



Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan



VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS



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WORK PAPERS

Three work papers were prepared during the course of the planning study. These work papers include:

- o *Memorandum No. 1: Conditions Inventory, Public Input and Issues and Opportunities Summary* (HNTB Corporation, December 2003)
- o *Memorandum No. 2: Preliminary Community-Wide and BNSF Railroad Corridor Concept Plans* (HNTB Corporation, March 2004)
- o *Market Assessment: Village of La Grange* (Goodman Williams Group, March 2004)

These work papers, while important elements of documentation of the planning process, do not constitute the official adopted plan and policy. This Comprehensive Plan report does. Thus, where inconsistencies exist between the content of these previous documents and this Plan, the Plan itself shall be the guiding resource. Copies of the documents may be obtained at the Village of La Grange Community Development Department at Village Hall.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Comprehensive Plan* that includes the *BNSF Railroad Corridor Plan* for the Village of La Grange, Illinois, was prepared through the efforts of the Village of La Grange, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra, Pace and the project planning consultants, HNTB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group. Many citizens, staff and officials of the Village of La Grange, too numerous to mention here, participated in the planning process. Their involvement and insights are sincerely appreciated.

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i. Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is the Village of La Grange's official *policy guide* to future land use, development and conservation within the community over the next twenty years. The Plan addresses community needs and opportunities from a Village-wide perspective, while placing an emphasis on the physical development and community services and facilities aspects of the Village. It is geographically comprehensive in coverage, in that it applies to both incorporated areas and selected unincorporated areas within one and one-half miles of the Village limits.

Unlike many other Village codes and ordinances which are adopted as enforceable law, a Comprehensive Plan is an advisory tool to be consulted and considered by the Plan Commission, Village Board, and other officials and staff when land use changes and capital facilities are proposed. It is long-range in orientation and intended to express general community goals and aspirations. Yet, it is specific enough to guide the day-to-day land use and development activities.

The Village's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1970. A more detailed plan that addressed the Downtown and surrounding areas, *A Plan for Northeast La Grange*, was adopted in 1986 and served, in part, as the basis for a very successful tax increment finance (TIF) project enacted in the same year. As useful as they once were, the passage of time has rendered these documents largely obsolete. However, many of the major recommendations contained within these existing plans have been implemented and they no longer provide effective development policy guidance.

Reinvestment and redevelopment within the Downtown over the last decade has raised redevelopment pressures on both commercial and residential properties. Significant single family residential redevelopment is also impacting several residential areas of the Village. For all of these reasons, the Village has undertaken the development of this update to the Comprehensive Plan that takes into account the changed conditions in and around the Village and will provide effective policy guidance into the future.



A. HISTORY AND PLANNING CONTEXT¹

In 1837, Robert Leitch purchased 440 acres of land from the U.S. government in what is now La Grange. Railroad service began in 1864, and by 1869 commuter rail service connected the La Grange area to Chicago. Franklin D. Cossitt purchased 600 acres adjacent to the railroad in 1870, including part of Leitch's property, roughly encompassing the area now bounded by Ogden Avenue, 47th Street, Bluff Avenue and Waiola Avenue. The Village of La Grange was incorporated in 1879, and was named for Cossitt's hometown in Tennessee. Many of the earliest residents of the Village relocated from Chicago after the fire of 1871. Commercial businesses clustered around the railroad depot at Fifth Avenue (now La Grange Road) as well as the Stone Avenue Station. By 1890, the La Grange business district consisted of 28 stores. The community's location within the greater Chicago area, and the opening of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad (now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe) in 1864 would continue to provide La Grange with opportunity for prosperity.

By the turn of the century the Village's population quadrupled from 1,000 to 4,000. The automobile was common by 1910, and its introduction continued to enhance access to the Village and its Downtown. Through the late 1920s the Village had expanded east of La Grange Road to East Avenue, and south of 47th Street to 51st Street. By 1930, the Village of La Grange grew from 6,525 to 10,103 residents, an increase of approximately 55%. From this period through the 1950's, La Grange had successfully positioned its Downtown as a regional shopping center, anchored with stores such as JC Penneys, Sears and Montgomery Ward.

Beginning in the late 1950's through the early 1970's the Village would face financial challenges. By this time, La Grange was fully developed. The introduction of the shopping mall would introduce a business prototype in nearby competitive locations, which significantly impacted the strength of La Grange as a retailing center. In the face of this challenge, La Grange did not completely succumb to the inclusion of large-scale shopping centers in the Downtown, as many other communities did. The introduction of the Calendar Court shopping street attempted to bring new identity and energy to the Downtown. The approach was only marginally helpful during this transitional period.

¹ Historical information was taken primarily from the publication *La Grange Centennial History*, edited by William J. Cromie, published by the La Grange Historical Society in 1979 and "Downtown La Grange a Reflection of Past Success," by Jennifer Thomas, *The Doings Newspapers*, June 10, 2004.

In 1970 the Village took action to again redefine and shape its role as both a strong and desirable residential and business community. It engaged in its first community - wide comprehensive plan to focus community ideas and resources on reversing and stabilizing local business and retailing. The strategy supported the notion the Village maintain the basic orientation of the Downtown as a pedestrian environment, and work with businesses on property and marketing improvements. A flurry of rehabilitation that began in the late 1980s, and continues today, has resulted in major reinvestment in the Downtown.

With foresight of the need to continue reinvestment in the Downtown and sustain a unique role in the market place, in 1986 the Village adopted a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District in the Downtown. The finance tool made possible many changes including street repairs, business incentives and façade renovation loans for refurbishing storefronts. One of the most visible and successful projects induced by TIF financing is the Triangle Redevelopment Project at La Grange Road and Ogden Avenue.

Today, the community has again called upon itself to evaluate the state of the Downtown, West End Business District, and the community as a whole, and to refine its course for the future. The last decade has brought prosperity to the Village. The Downtown has become a well known regional entertainment location. Major reinvestment has occurred in the Village's housing stock community-wide, and its Downtown remains strong.

A major focus of the plan update is sustaining the economic success of the community while retaining its small town charm and character. For example, issues include: the growth of the Downtown and the need for investment in the West End Business District; allowing desirable residential replacement housing while ensuring a range of housing types for all citizens in the community; identifying ways to sustain and improve conditions within the Village's smaller commercial locations; and the need to continue to provide high quality community services and facilities. Many other needs have been identified in the planning process as well.

The Village is well positioned to again meet its challenges. It is well organized and in a strong financial position to manage and influence its future. The Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Corridor Subarea Plan lays groundwork to leverage the strengths and successes of the past to meet the needs of today. The Plan provides a framework for action, built upon citizen aspirations which are embodied in La Grange's Vision and the Goals and Objectives.



Again relying on its strong civic institutions, businesses, and citizen volunteerism, La Grange will continue its legacy as a strong, high quality, and full service community.

B. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Village of La Grange is at a critical point in its evolution as a community. It is a built-out, mature suburb with little available land for redevelopment, yet it is facing significant market pressure for new commercial and multi-family housing development. The West End Business District holds significant potential for change in the coming years; change the Village should proactively seek to direct for the benefit of the entire community. Residential redevelopment is beginning to alter the character of several residential neighborhoods. Key community facilities are facing the need to expand and/or upgrade. The long term potential for an additional transit station facility on the east side of the Village through Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) on the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad also has far-reaching implications.

The Village has a demonstrated history of being proactive and sensitive to community planning issues, as evidenced by the successful implementation of the Downtown TIF District and the resulting resurgence of the Downtown. The existence of two Metra commuter stations and other available transportation modes are also highly desirable regional facilities. For these reasons, and many others, the Village will continue to attract investment and market opportunity. The Plan should provide guidance in the investment of both public and private resources.

The State of Illinois "Local Planning Technical Assistance Act" encourages local government comprehensive planning. It provides for incentives in two ways. First, technical assistance grants can be made available from the state to write or revise a local comprehensive plan. Second, compliance with the statute positions the Village to receive other state funding sources potentially affecting an array of municipal services and operations.

Plans must address each of the following elements: 1) Community Issues and Opportunities (Vision); 2) Land Use; 3) Transportation; 4) Community Facilities; 5) Telecommunications Infrastructure; 6) Housing; 7) Economic Development; 8) Natural Resources; and 9) Public Participation. Optional elements include natural hazards, agriculture and forest preservation, human services, community design, historic preservation and the adoption of sub area plans as needed.

While the state legislation identifies the purposes of each element, it also calls for the incorporation of performance measures in the Mobility Plan. To receive a technical assistance grant for five years after the effective date of the Plan, land development regulations, including amendments to the Village's zoning map and any land use actions should be consistent with the new or revised comprehensive plan.

Adoption of the La Grange Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan places the Village in compliance with the act, and enables the Village continued access to State of Illinois funding sources.

The Comprehensive Plan also provides guidance and direction for future land use and zoning patterns. As opportunities arise to guide and direct land use changes, the Plan will serve as a valuable resource to decision-makers. Reviewing the maps, goals, objectives and policies contained within the Plan will ensure that decisions regarding public and private investments are made with regard for the larger context that they will impact, and for the long-range "vision" that the Plan represents.

Without the benefit of a clear statement of community expectations and aspirations, there would be little consensus upon which to evaluate land use and development decisions. The Comprehensive Plan fulfills this purpose. It has been developed with substantial community input, and represents the conclusion of a two-year long planning process.

C. PLANNING PROCESS

Preparation of the Comprehensive Plan has followed a rigorous public involvement process. It began with documentation of the existing conditions and identification of issues or problems facing the Village. Involvement techniques such as focus groups, interviews, the Village's web site, and community surveys were employed to reach a range of La Grange's citizenry. Preparation of alternative plans and policies allowed citizens to compare and contrast alternative approaches to realizing community aspirations.

Critical to the success of the project was the appointment of a Steering Committee composed of a range of citizen representation from the Village. The Steering Committee brought a balanced view of the community and served as a critical "sounding board" on preliminary plans and proposals. Ultimately, consensus on a



community vision, and a preferred comprehensive future plan was reached. Implementation strategies to support preferred community improvement and conservation ideas were then developed.

PLANNING PROCESS

Data Collection	Issues and Opportunities	Vision	Professional Design Standards	Alternative Plans	Plan Formulating	Implementation
*Field Research	*Physical *Social *Environmental *Fiscal	*Goals *Objectives *Strategies	*Land Use *Transportation *Community Facilities *Economic Development	*Land Use *Transportation *Community Facilities *Economic Development	* Locally Best Acceptable Plan	*Capital Improvements *Land Development Code *Finance
----- <i>Time</i> ----->						

As mentioned earlier, the Plan update was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of Village officials, citizens, staff, and representatives of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra and Pace (refer to the Acknowledgements for a complete list of Steering Committee members). The development of the Plan was assisted by HNTB, a Chicago-based urban planning and design firm.

In addition to regular Steering Committee meetings, several community meetings were held during the planning process to solicit citizen and stakeholder input, and achieve consensus regarding the Plan, including the following:

- La Grange Business Association Workshop, September 11, 2003
- Community Workshop, October 7, 2003
- Community Workshop, October 20, 2003
- Key Person Interviews, November 3 and 4, 2003
- Focus Groups, November 5, 2003
- Community Forum, December 1, 2003
- Community Forum, March 2, 2004
- Community Forum, March 4, 2004
- Community Forum on the Draft Plan, August 18, 2004
- Plan Commission Open House, January 11, 2005
- Plan Commission Public Hearing, February 15, 2005 (continued to March 1, March 15 and March 29, 2005)

Comments received during meetings, interviews and focus groups held in the fall of 2003 are summarized in *Memorandum No. 1*. Comments received during later meetings served to provide guidance to the consulting team and Steering Committee as specific land use and transportation concepts and policies were developed.

The La Grange Village Board considered, discussed and ultimately adopted the *Comprehensive Plan and BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan* on May 9, 2005.

D. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into seven elements or chapters as follows: 1) Vision, Goals and Objectives; 2) Land Use; 3) Mobility; 4) Community Facilities; 5) Economic Development; 6) BNSF Railroad Corridor Sub Area Plan; and 7) Implementation.

References are frequently made to the BNSF Railroad Corridor (the "Corridor"), as described in Figure 6 on page VI-13. This area of the Village was identified for careful examination in the planning process due to: its importance to the quality of life for all Village residents; the presence

of several key transportation modes within the area; and the likelihood of significant redevelopment pressure in the coming years. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra and Pace engaged in discussions with the Steering Committee at appropriate points in the process with regard to the BNSF Railroad Corridor to ensure that physical planning recommendations and planning policies support transit operations, develop transit ridership, and result in transit supportive land use and development patterns.



BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Boundary

The contents of the Comprehensive Plan are supported by three work papers produced during the course of the planning process. These work papers, while important elements of documentation of the planning process, do not constitute the official adopted plan and policy. This Comprehensive Plan report does. Thus, where inconsistencies exist between the content of these previous

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documents and this Plan, the Plan itself shall be the guiding resource. Previous work papers prepared include:

- *Memorandum No. 1: Conditions Inventory, Public Input and Issues and Opportunities Summary* (HNTB Corporation, December 2003) contains detailed background information regarding physical conditions within the Village, previous planning policies, current initiatives, summaries of stakeholder and community input, and issues and opportunities.
- *Memorandum No. 2: Preliminary Community-Wide and BNSF Railroad Corridor Concept Plans* (HNTB Corporation, March 2004) contains goals and objectives, and preliminary alternative land use and BNSF Railroad Corridor planning concepts that were reviewed and evaluated by the Steering Committee and community in order to develop the refined policies and maps contained within this Plan.
- *Market Assessment: Village of La Grange* (Goodman Williams Group, March 2004) contains an analysis of general demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the Village. The market study also contains information on local and regional economic and real estate market trends, strategic advantages and opportunities for the Village with regard to development, and general strengths and weaknesses with regard to redevelopment opportunities. This market assessment was used primarily to ensure that future land use and development plans and policies reflect a realistic assessment of the likelihood of change within the Village over the time horizon of the Plan.

E. USE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan should be used by all Village departments, committees, agencies and other community organizations and private interests. The Plan is relevant to all citizens and property owners in La Grange. In particular, the Planning Commission, Village Board of Trustees and Village staff will have a special role in administering the Plan. Many of the Plan's recommendations are directed to both public and private actions and improvements. The interface between the majority of public and private interests are primarily managed by the Village of a Grange.

In general all policies and recommendations embodied in the plan "carry the same weight" without prejudice or preference. However, the community vision and goals and objectives form a fundamental

basis of the plan. When reviewing private or public plans and initiatives, a level of deference should be given to these elements as they most directly embody the values expressed by the community in the preparation of the plan.

Further, the review of development proposals should collectively consider all relevant elements of the plan including maps, text, policies, and recommendations. Given the complexity of community evolution and change, the “priority” or “emphasis” of any given aspect of the Plan will vary depending on the nature of the issue, request or improvement under consideration by the Village.



I. The Future of La Grange – A Shared Vision

A successful comprehensive plan must be based on the needs and aspirations of the community. Thus, before the Plan, there must be a vision. In La Grange, a variety of public participation activities, review of conditions in the community, and the evaluation of alternative planning futures has led the community to define its choices for the future. The process has engaged citizens in identifying ways of dealing with community issues and capitalizing on opportunities. In the end, La Grange’s Vision provides a central, orchestrating theme that guided the development of the planning program.

Visioning means the process by which a community, with the involvement of citizens, characterizes the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it.

A Vision for La Grange

Over the next twenty years, La Grange will remain a community with diverse housing, strong community services, and a reputation for civic involvement and volunteerism. Downtown La Grange remains strong, and revitalization of the West End will unify the entire BNSF Railroad Corridor. We will have experienced redevelopment, revitalization and change community-wide. Much of our housing stock will have been upgraded, but the Village will sustain a mix of housing to meet a range of lifestyle needs. We have invested in and safeguarded our quality education, recreation, open space, and municipal service systems – all of which are important to our family-oriented community.

A. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The following summary serves as a “checklist” to help ensure that planning recommendations are responsive to community concerns and opportunities and that they build upon and support the vision for La Grange. The issues and opportunities in this section relate to the Village as a whole. Issues and opportunities that are unique to the BNSF Railroad Corridor are included within the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan. Issues and opportunities were summarized from analyses of existing physical conditions and input



provided by the community during interviews, focus groups and workshops.

ISSUES AND WEAKNESSES

1. Land Use and Development

- Lack of large development parcels
- Lack of housing diversity (types, prices, locations)
- Lack of housing affordability (seniors, first-time homebuyers, young families)
- Impact of “teardown” redevelopment (increasing bulk and density)
- Stability of residential areas adjacent to industrial uses
- Lack of investment in older industrial properties

2. Urban Design

- Lack of “gateway” image at major community entry points
- Lack of pedestrian-friendly environment in neighborhood commercial areas
- Need for improved signage (public and private) in neighborhood commercial areas
- Maintaining architectural and historic integrity of neighborhoods
- Tree loss during redevelopment
- Buffering between industrial and residential areas

3. Transportation

- Railroad crossing congestion (La Grange Rd., 47th Street and East Ave.)
- Intersection of Ogden Avenue (Route 34) and La Grange Road (Route 45) is over capacity
- Perceived increasing truck traffic (Ogden and East Avenues)
- Perceived speeding on the increase
- Residential cut-through traffic
- The need for additional commuter parking in the BNSF Railroad Corridor
- Tilden Avenue viaduct underpass (vehicle/pedestrian conflicts)
- Pedestrian safety at intersections and near schools
- Lack of sidewalks in some areas
- Lyons Township High School student parking demands

4. Community Facilities

- Library expansion needs
- Need for additional public park space and indoor recreation facilities
- Lack of green space / athletic fields near schools

- Need for youth-friendly places
- Need for more quality daycare facilities
- Aging infrastructure (water mains)

5. Economic Development

- Limited business visibility / identity outside the Downtown
- Reliance on restaurant uses; under-served by retail uses and adequate office spaces
- Lack of development / enhancement incentives outside the TIF District
- Cook County tax structure diminishes market for “employment” uses

6. General / Quality of Life

- Maintaining diversity
- Maintaining sense of community
- Cultural amenities lacking
- Insufficient code enforcement (volume of construction activity rising)
- Homelessness / vagrancy
- Drug and gang issues (isolated)
- Environmental threats southeast of Village
- Taxes escalating

OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS

1. Land Use and Development

- Continuing market demand for residential and commercial properties
- Teardowns may modernize and upgrade housing stock
- Relocation of displaced medical and dental offices (from hospital campus)
- Vacant properties along BNSF tracks west of LTHS North Campus
- Fairly active industrial market (for smaller properties)

2. Urban Design

- Potential for consistent streetscape within neighborhood commercial areas
- Potential for expansion of design review into neighborhood commercial areas
- Attractive, tree-lined residential streets



3. Transportation

- Several existing transportation modes
- Regional access to build upon (to Loop, airports)
- Pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly environment exists in many areas
- Create bicycle and pedestrian routes linking destinations where lacking (including north to the Salt Creek Trail)
- Add/upgrade traffic lights to ease congestion and pedestrian movement
- Coordinate adjacent off-street parking areas and develop shared parking agreements and remote parking opportunities

4. Community Facilities

- YMCA plans to replace their facility
- Public Library as an "anchor" use in current or new location
- High quality school and municipal facilities

5. Economic Development

- Define the market "niche" of each commercial area
- Enhance partnerships with other area economic development organizations
- Expand incentives beyond the TIF District
- Enhance retail sales tax revenue (reduce homeowner tax burden over time)
- Attract job-producing "employment" uses

6. General / Quality of Life

- Concerned, involved citizenry
- Family-oriented, stable community
- Strong organizations and volunteerism
- Quality education system
- Historic district, individual landmark properties
- Establish a Village-wide wireless access network
- Places of worship

B. PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The La Grange Planning Goals and Objectives are intended to provide general policy direction when considering physical and design actions in the future. Goals and Objectives are intended to be used in combination with other maps, policies and recommendations to provide guidance.

Goals and Objectives transform collective community values into operational guidelines. Each has a distinct and different purpose in realizing community aspirations:

- **Goals** describe a desired *end state* toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad based and long-range in focus.
- **Objectives** describe *actions* that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall Goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning actions, guiding the implementation of each.

Planning Goals are divided into general categories for ease of reference, with applicable Planning Objectives listed immediately below each goal. The Planning Goals and their related Planning Objectives include:

A. LAND USE

Goal 1 - Seek to provide high quality and diverse housing options for Village residents.

- i. Support the provision of housing of varying types, sizes and price points in appropriate locations per this Plan, to effectively serve the housing needs of all segments of the current and future La Grange population, from young families to “empty nesters” and senior citizens.
- ii. Accommodate reasonable population growth within the Village with new “infill” housing development where appropriate.
- iii. Seek to protect the integrity and high quality of single-family residential neighborhoods throughout the Village.
- iv. Encourage the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Highlands area north of 55th Street and east of Willow Springs Road to remain a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood.
- v. Seek to maintain the Village’s current compliance with the threshold for affordable housing established by the State of Illinois¹ (at least 10% of total dwelling units), and seek to

¹ The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act became effective January 1, 2004 throughout the State of Illinois. Based upon the criteria established by the Act, and utilizing 2000 Census data, an affordable housing unit in Cook County has currently been defined as having a sales price of less than \$125,244 or a monthly rent of less than \$775.



maintain affordability that allows first-time homebuyers and older residents to live in the Village.

Goal 2 - Ensure the compatibility of new housing with existing residential neighborhoods.

- i. Consider adjustment, as appropriate, to basic zoning standards for residential redevelopment to sustain the unique character of our neighborhoods and the Village as a whole. For instance, building height and FAR standards should be examined.

Goal 3 - Maintain and strengthen the Village's existing commercial areas.

- i. Facilitate new commercial development of varying scale within the BNSF Railroad Corridor and along La Grange Road south of 47th Street, where compatible with surrounding uses and without over-stressing Village infrastructure. This could include the possibility of larger stores (up to approximately 20,000 square feet in size) where consistent with the policies of this Plan.
- ii. Encourage the upgrading and/or replacement of obsolete retail and office space.
- iii. Support efforts to accommodate retail and office uses within the Village that may be displaced as redevelopment occurs.

Goal 4 - Encourage transit supportive redevelopment within the BNSF Railroad Corridor (the "Corridor").

- i. Maintain current development review process height limits to ensure compatible redevelopment within the Corridor area.
- ii. Facilitate additional retail, service, office and multi-family opportunities in the Corridor, in particular within the West End Business District, without over-stressing Village infrastructure.
- iii. Seek a varied and self-sustaining mix of retail and service businesses in the Corridor that can benefit from transit access and a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- iv. Encourage shared parking arrangements to meet Corridor parking needs as efficiently as possible.
- v. Encourage the development of housing on upper stories of mixed-use buildings within the Corridor.

Goal 5 - Maintain and strengthen areas of the IHB Railroad Industrial Area that remain viable.

- i. Continue to enforce maintenance code requirements for industrial buildings and sites.
- ii. Continue to enforce zoning, nuisance and performance standards to minimize impacts on nearby residential properties from industrial operations.
- iii. Encourage the redevelopment of obsolete and/or physically deteriorated industrial buildings as appropriate.
- iv. Consider implementation of a facade improvement program similar to that currently utilized in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, to facilitate industrial facility upgrades.
- v. Undertake infrastructure upgrades, as appropriate, to support the continuing viability of stable areas of the IHB Railroad Industrial Area.
- vi. Encourage the timely remediation of environmental hazards within the industrial area, should any be identified in the future.
- vii. Facilitate coordinated and comprehensive redevelopment, if and when warranted, in the vicinity of the proposed future transfer station if Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) is implemented in the future. This could potentially include consolidation of the future transfer station with the nearby Congress Park Metra station on the Metra / BNSF Line.

Goal 6 - Maintain and enhance open space and recreational opportunities within the Village.

- i. As appropriate, cooperate with the Park and School Districts in the improvement and enhancement of existing Park and School District facilities.
- ii. Consider the expansion of open space and recreational amenities contiguous to existing parks and schools, and in underserved areas of the Village, as opportunities arise.
- iii. Cooperate with the Park District of La Grange to create a publicly accessible open space within the BNSF Railroad Corridor for community events.
- iv. Encourage the adjacent unincorporated La Grange Country Club to remain as a valuable open space amenity for the Village.



B. URBAN DESIGN

Goal 1 - Create a visually appealing system of public improvements throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor.

- i. Expand and enhance a consistent streetscape system throughout the Corridor.
- ii. Establish and implement consistent “gateway” treatments and wayfinding signage throughout the Corridor.
- iii. Continue the facade improvement program throughout the entire BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- iv. Strengthen existing design standards addressing architectural design, signage, parking lots, site improvements and landscaping.
- v. Seek to maintain storefronts with little or no setback from the public sidewalk in commercial and mixed-use areas, to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Goal 2 - Enhance the appearance of neighborhood commercial areas and key community entry points and traffic routes.

- i. Establish and implement a consistent streetscape treatment within neighborhood commercial areas.
- ii. Establish and implement consistent “gateway” treatments at key entries into the Village.
- iii. Establish a design review process for neighborhood and community commercial areas, with appropriate standards addressing architectural design, signage, parking lot treatments, site improvements and landscaping.
- iv. Minimize the visual impact of surface parking areas through perimeter and interior landscaping, and placement of lots behind or beside buildings.
- v. Implement a coordinated landscaping program, where financially feasible, along arterial streets, especially where side and rear property lines create an inconsistent appearance.
- vi. Bury overhead utility lines, where financially feasible, as upgrades are undertaken.

C. TRANSPORTATION

Goal 1 - Maintain and enhance existing public transportation facilities and services.

