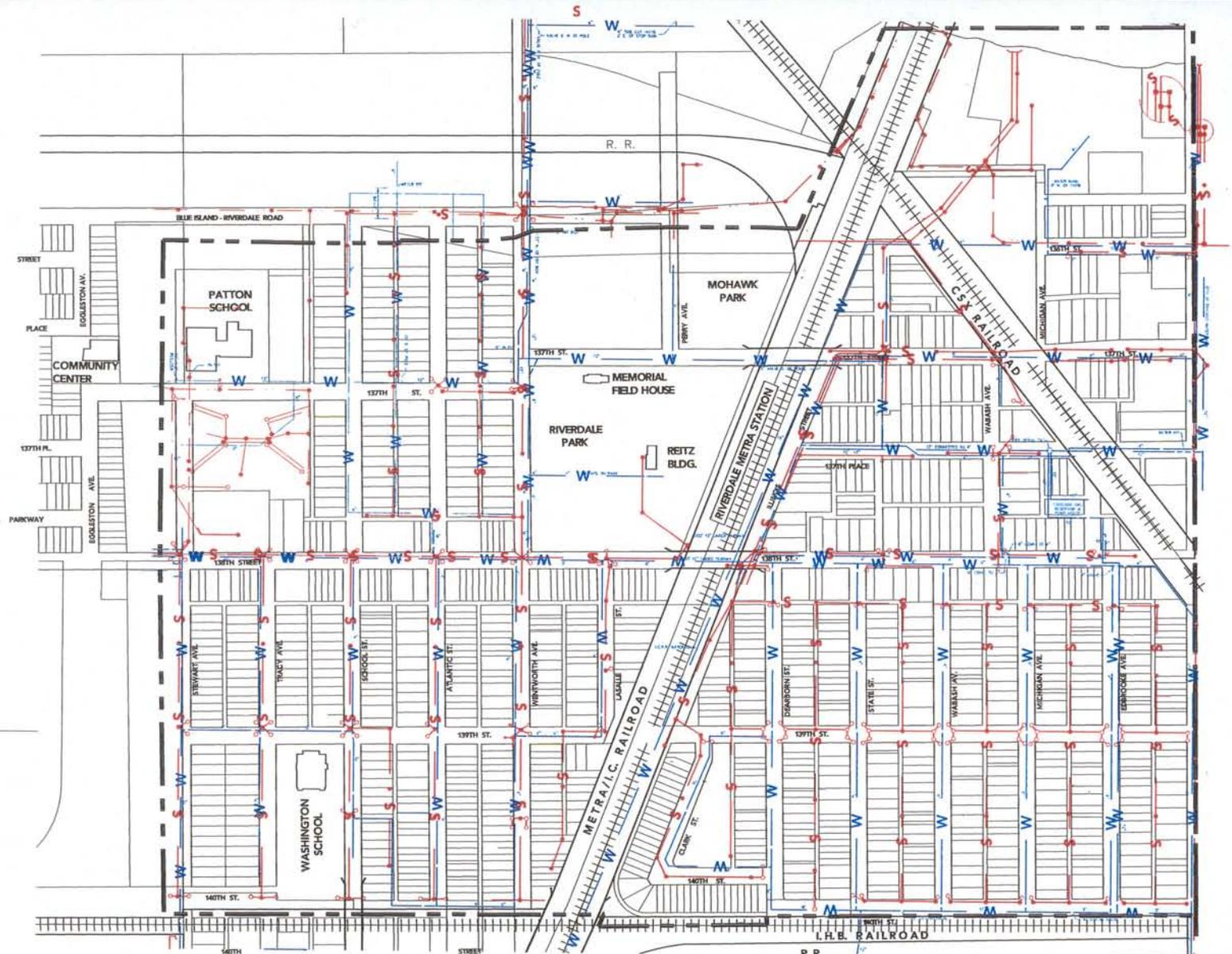
AT&T Cable

AT&T has contracted the services of C & S Contract Services, Inc. as a professional consultant to AT&T's long distance network to provide the locations for their long distance cable-mapping program. According to C & S, there are no long distance cables in the study area. For local AT&T cable-mapping locations, drawings were received from Media-One. According to the drawings, a cable line runs under Blue Island Riverdale Road and then east-southeast under the WorldCom site to 137th Street. The line then extends north under properties along Indiana Avenue. Information on current conditions, past maintenance, planned maintenance and future upgrades was not made available.

Worldwide Fiber

Fiber lines run north-south in the utility easement west of Stewart Avenue, and then east-west under Blue Island Riverdale Road from Stewart Avenue to Indiana Avenue. They also extend under State Street south from 136th Street (extended) south to 140th Street. Information on current conditions, past maintenance, planned maintenance and future upgrades was not made available.

FIGURE 6

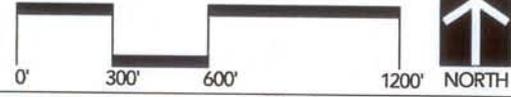


**INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS - WATER AND SEWER LINES
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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FIGURE 7



LEGEND

CABLE CABLE LINES (AMERITECH AND AT&T)

FIBER FIBER LINE (WORLDWIDE FIBER)

INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS - CABLE AND FIBER LINES

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

R. R.
DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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FIGURE 8



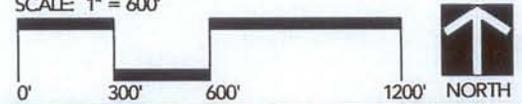
- LEGEND**
- **kg** LOW PRESSURE GAS LINE (KINDER MORGAN)
 - **gas** NIKOR GAS LINE
 - **hpg** HIGH PRESSURE GAS LINE (WEST SHORE)
 - **ngas** NITROGEN GAS LINE (PRAX AIR)

INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS - GAS LINES TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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Kinder Morgan Energies

Existing pipelines are 8" low-pressure gas lines that were installed in 1967. According to the drawings received from the Kinder Morgan Energies, the low-pressure gas lines extend under 140th Street from Stewart Avenue east to Indiana Avenue. Information on current conditions and past maintenance was not made available. No maintenance or upgrades are planned in the near future.

Nicor Gas

Gas lines run under most public streets in the study area. According to Nicor drawings, main pipelines serve the area from Blue Island Riverdale Road (extending south down Perry Avenue), and along 138th Street from Stewart Avenue east to the I.C. Railroad. In general, gas lines run north-south under streets in the northwest, southwest and southeast quadrants of the study area. They run east-west under 136th Street, 137th Street and 137th Place in the northeast quadrant. Information on current conditions and past maintenance was not made available. No maintenance or upgrades are planned in the near future.

Prax Air

Existing pipelines are 6" nitrogen gas lines with 600 psi. The pipelines were installed in 1944. Prax Air drawings show that the pipelines run under 142nd Street up to the Canadian National Railroad and then run in the alley between 140th Street and 141st Street to Indiana Avenue, not impacting the study area. Information on current conditions and past maintenance was not made available. There is maintenance or upgrading planned for the pipelines in the near future.

West Shore Pipe Line

There are 16" high-pressure gas lines within the study area. Maps indicate that the pipelines run under 141st Street from Stewart Avenue east to the Canadian National Railroad, then travel parallel to Canadian National Road from 141st Street to 140th Street, then run in the middle of 140th Street from the Canadian National Railroad to Indiana Avenue. This pipeline lies

south of the study area. Information on current conditions, past maintenance, planned maintenance and future upgrades was not made available.

In summary, current water and sewer systems are for the most part inadequate to handle development of a density higher than single-family detached housing. For this reason, the Village will need to consider the potential of front-funding infrastructure upgrades for the key redevelopment sites to be described later in this report, possibly utilizing TIF revenues, so that sites can be marketed as "development-ready." The Village's regular schedule of sewer line upgrades within the neighborhood should continue as currently projected, since many areas that will not experience increased densities also need upgraded service. Major cable and gas lines are for the most part not in critical locations that will be impacted by proposed redevelopment projects. Proximity to railroad rights-of-way should be "marketed" as an advantage for potential high-technology development sites in the area, as it can facilitate the extension of information technology infrastructure to serve the sites.

Transit Characteristics

Current Transit Service

The study area is served by the Metra Electric Line that terminates at University Park. The Riverdale station platform, upon which the study area is centered, extends between 137th Street on the north and 138th Street on the south, and consists of a single open-air platform between two tracks atop a solid embankment just west of, and parallel to, Illinois Street. There are a total of six tracks on the wide embankment. Entrance to the platform is gained from stairways leading from sidewalk level under the viaducts at 137th and 138th up to glass-enclosed turnstile and ticket vending vestibules at the platform level. As with all stations along the Metra Electric line, customer service is provided via a phone at each turnstile area, and tickets are purchased from vending machines. Signage for the station is minimal, as is signage for the parking lots.

Recommendations to enhance visibility and signage will be made as part of the *redevelopment strategies* to follow.



View of the sidewalk leading from the north commuter parking lot to the Riverdale Metra station entrance stairs underneath the viaduct at 137th Street.



View of the bottom of the stairs leading up to platform level from underneath the viaduct at 137th Street.

The Ivanhoe station (the next station to the south) is also within Riverdale, and located adjacent to the commercial/institutional core of the Village along 144th Street. The station, though similar in layout, has a stronger street presence along 144th Street because of an enclosed glazed vestibule at street level under the viaduct, more prominent signage and a visible platform level that extends out over 144th Street. For comparison purposes, data in this section are provided for both the Riverdale and Ivanhoe stations.

Pace service is available to Riverdale residents, with stops along Halsted (Route #352), at “flag stops” along Indiana and at a designated stop at 138th and Leyden, one block east of the Village boundary (Route #353).

Pace routes do not circulate through the Village. A new Pace turnaround facility will be constructed by Autumn of 2001 at 136th and Indiana (within the study area) to provide a location for drivers to rest and buses to turn around on the #353 route. Designated bus stops will also be created along Indiana to facilitate increased use of the #353 route by Riverdale residents. Service on this route is hourly north of 136th and less frequent going south. The turnaround will provide two shelters to protect waiting passengers from the elements.

The destination of a vast majority of riders of both Pace buses is the CTA station at 95th Street and the Dan Ryan expressway. Both routes come very close to several Metra stations further north and south of Riverdale. This is one reason that, at present, neither Pace route circulates within the Village of Riverdale to connect to either Metra station. Both routes are designed to remain on main arterial roadways to provide more schedule reliability, and Pace will usually attempt to avoid at-grade rail crossings along its routes for similar reasons. Pace staff have noted that some municipalities have arranged for “feeder” route service, often with smaller vehicles, to connect residents to primary Pace routes if resident demand warrants it and the municipality is willing to contribute financially to providing the service.

Metra Commuter Parking

There are two commuter parking lots located just east of the track embankment (between Illinois Street and the embankment). These off-street lots are owned by Metra and maintained by the Village, and are daily fee lots. The north lot, between 137th and 138th Streets, accommodates 121 spaces. The south lot, between 138th and 139th Streets, accommodates 115 spaces. Combined with 32 on-street spaces, the station area provides a total of 268 commuter parking spaces. In a 1999 parking lot survey, these spaces were 84% utilized. Metra also owns two unimproved lots one block further east on 137th Street that could potentially be used for future

commuter parking if site improvements were undertaken and signage and lighting were improved.

The Ivanhoe station provides two large off-street commuter lots east of the railroad embankment that accommodate 415 spaces. In a 1999 parking lot survey, these lots were 100% utilized. The Village currently, and temporarily, accommodates monthly permit parkers in two small parking lots near the Ivanhoe station (where commercial businesses are currently vacant).

Recommendations to improve commuter parking accommodations at the station are an important goal of the study and will be addressed in the *redevelopment strategies* to follow.

Transit Ridership

Weekly boardings in 1999 averaged 2,995 persons at Riverdale, and 6,290 persons at Ivanhoe. Typical weekday boardings in 1999 were 580 at Riverdale, and 1,201 at Ivanhoe. Approximately 90% of the boardings at both stations occurred during the morning rush period (6:15am to 8:30am), with a similar pattern of alightings during the evening rush period (4:30pm to 8:00pm).

