



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*Village of Richton Park | October 2014*





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This development of this Comprehensive Plan was funded through CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, which is supported by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Authority (FTA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Chicago Community Trust.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Village of Richton Park Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for community development for the next 15-20 years. The Plan outlines the existing conditions and documents the input received from the people who live and work in Richton Park. It prescribes a vision for future policies, development patterns, economic development, the transportation network, community services, and the maintenance and preservation of environmental features throughout the Village. The Plan represents the tremendous efforts of the Village, its businesses, and its residents to define a bright future for Richton Park.

The Richton Park Comprehensive Plan was guided by CMAP's regional plan: GO TO 2040. The planning effort was funded by a grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). CMAP sponsors a Local Technical Assistance (LTA) grant program that enables communities in Chicagoland to advance planning in order to maximize the benefits of local assets and create a more sustainable region as a whole.

## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Richton Park Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundation for decision making and a reference for Village officials as they consider development proposals, capital improvements, infrastructure investments, roadway improvements, and more. It will inform developers about the Village's intentions and expectations so that they may comply with and contribute to the overall goals and objectives for growth. Lastly, it represents residents' voices concerning what they want for Richton Park's future.

Although the Comprehensive Plan articulates the Village's vision and provides context for more detailed decisions, it is not in and of itself regulatory. The Zoning Ordinance is the Village's most important regulatory tool for implementing that vision, as it dictates how land may be used and what development may look like. The Comprehensive Plan should serve as a guide to regulatory decisions related to zoning, and updates to the Zoning Ordinance should be directly guided by the concepts and recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan.





## Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of a multifaceted process that included data collection, community outreach, stakeholder consultation, and professional analysis.

The process began by reaching out to Richton Park residents, businesses, and property owners. Their comments and concerns, collected through a series of interviews, workshops, and surveys, set the agenda of issues addressed by the Plan. In parallel with community outreach activities, in-depth research was conducted to document the current state of the Village, including land use, transportation, demographics, the economy, and the environment. This outreach and analysis was summarized in an Existing Conditions Report.

With a complete understanding of where the Village is now and where it has been, the Comprehensive Plan outlines the future vision for Richton Park and charts a course of how to get there. The resulting recommendations of the Plan form a holistic guide for Village decision makers as they create policies and shape the future of Richton Park.

The planning process included the following steps:

- Project Kick-off and Initiation
- Public Outreach: Issues, Priorities and Assets
- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Market and Demographics Assessment
- Public Outreach: Visioning
- Existing Conditions Report
- Vision, Goals and Objectives
- Village-wide Plans and Policies
- Implementation Strategies
- Public outreach: Review of Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Formal Review and Adoption

## ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Richton Park Comprehensive Plan consists of the following 11 chapters:

- **Introduction** – describes the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and the organization of the planning process.
- **Community Profile** – outlines the community context of Richton Park and summarizes demographics and market potentials.
- **Public Outreach** – catalogs the efforts to gather input and feedback from members of the Richton Park residential and business communities, analyzes the existing conditions, and highlights existing and potential challenges affecting future development.
- **Vision, Goals & Objectives** – a description of the community that provides a basis for the specific goals and objectives needed to lead the Village of Richton Park in the direction of implementation.
- **Land Use & Development Plan** – identifies the type and location of future land uses within Richton Park, and provides more detailed recommendations for residential, commercial, and industrial land use areas.
- **Transportation & Mobility Plan** – summarizes the transportation systems in the Village that provide for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians while also giving recommendations for improvement and growth.
- **Environment & Open Space Plan** – inventories and provides recommendations for the parks, open space, and natural features that add to the character and health of the community.
- **Community Facilities & Infrastructure Plan** – identifies the future need for community facilities, public infrastructure, prescribing actions for future growth.
- **Image & Identity Plan** – provides a framework for improving the overall appearance and character of the Village and its residential and commercial areas.
- **Sauk Trail Subarea Plan** – illustrates how Village-wide recommendations and policies can be applied to Sauk Trail in order to improve its vitality, character, and value to the community.
- **Implementation Plan** – presents specific actions, as well as potential funding sources, that Richton Park should pursue as it endeavors to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.





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## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Having a well-rounded understanding of Richton Park's past and present paves the way for what it will be in the future. The most recent Comprehensive Plan for the Village was adopted in 2005. Since that time, Richton Park has experienced dramatic shifts in the demand for housing and commercial services, new opportunities related to key infrastructure improvements, and a growing interest in strengthening its commercial areas. This section of the Comprehensive Plan presents an overview of Richton Park's history and past plans. The Community Profile chapter presents the Village's demographic and market analysis as well as summarizes the findings from the Existing Conditions Report, which lays the groundwork for the Comprehensive Plan.