- i. Pursue opportunities to improve passenger amenities at Metra station platforms and Pace bus stops.

- ii. Pursue opportunities for increased Pace bus service within and through the Village in conjunction with Pace officials.
- iii. Explore Pace bus routing improvements to more completely serve residents and commuters using both Metra stations.
- iv. As an alternative to Pace Bus service improvements in the Downtown, study the feasibility of a shuttle service between the Downtown and West End Business District during peak activity periods.
- v. Consider, where appropriate, the feasibility of providing additional commuter parking capacity in the BNSF Railroad Corridor through shared parking agreements with private property owners.
- vi. Identify locations where remote commuter park-n-ride lots may be physically and financially feasible whether within the Village or within cooperative neighboring communities which can be linked by a shuttle bus, when other parking solutions have been exhausted.
- vii. Preserve the historic character of the Stone Avenue Station building.
- viii. Assure continued status of two BNSF Metra commuter stations as full service stations.

Goal 2 - Improve traffic flow and safety throughout the Village.

- i. Pursue a comprehensive street capacity study to better understand existing traffic conditions throughout the Village and to develop alternative congestion mitigation measures for future consideration.
- ii. Work with railroad and transportation officials to implement improvements that address increased pedestrian activity in the BNSF Railroad Corridor, including crossings of the BNSF Railroad.
- iii. Pursue improvements to the Tilden Avenue underpass below Ogden Avenue and the BNSF Railroad, should Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service be implemented on the IHB Railroad.
- iv. Consider traffic rerouting and calming measures at north-south local streets along Burlington and Hillgrove Avenues, to protect nearby residential neighborhoods from Corridor-generated traffic, on a case-by-case basis as redevelopment occurs.
- v. Consider traffic rerouting and calming measures near community facilities and at the perimeter of the Village, to protect residential neighborhoods from traffic generated outside the Village boundaries, on a case-by-case basis.



- vi. Require traffic impact analysis of proposed redevelopments to facilitate addressing potential impacts, if any, on nearby residential neighborhoods.
- vii. Pursue the acquisition of additional right-of-way, where warranted and where opportunities arise, to improve traffic flow and safety.
- viii. Investigate traffic signal priority (TSP) strategies for Pace buses at signalized intersections.
- ix. Encourage Metra to perform track safety improvement (i.e. fencing).

Goal 3 - Maintain and/or facilitate adequate parking facilities to serve land uses throughout the Village.

- i. Actively monitor and manage on-street and off-street parking needs within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- ii. Consider creative solutions for providing increased public and commuter parking within the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
- iii. Balance Metra's projected commuter parking needs with potential benefits to the Village.
- iv. Collaborate with School District 204 to seek shared and alternative solutions to parking demands in the vicinity of the Lyons Township High School North Campus.
- v. Improve wayfinding signage throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor to aid pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in locating and accessing public parking lots.
- vi. Pursue opportunities for the reconfiguration of off-street parking lots, and/or the establishment of shared parking agreements, to meet parking demands within neighborhood commercial areas in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Goal 4 - Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience throughout the Village.

- i. Continue to improve pedestrian comfort, safety, and convenience through sidewalk improvements. To this end, include pedestrian movements in any comprehensive street capacity study undertaken.
- ii. Encourage bicycle travel through the provision of adequate and convenient bicycle parking facilities throughout the Village.
- iii. Seek to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major thoroughfares and at busy intersections, in particular near schools, parks and commercial areas.
- iv. Complete the sidewalk network throughout the Village.

- v. Pursue opportunities with neighboring communities and agencies to create pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby trails and recreational amenities.
- vi. Reduce pedestrian barriers at the IHB Railroad through improvements to sidewalks at and near at-grade crossings.

D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL 1 - Cooperate with public service providers and institutions within the Village to accommodate the service needs and desires of La Grange residents.

- i. Cooperate with the Park District of La Grange, as opportunities arise, to accommodate facility and open space expansion needs as identified in their Master Plan.
- ii. Cooperate with the Library District to accommodate a new expanded library.
- iii. Cooperate with the Rich Port YMCA, the Park District of La Grange and other area property owners to ensure that any facility upgrade plans result in the creation of an appropriate northern “gateway” to downtown La Grange.
- iv. Continue to work cooperatively with community public service agencies, religious, assembly and other facilities within the Village to ensure their ability to function effectively while minimizing impacts on nearby land uses.
- v. Encourage all new community facilities to be located and designed as key “signature” structures within the community, with high quality site improvements and architectural design.

Goal 2 - Expand and enhance cultural, arts and entertainment resources available to Village residents and visitors.

- i. Seek to attract high quality arts and cultural uses to the BNSF Railroad Corridor, working with local business organizations, local arts organizations and others.
- ii. Explore options for maintaining the long-term viability of the La Grange Theatre, in conjunction with the property owner.
- iii. Encourage and cooperate with local school districts, the Park District of La Grange, the Community Extension Project (CEP) and others as appropriate to create easily accessible and safe location(s) for youth-oriented activities within the Village.
- iv. Seek opportunities to integrate public amenities, such as open spaces and public art, through the development review process.



Goal 3 - Protect and enhance existing historic and natural resources.

- i. Within the Village's historic district, encourage property owners and developers to maintain historic properties, and encourage renovations and/or additions that are consistent with the style and character of original construction.
- ii. Implement appropriate regulations and practices to ensure the protection of existing trees and other natural resources, as appropriate, during redevelopment within the Village.
- iii. Encourage utilities to undertake appropriate maintenance practices to protect and enhance existing trees and other natural resources, as appropriate, within the public rights-of-way and open spaces of the Village.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1 - Continue economic development efforts within the Village.

- i. Continue to enhance the commercial tax base, in an effort to reduce the tax burden on residential property owners over time.
- ii. Upon dissolution of the TIF, seek alternative means to financially leverage desired improvement projects.
- iii. Support and assist, as appropriate, small and locally-oriented retailers as the Corridor continues to evolve.
- iv. Promote the use and construction of technology infrastructure to support economic development efforts.
- v. Continue to provide diverse employment opportunities within the Village.

Goal 2 - Continue to work with business partner organizations and agencies, such as the La Grange Business Association (LGBA) and West Suburban Chamber of Commerce, to maintain and enhance the commercial business mix within the Village.

- i. Continue "theme"-based marketing efforts, incorporating marketing of neighborhood commercial areas within the Village, as appropriate.
- ii. Work with the business community to maintain and develop regional patronage through expansion of the use mix and targeted marketing efforts.
- iii. "Showcase" La Grange at public locations throughout the community, including both Metra stations, by providing maps and information about upcoming events, etc.

- iv. Continue to work with and support the LBGA in its business development efforts to coordinate advertising, business hours and other issues among local businesses.

F. ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Goal 1 - Amend and enforce Village codes, as appropriate, to support the purposes of the Plan.

- i. Establish appropriate allowable use, bulk, height and density requirements in areas likely to experience redevelopment pressure, to ensure that redevelopment is consistent with the Village's expectations.
- ii. Provide the fiscal resources to ensure adequate building code enforcement throughout the Village.
- iii. Review zoning and other development regulations for Village-wide consistency with the use, bulk, area, off-street parking and other recommendations of the Plan.

Goal 2 - Continue to provide high quality municipal services and facilities.

- i. Continue an aggressive program of Village infrastructure improvements through strategic planning and the capital improvement program (CIP).
- ii. Cooperate with other community service agencies and organizations in achieving their future service and facility development plans.

Goal 3 - Work with regional agencies, neighboring municipalities and others, as appropriate, to address issues of regional concern impacting the Village.

- i. Seek to address and mitigate traffic delays and improve safety at at-grade railroad crossings within and at the perimeter of the Village.
- ii. Pursue strategic relationships with neighboring communities, as opportunities are presented. In particular, consider a boundary agreement with the City of Countryside to address the future of unincorporated areas located between La Grange's and Countryside's current boundaries.
- iii. Identify and explore alternatives to mitigate environmental and quality of life impacts on Village residents caused by manufacturing and mining operations occurring southeast of the Village.



- iv. Pursue working agreements, as opportunities arise and as appropriate, with neighboring communities, agencies and property owners to address issues impacting the Village.

II. Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan translates the Village's Vision into physical terms. It establishes the pattern of future land uses for the next 15 to 20 years. It also includes community land use policies and recommendations to realize the Plan. The Land Use Plan strives to maintain and enhance the basic physical character of the community, promote improvements and upgrades as needed, and proactively manage market-driven redevelopment in select locations and in a compatible manner.

The Land Use Plan is to be used in concert with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. It is organized into the following sections: A) Introduction To The Land Use Plan B) Residential Land Use; C) Commercial Land Use; D) Employment Land Use; and E) Public and Quasi-Public Land Use.

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE PLAN

The existing pattern of land uses in the Village is a strong influence on future land use and development patterns. The current pattern of land uses within the Village is illustrated in *Figure 1, Existing Land Use*. To determine the type and location of land uses currently existing within the Village of La Grange, field surveys were conducted in September and October 2003. Land uses observed at the time of the surveys were recorded and mapped. La Grange's existing land use areas were mapped and are described in detail in *Memorandum No. 1*. Overall, La Grange is a mature, low-density, residential community. While some non-residential portions of the community are subject to change due to age or obsolescence, its physical pattern of development is well organized and stable. And, because of the quality of the living environment, it is experiencing a high level of residential replacement housing.

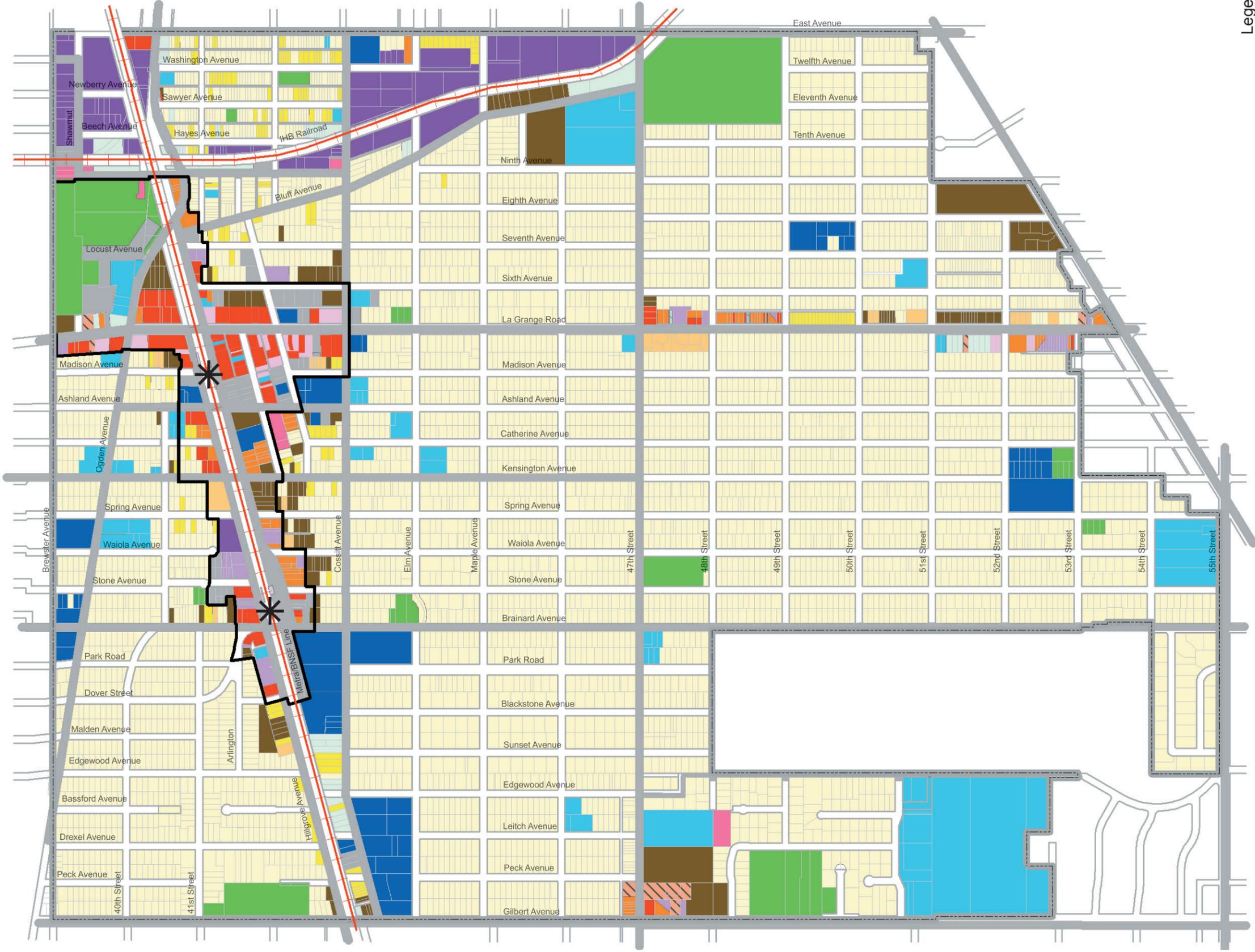
The Long-Range Land Use Plan builds upon the pattern of existing land uses, as illustrated in *Figure 1, Existing Land Use*, and provides a guide for future land use and development decisions. The *Long-Range Land Use Plan* strives to promote a compatible arrangement of uses which makes efficient use of land resources and community facilities and services, and emphasizes conservation in most areas. The Land Use Plan also considers and reflects the market analysis completed for the planning process which is also contained in *Memorandum No. 1*. *The Long-Range Land Use Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 2*. A description of the Land Use Plan and its associated recommendations are provided in the following sections.



B. RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Residential land uses in the Long-Range Plan will continue to sustain a stable pattern of development, very consistent with the current pattern of land uses in the Village. Residential land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Community-Wide Single-Family Residential* - residential areas which include single-family detached dwellings at all densities. Areas classified as "community-wide" generally include the developed residential areas outside the Village's historic district.
- *Core Single-Family Residential* - residential areas which include single-family detached dwellings at all densities. Areas classified as "core" are generally located within the Village's historic district, and consist of the older housing stock within the Village.
- *Two-Family Residential* - residential areas which include two family attached dwellings, either two-flats or side-by-side duplexes, which generally require 3,000 sq. ft of lot area per dwelling unit.
- *Medium-Density Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family residential dwellings in a low-rise condominium or townhome format, which generally require 2,000 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit. This type of housing includes structures that are usually two to three stories in height.
- *High-Density Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family residential dwellings in a condominium format (buildings with shared lobbies and centralized parking facilities), which generally require 1,300 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit. This type of housing generally includes structures that are four to five stories in overall height. Plan policies reiterate that structures more than three stories in height would require special approval by the Village.



Legend

- Metra Station
- Subarea Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- Arterial/Collector Street
- Public
- Quasi-public
- Commercial - Retail
- Commercial - Restaurant
- Commercial - Service
- Commercial - Office
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Duplex
- Multi-Family Townhome
- Multi-Family Apartment
- Medical Office
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Utilities
- Off-Street Parking
- Park/Open Space
- Vacant Building
- Vacant Land

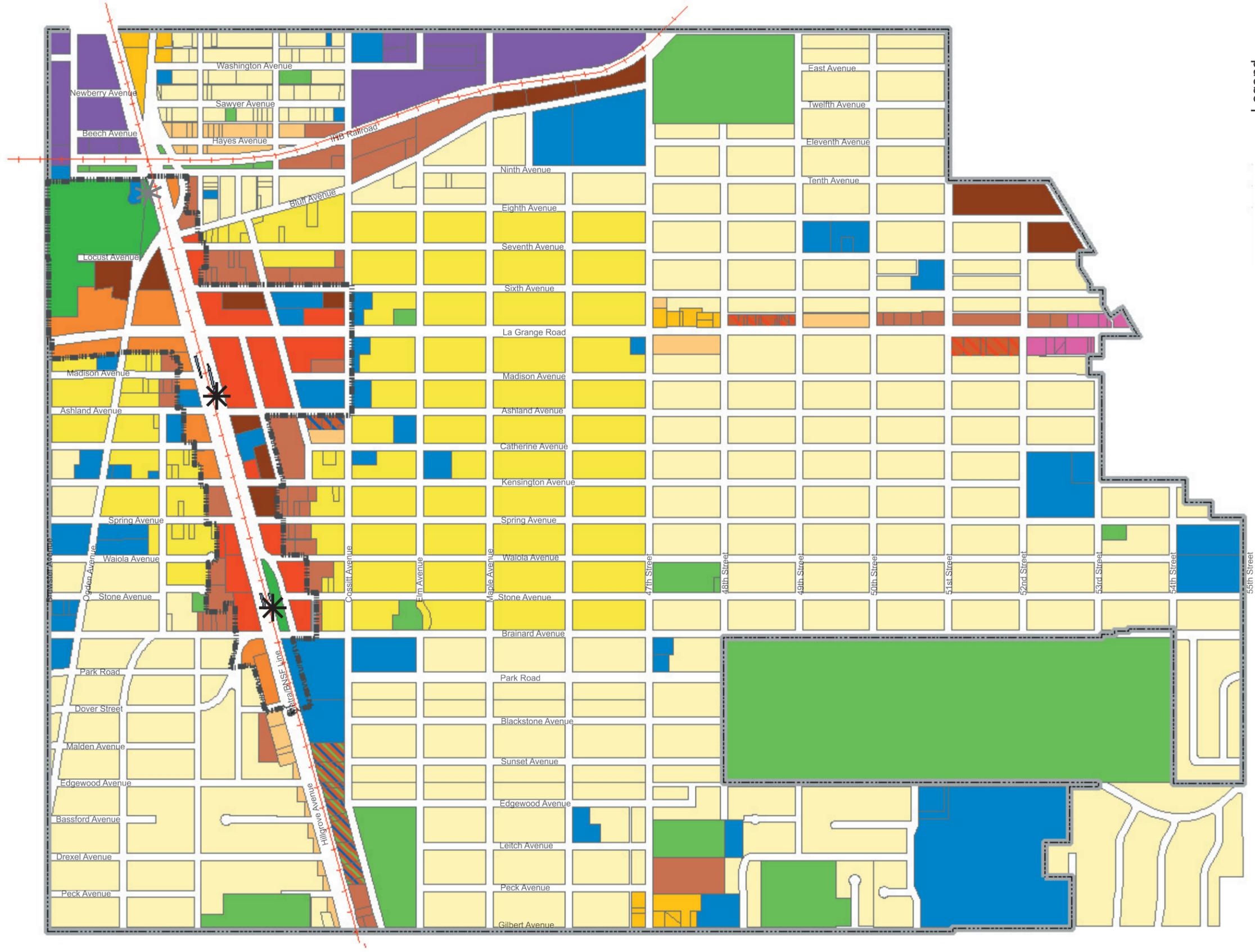
NOTE: Existing land use survey conducted in September, 2003



Comprehensive Plan
Village of La Grange, Illinois



Figure 1, Existing Land Use



Legend

- Light Industrial
- Public and Institutional
- Open Space and Recreation
- Multi-family or Institutional
- Multi-family or Commercial
- Multi-family, Institutional or Open Space
- Community-wide Single Family Residential
- Core Single Family Residential
- Two-Family Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- BNSF Core Commercial
- BNSF Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Metra Station
- Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
- Subarea Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad



Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan

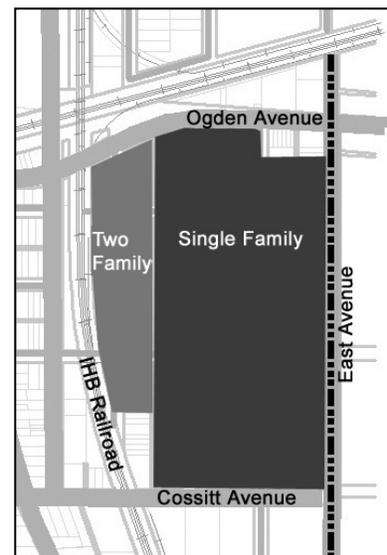
RESIDENTIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

Single-family residential land uses largely reflect existing conditions, incorporating a distinction between “core” residential areas and “community-wide” residential areas for purposes of policy distinctions. The recent increase in residential teardown redevelopment activity within the Village, and the inevitability of this redevelopment impacting older housing areas, has resulted in community sentiment to consider adjustments to current development regulations to maintain the general characteristics of residential areas that provide unique and valued character. Implementation of this concept will require several zoning code amendments to protect front yards from garages and wide driveways.

Another zoning code amendment might be introduced which provides for the control of basic building bulk through gross floor area limitation.

The Long-Range Land Use Plan map also clearly indicates the Village’s desire for single-family residential uses to continue within the adjacent area of the unincorporated La Grange Highlands. The Plan encourages the continued use of the La Grange Country Club as a recreational and open space facility. However, should it be subject to change in the future, the community’s land use preference for the area would be single-family detached residential that is compatible with neighboring areas.

The neighborhood bounded by the IHB Railroad, Ogden Avenue, East Avenue and Cossitt Avenue is currently a mix of single-family and two-family residences. Current development regulations allow for conversion to two-family residential throughout this neighborhood. The Land Use Plan indicates that, while two-family residential is an appropriate use type in the western portion of the area (along Hayes Avenue) to serve as a buffer against the IHB Railroad, the remainder of the neighborhood should remain as a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood.

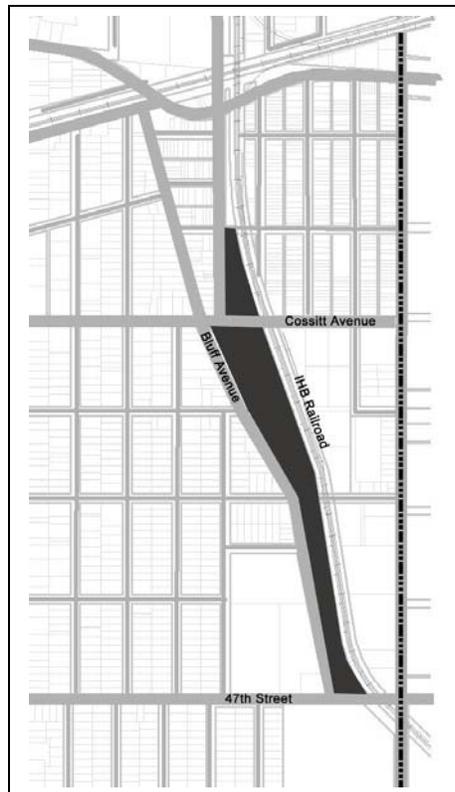


Multi-family residential uses generally follow the current land use pattern in the Village. However, there are a few locations which could be appropriate for new multi-family residential land uses. Multi-family residential areas within the BNSF Railroad Corridor are discussed in detail in Part VI B of this Plan.

Areas within the Village that could potentially accommodate additional multi-family development in the future include: the properties along Cossitt Avenue that back up to the BNSF Railroad between Gilbert Avenue and approximately Sunset Avenue (this area could potentially provide for commuter parking as well); the properties east of Bluff Avenue that back up to the IHB Railroad between 47th Street and approximately Cossitt Avenue; properties fronting on South La Grange Road between 48th and 49th Streets (on the east side); and properties fronting on South La Grange Road between 51st and 52nd Streets (on the west side).



Development of multiple family residential uses in each of these locations will require a change of use. Thus, it is important that any land use change and development proposal encompass the entire area designated for multiple family residential use. For example, should a residential use be proposed for the west side of South La Grange Road between 51st and 52nd Streets, the entirety of the block face between these streets should encompass the proposal and illustrate how development will occur to ensure a coordinated approach, compatible with surrounding land uses. Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within residential areas of the Village. These include:



1. **The existing visual and environmental character of La Grange's various residential neighborhoods should be preserved and enhanced.** The Village is made up of several distinct neighborhood areas, each with somewhat different physical characteristics such as street configuration, landscaping, and lot sizes. Much of the Village's overall image and identity is due to the unique character of its neighborhoods, and these distinguishing features should be enhanced in the future.
2. **New multi-family residential development should include a distinctive landscaping and open space system as an integral part of the overall site design.** Landscaping or other buffering techniques should be used to screen residential areas from adjacent non-residential uses.
3. **Community-Wide Residential Scale and Bulk Preferences.** In general, residential areas should be comprised of structures not to exceed two and one-half stories in height. New homes should reflect architectural styles and materials that are not incompatible with Village standards. A Floor Area Ratio (FAR) should be considered for limiting the bulk and mass of structures in all residential zoning districts to ensure that infill and replacement housing is in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood character.
4. **Housing Opportunities in the BNSF Corridor.** Consider adjustments to minimum lot size requirements in the BNSF Corridor to better utilize properties to provide varied housing opportunities.
5. **Maintain compliance with the State of Illinois threshold for affordable housing.** The State of Illinois recently established the goal that a minimum of 10% of housing stock within each Illinois municipality should be affordable¹. Based upon the state's criteria, La Grange's 2004 housing inventory includes 20.8% affordable units. The Village should seek to maintain affordable housing at or above the State's established threshold, to continue to provide varied housing opportunities within the Village.

¹ The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act became effective January 1, 2004 throughout the State of Illinois. Based upon the criteria established by the Act, and utilizing 2000 Census data, an affordable housing unit in Cook County has currently been defined as having a sales price of less than \$125,244 or a monthly rent of less than \$775. These figures, as well as the Village's rate of compliance, will be subject to adjustment in later years.