The average weekday ridership on the Halsted Pace route is 5,613 (average Saturday ridership is lower at 4,259). Approximately 181 persons board buses going northbound or southbound between 147th Street and 138th Street, so it can be presumed that approximately that number may be originating from Riverdale daily. The average weekday ridership on the Indiana Avenue route is 3,398 (average Saturday ridership is lower at 1,632). Boarding data by stop is not available for the Indiana Avenue route.

Origins and Mode-of-Access of Metra Commuters

Note: Data presented for the “Riverdale station area” encompass a half-mile radius around the Riverdale Station (roughly approximating the study area), and data presented for the “Ivanhoe Station area” encompass a half-mile radius around the Ivanhoe station.

A driver origins survey at the Riverdale station in 1999 revealed that 21% of drivers are coming from within Riverdale, 33% are coming from Dolton (immediately to the east of Riverdale), 10% are coming from Calumet City (immediately to the east of Dolton), and 36% are coming from scattered other municipalities, primarily to the south and east.

1990 Census data for the two station areas indicates that 21.5% of workers were utilizing public transportation from the Riverdale station area, and 18.9% of workers from the Ivanhoe station area were utilizing public transportation. Table 6: Mode of Transportation to Work (1990) provides more detail, including the breakdown for other modes. Note that these percentages combine Metra and Pace use.

A 1999 Metra on-board survey revealed that at the Riverdale station, 30% of responding commuters indicated that they walked to the station, while the remaining 70% indicated that they drove or were dropped off. This is significant for two reasons. First, the percentage of commuters walking to the station exceeds the overall Metra system average of 23% by a considerable margin. Improvements to area sidewalks, lighting and wayfinding signage could further enhance this percentage. Secondly, approximately 375 persons are assumed to be driving or dropped off, while there are only 268 parking spaces available. This suggests that a significant number of commuters (upwards of 100 daily) may be getting dropped off and picked up at the station, despite the lack of a designated drop-off area. This phenomenon bodes well for future retail potential at the station, as commuters waiting for a pick-up may be attracted to patronize nearby retailers while waiting.

TABLE 6:

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK (1990)

	Riverdale Station (137th/138th St.)		Ivanhoe Station (144th St.)	
	#	%	#	%
	All Modes	1,521	100.0%	3,153
Driving Alone	931	61.2%	2,013	63.8%
Carpool	198	13.0%	418	13.3%
Public Transport*	327	21.5%	597	18.9%
Walking	40	2.6%	77	2.4%
Other Means	14	0.9%	28	0.9%
Working at Home	11	0.7%	20	0.6%

*Metra or Pace

Note: percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

Source: Claritas Inc.

4: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

Three opportunities for public input into the planning process were provided during the study. Key Stakeholder Interviews conducted in Riverdale on January 18, 2001, involved approximately thirty-five individuals representing the following stakeholder groups: residents, property owners, business owners, realtors, Village departments, the school district, the park district, the library, real estate developers, and a local non-profit organization. A First Public Forum was held on February 22, 2001. At the interviews and public forum general issues and concerns regarding the area were solicited, as well as opportunities for area improvements. A Community Workshop and Second Public Forum were held on March 7 and March 8, 2001. Approximately twenty-five persons participated in a series of working sessions to provide feedback regarding initial concept plan ideas during the Workshop.

Planning Issues

The issues that were raised and discussed during the Key Stakeholder Interviews and Public Forums are summarized in several categories below:

General Issues

- The “Centennial” area has historic significance to long-time residents
- Industrial traffic and activity is generally isolated from residential areas
- Clear neighborhood edges exist along utility easements and rail lines (both positive and negative)
- Land uses are mixed along major corridors (138th, Indiana)
- Surface rail lines restrict pedestrian and vehicle movement
- Landmark buildings need repair (Old Calumet Hotel, former theatre)

Transportation Issues

- Metra owns scattered property east of the station for parking expansion
- Lack of transit connections within the Village that would make amenities more accessible (forest preserve, library, etc.)
- At-grade rail crossing at 138th/Indiana makes intersection inefficient
- No sense of “arrival” or identity at the Riverdale Metra station
- Difficult to drop off passengers at the Riverdale Metra station
- Riverdale Metra station and parking lots perceived as unsafe (lighting, lot layout)
- Potential for a future Metra station in Dolton as part of proposed Southeast service (could draw away commuters who currently use the Riverdale station)
- Where traffic congestion occurs in the neighborhood: at School/138th, near the Metra station at Illinois/138th, at the railroad crossing at Indiana/138th, at the Acme Metals entrance on Perry Avenue, at 137th and the CSX tracks, at 137th and Indiana (near the bank)

Commercial/Retail Issues

- Key redevelopment sites are available (former bowling alley site, former Miller Marine)
- Potential redevelopment sites are all within TIF districts
- Fiber-optic lines exist within the study area
- Success of future commercial dependent upon level of traffic generated (walking and driving)
- Lack of buffering from residential areas
- No cohesive image, businesses are dispersed
- Existing retail in study area is struggling (run-down appearance, lack of traffic, high tax rates)

- Lack of retail choices within the Village (few restaurants, no pharmacy or grocery store)
- Where retail businesses should be located, according to meeting attendees: at 137th/Illinois, at the Miller Marine site, at the former bowling alley site, across from the strip mall/liquor store
- Where residents go outside of the neighborhood: the library on 144th Street, shopping in Dolton (Walgreens, Jewel, Ames), shopping in Orland Park, shopping in Calumet City (River Oaks), shopping in South Holland (Walts, Aldi)
- Which other commercial areas meeting attendees think Riverdale should emulate: Flossmoor (because there is a mixture of stores and restaurants), Homewood (because there is commercial close to both multi-family and single-family housing choices)

Housing Issues

- Proposed 132-unit assisted living facility at 138th and Stewart
- Habitat for Humanity renovations on 137th Street
- RRC renovations and new construction on 137th Street
- Strong code enforcement policies (for rental units and units for sale)
- Long-time residents feel Riverdale is very “suburban” despite its proximity to Chicago
- Some HUD homes exist, but Riverdale appears to have fewer foreclosures than some other south suburbs
- New residents are predominantly coming from the City of Chicago (both renters and buyers)
- Aging, deteriorated housing concentrated in northeast quadrant of study area
- Pacesetter complex is a de-stabilizing influence on the station area (75% rental, 94% turnover rate at adjacent Patton School); improvement plan is underway
- Absentee landlords (rental investment properties)
- Home values lower in the study area than in the rest of the Village

- Housing that is over-priced for the surrounding market is difficult to sell
- Home sales appear to be slower in the study area than in the rest of the Village

Urban Design Issues

- Established street trees on most residential streets
- Open space at utility easements
- New light fixtures and sidewalk upgrades at 137th Street (“Centennial” area)
- Lack of landscaping and streetscaping at Metra parking lots and along major corridors
- Railroad embankments and rights-of-way are unkempt
- No visual buffer exists along IHB or CSX tracks (tracks at grade)
- “Hard” edges at Riverdale Park are unwelcoming (fence at perimeter, few perimeter plantings)
- Areas considered “most attractive” by meeting attendees: Riverdale Park
- Areas considered “least attractive” by meeting attendees: the northwest corner of School/138th, the bowling alley (now demolished), the liquor store on 138th at Atlantic, homes on the west side of State Street north of 137th, the Old Calumet hotel building, the site of the future Community Resource Center (now under construction), the house south of Heritage Community Bank on Indiana, the Miller Marine site at 138th/Indiana (slated for demolition), and the buildings south of Miller Marine on Indiana

Community/Public Facilities Issues

- Village plans a Community Resource Center and medical clinic at Wabash Avenue and 137th Place
- New police station planned near 138th and Halsted (west of study area)
- Sidewalk upgrades occurring over time (approximately 20% of corner ramps completed)

- Aging infrastructure, designed for single-family densities (upgrading about two blocks per year)
- Unimproved rights-of-way along CSX and IHB railroad tracks, at utility easements, near WorldCom
- Incomplete sidewalk system
- Some alleys not in good condition
- Littering is a problem around the station and retail businesses
- Where children play in the neighborhood: Riverdale Park and Washington School playground
- Where crime occurs in the neighborhood: near the liquor store and strip mall at 138th/Atlantic, around Patton School and at the Pacesetter complex (just west of the study area)

Potential Plan Opportunities

Ideas arising during the Key Stakeholder Interviews and Public Forums regarding improvement opportunities within the study area are summarized below:

General Opportunities

- Build upon the comparative advantage of station proximity
- Build upon the area's history
- Minimize incompatible land use frictions
- Minimize vacancies (reoccupy or replace)
- Use commuters as an "economic engine" for retail
- Increase the population in the station area

Transportation Opportunities

- Improve visibility and condition of the station facility
- Minimize traffic conflicts in the station area
- Develop commuter facilities that support local retail and services (generate foot and auto traffic)
- Maximize potential Metra ridership
- Pursue shared parking arrangements
- Create transit connections within the Village

- Create a bypass at 138th Street / Indiana Avenue intersection if feasible

Commercial/Retail Opportunities

- Build upon available redevelopment sites ("catalyst" projects)
- Provide needed convenience retail and services
- Build upon the WorldCom facility and the potential for fiber-optic line easements
- South Suburban Tax Reactivation Program (TRP)

Housing Opportunities

- Develop station-oriented new housing
- Increase homeownership opportunities
- Isolate future traffic increases from residential streets
- Build upon proposed senior housing project
- Build upon ongoing renovation and construction efforts (Habitat and RRC)

Urban Design Opportunities

- Improve perception of the station area at major entry points
- Improve the appearance of major public rights-of-way
- Upgrade utility easements and railroad edges
- Create an cohesive "image" for the area

Community/Public Facilities Opportunities

- Build upon the planned Community Resource Center/medical clinic
- Create a stronger sense of community (within sub-neighborhoods?)
- Maintain and increase services for a diverse population (youth, elderly, young parents, etc.)
- Increase use of Riverdale Park for community events and programs

Potential Plan Strategies

After the Key Stakeholder Interviews and First Public Forum, the following list of potential plan strategies was developed and presented at the Community Workshop for review and discussion:

- Create a modern, safe, well-lit station facility
- Expand and improve Metra parking lots
- Assess current level of Pace bus service and connection opportunities within the Village
- Encourage multi-modal use of the station (walking, biking, drop-off, driving)
- Link commercial activity to improved station traffic patterns
- Concentrate commercial in nodes with good access and visibility
- Actively seek commuter-oriented retail/services: day care, dry cleaners, restaurant, carry out, coffee/snack shop, financial/tax services, pharmacy, groceries, bill payment center/currency exchange, shoe repair, video rental, auto repair, etc.
- Pursue opportunities for medium-density residential and mixed-use development
- Carefully create density “by design”
- Encourage housing rehabilitation where feasible, and infill with single-family homes where appropriate
- Upgrade residential area edges (along tracks and utility easements)
- Use “Centennial” theme to create an area identity
- Add landscaping and streetscaping improvements along major corridors
- Study feasibility of a bypass at 138th Street / Indiana Avenue to relieve congestion
- Utilize external resources to leverage Village’s investments
- Adopt-A-Block for litter control and railroad edges

5: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The basic elements upon which to build a successful transit-oriented neighborhood are in place within the Riverdale Metra station area: several convenience-related businesses, both single-family and multi-family housing choices, a community park, and a planned community resource center. However, despite being located in close proximity, these key elements do not currently relate well to the station or to one another, and are in an area that is not considered attractive or secure. The plan must address this perception that the area is unsafe while identifying mechanisms to tie the area together, increase the visibility and accessibility of area businesses, and upgrade the quality of both the public and private realms.

Transit-Oriented Development Potential in Riverdale

It is important to note that the TOD concept plan to follow attempts to be realistic in assessing and capturing the market potential of the study area. TOD cannot *create* a market by itself, but can significantly *enhance* a market. While meeting attendees were quite concerned about the lack of significant retail development (and resulting tax revenue) within Riverdale, the physical characteristics of the study area are such that large-scale retail is not likely to occur in the vicinity of the Metra station. The focus of business activity in the Village is currently at 144th Street, and major chain retailers who might be willing to consider a site with less than ideal regional visibility will consider 144th Street preferable to 138th Street. New retail and service businesses along 138th Street are more likely to be small in scale.

Previous plans for Riverdale have reached the same general conclusion: Halsted Street frontage has the greatest potential for significant retail development within the Village, and some “chain” retail at a smaller scale might be possible along Indiana Avenue.