## VILLAGE HISTORY & SETTING

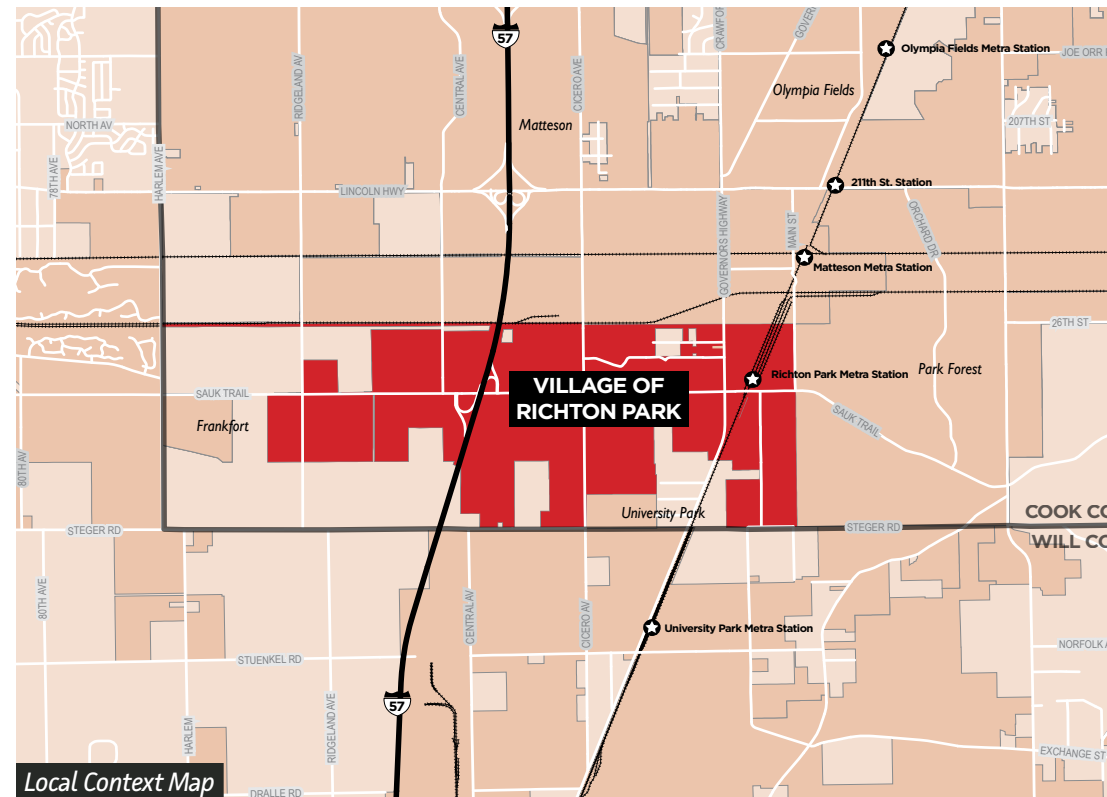
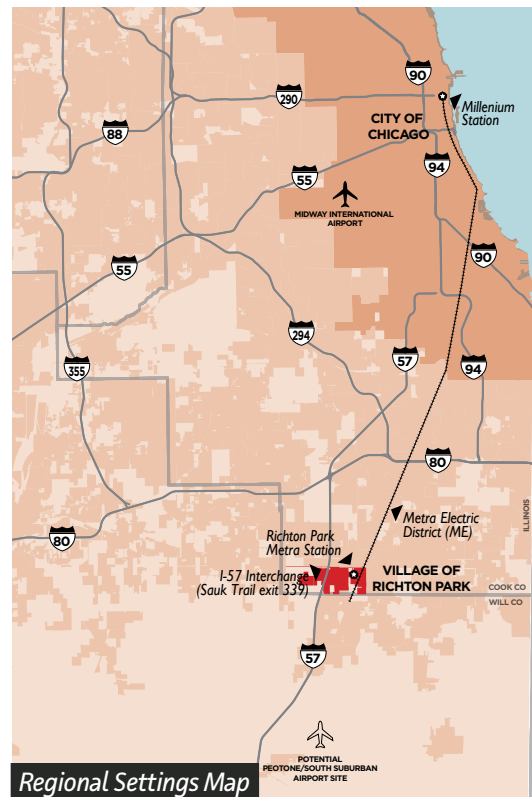
Richton Park, located on the southern border of Cook County and approximately 28 miles from Downtown Chicago, historically served as a stopping point for early trade and travel through the Midwest. Sauk Trail was a travel and trade route between Rock Island, Illinois and Detroit, Michigan used by the Sauk Native American tribe. The trail was later adopted by early explorers, traders, and settlers of the area, and even used as part of the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. Today, Sauk Trail Road is the primary east-west corridor in Richton Park, providing access to I-57 and handling a daily average of 28,000 vehicles.