C. COMMERCIAL LAND USE

The Long-Range Plan for commercial land use recommends a continued strong presence of retail and commercial uses in the Village. While the Plan does not encourage substantial new commercial areas, it does place a strong emphasis on enhancing and improving conditions in existing commercial locations. This discussion includes all commercial areas of the Village except for the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Part VI of the Plan is specifically devoted to a discussion of the Corridor. Commercial land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Neighborhood Commercial* - a commercial area which provides convenience goods and services, primarily to meet the daily living needs of nearby residents.
- *Community Commercial* - a commercial area which provides services extending beyond daily living needs, possibly including comparison shopping goods. This area is typically located along major streets and caters to community neighborhoods as well as passersby from outside the Village.
- *BNSF Core Commercial* - This area forms the business and civic core of the Village and functions as a focal point for *mixed-use* activity. It includes retail and entertainment uses on the first floor of buildings, and office, commercial services and residential uses above the first floor. In order to maximize its pedestrian setting for retailing and entertainment, off-street parking by use is not required for development within this area. Shared parking is provided primarily by municipal parking facilities, helping to encourage pedestrian movement and "multiple destination" shopping trips.
- *BNSF Commercial* - This area offers a mix of uses similar to the Core Commercial area, but is intended to be less intensive in character. Any allowable land use (except residential) could be located on the first floor of buildings. Because of their perimeter locations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor, these locations would be required to provide dedicated off-street parking for all uses.

COMMERCIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

Commercial land uses outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor are currently located in four distinct commercial areas: at the intersection of 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue/Willow Springs Road; along South La Grange Road, at both the south end of the Village and near the intersection with 47th Street; and, at the intersection of Ogden and East Avenues. Reflective of the auto-oriented nature of the intersection of Plainfield and La Grange Roads, the area at the south end of La Grange Road is considered a “community” commercial area. Due to their smaller size and mix of uses, the other three are designated as “neighborhood” commercial areas.

It is not anticipated that commercial areas outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor will expand. However, redevelopment within these areas is likely. This could include several vacant parcels on the southwest corner of Ogden and East Avenues. It may be necessary for a developer to acquire two adjacent residential parcels to the south of the current commercial use. Should such a private transaction be successfully negotiated, the Village should be supportive of a rezoning request. In addition, should the industrial business on Ogden Avenue just west of East Avenue cease operations, auto-oriented commercial is the most appropriate land use to consider for the parcel.

Other existing commercial areas within the Village that could potentially accommodate commercial redevelopment include: the southernmost blocks within the Village along South La Grange Road, the neighborhood commercial area at 47th Street and Gilbert Avenue; and the neighborhood commercial area at 47th Street and South La Grange Road. The Village should consider direct efforts to facilitate coordinated redevelopment efforts, such as limited parcel assemblage.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within commercial areas of the Village. These include:

1. **Establish a dominant function and role for future commercial land use areas.** High-quality new commercial development should occur at selected locations in the future. While many commercial areas could include a mix of uses, the Land Use Plan recommends that most new commercial areas be characterized by a dominant function, such as retail, office or service commercial uses. This organization is reinforced by travel patterns, surrounding land uses, and community-wide service needs.



2. **Encourage the maintenance and improvement of existing commercial areas.** Existing commercial areas should be improved and upgraded as required. Overall access, parking and environmental improvements should be undertaken where necessary. The negative impact of commercial areas on other land uses should be minimized.
3. **Ensure that the design of commercial development supports and does not conflict with the adjoining street system.** Since most commercial areas are located along the Village's major streets, access to commercial properties should be carefully designed to minimize conflicts with through traffic movement. The consolidation of access drives for several individual properties should be encouraged. Commercial areas should be designed so that no direct vehicular access is provided between them and abutting residential areas.
4. **Improve and upgrade the image and appeal of commercial areas along commercial streets.** The overall image and appearance of existing commercial areas should continue to be upgraded and improved. Much could be done to improve commercial area lighting, landscaping, signage, and pedestrian conveniences which would not only help upgrade property, but also unify the overall appearance of commercial streets.
5. **Ensure the highest quality of new construction and design.** The design and appearance of buildings, site development, landscaping, signage and graphics, and street furniture should all be of special concern.
6. **Commercial areas should not adversely impact adjacent residential areas.** Screening and buffering should be provided, including landscaped setbacks, high quality fencing, and open space areas. Commercial operations, including traffic and parking, should not be allowed to affect neighborhood quality. Noise, safety, and overall maintenance of commercial properties should be carefully controlled.

D. EMPLOYMENT LAND USE

Employment land uses will continue to serve an important role in the future. Employment land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Light Industrial* - an area generally intended for a mix of light industrial uses including office uses, warehousing and distribution of wholesale goods and supplies, and the light assembly and light manufacturing of products.

EMPLOYMENT AREA RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

Light industrial uses are indicated in two contiguous areas of the Village: the Shawmut Avenue Business Park, located north of the BNSF Railroad and east of the IHB Railroad; and the East Avenue Business Park, bounded by the IHB Railroad, East Avenue and Cossitt Avenue. Industrial uses in other areas should be relocated or phased out over time, including: the industrial business just northwest of the intersection of Ogden and East Avenues; the industrial businesses west of the IHB Railroad along Bluff Avenue; and, the industrial businesses along Hayes Avenue between Lincoln and Calendar Avenues.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within employment areas of the Village. These include:

1. **Encourage property owners to maintain and enhance the overall condition of existing industrial, business and office developments.** As existing developments continue to age, it will become important for the Village to maintain relationships with property owners and tenants to keep these areas viable and stable in the future. Several properties could undergo site improvements, especially in the industrial area south of the BNSF Railroad Corridor.
2. **New development and redevelopment locations should occur in a planned and unified manner.** In particular, plans should emphasize the consolidation of obsolete parcels and structures to meet current development needs.
3. **New development shall have adequate off-street parking and loading facilities.** Adequately screened off-street parking and loading facilities should be provided in all light industrial areas.



E. PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC LAND USE

Public and quasi-public land uses are critically important for sustaining basic community service functions as well as enhancing the Village's overall quality of life. Public and quasi-public uses are briefly discussed in this Part, and are covered in more detail in Part IV of the Plan. Public and quasi-public land use areas identified in *Figure 2, Long-Range Land Use Plan*, are described below.

- *Public and Institutional* - an area containing major community facilities or public buildings such as schools, colleges, hospitals, churches, municipal buildings and cultural facilities.
- *Open Space and Recreation* - an area intended to be maintained as a park, recreation site or open space.

Areas designated within the Land Use Plan as Public and Institutional or as Open Space and Recreation largely reflect existing facility locations, with a few areas of minimal expansion where isolated single-family residential properties are located directly adjacent to existing facilities.

The Land Use Plan also indicates the La Grange Country Club as Open Space and Recreation, reflecting the Village's desire to see the Country Club continue as a recreational amenity. However, as mentioned above, should the site be subject to change in the future, the community's land use preference for the site would be for single-family detached residential uses.

For the most part, public and quasi-public land use areas in the Village are well established. Future change will more often come by way of expansion of existing facilities.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within public and quasi-public areas of the Village. These include:

1. **The Village should consider the provision of new facilities and services which respond to the needs and desires of local residents and businesses.** The demands on community facilities and services needs may change in the years ahead. For example, the increasing number of older residents may lead to new facilities and services for senior citizens. New services might also be considered for youth, or the physically challenged.

2. **The Village should capitalize on the visual and image potentials which are presented by new community facilities.** New public buildings represent a unique opportunity to develop new civic focal points. La Grange's overall image and identity can be further enhanced by ensuring thoughtful and compatible design of new or redeveloped facilities in the context of their location. At a minimum, all facilities should be in good repair and be located on attractively landscaped sites.
3. **Work with the Park District of La Grange on the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.** While implementation of the Plan is clearly the responsibility of the Park District, the Village should work with the Park District to realize community recreation and open space objectives, as appropriate.
4. **The Village should pursue a dialogue with the La Grange Country Club and Cook County regarding the future of the property.** The Country Club is a significant open space resource for the Village located in adjacent unincorporated Cook County. The Village should work proactively with the County and property owner to seek to preserve open space to the greatest extent feasible if development occurs. Should development be proposed in the future, annexation and development with residential uses of no greater density than, and of no less than the character of, surrounding neighborhoods should be considered, with an emphasis on maximizing open space and encouraging redevelopment as a Planned Development.
5. **The Village should promote cooperation and interaction among various agencies and organizations within and around La Grange in the provision of community facilities and services.** The Village should support the library, recreation and school systems, and other governmental service agencies, as appropriate, which seek to contribute to and improve the quality of life as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. Cooperative efforts to address traffic issues and pedestrian safety concerns near community facilities should be undertaken.
6. **Existing community facilities should be maintained and upgraded as required.** These include schools, municipal buildings and other institutions. Replacement facilities should be constructed for existing facilities which become inadequate or obsolete. Special care should be taken to ensure that these new facilities are well located and compatible with surrounding land uses.



7. **The design and improvement of existing and new park and recreation facilities should consider and plan for bicycle system improvements.** Park improvements should provide an appropriate right-of-way through the park for use by cyclists; rest locations; potable water; and other facilities of convenience to both cyclists and nearby residents. These should be coordinated with the recommendations contained in the Mobility Plan for bicycle improvements.

8. **Seek the continued development of youth, teen and senior citizen facilities and services.** The Village should help to ensure the recreational needs of these groups are met for the future. Where appropriate, the Village should assist or support such programs.

III. Mobility Plan

While La Grange is largely a developed community, the Village would benefit from a variety of “mobility” improvements. There is a number of proposed transportation improvements intended to enhance the basic street system as well as offer transportation alternatives to La Grange residents. This chapter includes a discussion and presentation of: a) Mobility Policies; b) Existing Street Network c) Functional Street Classification; d) Street System Improvements; e) Bicycle and Pedestrian Access; and f) Transit Facilities and Services. Detailed transportation recommendations for the BNSF Railroad Corridor are included in the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan. The La Grange community-wide *Mobility Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 3*.

A. MOBILITY SYSTEM POLICIES

Transportation policies should be used to guide the overall maintenance and improvement of the Village transportation system.

1. **Maintain and improve the local street network in accordance with the Mobility Plan.** The Village should improve streets in accordance with the functional classification described in this Chapter. In the review of future public and private development proposals and projects, the Village should determine whether the improvements are consistent with the functional street classification.
2. **Ensure that new development and redevelopment plans are in compliance with Village codes and subdivision regulations.** The Village should continue to apply its subdivision regulations and improvement standards for new development and redevelopment.
3. **Develop and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout La Grange.** The Plan emphasizes the enhancement of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the community. The system should not only provide local bicycle connections to existing regional facilities, but also safely and conveniently interconnect key existing and planned activity areas and community facilities within the Village.
4. **Provide bicycle parking in conjunction with new commercial and mixed-use developments.** The Village should develop revised streetscape standards that provide for bicycle parking in conjunction with new mixed-use and retail-commercial developments. The zoning code should be amended for this purpose.