However, commercial development adjacent to the Metra station at 137th/138th Streets will almost certainly be limited to commuter-oriented and resident-oriented convenience retail and services (such as dry cleaners, coffee shops, etc.).

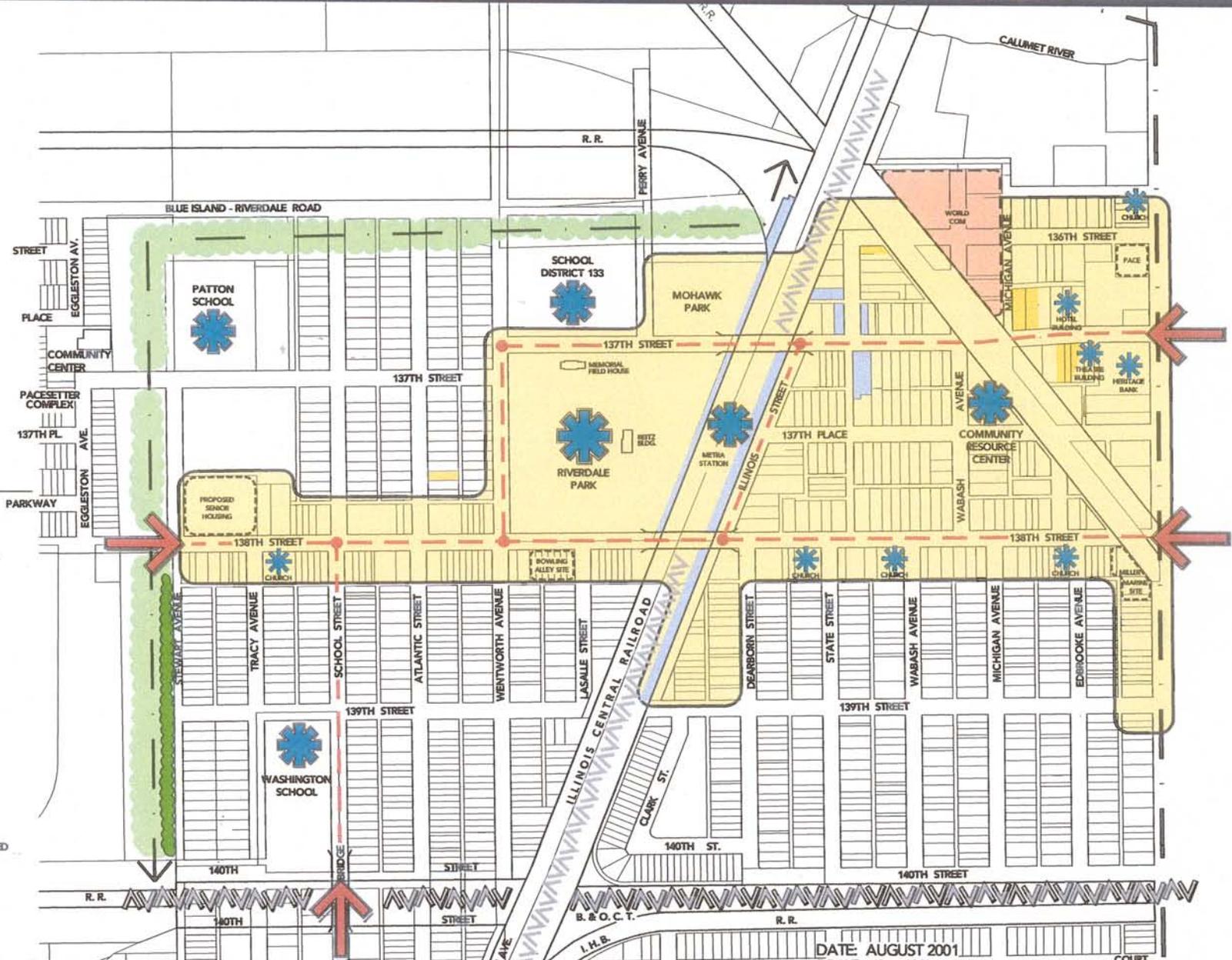
Figure 9: Issues and Opportunities summarizes in a graphic format the primary factors the TOD plan addresses. Because of the concentration of land use and zoning frictions and deterioration in the northeast quadrant, coupled with the concentration of institutional and historic resources in the same area, the plan focuses on this area in detail. Any significant future commercial, housing or employment-generating redevelopment will likely occur in this area. Some minor aesthetic issues will be addressed in the remainder of the study area, but significant physical changes are not needed in these solid residential quadrants.

The Village has three TIF Districts in place in the area that, in addition to seeking funds from outside sources, will facilitate implementation of the plan recommendations to follow. Plan implementation may involve the removal of some sound structures, possibly through eminent domain procedures, in order to effectively address areas of weakness. A proactive implementation effort will demonstrate a commitment to the area, sending a strong positive signal to residents and the development community alike. The goal will be to achieve early successes that can stimulate further redevelopment and encourage more direct involvement from the private sector.

FIGURE 9

LEGEND

-  PLAN FOCUS AREA
-  KEY REDEVELOPMENT OR IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
-  KEY TRAFFIC ROUTE
-  NEIGHBORHOOD ENTRY POINT
-  NEIGHBORHOOD ANCHOR/ASSET
-  "SOFT" EDGE
-  "HARD" EDGE
-  PHYSICAL BARRIER
-  METRA-OWNED PROPERTY
-  NEW OR REHABILITATED HOUSING
-  UTILITY LINES



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'



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6: TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GOALS

To realize the revitalization of the Riverdale Metra station area and an associated increase in the use of transit facilities, the Village, area businesses, Metra and Pace should combine efforts and aim to achieve the following *goals* and related *strategies*. They are separated into five general categories: Commercial Development, Housing, Transit Facilities, Public Realm and Quality of Life. The strategies will be described in detail in the next chapter.

A. Commercial Development

GOAL 1:

Provide needed and desired retail and services for both commuters and local residents.

- e. Acquire, prepare and market commercial development sites.
- f. Develop a retail center adjacent to the Riverdale Metra station.
- g. Solicit a developer/operator for a new day care center near the Riverdale Metra station.
- h. Assist property owners with rehabilitation of existing viable commercial properties.

GOAL 2:

Capture the market potential provided by Metra commuters to support local commercial enterprises.

- c. Increase awareness of area businesses through marketing and promotion to commuters and local residents.
- d. Ensure the visibility and accessibility of station area businesses.

GOAL 3:

Provide employment opportunities within the station area.

- b. Bring in technology-related businesses along Indiana Avenue north of 137th Street.

B. Housing

GOAL 1:

Provide new housing near the Metra station to attract a commuter-oriented population base.

- d. Acquire, prepare and market residential development sites.
- e. Develop new medium-density housing on selected sites.
- f. Convert non-viable commercial properties along 138th Street to residential use.

GOAL 2:

Stabilize existing housing stock where feasible to maintain affordability.

- b. Encourage appropriate rehabilitation of existing residential properties in the station area.

C. Transit Facilities

GOAL 1:

Make the station more inviting and easy to use.

- c. Undertake improvements to existing commuter parking lots.
- d. Improve commuter amenities at the sidewalk and platform level.

GOAL 2:

Increase multi-modal accessibility of the station area.

- e. Increase pedestrian accessibility between the station and adjacent areas.
- f. Provide adequate and convenient parking and “kiss and ride” areas.
- g. Improve bicycle access to the station area.
- h. Assess the feasibility of establishing a Pace bus route through Riverdale.

D. Public Realm

GOAL 1:

Tie the neighborhood together with a unified visual theme.

- d. Implement coordinated streetscape and landscape improvements within public rights-of-way.
- e. Implement landscape upgrades at railroad rights-of-way and utility easements.
- f. Enforce design standards for renovations and new construction that respect the existing context.

GOAL 2:

Improve traffic flow into the area and along 138th Street.

- d. Reduce congestion at at-grade railroad crossings where feasible.
- e. Ensure that new development in the station vicinity does not create congestion problems.
- f. Accommodate bicycle routes through the area in cooperation with regional efforts.

GOAL 3:

Create and enhance public open spaces.

- e. Implement Riverdale Park improvements.
- f. Create a neighborhood park at 138th Street and School Street.
- g. Create a community gathering space east of the Riverdale Metra station.
- h. Provide pedestrian comfort amenities near CSX railroad crossings.

E. Quality of Life

GOAL 1:

Increase the sense of security in the station area. Increase the police presence at the Riverdale Metra station and in Riverdale Park.

- d. Eliminate physically isolated and under-lit locations during redesign of the station area.

GOAL 2:

Educate residents and visitors about the history of Riverdale.

- c. Create a walking tour and printed information regarding the historic resources in the area.
- d. Stabilize the exterior of the Old Calumet Hotel, restoring its historic appearance, if feasible.

GOAL 3:

Increase community involvement in the neighborhood.

- d. Organize community members to undertake additional youth programs.
- e. Organize volunteer efforts to address litter control and maintain landscaped areas.
- f. Consider establishing a YMCA or community center within the neighborhood.

7: REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

In order to meet the *goals* outlined in Chapter Six and realize the desired future for the Riverdale station area, the following *redevelopment strategies* were developed. These strategies serve as the organizing device for specific recommendations and *key projects* that are elaborated upon in the descriptions and plans to follow. The strategies, like the goals, fall into five general categories: Commercial Development, Housing, Transit Facilities, Public Realm and Quality of Life.

The *key projects* described here seek to implement the strategies by a variety of methods. These include making the area more visually appealing and more accessible, creating a variety of destinations near the station, and increasing housing choices in the Village by providing medium density housing surrounding the station.

Many of the strategies and projects described below are summarized graphically in [Figure 10: Concept Plan](#) and [Figure 11: Focus Area Plan](#) on the following pages.

A. Commercial Development

1-a. Acquire, prepare and market commercial development sites.

Acquisition efforts should initially focus on tax delinquent and vacant properties within the study area, prior to pursuing properties in active use. As [Figure 10: Concept Plan](#) indicates, future commercial development should occur in concentrated zones along 138th Street and Indiana Avenue. Regulatory changes to reflect the Village's priorities, improve land use relationships and ensure design quality will be needed, with the long term use prospects of such facilities as the Ameritech building and Heritage Community Bank facilities being considered.

Once sites are consolidated and prepared, including potential front-funding of infrastructure upgrades, aggressive marketing by the Village or its representative(s) will be needed, both for specific development opportunities and in general, at such events as the annual International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) convention. Government agencies who may be seeking sites or buildings should also be solicited.

1-b. Develop a retail center adjacent to the Riverdale Metra station.

A site for a small retail center of approximately 5,000 square feet, to accommodate 3 or 4 small businesses, should be created just east of the railroad embankment by realigning Illinois Street to align with Dearborn Street as it intersects 138th Street. This will require the removal of three homes and one commercial building currently facing Illinois Street just north of 138th Street, to allow for relocation of the southernmost section of the current commuter parking lot to the east side of Illinois Street. A detailed site plan and illustrative sketch of this project are presented as [Figure 12: Key Project—New Station Retail Center Plan](#) and [Figure 13: Key Project—New Station Retail Center](#) on the following pages.