The Illinois Central Railroad established a depot in Richton Park in the mid-19th century. The line was later electrified for suburban commuter service, terminating in the Village. Metra now operates a commuter rail station in the Town Center as part of its Metra Electric District Line, having served 1,625 weekday riders in 2006, according to the Regional Transportation Authority.

The Sauk Trail and Illinois Central Railroad were the primary sparks for the growth of Richton Park. However, the Village remained primarily rural until the 1970s when the growth of the Chicago region reached Richton Park. The community grew from approximately 2,500 people in 1970 to approximately 13,500 people in 2010.

Today, the Village includes almost four square miles of incorporated land area and abuts Matteson to the north, Park Forest to the east, portions of University Park and unincorporated Will County to the south, and unincorporated Cook County to the west. As a result of its history and evolution, Richton Park is poised to define the next phase of its growth and development. It is a balance of established neighborhoods, evolving commercial centers, and new opportunities for





expansion.

## PLANNING JURISDICTION

The Comprehensive Plan addresses issues within the municipal boundaries of Richton Park as well as unincorporated areas adjacent to the Village. Illinois State Statute (65 ILCS 5/11-12-5) allows a Comprehensive Plan to plan for an area extending 1.5 miles from the current corporate boundary. This “extraterritorial jurisdiction” cannot include land that is incorporated by other municipalities, areas claimed through a formal boundary agreement, or the extraterritorial jurisdiction of another community. The planning areas highlighted in the Existing Land Use Map (page 13) and each of the subsequent map figures represents the Village of Richton Park’s existing planning area.

## PAST PLANS & STUDIES

There are several past plans and studies that have influenced, and will continue to influence, Village growth and development. This section summarizes these plans, which served as a foundation for understanding what Richton Park can be in the future. Throughout the planning process, previous planning policies were considered and some altered to better serve as an implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan.

### 2005 Comprehensive Plan

Richton Park’s first comprehensive plan was originally adopted in 1973, revised in 1990, and partially revised in 2004. The current version retains the goals of the original plan, which addressed environmental preservation; diverse housing options; commercial, industrial, and office development; outdoor recreation; transportation facilities; and social services. The recommendations included improving the walkability, safety, and aesthetics of residential neighborhoods; clustering commercial development around transit corridors and interchanges; adding pedestrian amenities to Sauk Trail road; encouraging industrial uses; and improving the existing transportation network. While the current planning process will result in a new Comprehensive Plan for the Village, elements of the 2005 Plan may be carried forward if they reflect the goals as expressed by the community.

### Town Center Redevelopment Plan (2007)

This concept focused on the area near the Metra commuter rail station at the intersection of Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway. Plan recommendations aim to create a vibrant town center by increasing residential densities near the Metra station, providing new commercial spaces that would serve residents of the Village and visitors from elsewhere, enhancing access and mobility for all modes through strategic transportation improvements, and establishing a distinctive local character through quality design and streetscaping. This project was complemented by a more detailed Town Center Streetscape Manual in 2009.

### Forest Preserve District of Cook County 2012 Land Acquisition Plan

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County developed the 2012 Land Acquisition Plan to strategically guide future land acquisition that would fill in the gaps of the District’s existing greenway and trail system and protect additional natural land from development. Richton Park is located in the Plan’s Southwest Zone, with portions of the Village within acquisition focus areas. The Plan’s recommendations for the Southwest Zone stresses acquiring land that is adjacent to existing District holdings and those with ecologically significant features.

# DEMOGRAPHIC AND MARKET OVERVIEW

A firm understanding of the existing and projected demographics of the Village of Richton Park is extremely important as a foundation for land use and development decision-making. This overview includes an analysis of recent trends in population, households, income, age and gender characteristics, racial and ethnic composition, and labor force and employment. The demographic analysis identifies the issues the community is facing and will likely face and creates a foundation to assist with future land use designation and planning objectives.

## Demographic Overview

Changes in population, households, and demographic composition will influence future land use and development as well as other issues within the Village. For purposes of this analysis, 2010 Census data for the Village have been contrasted with data from the 2000 Census as well as future projections, depending on the availability of specific data.

Demographic data summarized in this section indicate that the total population within Richton Park has increased slightly since the 2000 Census and is projected to remain relatively stable through 2017. Total households are projected to increase slightly even as household sizes decrease.

Inflation-adjusted household incomes within Richton Park have also increased moderately over the past decade and are projected to continue to increase as well. While the Village's median age is projected to increase slightly, the percentage of the population age 55 and over is expected to experience the largest total increase.

The existing and projected racial and ethnic composition of the Village of Richton Park has been analyzed.