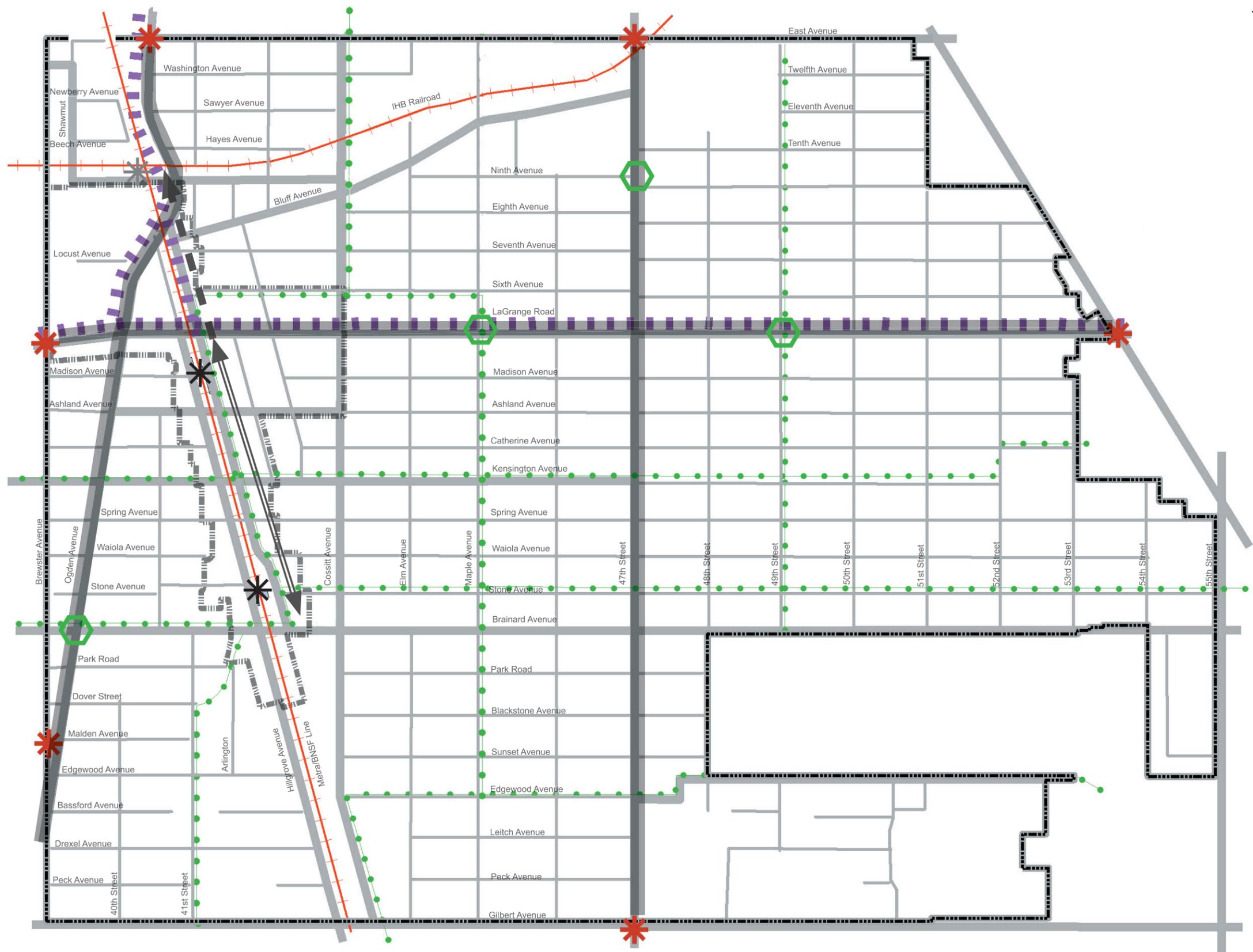


5. **Complete the Village sidewalk system.** Working with La Grange residents, the Village should install sidewalks in areas where they presently do not exist.
6. **Develop a Community-Wide Wayfinding Program.** The Village should develop a system of community "gateway" and wayfinding signage which provides motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians a means of navigating destinations in the community. This system should be coordinated with a similar system recommended as part of the BNSF Railroad Corridor Subarea Plan.
7. **Seek to maximize the contributions by state, federal and other agencies toward the costs of the major roadway system of the Village.** Wherever possible, local improvement projects should be coordinated with county, state, and federal projects to maximize the development of the local street system.
8. **Encourage the expansion of Pace Bus service in the Village.** Future service expansion should carefully consider the requirements of senior citizens and local employees. The need for improved north-south access in the community is emphasized in this regard. The possibility of providing shuttle service between the Metra commuter station and the Village's intensive employment areas would be beneficial to local employers, and a possible park-n-ride facility with shuttle bus to the station would allow commuters additional parking within the Village and decrease some commuter traffic in the downtown.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING STREET NETWORK

The Village of La Grange is served by a well-developed street system. It brings people and goods into the community and provides the means by which to move about from one part of the Village to another. The Village's basic grid street pattern is one of the major "structural" elements which defines the character of the community.

Regional access to and from the Village is provided by I-294 (Tri-State Tollway) to the west, I-290 (Eisenhower Expressway) to the north, and I-55 (Stevenson Expressway) to the south. There are two U.S. Highways, which are under state jurisdiction, traversing the Village: Ogden Avenue (U.S. Rt. 34) and La Grange Road (U.S. Rt. 12/20/45). Ogden Avenue is grade separated to travel under the BNSF Railroad just east of La Grange Road, and again further east to travel over the IHB Railroad. It returns to grade at the East Avenue intersection at the easternmost edge of the Village. The remaining streets within the Village are controlled by either Cook County or the Village of La Grange.



Proposed bicycle route alignments are based upon preliminary routes included in the 1996 "West Central Bikeway Plan" developed by the West Central Municipal Conference, preliminary routes included in the Park District of La Grange Master Plan, and input from the Village Engineer.

Legend

- Community Gateway
- Village Limits
- Proposed Bicycle Route
- Bus route
- Railroad
- Proposed bicycle crossing signal
- Arterial Street
- Collector Street
- Local Street
- Metra Station
- Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
- BNSF Railroad
- Corridor Boundary
- Peak hour shuttle and/or Pace Bus concept



Comprehensive Plan
Village of La Grange, Illinois



Figure 3, Mobility Plan

C. FUNCTIONAL STREET CLASSIFICATION

Functional classification of all streets within the Village is a necessary first step in determining the need for future improvements to existing streets and the addition of new streets. Functional classification identifies the purpose of the street, such as whether it is to provide local access in residential neighborhoods or move traffic through the community to other parts of the region. Several factors were considered in identifying the functional classification of all existing and proposed streets. These include:

- The type and density of land uses abutting the street.
- Whether the street permits direct parcel access.
- The distance to which the street extends beyond the Village boundaries.
- The number of traffic lanes, types of intersection and access control.
- Spacing, relative to the network of streets in and surrounding the community.
- The overall existing and anticipated traffic volumes to be carried by the street.

La Grange's functional street classifications are listed below. The titles given these classifications describe the type of traffic expected to use the street. The categories defined are intended to be consistent with current regional and community transportation plans for the area. *Figure 3, Mobility Plan*, depicts the location and relationship of these various types of streets. The functional class applies to all streets within the Village's planning area.

- **Expressways:** Expressways or Freeways are limited access roads extending far beyond the limits of the Village, providing a transportation network throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. They are high speed arterials that carry large volumes of traffic and are accessed from select interchange locations.

An example of an Expressway is I - 294.

- **Arterials:** Arterials are intended to serve all types of trips, with a significant portion representing trips with destinations beyond the boundaries of the community, and possibly neighboring communities. Principal arterials have regional importance because of their alignment, continuity, capacity and connections with regional traffic routes.

Examples of Arterials include Ogden Avenue and 47th Street.



- **Collector Streets:** Collector streets are intended to serve only vehicle trips generated to and from neighborhoods. Their function is to collect traffic from the local street system, distribute it between neighborhoods and community facilities, and provide access to the arterial street system.

Examples of Collectors include Brainard and Cossitt Avenues.

- **Local Streets:** All other streets within the planning area are classified as local streets. A local street is intended to serve only those vehicle trips generated by land uses abutting the street, providing access to and from individual properties within the neighborhood.

D. STREET SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

This section summarizes existing street system facilities in the Village and key future needs. It includes: Street Network and Public Right-of-Way Improvements.

STREET NETWORK

A number of street improvements are proposed for the Village and its planning area. These improvements can have implications for the operation of the existing system as well as for future land use potentials and patterns. This section is not intended to identify all improvements the Village may undertake over the planning period, but highlight those critical improvements recognized at this time.

Transportation concerns within the Village will continue to focus on maintenance and improvement of the existing street system, and improving the efficiency and aesthetic appeal of the Village's major streets.

Most traffic operation problems and concerns within La Grange are located along or near the major traffic routes which pass through the community, particularly Ogden Avenue, La Grange Road, 47th Street, 55th Street, Plainfield Road, Gilbert Avenue, Cossitt Avenue, and East Avenue. Problems and concerns include relatively heavy traffic volumes along several routes, including a significant amount of through traffic and localized traffic congestion.

It is recommended that the following general projects and actions be considered to improve traffic operations within the community in the future.

1. **Monitor the need for additional roadway capacity and left-turn lane Improvements.** In general, most of the traffic operation problems along major roadways appear to relate to left-turn movements. Left-turn lanes have been provided along several routes in recent years. The Village should continue to monitor the need for additional left-turn lanes or other capacity improvements at other locations in the future.
2. **Seek to improve roadway capacity** at the intersection of Ogden Avenue (Route 34) and La Grange Road (Route 45), while also addressing pedestrian safety concerns.
3. **Consolidate or redesign access to commercial properties.** A number of commercial blocks have multiple curb cuts, which not only hamper traffic flow but are also inefficient in terms of land development. Where possible, parking and service areas within the same block should be reconfigured to allow for the consolidation of curb cuts and access drives.
4. **Seek to improve the condition of streets in the Village's industrial area south of Ogden Avenue.** The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has made this improvement a priority in the next several years and the Comprehensive Plan strongly encourages the improvement. The improvement will not only add capacity to the area, but will serve as a strong visual enhancement.
5. **Working with neighboring communities, seek to improve Plainfield Road to an urban street profile.** The current Plainfield Road cross-section east of La Grange Road is rural in character, including roll shoulders and open swales, and should be improved with an urban cross-section.
6. **Continue to work with the Illinois Dept. of Transportation to consolidate and coordinate curb cuts along major arterial routes.** The Village should establish its preferences for access and curb cut improvements to the major streets and work with IDOT or the appropriate county to realize those improvements.



PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to traffic related improvements, a range of other improvement projects should be considered within the public right-of-way to upgrade the overall image and appearance of commercial areas.

1. **Continue to maintain and repair sidewalks.** Segments of several streets have poorly maintained sidewalks, and these should be repaired. In addition, special new sidewalk surfaces and the widening of sidewalks at intersections should be considered in active pedestrian shopping areas.
2. **Maintain the Village's street trees.** Street trees are an important part of the Village's character. La Grange should continue the practice of providing street trees. In recent years, concern has been expressed over how trees have been over pruned by utility companies affecting their aesthetic character. Make it a priority to preserve the existing tree canopy where possible. Existing trees should not be over-pruned, and character should be maintained.
3. **Seek to bury overhead utilities.** One way to minimize impacts of utilities on tree trimming, and improve the overall aesthetic appearance of the community is to underground utility lines. While this is a very expensive activity, and would occur over a period of years, community-wide appearance would improve greatly. The Village should start with its most highly traveled and visible major streets first.
4. **Provide special wayfinding signage along major streets.** Special wayfinding signage can assist residents and visitors in navigating the Village, and help define appropriate vehicle routes to access assembly and related land uses. Wayfinding signage can also aid in "branding" activities of the Village and support its economic development efforts.

E. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The La Grange community has expressed a desire for an organized bicycle access network. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the continued development of a local bicycle system with regional continuity. Cooperation with the Park District of La Grange and the Cook County Forest Preserve District is encouraged where connections to other Villages is beneficial.

A preliminary bicycle route framework for La Grange is illustrated in *Figure 3, Mobility Plan*. Proposed bicycle routes throughout the Village should be located so as to facilitate safe bicycle movement between destinations such as the BNSF Railroad Corridor, Metra stations, parks and schools. Cooperation with transportation agencies and neighboring communities to facilitate routes within the Village and connections to nearby recreation destinations such as the Salt Creek Bike Trail will be necessary. The alignments shown are based upon recommended routes contained in the 1996 "West Central Bikeway Plan" developed by the West Central Municipal Conference. The 1996 plan provides further detail regarding the potential implementation of these bicycle routes.

The *Open Space Master Plan* prepared in 2000 by the Park District of La Grange identifies a bicycle access framework consistent with routes illustrated in *Figure 3*. It also shows locations for bicycle crossing lights at high traffic intersections, which are also shown in *Figure 3*.

All system improvements in La Grange are proposed as on-street facilities. As such, improvement standards require a marked bicycle travel lane of four feet in width. Bicycle routes should include regulatory and identification signage as well. All improvements should be in conformance with AASHTO design and construction guidelines. This would make the project potentially eligible for state and federal finance assistance. Where feasible and appropriate, the Village should consider acquisition of additional right-of-way to accommodate bike route improvements.

Off-street bicycle parking should be provided in association with new development or redevelopment projects in the Village. The zoning code could provide the basis for establishing new off-street bicycle parking standards and requirements.

In the future, bicycle improvements should utilize this framework as a guide. Alternative or expanded routes could eventually be established. Improvements should be coordinated with the Park District of La Grange, Cook County Forest Preserve District and other agencies as appropriate.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Pedestrian facilities are adequate throughout the majority of the Village. There are a few areas in the southern area of the Village which currently do not provide for sidewalks. Working with homeowners in these areas, the Village should work toward providing sidewalks in these areas in the future.



Areas in need of sidewalk improvements for pedestrian comfort and safety include the Gilbert Avenue / 47th Street intersection, and the at-grade crossings of the IHB Railroad at Lincoln and Cossitt Avenues. The Village should also encourage improved pedestrian access to and within the La Grange Memorial Hospital campus.

In general, the following standards should apply to sidewalk improvements:

- The minimum width for a sidewalk should be 5 feet.
- Sidewalks may need up to an additional 2 feet of width if they directly abut fences, walls and buildings.
- Within commercial areas and places with high pedestrian volumes, sidewalks should be sized and surfaced appropriately for anticipated pedestrian traffic volumes and to meet or exceed ADA guidelines.
- "Count-down" clocks indicating the number of seconds during the crossing cycle at pedestrian crossings should also be considered at high traffic intersections, as deemed appropriate

F. TRANSIT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Three transit carriers currently serve the Village of La Grange: the Metra/Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Line (commuter rail), Pace's West Division (suburban bus) and Amtrak (inter-city rail). The continued provision of these services to Village residents is an important component of the mobility system serving the Village of La Grange. Metra facilities and services at both the Downtown La Grange Road and Stone Avenue stations are discussed as part of the *BNSF Railroad Corridor Plan* in Part VI.