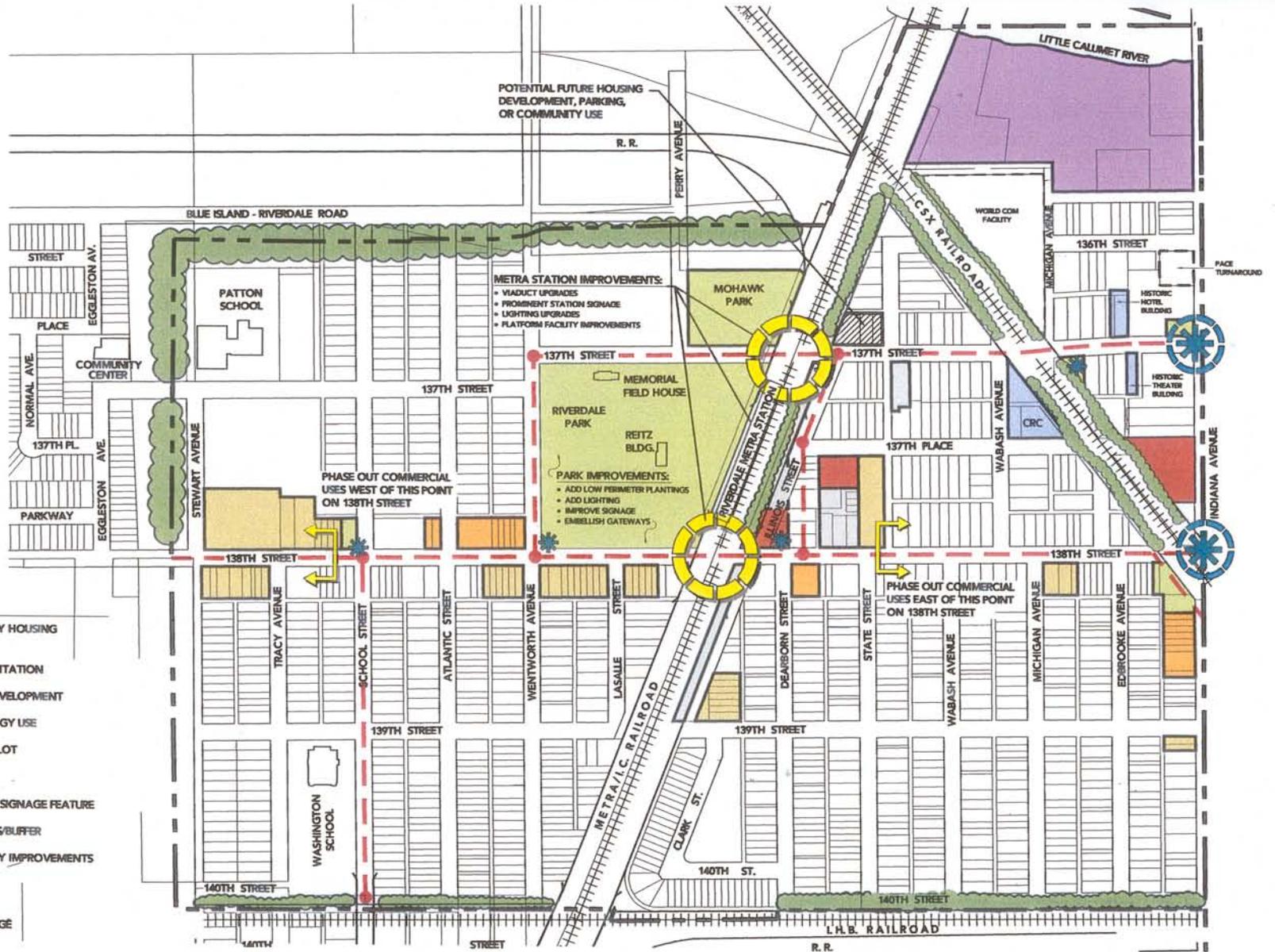
The Village should take the lead in establishing a public/private partnership with a retail developer to pursue this project, ensuring that it is of high quality and creates a safe and pedestrian-oriented environment. The design should suggest a relationship with the Metra station facility to strengthen its commuter orientation. Tenants should be convenience oriented, such as a coffee shop, a newsstand and a dry cleaner.

1-c. Solicit a developer/operator for a new day care center near the Riverdale Metra station.

As indicated on [Figure 12: Key Project—New Station Retail Center Plan](#), a site should be created and marketed just north of the new

FIGURE 10

- LEGEND**
-  NEW MEDIUM-DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
 -  COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION
 -  NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
 -  NEW HIGH TECHNOLOGY USE
 -  COMMUTER PARKING LOT
 -  PARK/OPEN SPACE
 -  LANDSCAPE/IDENTITY SIGNAGE FEATURE
 -  LANDSCAPE UPGRADES/BUFFER
 -  METRA STATION ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS
 -  KEY TRAFFIC ROUTE
 -  VILLAGE ENTRY SIGNAGE

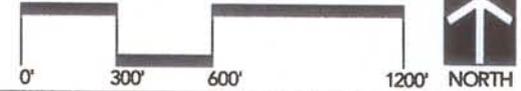


CONCEPT PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'

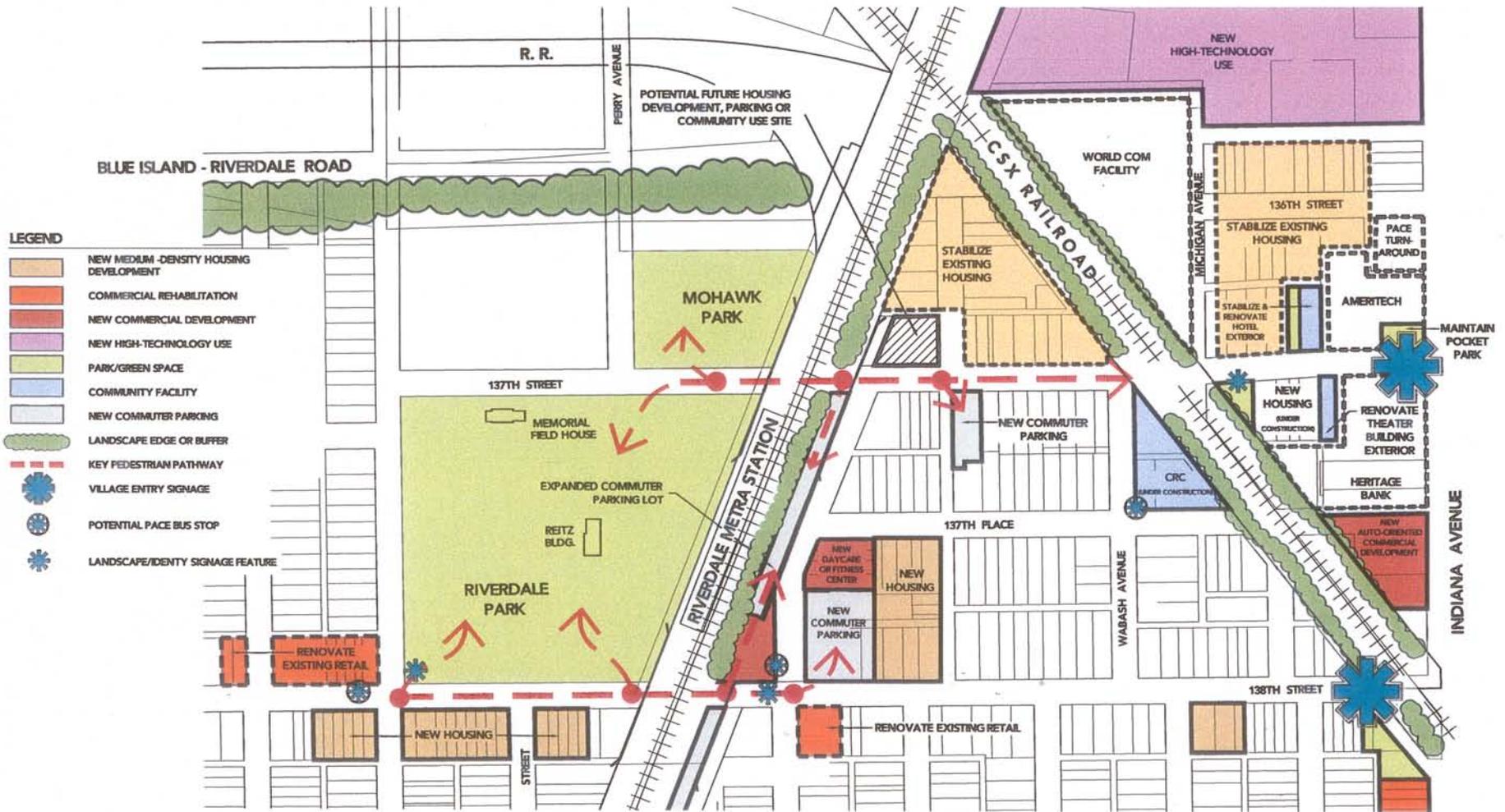


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FIGURE 11

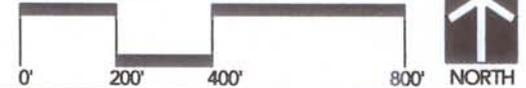


FOCUS AREA PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

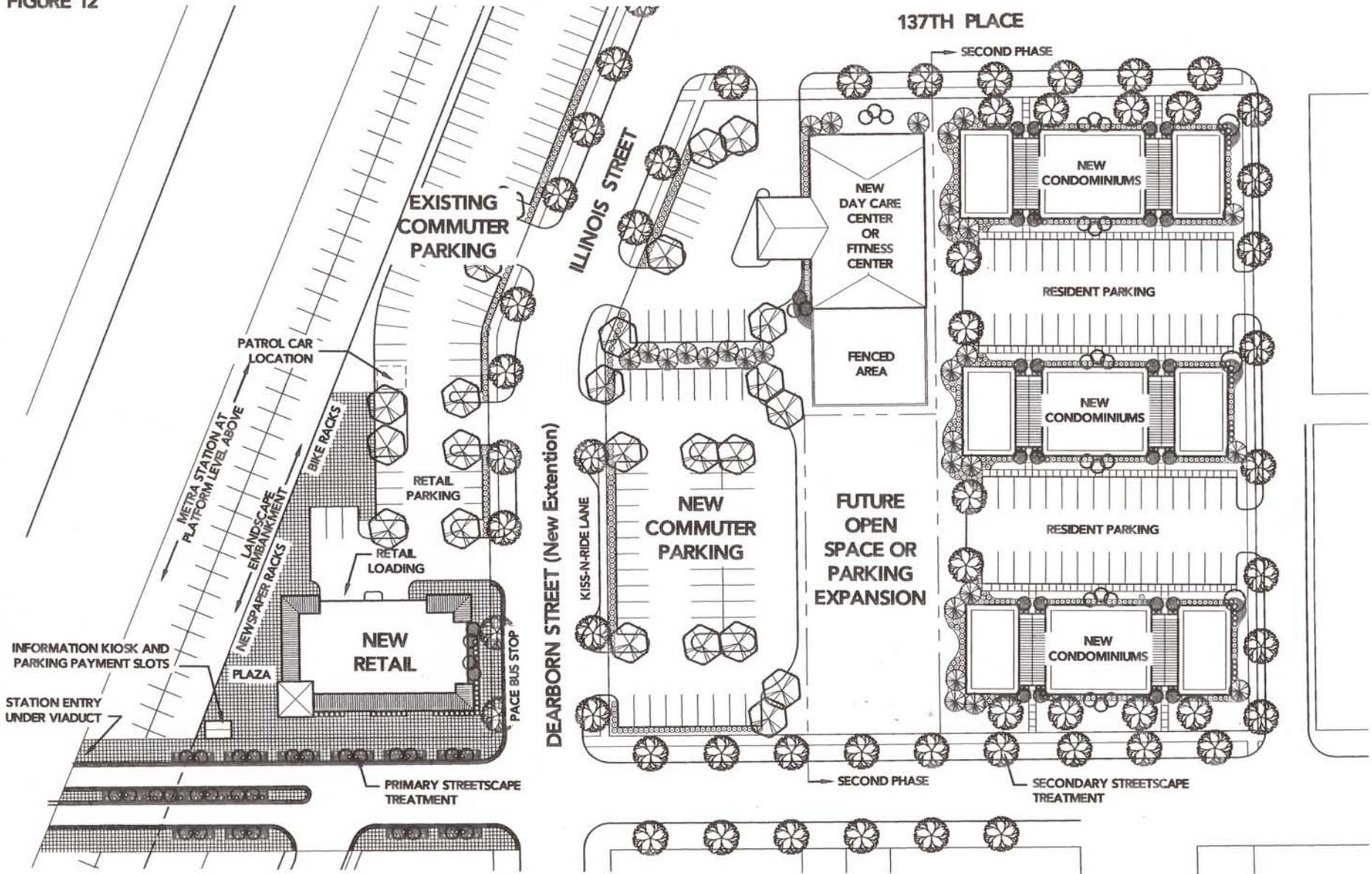
DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 400'



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FIGURE 12

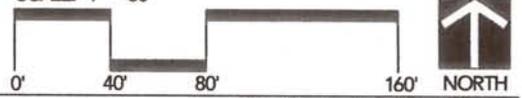


KEY PROJECT: NEW STATION RETAIL CENTER PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 80'



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FIGURE 13



The retail center is a separate structure adjacent to the railroad embankment with frontage on 138th and Illinois Streets, providing approximately 5,000SF of convenience retail and service business space. Illinois Street is realigned to create a larger site adjacent to the tracks. The retail spaces will attract commuters who must pass by the storefronts to reach the commuter parking lots, but can also operate when the station is closed. The design of the center will reflect the station design at platform level to tie them together, and will be pedestrian-friendly in character.