- According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the percentage of the population classified as Black Alone was 82.4%. This percentage is projected to decrease to 76.3% by 2017.
  - In 2010, 12.7% of Richton Park's population was composed of individuals who are considered White Alone (as classified by the U.S. Census). The White Alone population is projected to increase to 16.9% by 2017.
  - The next largest segment of the population consists of those reporting two or more races, which is projected to increase by one percent from 2.6% to 3.6% between 2010 and 2017.
  - The community's Hispanic population, which per the U.S. Census may include individuals that are also classified as Black Alone or White Alone, is expected to increase from 3.5% to 5.3% between 2010 and 2017.
- Overall, the Village of Richton Park's population is expected to remain relatively stable.
- Richton Park is projected to see an increase in the population over the age of 55.
  - The largest increase is expected to take place in the 65 to 74 year old age cohort.
  - The largest decrease is expected in the 45 to 54 year old age cohort.

## DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Summary	2000 Census	2010 Census	2017
Population	12,434	13,646	13,622
Households	4,532	4,997	5,020
Families	4,681	3,483	3,475
Average Household Size	N/A	2.69	2.68
Owner Occupied Housing Units	N/A	3,019	3,076
Renter Occupied Housing Units	N/A	1,978	1,944
Median Age	N/A	35.5	35.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI Business Analyst

## POPULATION BY AGE

Population by Age	2010 Census		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	828	6.1%	851	6.2%
5 - 9	978	7.2%	992	7.3%
10 - 14	1,237	9.1%	1,238	9.1%
15 - 19	1,178	8.6%	1,075	7.9%
20 - 24	830	6.1%	758	5.6%
25 - 34	1,665	12.2%	1,726	12.7%
35 - 44	2,086	15.3%	1,991	14.6%
45 - 54	2,069	15.2%	1,863	13.7%
55 - 64	1,600	11.7%	1,700	12.5%
65 - 74	735	5.4%	936	6.9%
75 - 84	325	2.4%	364	2.7%
85+	115	0.8%	126	0.9%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## POPULATION RACE AND ETHNICITY

Race and Ethnicity	2010 Census		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	1,733	12.7%	2,297	16.9%
Black Alone	11,244	82.4%	10,393	76.3%
American Indian Alone	15	0.1%	20	0.1%
Asian Alone	136	1.0%	170	1.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	8	0.1%	16	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	162	1.2%	237	1.7%
Two or More Races	348	2.6%	489	3.6%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	477	3.5%	724	5.3%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst



## Household Income

The following presents projected changes in household income levels from 2012 to 2017. The rise in local household income reflects a marked decrease in the proportion of lower income households and moderate change among middle and upper income households.

- The number of households earning less than \$75,000 within Richton Park is projected to decrease.
- The number of households earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000 is projected to experience the greatest percentage increase.
- The number of upper income households is projected to increase in all income groups above \$100,000.
- The average income among Richton Park households is projected to increase by approximately 14% between 2012 and 2017.

Household income is calculated as a measure of income, investments, assets, and overall net worth. So while older segments of the population will in fact experience declines in employment income, their net worth and disposable income tends to increase due to a combination of such things as a reduction in expenditures, home equity, retirement funds, and other factors.

## Market Implications

The Village of Richton Park's population is stable and projected to remain so over the coming years with some demographic fluctuations. The community is expected to become slightly older with an overall increase in average and median household incomes. In addition, data indicate that the spending power of Richton Park's households is expected to increase along with household income. This represents potential future opportunities for investment and development/redevelopment, particularly for those businesses and uses catering to an older population.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Households by Income	2012		2017
	Number	Percent	Number
<\$15,000	409	8.3%	415
\$15,000 - \$24,999	457	9.3%	354
\$25,000 - \$34,999	505	10.3%	390
\$35,000 - \$49,999	910	18.5%	802
\$50,000 - \$74,999	935	19.0%	875
\$75,000 - \$99,999	683	13.9%	937
\$100,000 - \$149,999	734	14.9%	888
\$150,000 - \$199,999	144	2.9%	198
\$200,000+	137	2.8%	162
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$53,302		\$63,454
<i>Average Household Income</i>	\$69,510		\$79,093
<i>Per Capita Income</i>	\$25,783		\$29,622

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Labor Force & Employment

Historic employment from 2002 through 2011 (the most recent year for which data is available) shows that the number of jobs offered by Richton Park employers has fluctuated over the last decade. Recent figures indicate that current employment of firms located within the Village is the highest in a decade and fairly spread out over several industries.

Much of the employment growth within Richton Park has occurred in the manufacturing and education sectors and in higher paying positions. An additional note of interest is that over 63% of Richton Park businesses are minority owned and 42% are women owned businesses.

## EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
<b>Total All Jobs</b>	2,078	1,716	1,697	1,857	1,687	1,569	1,642	1,524	1,668	1,727
<b>Jobs by Worker Age</b>										
Age 29 or younger	479	466	444	536	486	451	480	447	489	450
Age 30 to 54	1,185	941	947	985	885	816	856	827	896	982
Age 55 or older	414	309	306	336	316	302	306	250	283	295
<b>Jobs by Earnings</b>										
\$1,250 per month or less	606	639	658	762	648	592	701	643	682	681
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	769	613	620	627	582	569	573	552	616	657
More than \$3,333 per month	703	464	419	468	457	408	368	329	370	389
<b>Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector</b>										
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Utilities	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	1	8	17	20	15	17	14	9
Manufacturing	204	8	10	8	11	9	8	9	6	66
Wholesale Trade	42	39	36	36	46	41	33	40	56	41
Retail Trade	100	89	63	86	63	76	68	100	61	73
Transportation and Warehousing	3	4	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Information	33	26	28	31	31	18	19	14	15	21
Finance and Insurance	23	51	41	52	82	69	105	28	178	186
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	61	62	56	64	42	46	64	59	56	60
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	43	18	25	31	33	22	17	30	33	45
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	282	180	265	237	228	198	171	176	159	183
Educational Services	483	348	383	357	356	334	318	297	297	287
Health Care and Social Assistance	351	378	393	387	306	328	316	273	336	324
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	47	57	35	68	66	66	71	66	73	67
Accommodation and Food Services	190	248	264	274	183	107	167	156	146	147
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	30	30	34	46	60	67	78	90	87	79
Public Administration	186	177	61	170	163	167	192	169	149	139

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (OnTheMap)

## Residential Market

The following summarizes select housing characteristics for the Village of Richton Park. Data on building permit activity indicate that new construction has been limited in recent years. Overall, the most prominent type of housing in Richton Park is owner occupied, single family home with three bedrooms. Rental units make up more than one-third of the local housing stock and are dispersed among single family detached and multi-family structures. More than four out of every ten housing units in Richton Park were built between 1970 and 1979.

The residential real estate market experienced a significant negative impact beginning in 2008 with declines in values, sales, and new construction continuing into 2013. The South Suburban market was particularly hard hit, especially by foreclosures. However, these trends have recently begun to stabilize and even reverse. Numerous residential market data sources were reviewed in conducting this analysis. While actual numbers were inconsistent in terms of average and median sale and listing prices, all indicated that Richton Park has, and is projected to continue to, experienced a significant improvement in home prices and sales velocity.

### NEW CONSTRUCTION BUILDING PERMITS

Year	Number	Avg. Value
2000	59	\$95,500
2001	81	\$105,200
2002	75	\$130,200
2003	48	\$123,000
2004	39	\$78,000
2005	30	\$100,300
2006	20	\$131,800
2007	18	\$162,400
2008	20	\$221,500
2009	1	\$80,000
2010	0	\$0
2011	0	\$0

### UNITS IN STRUCTURE

Unit Type	Percent
1-unit, detached	56.5%
1-unit, attached	9.0%
2 units	0.8%
3 or 4 units	3.8%
5 to 9 units	9.8%
10 to 19 units	3.2%
20 or more units	16.6%
Mobile home	0.3%

### TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BY OCCUPANCY

	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,391</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Occupied Housing Units	4,997	92.7%
Vacant Housing Units	394	7.3%
For Rent	174	3.2%
Rented, not Occupied	6	0.1%
For Sale Only	94	1.7%
Sold, not Occupied	14	0.3%
For Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional Use	0	0.0%
For Migrant Workers	0	0.0%
Other Vacant	106	2.0%
Total Vacancy Rate		

### HOUSING VALUE

Owner-occupied units	Percent
Less than \$50,000	0.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	10.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	24.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	29.5%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	22.3%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	12.4%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0.0%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.4%

### GROSS RENT

Occupied units paying rent	Percent
Less than \$200	2.3%
\$200 to \$299	3.2%
\$300 to \$499	5.7%
\$500 to \$749	9.0%
\$750 to \$999	36.2%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	33.5%
\$1,500 or more	10.1%

### HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE

	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,997</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Owner Occupied	3,019	60.4%
Renter Occupied	1,978	39.6%
Average Household Size	2.35	

### AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Year Built	Percent
Built 2005 or later	3.3%
Built 2000 to 2004	11.9%
Built 1990 to 1999	15.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	9.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	41.8%
Built 1960 to 1969	9.7%
Built 1950 to 1959	4.1%
Built 1940 to 1949	1.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	2.5%

## Housing Market Implications

As indicated in the demographic section, the population within the Village of Richton Park is relatively stable. Data also indicates that households are growing older and household size is declining. As such, demand for housing will likely be generated from the shifting needs of the existing population and the replacement of existing housing units.

While owner occupied units are likely to remain the predominant housing type, shifts in consumer behavior may also point to increasing demand for rental housing, particularly in multi-family structures. For this reason, it is anticipated that rental units will continue to make up a high percentage of the housing stock. Increases in older age cohorts will also result in increases in demand for quality senior housing to allow residents to remain in the community as they age.