Pace bus routes serve La Grange primarily along La Grange Road and along Ogden Avenue extending east from La Grange Road. Amtrak provides service from Chicago to western Illinois with a daily stop at the La Grange Road Station.

METRA COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE

Metra's proposed Inner Circumferential Service (ICS), which would utilize the IHB Railroad right-of-way to provide commuter rail service, could introduce another important public transportation opportunity in the Village. A new transfer station could be developed where the IHB and BNSF railroads cross. This would necessitate the creation of a transfer station facility near the intersection of the BNSF and IHB Railroads, most likely northwest of the intersection.

The Inner Circumferential Service (ICS) is included in the Chicago Area Transportation Study's (CATS) Shared Path 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). If such a station facility is developed, vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns should be assessed and accommodated, with improvements including a pedestrian connection over Ogden Avenue to connect the new station to the BNSF Railroad Corridor and improvements to the Tilden Avenue underpass to facilitate improved traffic patterns in the area. Given current understanding that the station would be a transfer facility, and that transfer volumes are unknown at this time, transit oriented land use and development opportunities are difficult to measure. Further, given the long term horizon under which these improvements might occur, recommended land uses conservatively assume no change in the overall development pattern. By the time a decision is made to develop circumferential rail service, the Village would have ample time to develop new detailed land use plans for this area.

The Village of La Grange should also explore "park-n-ride" facilities, or feeder bus service to commuter facilities, in locations outside the BNSF Railroad Corridor. Because land availability will remain constrained in the Downtown area, park-n-ride facilities offer another means under which the Village can help meet facility needs for its growing commuter market. Metra and Pace have begun research on attributes which make these facilities successful, through experience gained at existing park-n-ride locations by working with other communities. The Village should maintain an open dialogue with Metra and Pace to explore how these facilities and/or services might service La Grange in the future.

PACE SUBURBAN BUS SERVICE

Pace currently provides service to the Village along Routes 302, 304, and 330. Future changes are being considered for Route 330 which operates on La Grange Road to enhance service. Enhancement to Pace service within the Village of La Grange will be consistent with Pace's Vision 2020 Plan, which can be viewed at www.pacebus.com. Enhanced mobility requires services that are cost and time competitive with the automobile and that also contribute to the community development objectives of the Village. The La Grange Road Metra Station will continue to be served by Pace; La Grange Road is being considered for traffic signal priority (TSP) to make public transit more efficient between O'Hare Airport and the Village of La Grange, along with other arterial streets served by Pace in the region. The Village should support Pace service enhancements as well as the transit signal priority program. One pending Pace service upgrade that will



positively benefit Village residents in the near future is a planned shuttle service between the Hollywood Metra Station in Brookfield (the “Zoo Stop”) and Brookfield Zoo.

AMTRAK INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Amtrak provides services from Chicago’s loop to western Illinois (Quincy) and makes one outbound and one inbound stop in La Grange each day. Because this is the only transit service in La Grange which extends beyond the Chicago metro area, it provides an important service to community residents.

G. MOBILITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance measures or “indicators” are a performance-monitoring standard that permit La Grange to measure the extent to which the goals and policies of the Mobility Plan are being achieved. They are prepared to be responsive to the State of Illinois *Local Technical Planning Assistance Act*. The performance measures are used to monitor change in transportation system performance.

For the major street system a level of service (LOS) approach is used to measure performance. Six levels of service, as currently defined by the Illinois Department of Transportation, are defined for each type of facility. They are given letter designations from “A” to “F”, with level-of-service “A” representing the best operating conditions and level-of-service “F” the worst. The various levels of service are defined as follows for uninterrupted flow facilities:

- A Represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.
- B Is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable.
- C Is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream.
- D Represents high-density, but still stable, flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted and the driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience.
- E Represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult.

- F Is used to define forced or breakdown flow. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can traverse the point. Queues form behind such locations. Operations within the queue are characterized by stop-and-go waves, and they are extremely unstable.

For suburban areas such as the Village of La Grange, the performance measure proposed is to reach an overall level of service C. However, level of service D is acceptable during peak periods along critical travel routes. To measure performance, the Village will need to undertake an LOS assessment of traffic patterns along key roadways in the Village and select minor streets. This should include testing at known congestion locations. The Village should undertake service level testing every two or three years following this initial assessment to determine performance.

In addition to these studies of existing conditions, Village consideration of redevelopment proposals should require that potential future traffic impacts be identified, and that mitigation measures be cooperatively developed and implemented.

With regard to public transportation, and over the next ten to fifteen years, several basic performance measures can be used:

- Consider implementation of a shuttle service throughout the BNSF Railroad Corridor, particularly between the LaGrange Road and Stone Avenue Metra stations.
- Implement zoning recommendations within the BNSF Railroad Corridor which will result in transit supportive development that is integrated into the community.
- Monitor Metra commuter parking demand and balance new parking opportunities with demonstrated need. Increased commuter parking should provide a benefit to the Village without over-stressing roadway infrastructure.



IV. Community Facilities Plan

The Village of La Grange is host to a range of high quality community facilities and services, and the Comprehensive Plan seeks to sustain and enhance these services. Quality community services are an important element of a mature residential community like La Grange.

The term “community facilities” includes buildings, land, interests in land (e.g., easements), and equipment of governmental services on behalf of the public. They may include facilities that are operated by public agencies as well as those that are owned and operated by private (for-profit or non-profit) enterprise for the benefit of the community.

For the most part, community facilities in La Grange are of high quality and not in need of significant improvement. Participants in the planning process spoke highly of the services available to the Village. Community facilities generally include the following: municipal facilities, schools, parks and recreational facilities, utilities, and other institutions.

Community facilities are an important aspect of the quality of life in the Village, providing valuable services to residents and businesses. This Chapter focuses on policies for maintaining and enhancing existing facilities. The policies outlined at the end of this chapter are to be implemented in concert with other policies, goals and recommendations of the Plan.

A. EXISTING FACILITIES

This section highlights community facilities and resources that contribute to the high quality of life of residents in the Village of La Grange. They provide a necessary foundation to maintain the community’s traditionally strong residential character.

La Grange is currently served by a full range of community services and resources. A brief listing of the organizations providing services to the community is provided below. Further information regarding many of these agencies’ facilities and services can be found in *Memorandum No. 1*.

- *Village of La Grange* - including Village Hall, Public Works Department, Police Department and Fire Department
- *Schools* - including Districts 102, 105 and 204



- *La Grange Public Library*
- *Park District of La Grange*
- *Richport YMCA*
- *La Grange Country Club*
- *La Grange Field Club*
- *Cook County Forest Preserve District*
- *La Grange Memorial Hospital*
- *Southwest Suburban Center on Aging*
- *La Grange Art League and Gallery*
- *La Grange Area Historical Museum*

HISTORIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The *La Grange Historic District* is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The southern portion is roughly bounded by Brainard Avenue, 47th Street, Eighth Avenue and Cossitt Avenue, with extensions north along Catherine Seventh Avenues. A second portion of the District, located north of the BNSF Railroad, is roughly bounded by Stone, Hillgrove, Madison and Ogden Avenues. The District was placed on the National Register in 1979. It is a prime example of a residential neighborhood that has maintained significant architectural integrity. The area contains high quality examples of restored Victorian, Queen Anne, Prairie Style and American Four-Square homes.

There is also one individual National Register Landmark within La Grange. The Village Hall, at 53 South La Grange Road, was constructed in approximately 1899 and for many years served as Lyons Township Hall. It was listed on the Register in 1978.

There are thirty-four additional buildings listed in either the Illinois Inventory of Historic Landmarks or Structures, including: the Stone Avenue Station; portions of the Lyons Township High School North Campus; Seventh Avenue School at the southeast corner of 49th Street and Seventh Avenue; the Kensington School building at 125 North Kensington Avenue; the church at the southeast corner of Ogden and Kensington Avenues; a utility building at 530 East Cossitt Avenue; the Jackson Storage Warehouse at 108 East Burlington Avenue; and, twenty-seven homes (nineteen of which are within the Historic District; see Appendix for a complete listing).

B. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The *Community Facilities Plan, Figure 4*, generally reflects existing facilities with isolated locations where facilities might undertake minimal expansion to achieve a consistent facility boundary in the future as opportunities arise. While some proposals for community facilities are known, few have been conceptualized or mapped. None the less, community facility proposals that are recommended to be considered are as follows:

PARKS AND RECREATION

Because La Grange is a mature community, there are limited opportunities to acquire new open space. Through the planning process, several opportunities for improved recreational facilities were identified. These are briefly discussed below.

- **Master Parks and Recreation Plan** – The Park District of La Grange has adopted the Master Parks and Recreation Plan as its primary guide to recreation and facilities improvements. The *Master Plan* should be used as a reference tool and resource in working with the Park District in program implementation.
- **Make efficient use of existing facilities** – The Comprehensive Plan recommends continued efficient use of existing recreational land and facilities. Land resources will be limited, and the Plan encourages continued collaboration between the Park District of La Grange, local schools, and the Village of La Grange.
- **Where opportunities arise, consider the expansion of existing facilities** - If at any time properties contiguous to existing park sites become available for acquisition and inclusion in the local parks system in the future, the Village should work with the Park District of La Grange to allow such park expansions to occur. Beyond the recommendations of the Master Parks and Recreation Plan, the only other new park opportunity site is along Bluff Avenue. The Residential Area Recommendations and policies section of the Land Use Plan discusses this potential in greater detail.



It is important to point out that parks and recreation facilities, services and programs are the responsibility of the Park District of La Grange. The Plan recommends that future initiatives undertaken by the District should occur with the coordination and advice of the Village of La Grange, as appropriate.

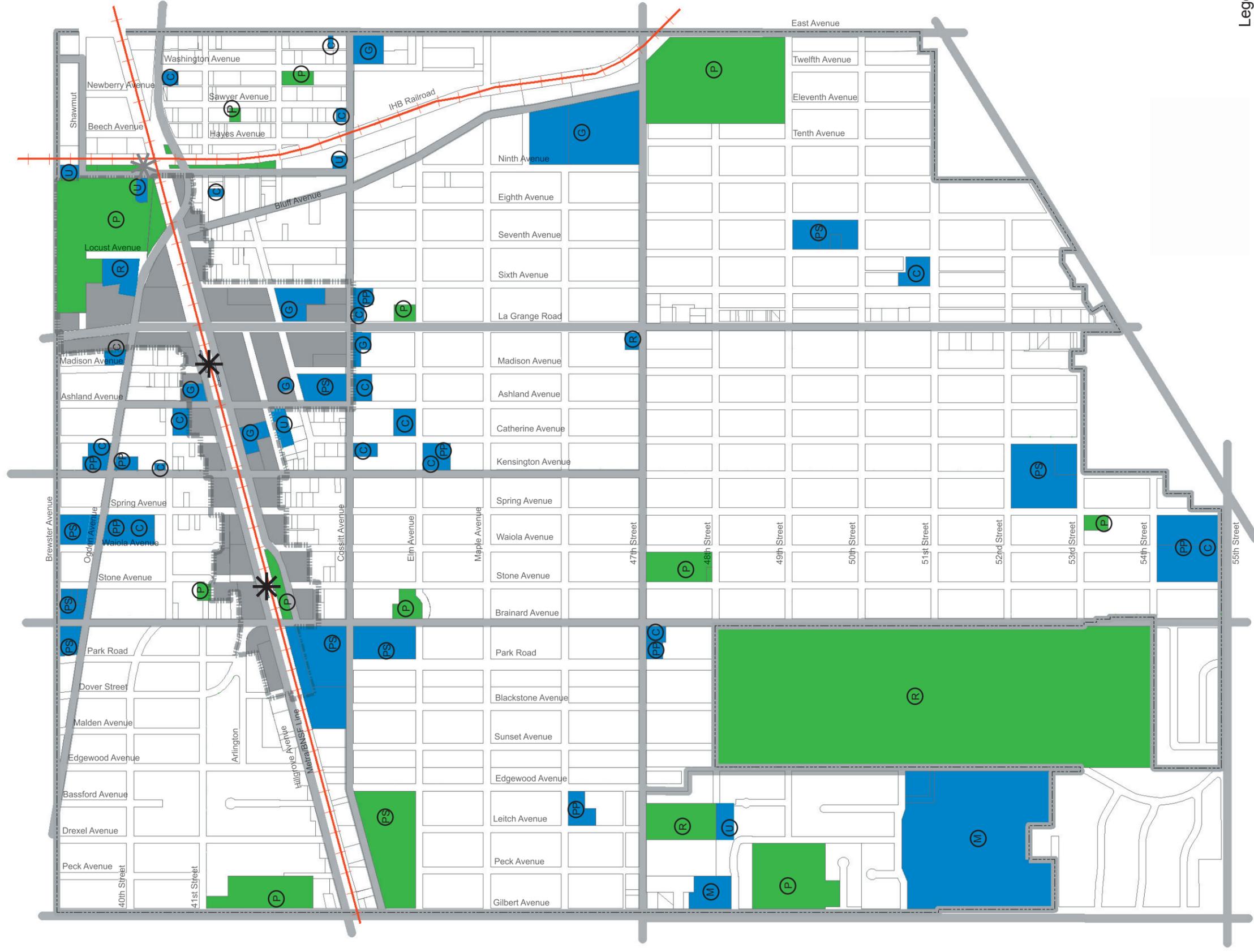
A Special Note on the La Grange Country Club

The La Grange Country Club is the only remaining large expanse of land within La Grange's planning area. Although it exists within unincorporated Cook County, it is logical to expect that since it is nearly surrounded by the Village, it will eventually become part of the Village. While it is expected that the site will remain as a golf course for the foreseeable future, some consideration should be given to its function and value to the community as an open land resource when setting out a planning perspective for the future. The area also provides drainage and recreational benefits, and contributes to the character of the community.