VIEW LOOKING WEST TOWARD STATION AT 138TH STREET
KEY PROJECT: NEW STATION RETAIL CENTER
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

SCALE: NTS: 1/4"=1'-0" DATE: AUGUST 2001
CAMIROS

commuter parking lot mentioned above, to accommodate a new day care center or health club across the street from the new retail center. This will require removal of four homes currently facing Illinois Street just south of 137th Place. Either would be a desirable addition to the neighborhood from the standpoint of both local residents and commuters. A shared parking arrangement with adjacent commuter lots might also be developed to address evening and weekend parking needs, should the site develop as a health club.

1-d. Assist property owners with rehabilitation of existing viable commercial properties.

Building and site improvement grants or loans should be marketed to area commercial property owners, along with guidance as to desired improvements, to enhance the appearance of existing buildings. Design criteria have been prepared as part of this study, and will be useful in providing guidance to property owners.

2-a. Increase awareness of area businesses through marketing and promotion to commuters and local residents.

Marketing assistance should be provided to existing and future businesses, publicizing the multiple businesses in the area in a coordinated manner via mail and print media. Tasteful advertising for local businesses should also be installed at the Metra station, perhaps on an information kiosk that includes an area map, to increase awareness of nearby conveniences among commuters. Key to the success of this effort will be ensuring that businesses are open early in the mornings and/or late in the evenings, when commuters are arriving at and departing the station area.

2-b. Ensure the visibility and accessibility of station area businesses.

Streetscape and landscape improvements, as well as adjustments to the circulation network, should bear in mind the importance of ensuring that commercial businesses are readily accessible and highly visible from main thoroughfares. Also, consideration should be given to allowing commuter lots to accommodate parking for area

businesses and community events during evenings and weekends, as activity in the area increases.

3-a. Bring in new technology-related businesses along Indiana Avenue north of 137th Street.

The P.M.Ag site, just south of the Calumet River and north of 136th Street, is a prime location for a new technology-dependent business enterprise due to its adjacency to railroad rights-of-way that could accommodate telecommunications infrastructure. The site, when viewed from Indiana Avenue, should maintain its well-buffered appearance by careful maintenance of existing mature trees as the site is renovated.

B. Housing

1-a. Acquire, prepare and market residential development sites.

Acquisition efforts should initially focus on tax-delinquent and vacant properties within the study area, prior to pursuing properties in active use. As the concept plan will indicate, future residential development should occur on sites within a few blocks of the Riverdale Metra station that are readily accessible to 138th Street, to minimize traffic impacts on single-family areas. Regulatory changes to reflect the Village's priorities, improve land use relationships, increase allowable density and ensure quality design will be needed.

Once sites are consolidated and prepared, including potential front-funding of infrastructure upgrades, aggressive marketing by the Village or its representative(s) will be needed, both for specific development opportunities and in general.

1-b. Develop new medium-density housing on selected sites.

A diversity of housing types should be created to accommodate such potential homeowners as: young single professionals, families with young children, and empty nesters. These households are more likely to find transit accessibility appealing and own fewer cars. An example of a condominium infill project is presented on the

following pages as Figure 14: Key Project—New Condominium Housing Plan and Figure 15: Key Project—New Condominium Housing. This scenario envisions a new condominium development on the former bowling alley site across 138th Street from Riverdale Park. Townhomes and condominiums should be developed for purchase, not rental. The area already contains several rental properties in the vicinity of the station.

The Village should take the lead in establishing a public/private partnerships with residential developers to pursue housing projects, ensuring that they are of high quality and create a safe and pedestrian-friendly environment. Projects should incorporate green space on-site and provide adequate off-street parking for residents and visitors.

1-c. Convert non-viable commercial properties along 138th Street to residential use.

Changes to the Village's zoning map should be undertaken to facilitate concentrating commercial uses along 138th Street in the few blocks east and west of the Riverdale Metra station, and transitioning other commercial properties to residential use over the long term (see Figure 10). Adaptive reuse or demolition and replacement of vacant commercial properties in these areas should then be encouraged.

2-a. Encourage appropriate rehabilitation of existing residential properties in the station area.

Ongoing efforts to renovate previously vacant homes and foster homeownership opportunities should be strongly supported in the future, including those of Habitat for Humanity and the Regional Redevelopment Corporation (RRC). In addition, existing grants and/or low-interest loans that are available to homeowners and landlords who are interested in renovating their own properties to a high level of quality should be continued, and expanded as feasible.

C. Transit Facilities

1-a. Undertake improvements to existing commuter parking lots.

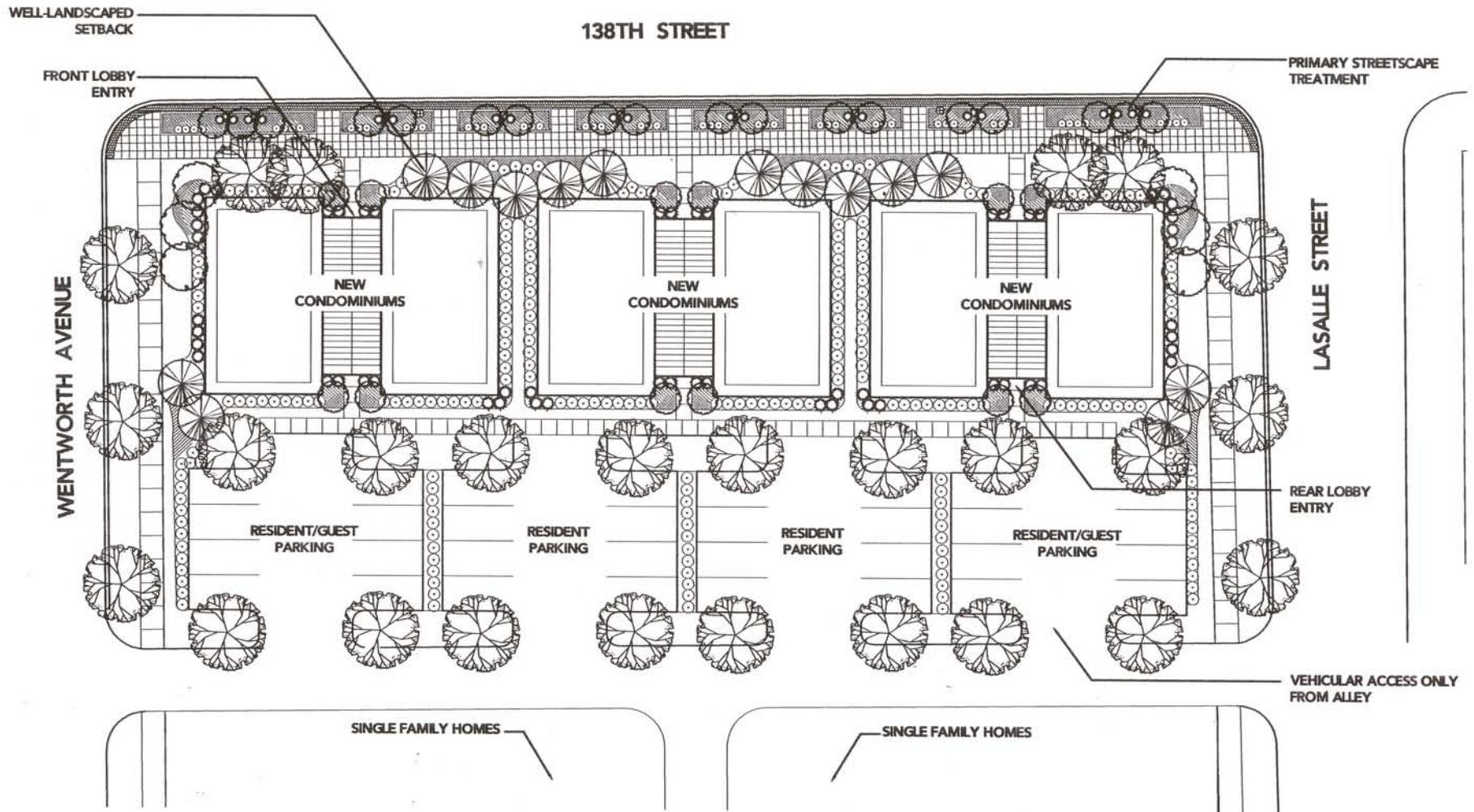
In conjunction with the development of the retail center just east of the station, improvements to existing commuter lots to remain should be undertaken. Improvements should result in good traffic flow while accommodating safe pedestrian movement to station entrances. Lighting should be increased to provide better visibility and a greater sense of security. Large protective canopies should be provided over payboxes in a design that coordinates with the type used at the Ivanhoe station (see 1-b below). Additionally, wayfinding and informational signage should be provided, including a kiosk with Metra system information and an area map and business directory (see Figure 12 and Figure 13).

Signage should be upgraded from the Metra standard, and should be coordinated with the other design elements used in the area. The Village should seek assistance, or solicit ideas through a competition, to design station signage that is both acceptable to Metra and in keeping with the desired character of the area.

1-b. Improve commuter amenities at the sidewalk and platform level.

Improvements to the undersides of the railroad viaducts and station entries should include additional lighting, low maintenance finishes and decorative enhancements to make this space safer and more inviting. Walls and ceilings should be sealed and painted and the lower walls clad in glazed brick. Station-related amenities such as newspaper boxes, parking lot fee machines, bike racks and informational signage should be consolidated in this location, reflecting elements used at the Ivanhoe station and the palette used in nearby streetscape improvements. Figure 16: Key Project—Viaduct and Station Entry Improvements provides an illustrative sketch of these proposed upgrades.

FIGURE 14



KEY PROJECT: NEW CONDOMINIUM HOUSING PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 40'



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FIGURE 15



VIEW LOOKING EAST ALONG 138TH STREET FROM WENTWORTH AVENUE

**KEY PROJECT: NEW CONDOMINIUM HOUSING
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

This prototype infill housing project will accommodate such potential homeowners as: young single professionals; families with young children; and, empty nesters who wish to remain in Riverdale. These households are more likely to find transit accessibility appealing and will own fewer cars. Parking lot access is from the rear alley, allowing the streetscape in front to be uninterrupted and pedestrian-friendly. High quality materials are utilized, and design details reflect a residential scale.

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

SCALE: NTS. PLAN DATE: AUGUST 2001

CAMIROS

FIGURE 16

Improvements to the undersides of the railroad viaducts and station entries include additional lighting, low maintenance finishes and decorative enhancements to make this space safer and more inviting. Walls and ceilings are sealed and painted and lower walls are clad in glazed brick. Station-related amenities such as newspaper boxes, parking lot, fee machines, bike racks and informational signage are consolidated in this location, utilizing elements that reflect the materials used at the Ivanhoe station and the palette used in nearby streetscape improvements.



VIEW UNDER VIADUCT AT 138TH STREET

KEY PROJECT: VIADUCT AND STATION ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

SCALE NTS. PLANDOE AUGUST 2011

CAMIROS

Chicago's Transit Oriented Development Study

Improvements should be undertaken to the station stairs and turnstile enclosures, as well as the shelters on the platform. The design of these elements should reflect the design and quality established at the Ivanhoe station. A “tower” element similar to that used at Ivanhoe should be placed at the southern end of the platform for maximum visibility of the station. Lighting at the platform level, turnstile enclosure, and stairs should also be increased.

2-a. Increase pedestrian accessibility between the station and adjacent areas.

Where sidewalks throughout the neighborhood are in disrepair they should be replaced. In addition to creating a complete sidewalk network, crosswalk striping and warning signs should be placed at key crossing points along 138th Street, Illinois Street, School Street, and surrounding Riverdale Park.

2-b. Provide adequate and convenient parking and “kiss and ride” areas.