New residential development should focus on infill development and the improvement or replacement of existing housing units. Doing so will help stabilize existing neighborhoods and concentrate activity within Richton Park's established core. Given recent and projected marked improvements in the real estate market, this will have positive implications in the overall local economy.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey, ESRI Business Analyst, Houseal Lavigne Associates



## Retail Market

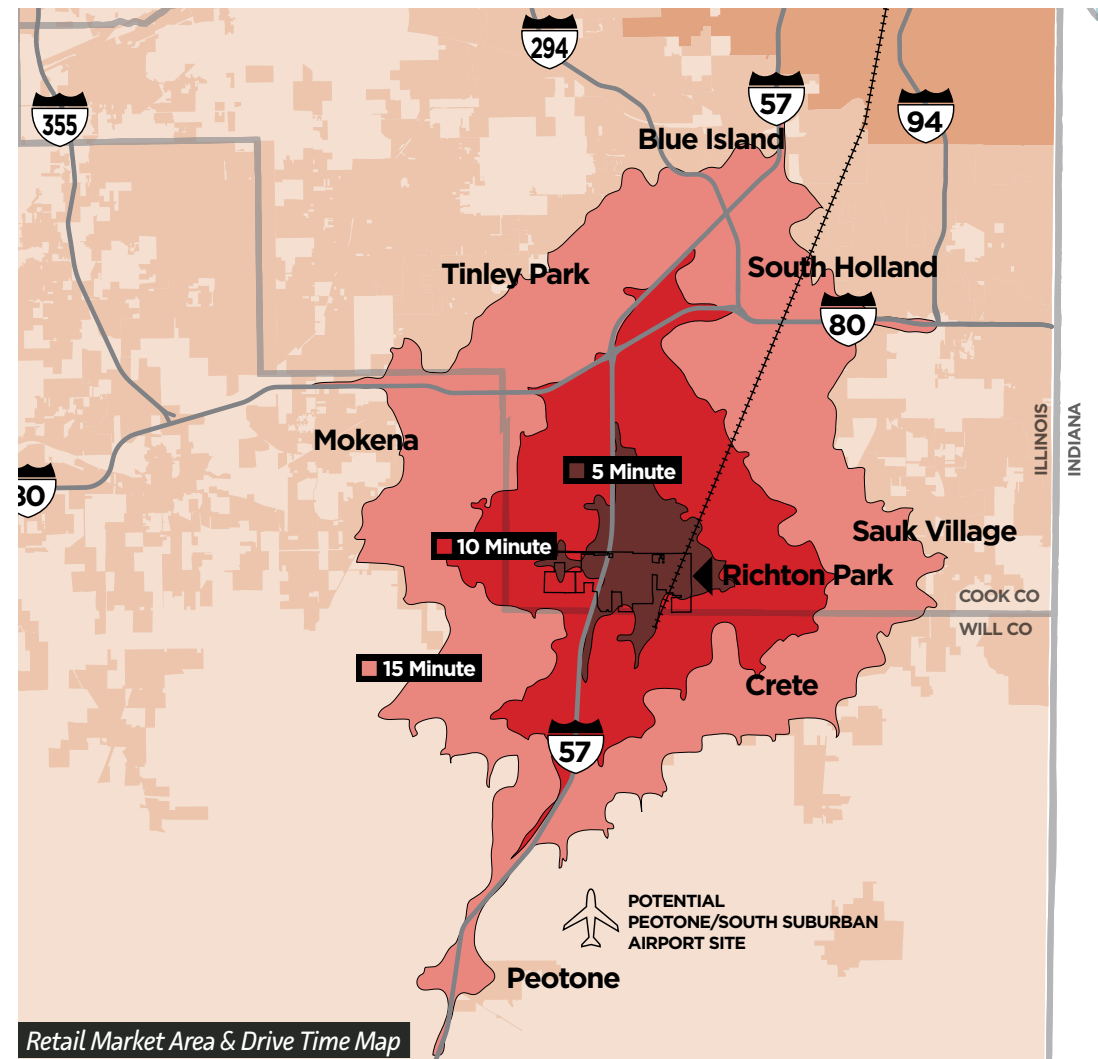
The potential for commercial development at any given location is influenced by several factors including local and regional demand for goods and services, the health of local commercial districts, the location of surrounding commercial nodes, and the consumer expenditure patterns of the market area population. Richton Park is well situated with access to four major interstates – I-57, I-94, I-80, and I-294 – a well used Metra station, and several established retail nodes.

The following analysis uses a comparison of projected spending by market area households to the existing supply of retail space to assess the potential for retail uses in Richton Park and the surrounding area. This “gap” analysis provides an indication of “surplus” or “leakage” within a given retail category. The presence of a surplus within a given retail category suggests that there is at least enough retail space to accommodate demand for the range of goods and services provided by stores in that category.