It is not inconceivable that the land could be sold for development in the future. The Village should, therefore, cooperate with current and subsequent owners, as well as Cook County, to maintain open space to the greatest extent feasible. These efforts should include pursuing a boundary agreement with Countryside, and investigating the establishment of a conservation district designation with the County for some or all of the property. Should development be proposed in the future, annexation and development with residential uses of no greater density than, and of no less than the character of, surrounding neighborhoods should be considered, with an emphasis on maximizing open space and encouraging redevelopment as a Planned Development.

VILLAGE MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

For the most part, existing municipal facilities will meet the needs of the Village in the future, and major changes are not anticipated. However, with respect to the Public Works Department, there remains a need for better organized and defined space that is dedicated to the materials, equipment, and operations associated with infrastructure maintenance.



Legend

- Metra Station
- Potential BNSF and IHB Transfer Station
- Subarea Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- Park
- Public School
- Parochial School / Private School
- Church
- Recreational / Cultural Facility (Public or Private)
- Medical Center
- Government / Community Facility
- Utility

Comprehensive Plan
Village of La Grange, Illinois



Figure 4, Community Facilities Plan

Presently, the department uses space at its main office and garage facility located at Cossitt Avenue and East Avenue and in a separate fenced area located along the north side of the BNSF Railroad near the Tilden Avenue water storage reservoir. These two areas should be consolidated to a single facility to be effective. The main public works facility should be expanded south to encompass some of the neighboring residential and commercial parcels. All material and equipment storage would then be consolidated into the expanded main operations center and the Tilden Avenue yard cleared for other use.

Alternatively, the entire public works facility would be relocated to the west side of the IHB Railroad within one of the industrial properties located between Maple Avenue and Cossitt Avenue. This relocation would place the public works facility in a more accessible location to the community. The only area of the Village feasible for establishing a public works operation would be within the industrial zoned area located between Cossitt Avenue, East Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Bluff Avenue.

WATER SYSTEM

In general, the existing water distribution system is adequate and will continue to meet the future needs with incremental maintenance and targeted system upgrades. Known water distribution system deficiencies are generally associated with small four-inch and certain six inch diameter water main segments located in a number of areas around the Village.

Two targeted system upgrades are planned. One is located along Gilbert Avenue and the other along Bluff Avenue. The Gilbert Avenue project will correct distribution system deficiencies in the northwest neighborhood by eliminating three dead end water main segments and eliminating an undersized water main segment. The Bluff Avenue project is intended to replace a deteriorated segment of water main, where repair incidence is high. This work should be completed as part of a future roadway improvement for the area.



STORM AND WASTE WATER COLLECTION SYSTEMS

The majority of the community is served by a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. In general the sewer systems serving the Village meet current and future needs. While waste water facilities are of adequate capacity, storm water capacity problems exist in a number of areas, particularly where sewer back up and basement flooding occurs.

A system of relief storm sewers should be developed to provide added storm water disposal capacity, and thereby reduce the risk of basement and street flooding. Where economically feasible, separate storm sewers should be extended to surface drainage outlets to reduce the drainage load on the combination sewer and treatment systems.

ELECTRICAL, GAS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In general the facilities maintained by the energy and telecommunications industry within the Village appear to be sufficient to meet community needs. However, future capabilities are of question. The Village might consider hosting a series of industry forums to discuss the capabilities of the infrastructure and the plans for renovation and expansion to meet the future needs of the community. A list of objectives and guidelines could be established to aid coordination of system upgrades with municipal projects and community interests.

Overhead Electrical Service

The majority of La Grange receives power from overhead aerial cables. In many areas these cables and pole systems conflict with trees or other municipal infrastructure. Extensive tree trimming operations by the power industry is common to reduce storm damage and power interruptions. However, the extent of tree trimming often results in unnecessary pruning, frequently threatening the health of the community's trees. While expensive and difficult to accomplish, the Village should work with the power industry to place overhead electrical and utility lines underground. The Village should meet with agencies to devise a strategy toward this end.

Telecommunications

The telecommunications industry entered a period of transition about 15 years ago as certain government and private initiatives precipitated the explosive growth of the internet and wireless communication systems. The placement of fiber optics along the BNSF Railroad in 1999 has been followed by a number of upgrades to facilities owned by SBC, Sprint, and other communications companies. All future plans for expansion of telecommunications facilities must be carefully monitored by the Village. Replacement of obsolete infrastructure consistent with updated technology standards should be encouraged, with infrastructure placed underground where opportunities arise. The Village should coordinate with the development community to facilitate the provision of broadband wireless technology. The Village should meet with telecommunications providers to devise a strategy toward this end.



V. Economic Development Plan

Balancing economic resources in a mature residential community such as La Grange is a challenge. The Comprehensive Plan has identified a range of community facility and development needs. While public finance is an integral element of the Plan, equally important is the actions the community can take relative to shaping and affecting market forces. The Economic Development Plan focuses on private initiatives which create economic opportunities for the Village.

The Plan seeks to ensure that adequate economic development opportunities are available; identify the strategic competitive advantages of the community and the surrounding region; assess the community's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry; and define the Village's role within this broader strategy.

A. EXISTING RESOURCES

In early 2003 the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Community Development Department jointly developed an "Economic Development Strategy for the Village of La Grange" that seeks to support and encourage the continued vitality of the Village, including the "themed" marketing strategy for downtown. Briefly identified below are three key tools/organizations that are identified in the Economic Development Plan, and have particular relevance in the Comprehensive Plan.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

- **The La Grange Business Association (LGBA)** is a member-based organization that seeks to enhance the local business climate, and promote and stimulate orderly growth for businesses located in La Grange. The LGBA in association with the Village of La Grange has been a major force in the revitalization of Downtown La Grange. The organization meets monthly to discuss issues of interest to local business owners and operators, promotes the growth of its member businesses, represents the interests of local businesses to the Village and the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and sponsors promotional efforts and events within the Downtown to benefit all members. The Business Association works with the Village to promote the Downtown.



- **The West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry** is supported by 350 members within seven communities in the western suburbs (La Grange, La Grange Park, Countryside, Willow Springs, Western Springs, Indian Head Park and Hodgkins), helping to promote their stability and well-being. Its offices are located at 48 S. Sixth Avenue in La Grange. The organization provides several member services, including: informational mailing inserts, new resident welcome packets, news articles and press releases, business lists and mailing labels, event sponsorships, and business promotion events. The Chamber of Commerce also maintains a website. Some of its on-line assistance links include resources for business start-up, workforce development, environmental standards and safety compliance, federal and state government resources, legislative issues and other business organizations.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Development opportunities will play a very important role in realizing economic development in the Village in the years ahead. The following summarizes the findings of the market assessment completed at the time of Plan adoption, and identifies the types of economic and real estate development opportunities likely to be brought before the Village for consideration. An extensive analysis of La Grange's market opportunities was made early in the planning process, and was considered in formulating land use and development decisions reached in preparing the Comprehensive Plan. More information on the La Grange market, and its consideration in the planning process are included in Appendix *Memorandums No. 1* and *No. 2*.

RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL

With nearly 100 retail establishments located in the Village, La Grange's retail market remains strong. Through the Village's redevelopment efforts, Downtown branding strategy and public-private partnership with the business community, La Grange has broadly expanded its market. Several national retailers have expressed an interest in La Grange. The Village will need to work with these to identify appropriate sites for larger stores (up to approximately 20,000 square feet in size), where access and infrastructure issues can be addressed. Continuing to maintain a mix of small and large businesses in the community is important.

The mix of retail and service uses along South La Grange Road and near the intersection of Gilbert Avenue and 47th Street could be

improved. Due to the age of structures in these locations, redevelopment would help provide new functional building space, and assist in diversifying the tenant mix at each location.

In the years ahead, several hundred thousand square feet of new commercial and retail development may be possible in La Grange. The key to capturing this new development will be to provide appropriately sized floor space in select locations. The Plan does not suggest that the Village accommodate all new development potential. Rather, that the new development be well designed and integrated into the community.

ENTERTAINMENT

Restaurants will remain an important element of Downtown La Grange's entertainment strategy. With a current mix of approximately 40 restaurants, La Grange is a dining destination, and attracts patrons from a fairly large trade area. Market research indicates that the market for eating, drinking and entertainment establishments is not yet saturated. As confirmed by work completed in the Plan, local brokers and property owners continue to see interest from a variety of types of prospective restaurant operators. Maintaining a balance of restaurants with other uses will be important. The introduction of new cultural attractions and retail activities will help reinforce the dining and entertainment market.

OFFICE

Office uses will continue to serve a support role in the La Grange economy. The market for office uses in the Village will primarily be for small business and professional service firms. Current demand in the Village has been met mostly in storefront space in combination with retail uses, and where allowed under current zoning, primarily in the West End Business District and the neighborhood commercial areas of the Village. Future demand will come primarily from the need to replace older facilities and will be strongest from medical/dental and financial service firms.

The recent trends of "live-work" zones (areas that accommodate combined residences and small-scale work spaces) and "third place" work environments (working across wireless networks from locations other than the office or home) are workplace types that the Village should seek to accommodate in the future, as well.



INDUSTRIAL

La Grange has a sizable concentration of small industrial firms, clustered primarily in the northeast section of the Village along the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad. These areas are successful and stable. Market demand for manufacturing and distribution uses remains strong. Several properties could be improved and redeveloped in locations south of Ogden Avenue. This would not only introduce new employment activities, but would help stabilize neighborhood conditions as well. Especially in the area south of Ogden Avenue, the Village should carefully examine its zoning regulations to ensure new development is compatible with surrounding residential areas.

RESIDENTIAL

La Grange will continue to experience market pressure for replacement single family detached housing as well as new condominium development. With its quality schools, community facilities and neighborhoods, as well as a strong sense of community, La Grange will continue to see residential reinvestment pressure for the foreseeable future.

The market for multi-family and attached single family residential development is also strong. High quality developments with an emphasis on small to mid-size units have met with strong market acceptance in recent years. The Village could absorb an annual average of approximately 20 to 25 new units. To date, multi-family redevelopment activity has been directed to the BNSF Railroad Corridor. New residential development in the Corridor is important to continue to sustain retail and commercial service uses. As discussed in the Land Use Plan, there are other locations in the Village which could support low to moderate density multi-family residential development, as well.

ANNUAL BUDGET AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Village recognizes that an important component in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and overall fiscal responsibility is the budget process and the Capital Improvement Program. The Village's budget process is recognized for its utility as a policy document, operational guide, finance plan and communication device. The Village of La Grange maintains a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is a major consideration in preparation of the annual budget. CIP funds are allocated to the following categories: streets, alleys and

streetscape; water system; vehicles and equipment; sidewalks, curbs and gutters; street lighting; sanitary and storm sewers; and, tree planting and other miscellaneous expenses.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

There are several strategies the Village can undertake to continue successful economic development in La Grange. These are identified below.

- **Village Economic Development Support** – The Village should continue to provide resources for economic development activities in La Grange. La Grange has developed a strong and unified work program with the La Grange Business Association, and this should continue in the future. It is critical that the Village continue to work with business and property owners to realize its economic development goals.
- **Cultural Attractions** – The community has identified art and cultural venues as growth segments for the community. Expanded activities will support a core entertainment role of the Downtown in the Village’s economic development strategies. The Village and LGBA should work together to define opportunities. Cultural activities are typically both publicly and privately sponsored.
- **Public Investment Strategies** – The Village’s current Downtown TIF District expires in 2009. As discussed in the implementation section, the Village will need to identify alternative resources for investment in the future.

It is important to point out that even though residential and non-residential markets currently remain strong in La Grange, the need for redevelopment finance assistance will also remain important. Development costs associated with land assembly and acquisition, building demolition, and related development costs can serve to create financial “gaps” and block retailers’ entrance into the market. Thus, while each request for assistance should be considered on its own merits, it will be important for the Village to make redevelopment investment resources available in the future.

- **Continue to Support Business Networking and Marketing** – The Village should continue to play an active role in networking and marketing for business development activities.