In addition to upgrading the existing lots adjacent to the railroad embankment, Metra and the Village should work together to install a large new parking lot immediately east of Illinois Street (relocated), as well as to upgrade the currently unused lot on the southeast corner of 137th Street and State Street. These actions will result in a net increase of approximately 85 commuter spaces, with the possibility of approximately an additional 40 spaces if the block face north of 137th Street between the embankment and State Street is also developed into a commuter lot. A “kiss and ride” area should be created either along the curb on Illinois Street, or within the existing commuter lot that is located just north of the retail center.

2-c. Improve bicycle access to the station area.

Improvements to streets in the vicinity of the station, as well as planning for the provision of on-street parking, should take into consideration the need for safe on-street bike routes leading to the station. Signs indicating these bike routes should be posted. In

addition, a highly visible location for bicycle storage racks should be provided in conjunction with the new retail center.

2-d. Assess the feasibility of establishing a Pace bus route through Riverdale.

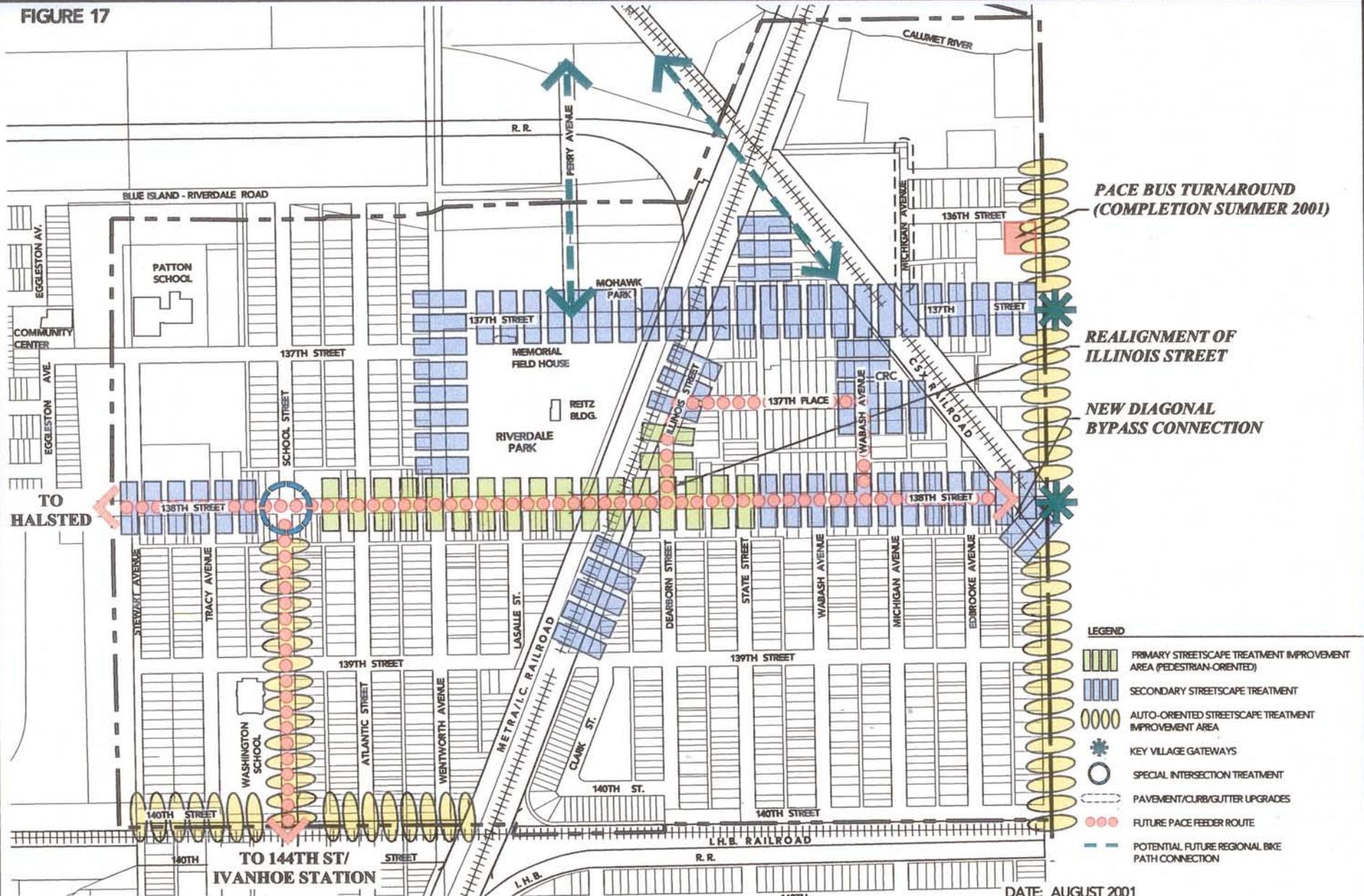
A potential route for a Pace feeder bus to connect to existing Halsted Street and Indiana Avenue routes and provide pick-up locations within the Village is proposed. The route could allow for convenient connections to the Riverdale and Ivanhoe Metra stations for many Riverdale residents who live further than one-half mile from either Metra station. While plans for the reconfiguration of Illinois Street to create the retail center are being developed, contingencies for accommodating a 40-foot long bus should be included, as well as earmarking a potential bus stop adjacent to the retail center. However, the vehicle used when the feeder route is established may be smaller than a full size bus, and is likely to run on a varying schedule focused on “peak” travel times.

D. Public Realm

1-a. Implement coordinated streetscape and landscape improvements within public rights-of-way.

Streetscape and landscape improvements should build upon the recently installed ornamental lighting and parkway improvements along 137th Street, and the upgrades installed along 144th Street and at the Ivanhoe station. Incorporating common elements such as a brick carriage walk, cast iron materials, additional ornamental lighting, colorful plantings, and banners will create a unified design theme along key corridors in the Riverdale station area. This will establish a unique streetscape while also visually tying the Riverdale station and the Ivanhoe station together. [Figure 17: Circulation/Streetscape Plan](#) outlines the extent of these proposed improvements.

FIGURE 17



**PACE BUS TURNAROUND
(COMPLETION SUMMER 2001)**

**REALIGNMENT OF
ILLINOIS STREET**

**NEW DIAGONAL
BYPASS CONNECTION**

- LEGEND**
- PRIMARY STREETScape TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT AREA (PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED)
 - SECONDARY STREETScape TREATMENT
 - AUTO-ORIENTED STREETScape TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT AREA
 - KEY VILLAGE GATEWAYS
 - SPECIAL INTERSECTION TREATMENT
 - PAVEMENT/CURB/GUTTER UPGRADES
 - FUTURE PACE FEEDER ROUTE
 - POTENTIAL FUTURE REGIONAL BIKE PATH CONNECTION

CIRCULATION/STREETScape PLAN TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Transit Oriented Development RIVERDALE, ILLINOIS

DATE: AUGUST 2001
SCALE: 1" = 600'

0' 300' 600' 1200' NORTH

The proposed “primary” streetscape palette should include a series of distinctive elements. Masonry-edged planting beds with low cast iron perimeter fencing within the existing parkway zone will create visual continuity, provide colorful planting areas, and designate a safe pedestrian zone along 138th Street. This feature will physically define public space at the ground plane, yet allow views beyond the public right-of-way to commercial businesses and areas of potential safety concern. Small-scale street trees should be planted at intervals within the planting beds. Ornamental lighting will provide for well-lit pedestrian areas while providing adequate street lighting and banner display space. Along 137th Street existing improvements will be maintained and augmented with new low plantings within the planter beds. See the Appendix for a listing of recommended plant materials for use in “primary” streetscape areas.

“Secondary” streetscape treatment areas should receive new ornamental lighting and street trees where needed, with grassy parkways to remain. As improvements are undertaken throughout the area utilities along key corridors should be buried. At entrances to the Village from Indiana Avenue at 137th and 138th Streets, “Welcome to Riverdale” signage should be incorporated into parkway improvements.

1-b. Implement landscape upgrades at railroad rights-of-way and utility easements.

Hardy perennial grasses and flowers, along with groundcovers, should be used to plant the railroad embankments and the edges of the wide utility easements that flank the study area to the north and west. Shade trees and ornamental trees should be interspersed within these lower plantings. See the Appendix for a listing of recommended plant materials for use in easement and buffer areas. Existing mature trees should be trimmed as needed and preserved. Along open railroad easements at grade, low plantings should be introduced to soften the edge of the rights-of-way and make them less unsightly. The Village should establish a maintenance partnership with local schools and/or a university landscape

architecture or horticulture program to maintain these areas in exchange for utilizing the areas for experimental and educational purposes.

1-c. Enforce design standards for renovations and new construction that respect the existing context.

As new development occurs, it will be important for the Village to insist that design and construction be of high quality, that it utilize attractive and appropriate materials that reflect the predominant materials and colors in the study area, and that it respect the scale and massing of existing structures. In addition, building setbacks should reflect the surroundings and landscaping should be ample and well designed. Design criteria have been prepared as part of this study, and will be useful in discussions with property owners and developers to ensure appropriate design and material quality.

2-a. Reduce congestion at at-grade railroad crossings where feasible.

The study area has several at-grade railroad crossings that cause delays and aggravation for area residents and commuters. Users of both of the key entrances to the Village from Indiana Avenue, at 137th and 138th Streets, must contend with an at-grade crossing. At the intersection of 138th and Indiana, the possibility of creating a bypass road segment to connect the two streets south of the existing crossing should be explored, as indicated in [Figure 17: Circulation/Streetscape Plan](#). Persons traveling northbound on Indiana Avenue and wishing to turn west, along with persons traveling eastbound on 138th and wishing to turn south, could make the desired movements without having to cross over the tracks, alleviating significant delays for commuter traffic traveling to and from the Metra station. A seldom-used siding at that intersection could potentially be abandoned if further study warrants it. Creating this bypass, utilizing the current Miller Marine site that is slated for demolition, would also allow for a small green space to buffer the bypass from nearby homes and provide an attractive entryway feature.

The Village will also further explore the feasibility of installing vehicular and/or pedestrian overpasses in this area, to alleviate both the traffic delays and the public safety concerns that the crossings create. Installation of an overpass at either crossing will require very careful consideration, as it could significantly impact the visibility and accessibility of key development parcels in the area.

2-b. Ensure that new development in the station vicinity does not create congestion problems.

As new developments are considered within the study area, their potential impacts on congestion should be reviewed. The proposed station retail center, for example, will realign Illinois Street with Dearborn Street to create a four-way intersection farther from the viaduct, allowing for safer traffic movements as commuters enter and exit. In addition, parking for non-commuting shoppers will be accessed off Illinois rather than directly from 138th to alleviate potential conflicts. A dedicated turn lane in this vicinity should be considered.

Housing developments that are proposed along 138th Street should rely upon alley access from side streets for parking and provide all needed parking on-site, maximizing available on-street parking for other uses and minimizing turning movements to and from 138th Street. While on-street parking on 138th Street should be carefully limited in location and to certain non-peak time periods, it should not be eliminated entirely. As-yet-unanticipated projects that may be proposed should also endeavor minimize traffic impacts.

2-c. Accommodate bicycle routes through the area in cooperation with regional efforts.

The City of Chicago is extending a bike trail to the Whistler Woods from the north, and the Forest Preserve will extend the trail into the Woods. If a solution to traversing the Acme Steel property can be found, the trail should be extended into Riverdale via Perry Avenue or the CSX Railroad right-of-way. Bike routes within the Village should be on-street, signed routes. Further regional connections

may be made in the future, after the connection to the Whistler Woods is in place.

3-a. Implement Riverdale Park improvements.

Park enhancements should include benches and additional lighting within the park to promote a safe, comfortable environment that can be utilized by the entire neighborhood. The main entrance to the park at the southwest corner should receive a special entry treatment. The fence at the corner can be set back to accommodate a gracious arched entry gate and planting areas to frame the gate. The fence design and planting materials should reflect the design of the parkway improvements along 138th Street to further unify the area. Embellishments to other park entrances should also be considered. Park signage should be improved and low perimeter plantings should be added at the existing fence line, maintaining sight lines into the park and facilitating increased security patrolling. Figure 18: Riverdale Park Improvements provides an illustrative sketch of these proposed upgrades.

3-b. Create a neighborhood park at 138th Street and School Street.