Conversely, leakage indicates that demand exceeds supply and consumers are spending dollars outside of the market area. This leakage could potentially be recaptured and may represent a commercial opportunity within the market area. It is important to distinguish between support in the market and development potential of a specific site or location. The availability of alternative sites, specifications of particular retailers, the number of projects actively pursuing tenants, and similar issues can affect whether market potential translates to development potential.

In that retail market areas are not restricted by municipal boundaries, drive times have been used to better emulate consumer behavior. This is particularly the case in a community proximate to major arterials or highways such as Richton Park. Five, ten, and fifteen minute drive times from roughly the center of the Village have been used for this analysis. While this provides an indication of the population and households with access to Richton Park, it also is an indication of competing retailing areas within easy access to Richton Park residents. Generally, shorter drive times are utilized for daily and convenience goods such as groceries. Consumers are more inclined to travel further for things that they buy less often such as appliances and clothing. While all three drive times are shown for illustrative purposes, the ten minute drive time provides a balance and is more indicative of Richton Park’s overall potential.

The current estimated population within the ten minute market area is estimated at just under 100,000 with over 35,000 households and a per capita income of approximately \$30,000 (slightly higher than the closer five minute market and expanded fifteen minute market areas).



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

**SUMMARY DEMOGRAPHICS & RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS**  
5 Minute Drive Time

2015 Population	22,415
2015 Households	8,345
2015 Per Capita Income	\$30,667

2015 Forecast Industry Summary	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$254,934,682	\$595,045,397	-340,110,715	-40.0
Total Retail Trade	\$216,315,983	\$523,244,801	-306,928,818	-41.5
Total Food & Drink	\$38,618,699	\$71,800,596	-33,181,897	-30.1

**DETAILED RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS**  
5 Minute Drive Time

Industry Detail by Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$51,875,381	\$194,913,398	-143,038,017	-58.0
Automobile Dealers	\$44,990,624	\$188,331,301	-143,340,678	-61.4
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$3,442,738	\$0	3,442,738	100.0
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$3,442,020	\$6,582,097	-3,140,077	-31.3
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$7,946,992	\$3,064,651	4,882,340	44.3
Furniture Stores	\$5,066,818	\$2,442,743	2,624,075	34.9
Home Furnishings Stores	\$2,880,174	\$621,908	2,258,265	64.5
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$7,253,929	\$24,967,793	-17,713,863	-55.0
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$8,630,276	\$18,214,332	-9,584,056	-35.7
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$8,108,719	\$18,202,986	-10,094,267	-38.4
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$521,557	\$11,347	510,210	95.7
Food & Beverage Stores	\$47,543,204	\$57,535,257	-9,992,053	-9.5
Grocery Stores	\$43,643,407	\$55,986,276	-12,342,869	-12.4
Specialty Food Stores	\$1,735,132	\$727,989	1,007,143	40.9
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$2,164,666	\$820,992	1,343,674	45.0
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$6,812,072	\$15,684,161	-8,872,089	-39.4
Gasoline Stations	\$35,387,837	\$47,707,335	-12,319,498	-14.8
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$10,578,777	\$37,096,605	-26,517,828	-55.6
Clothing Stores	\$8,365,015	\$16,733,378	-8,368,363	-33.3
Shoe Stores	\$1,126,638	\$2,950,949	-1,824,311	-44.7
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$1,087,124	\$17,412,278	-16,325,154	-88.2
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$2,394,543	\$3,815,492	-1,420,949	-22.9
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$1,104,596	\$1,262,399	-157,803	-6.7
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$1,289,947	\$2,553,093	-1,263,146	-32.9
General Merchandise Stores	\$23,241,017	\$113,465,198	-90,224,182	-66.0
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$10,167,421	\$60,582,129	-50,414,708	-71.3
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$13,073,596	\$52,883,069	-39,809,473	-60.4
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$3,725,992	\$5,931,265	-2,205,273	-22.8
Florists	\$370,447	\$275,498	94,949	14.7
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$936,414	\$3,725,243	-2,788,829	-59.8
Used Merchandise Stores	\$176,136	\$78,542	97,594	38.3
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$2,242,994	\$1,851,982	391,012	9.5
Nonstore Retailers	\$10,925,964	\$849,313	10,076,651	85.6
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$7,858,674	\$0	7,858,674	100.0
Vending Machine Operators	\$770,860	\$831,610	-60,750	-3.8
Direct Selling Establishments	\$2,296,430	\$17,703	2,278,727	98.5
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$38,618,699	\$71,800,596	-33,181,897	-30.1
Full-Service Restaurants	\$18,742,688	\$23,866,546	-5,123,858	-12.0
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$14,178,340	\$46,063,659	-31,885,319	-52.9
Special Food Services	\$4,308,577	\$864,648	3,443,930	66.6
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$1,389,093	\$1,005,743	383,350	16.0