Additional open spaces throughout the neighborhood will provide an opportunity for identity signage, historical markers, and community gatherings. A new pocket park at 138th and School Streets can provide an attractive neighborhood focal point at a highly visible location that can serve as a western “gateway” into the transit-oriented neighborhood core. It will also provide seating areas and the potential for a community garden, while reflecting the established streetscape palette used along 138th Street. Figure 19: New Pocket Park provides an illustrative sketch of these proposed upgrades.

FIGURE 18

Park enhancements include benches and additional lighting within the park to promote a safe, comfortable environment that can be utilized by the entire neighborhood. The main entrance to the park at the southwest corner will receive a special entry treatment. The fence at the corner is set back to accommodate a gracious arched entry gate and planting areas frame the gateway. The fence design and planting materials will reflect the design of the parkway improvements along 138th Street to further unify the area.



NORTHEAST CORNER OF 138TH STREET AND WENTWORTH AVENUE

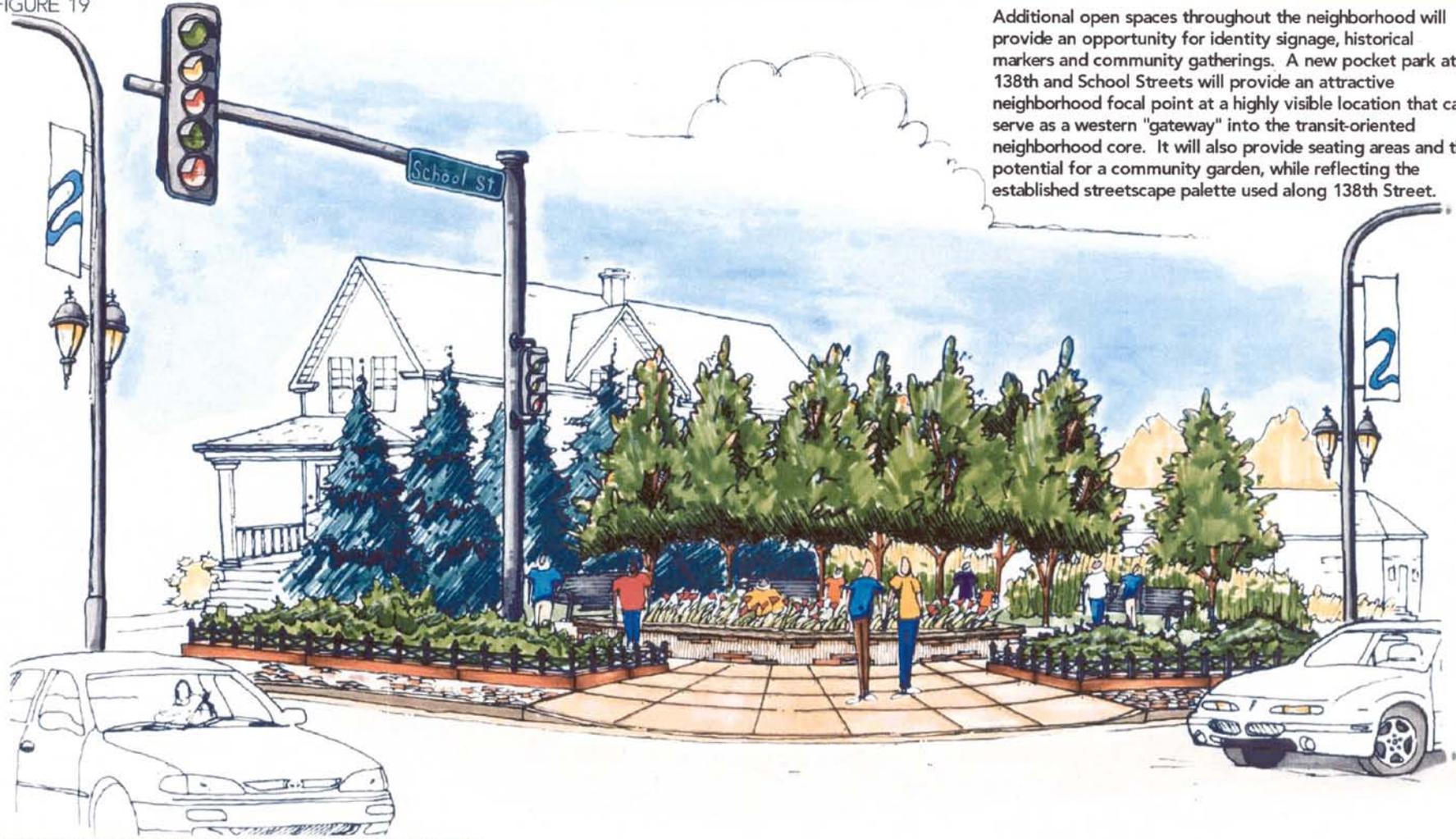
KEY PROJECT: RIVERDALE PARK IMPROVEMENTS
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

CAMIROS
ARCHITECTURAL FIRM

FIGURE 19



Additional open spaces throughout the neighborhood will provide an opportunity for identity signage, historical markers and community gatherings. A new pocket park at 138th and School Streets will provide an attractive neighborhood focal point at a highly visible location that can serve as a western "gateway" into the transit-oriented neighborhood core. It will also provide seating areas and the potential for a community garden, while reflecting the established streetscape palette used along 138th Street.

NORTH WEST CORNER OF 138TH AND SCHOOL STREETS

KEY PROJECT: NEW POCKET PARK
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Regional Transportation Authority

Village of Riverdale, Illinois

SCALE: NTS PLAN DATE: AUGUST 2001

CAMIROS

3-c. Create a community gathering space east of the Riverdale Metra station.

An open plaza should be created between the railroad embankment and the station retail center, to provide a venue for community events, in conjunction with Riverdale Park (see [Figure 12](#)). Events such as a farmer’s market or an antique fair can then be effectively accommodated. During weekends, the adjacent commuter lots can be used for event-related parking. The area can be successful if it highly visible and creates a sense of security for users.

3-d. Provide pedestrian comfort amenities near CSX railroad crossings.

In addition to the new pocket park at 138th and School Streets, and improvements to the existing pocket park at 137th Street and Indiana Avenue, consideration should be given to creating small “rest areas” at the at-grade CSX railroad crossings at 137th Street and 138th Street. These small areas should include benches on either side of the crossing, possibly under weather shelters. Lighting should be provided in these areas for nighttime safety.



This sketch of a proposed pedestrian rest area for downtown Grayslake, IL provides an example of the type of rest area envisioned for installation near the at-grade crossings in Riverdale (Camiros, Ltd., 1995).

E. Quality of Life

1-a. Increase the police presence at the Riverdale Metra station and in Riverdale Park.

A major concern voiced by plan participants was that of a lack of security at the station, in the commuter lots and in Riverdale Park. An easy and effective way to alleviate the concerns of commuters about using the Riverdale station will be to increase the police presence during peak periods, especially during the winter months when it is already dark during the evening rush hour. In addition, security cameras and a direct phone connection to the local police should be in place at the platform level. In Riverdale Park, foot patrols combined with lighting improvements will increase the overall sense of security for park users.

1-b. Eliminate physically isolated and under-lit locations during redesign of the station area.

A lack of adequate lighting at the commuter lots, under the railroad viaducts and on the platform contributes to the sense that the area is not secure. Care should be taken during the redesign of the station area and the design of the station retail center to eliminate under-lit areas and increase the sense of “defensible space.” In other words, persons walking from the station to their cars should not feel that they are vulnerable as they move through the area.

2-a. Create a walking tour and printed information regarding the historic resources in the area.

A tool should be created to educate Riverdale residents, including school-age children, about the history of the community. Informational literature, including a self-guided walking tour pamphlet, should be developed for use by the schools and as a Village marketing tool. This might be undertaken in conjunction with more regional efforts to research and document local connections to the Underground Railroad and/or the history of the region as a whole.

2-b. Stabilize the exterior of the Old Calumet Hotel, restoring its historic appearance, if feasible.

The Old Calumet Hotel, currently privately owned, has fallen into significant disrepair and is in danger of being lost forever. The

Village should examine the possibility of taking ownership of the building and seeking grant funding to, at a minimum, stabilize the exterior of the hotel while recreating its historic exterior appearance. External funding will be needed due to the anticipated high cost of any stabilization effort. It may not be feasible to utilize the interior of the building for any active use, given the level of deterioration and modern accessibility issues. If a structural analysis results in a determination that demolition of the building is needed, a commemorative plaque should be placed at the site. If use of part of the interior is deemed feasible, it might be used as a history center or interpretive center for area historic sites. However, the smaller theatre building across the street from the hotel, if rehabilitated, may be a preferable site for a history center or an interpretive center.

3-a. Organize community members to undertake additional youth programs.

Feedback during the planning process indicated a perception that there are not enough organized youth programs in the neighborhood. The Park District might become a clearinghouse to facilitate volunteer efforts by area parents to organize youth activities, with some basic financial support. These efforts might tie into the historical education efforts mentioned previously. They might also allow for a wider variety of sports or other planned activities than the Park District currently provides. Such a grass-roots effort can build the cross-connections that will help to encourage long-term residency and a commitment to a

neighborhood that is increasingly transient in nature. The Village should work with the Park District as warranted to highlight and promote youth activities in and around the Village, but the support of parents and volunteers will also be important.

3-b. Organize volunteer efforts to address litter control and maintain landscaped areas.

Another option for maintaining landscaped areas such as the railroad embankments and rights-of-way is to organize volunteer groups on a geographic basis to tend to areas close to their homes. Financial support can be secured from local businesses or community organizations to defray the public expense of maintaining these areas.

3-c. Consider establishing a YMCA or community center within the neighborhood.

The north side of 137th Street, between the railroad embankment and State Street, is a possible location for such a facility. It would be a welcome addition to the station area, because the activity generated would help to support local commercial enterprises and it could provide an evening and weekend use for nearby commuter parking lots. The Village of Riverdale should assist the Riverdale Park District in recruiting partners to develop such a facility, should the need be determined.

8: IMPLEMENTATION WORK PROGRAM

The *Key Projects* contained in the *Redevelopment Strategies* outlined above are summarized in *Table 7: Implementation Work Program*, which addresses responsibilities and phasing and will facilitate inclusion of these TOD related improvements in the Village's capital improvements plan and Metra's plans for facility upgrades. The length of the phases indicated is somewhat fluid, and must respond to funding availability from both the Village and other appropriate agencies. Any available sources of matching funds for transit-related, infrastructure and aesthetic improvements should be tapped to augment the Village's resources. Potential funding sources listed below are current as of the date of this report, and will need to be further researched as implementation efforts begin.

A strong commitment to these recommendations from the Village and the RTA will generate private sector interest. The Village and transit agencies must set the stage for these improvements, and the private sector must then step up and meet the challenge with its own efforts at improvement. If efforts initially focus on the immediate station area, as recommended, a natural progression will begin that will expand the positive impacts of redevelopment outward. "Year 1" projects are intended to provide early, visible signs of improvement that will stimulate further interest in revitalization of the area.

**TABLE 7:
IMPLEMENTATION WORK PROGRAM**

A. Commercial Development

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Years 2-3</i>	<i>Years 4-5</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Potential Funding Source(s)*</i>
1. Provide needed and desired retail and services for both commuters and local residents					
a. Acquire, prepare and market commercial development sites				V of R	TIF, CDBG, AFPI, IDFA, EDA, SSTRP
b. Develop a retail center adjacent to the Riverdale Metra station				V of R, developers	TIF, CDBG, AFPI, EZ, SBA, IDFA
c. Solicit a developer/operator for a new day care center near the Riverdale Metra station				V of R	TIF, CDBG, AFPI, EZ, SBA, IDFA
d. Assist property owners with rehabilitation of existing viable commercial properties				V of R	TIF, CDBG, EZ, SBA
2. Capture the market potential provided by Metra commuters to support local commercial enterprises					
a. Increase awareness of area businesses through marketing and promotion to commuters and local residents				V of R, Chamber	Chamber/businesses, SBA

b. Ensure the visibility and accessibility of station area businesses				V of R	n/a
3. Provide employment opportunities within the station area					
a. Bring in technology-related businesses along Indiana Avenue north of 137th Street				V of R, DCCA, Chamber, Chicago Southland Alliance	TIF, AFPI, BDPI, EZ, SBA, IDFA, EDA, BEDI

B. Housing

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Years 2-3</i>	<i>Years 4-5</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Potential Funding Source(s)*</i>
1. Provide new housing near the Metra station to attract a commuter-oriented population base					
a. Acquire, prepare and market residential development sites				V of R	TIF, CDBG, AFPI, IDFA, SSTRP
b. Develop new medium-density housing on selected sites				V of R, developers	TIF, CDBG, AFPI, IDFA, IHDA
c. Convert non-viable commercial properties along 138th Street to residential use				V of R, developers	TIF, CDBG, IHDA
2. Stabilize existing housing stock where feasible to maintain affordability					
a. Encourage appropriate rehabilitation of existing residential properties in the station area				V of R, RRC, Habitat, local banks	TIF, CDBG, IHDA

C. Transit Facilities

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Years 2-3</i>	<i>Years 4-5</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Potential Funding Source(s)*</i>
1. Make the station more inviting and easy to use					
a. Undertake improvements to existing commuter parking lots				V of R, Metra	RTA/Metra, CDBG, STP
b. Improve commuter amenities at the sidewalk and platform level				Metra	RTA/Metra, CDBG, STP
2. Increase multi-modal accessibility of the station area					
a. Increase pedestrian accessibility between the station and adjacent areas				V of R	CDBG, OGL, CMAQ, STP
b. Provide adequate and convenient parking and “kiss and ride” areas				V of R, Metra	RTA/Metra, CDBG, STP, IDFA

c. Improve bicycle access to the station area				V of R	IDNR, OGL, CMAQ, STP
d. Assess the feasibility of establishing a Pace bus route through Riverdale				V of R, RTA, Pace	RTA/Pace, V of R

D. Public Realm

1. Tie the neighborhood together with a unified visual theme	Year 1	Years 2-3	Years 4-5	Responsibility	Potential Funding Source(s)*
a. Implement coordinated streetscape and landscape improvements within public rights-of-way				V of R	TIF, CDBG, Chamber/businesses, AFPI, STP
b. Implement landscape upgrades at railroad rights-of-way and utility easements				V of R, railroads, utilities	TIF, CDBG, OSLAD, STP
c. Enforce design standards for renovations and new construction that respect the existing context				V of R	n/a
2. Improve traffic flow into the area and along 138th Street					
a. Reduce congestion at at-grade railroad crossings where feasible				V of R, Cook County, IDOT	TIF, OGL, CMAQ, STP, AFPI, ICC
b. Ensure that new development in the station vicinity does not create congestion problems				V of R, developers, business owners	n/a
c. Accommodate bicycle routes through the area in cooperation with regional efforts				V of R, Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, SSMMA	IDNR, OGL, CMAQ, STP
3. Create and enhance public open spaces					
a. Implement Riverdale Park improvements				V of R, Park District	CDBG, OSLAD, private donations
b. Create a neighborhood park at 138th Street and School Street				V of R, Park District	CDBG, OSLAD, IDFA, private donations
c. Create a community gathering space east of the Riverdale Metra station				V of R, developers	TIF, CDBG, AFPI, IDFA

d. Provide pedestrian comfort amenities near CSX railroad crossings				V of R	TIF, CDBG, STP, AFPI, IDFA, private donations
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E. Quality of Life

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Years 2-3</i>	<i>Years 4-5</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Potential Funding Source(s)*</i>
1. Increase the sense of security in the station area					
a. Increase the police presence at the Riverdale Metra station and in Riverdale Park				V of R	V or R, RPD
b. Eliminate physically isolated and under-lit locations during redesign of the station area				V of R, Metra	n/a
2. Educate residents and visitors about the history of Riverdale					
a. Create a walking tour and printed information regarding the historic resources in the area				V of R, history groups, schools	NPS, LPCI, private donations
b. Stabilize the exterior of the Old Calumet Hotel, restoring its historic appearance, if feasible				V of R	CDBG, NPS, LPCI, private donations
3. Increase community involvement in the neighborhood					
a. Organize community members to undertake additional youth programs				Park District, schools, businesses	RPD, private donations
b. Organize volunteer efforts to address litter control and maintain landscaped areas				V of R, community groups, businesses, SSMMA	CDBG, Chamber/businesses, KAB, private donations
c. Consider establishing a YMCA or community center within the neighborhood				V of R	V of R, RPD

* Information provided is based on general promotional information. Compliance with specific eligibility criteria for funding sources has not been verified.

Abbreviations used:

AFPI: Affordable Financing of Public Infrastructure (DCCA)
 BDPI: Business Development Public Infrastructure Program (DCCA)
 BEDI: Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (HUD)
 CATS: Chicago Area Transportation Study

CDBG: Community Development Block Grant (HUD)
 Chamber: Riverdale Chamber of Commerce
 CMAQ: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CATS)

DCCA: Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs
EDA: U.S. Economic Development Administration (Department of Commerce)
EZ: Calumet Region Enterprise Zone
HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDFA: Illinois Development Finance Authority (bonds, grants, municipal leases)
ICC: Illinois Commerce Commission (Illinois First funds)
IDNR: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Bicycle Path and Recreational Trails Program)
IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation
IHDA: Illinois Housing Development Authority (HUD funds, tax credits)
KAB: Keep America Beautiful
LPCI: Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois

n/a: not applicable
NPS: National Park Service (historic preservation tax credits)
OGL: Operation Greenlight (IDOT Department of Public Transit)
OSLAD: Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (IDNR)
RPD: Riverdale Park District
RTA: Regional Transportation Authority
SBA: U.S. Small Business Administration
SSMMA: South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
SSTRP: South Suburban Tax Reactivation Program
STP: Surface Transportation Program (TEA-21 federal funding through state, including Hazard Elimination and Transportation Enhancements Programs)
TIF: Tax Increment Financing
V of R: Village of Riverdale

APPENDIX

Key Stakeholder Interview Participants	A-2
Community Workshop Participants	A-3
Utility Company Contacts	A-4
Plant List—Primary Streetscape	A-5
Plant List—Buffers/Easements	A-6

Key Stakeholder Interview Participants

Mercedes Brewer	Resident, 13833 Atlantic	Thedora Langston	Resident, 13934 State
Michael O. Brown	Schwartz & Freeman	Connie McChristian	Riverdale Park District
Jimmy Crittenden	Jimmy's Place Bar, 13832 South Indiana	Roy McKinney	Riverdale Building and Zoning
Gary Durish	Realty Executives, South Holland, IL	John Moran	Resident, 13814 South Dearborn
Keith Elzey	Riverdale Housing Authority	Tom Opyt	Riverdale Chamber of Commerce
Joyce Forbes	Clerk, Village of Riverdale	Bill Planek	Greenplan (owners of shopping center at 138th/Wentworth)
Cheryl Foy	Trustee, Village of Riverdale <i>and</i> Riverdale Park District	Ed Podgers	Riverdale ESDA
Bill Greengoss	Greenplan (owners of shopping center at 138th/Wentworth)	Lillie Pooler	Resident, 13824 South Wentworth
Mark Haines	Realty Executives, South Holland, IL	Thomas Richards	Resident, 13901 South Wentworth
Essie M. Harris	School District 133	Rudy Rinas	Riverdale Fire Department
Allison Heard	Riverdale Youth Services	James Shannon	82 West 140th Street
Kevin Holeton	Heritage Community Bank	David Shilling	Chief of Police, Village of Riverdale
Antoinette Horton	Resident, 13931 South Michigan	Chris Swan	Swan Corp I
Bob Kelliher	Zoning Board of Appeals, Village of Riverdale	Adelle Swanson	Riverdale Public Library
Holly Knauff	School District 148	Clara Truchon	Riverdale Park District
Don Krause	Riverdale Public Works Department	Georgiana Welch	Regional Redevelopment Corporation
		Belinda Wilson	Resident, 13711 South Stewart
		Ray Woods	Inspection Services, Village of Riverdale

Community Workshop Participants

Ronald Bonneau	Community and Economic Development, Village of Riverdale	Ray McKinney	Riverdale Building and Zoning
Mercedes Brewer	Resident, 13833 Atlantic	John Moran	Resident, 13814 Dearborn
Lynne Corrao	Metra	Janice Morrissy	Community and Economic Development, Village of Riverdale
Deborah Dillon	Trustee, Village of Riverdale	Lynda Odigie	Community and Economic Development, Village of Riverdale
Zenovia Evans	Mayor, Village of Riverdale	Louis Peyton	Trustee, Village of Riverdale
Joyce Forbes	Clerk, Village of Riverdale	Ed Podgers	Riverdale ESDA
Cheryl Foy	Trustee, Village of Riverdale <i>and</i> Riverdale Park District	Tom Radak	Pace
Allison Heard	Riverdale Youth Services	Bill Reynolds	RTA
Lynnette Himmelman	Metra	Thomas Richards	Resident, 13901 South Wentworth
Bob Huffman	Pace	Raymond Sallay	Village of Riverdale
Tyrone Jarrett, Sr.	Riverdale Fire Department	James Shannon	Resident, 82 West 140th Street
Bob Kelliher	Zoning Board of Appeals, Village of Riverdale	Adelle Swanson	Riverdale Public Library
Holly Knauff	School District 148	Clara Truchon	Riverdale Park District
		Ray Woods	Trustee, Village of Riverdale

Utility Company Contacts

Ameritech Communications

Beth Bettis (920) 459-2600

David Williams (708) 396-7615

Note that the cost of obtaining detailed information is a cost that Ameritech charges to the requesting party. For this reason, detailed information was not collected.

AT & T Cable Services

George Golus

(630) 716-2658

Worldwide Fiber

Ms. Debbie Martin

(303) 854-5098

Kinder Morgan Energies

Karen R. McMillian

(713) 369-9299

Nicor Gas

Ms. Lynne Sinclair

(630) 983-8676

To confirm the location of gas lines prior to improvements call:

JULIE

(800) 892-0123

Prax Air

Jerry Dewitt

(219) 670-6668.

West Shore Pipelines

Larry Olson

(630) 257-386

The following utility providers were contacted for existing systems information, but did not respond to inquiries:

Broadwing Communication Services

contact: Geneva Titus, 512-340-2644 ext.2644

MCI/WorldCom

contact: Dean Boyers, 972-656-1974

McLeod USA

contact: Bill Smalley, 515-251-3634 ext 3634

Premcor Refining Group

contact: Tim Brescia, 708-396-1220

Utility Quest

specific contact name not provided

Plant List—Primary Streetscape

The following is an abbreviated list of plant specimens that are appropriate for incorporation into the streetscape plantings described in Chapter Seven of this report:

Shade Trees

Acer spp., Maple species
Fraxinus spp., Ash species
Ginko biloba, Ginko
Gleditsia triacanthos, Honeylocust
Tilia Americana, American Linden

Ornamental Trees

Acer ginnala, Amur Maple
Amelanchier spp., Serviceberry
Syringa spp., Lilac species

Evergreen Trees

Taxodium distichum, Baldcypress

Shrubs

Buxus microphylla, Boxwood
Hydrangea spp., Hydrangea
Ilex spp., Holly species
Spiraea spp., Spirea species
Viburnum spp., Viburnum

Flowers and Groundcovers

IHemerocallis spp., Daylily
Hedera helix, English Ivy
Liriope spp., Liriope
Pennisetum spp., Pennisetum
Rudbeckia spp., Black-eyed Susan

Plant List—Buffers/Easements

The following is an abbreviated list of plant specimens that are appropriate for incorporation into the railroad buffer and utility easement plantings described in Chapter Seven of this report:

Shade Trees

Acer spp., Maple species
Fraxinus spp., Ash species
Ginko biloba, Ginko
Liquidambar styraciflua, Sweetgum
Quercus spp., Oak species

Ornamental Trees

Aesculus glabra, Ohio Buckeye
Amelanchier spp., Serviceberry
Cercis canadensis, Eastern Redbud
Cornus florida, Dogwood
Malus spp., Crabapple species

Evergreen Trees

Abies concolor, White Fir
Picea abies, Norway Spruce
Pinus strobus, Eastern White Pine

Shrubs

Cornus sericea, Redosier Dogwood
Hydrangea arborescens, Hydrangea
Forsythia x intermedia, Forsythia
Viburnum spp., Viburnum species

Flowers and Groundcovers

IHemerocallis spp., Daylily
Hedera helix, English Ivy
Liriope spp., Liriope
Pennisetum spp., Pennisetum
Rudbeckia spp., Black-eyed Susan