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

**SUMMARY DEMOGRAPHICS & RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS**  
10 Minute Drive Time

2015 Population	103,984
2015 Households	38,119
2015 Per Capita Income	\$32,777

2015 Forecast Industry Summary	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$1,238,154,836	\$1,270,460,038	-32,305,202	-1.3
Total Retail Trade	\$1,050,853,298	\$1,075,633,630	-24,780,333	-1.2
Total Food & Drink	\$187,301,538	\$194,826,407	-7,524,869	-2.0

**DETAILED RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS**  
10 Minute Drive Time

Industry Detail by Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$249,148,934	\$268,076,307	-18,927,374	-3.7
Automobile Dealers	\$213,948,352	\$250,587,551	-36,639,199	-7.9
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$17,540,086	\$3,843,210	13,696,876	64.1
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$17,660,496	\$13,645,546	4,014,950	12.8
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$39,417,031	\$8,061,621	31,355,410	66.0
Furniture Stores	\$25,031,751	\$4,726,182	20,305,570	68.2
Home Furnishings Stores	\$14,385,279	\$3,335,439	11,049,840	62.4
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$35,580,319	\$31,347,680	4,232,640	6.3
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$45,149,787	\$34,272,315	10,877,472	13.7
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$41,501,847	\$33,549,792	7,952,055	10.6
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$3,647,941	\$722,524	2,925,417	66.9
Food & Beverage Stores	\$234,005,052	\$181,503,434	52,501,617	12.6
Grocery Stores	\$216,209,771	\$174,877,914	41,331,857	10.6
Specialty Food Stores	\$7,466,217	\$1,525,346	5,940,871	66.1
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$10,329,064	\$5,100,175	5,228,890	33.9
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$34,361,867	\$44,413,962	-10,052,095	-12.8
Gasoline Stations	\$173,456,929	\$267,478,073	-94,021,144	-21.3
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$48,563,432	\$42,849,338	5,714,094	6.3
Clothing Stores	\$38,235,164	\$21,163,093	17,072,071	28.7
Shoe Stores	\$5,101,942	\$4,159,342	942,600	10.2
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$5,226,326	\$17,526,903	-12,300,577	-54.1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$12,158,691	\$8,124,094	4,034,597	19.9
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$5,784,866	\$3,013,052	2,771,815	31.5
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$6,373,825	\$5,111,042	1,262,783	11.0
General Merchandise Stores	\$113,595,609	\$169,750,374	-56,154,765	-19.8
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$54,677,620	\$91,439,140	-36,761,520	-25.2
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$58,917,989	\$78,311,234	-19,393,246	-14.1
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$17,876,010	\$10,974,974	6,901,036	23.9
Florists	\$1,748,713	\$902,138	846,576	31.9
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$5,131,428	\$5,132,883	-1,455	0.0
Used Merchandise Stores	\$804,152	\$294,004	510,149	46.5
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$10,191,716	\$4,645,950	5,545,766	37.4
Nonstore Retailers	\$47,539,636	\$8,781,457	38,758,179	68.8
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$32,735,354	\$3,247,652	29,487,701	81.9
Vending Machine Operators	\$3,647,476	\$991,668	2,655,808	57.2
Direct Selling Establishments	\$11,156,806	\$4,542,137	6,614,670	42.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$187,301,538	\$194,826,407	-7,524,869	-2.0
Full-Service Restaurants	\$87,924,071	\$74,392,316	13,531,755	8.3
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$72,324,039	\$101,405,831	-29,081,793	-16.7
Special Food Services	\$20,525,624	\$14,968,062	5,557,561	15.7
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$6,527,806	\$4,060,198	2,467,608	23.3

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

While the market is generally saturated, there are indications of market potential in several categories, including: specialty grocery, home furnishings, clothing, and gas stations. While consumer expenditure data indicates that the market for grocery stores in general is being met, the gap is relatively low, which may represent an indication of future potential. The largest amount of retail leakage is occurring in eating and drinking establishments, indicating that market area residents are spending a disproportionate amount of dollars outside of the market area. This appears to apply to all restaurant types, including full service dining.



## SUMMARY DEMOGRAPHICS & RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS 15 Minute Drive Time

2015 Population	325,534
2015 Households	115,230
2015 Per Capita Income	\$30,902

Industry Summary	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$3,673,752,365	\$3,475,712,098	198,040,267	2.8
Total Retail Trade	\$3,118,129,077	\$2,886,854,420	231,274,657	3.9
Total Food & Drink	\$555,623,288	\$588,857,678	-33,234,390	-2.9

## DETAILED RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS 15 Minute Drive Time

Industry Detail by Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$740,678,892	\$616,012,171	124,666,721	9.2
Automobile Dealers	\$634,788,190	\$556,138,560	78,649,630	6.6
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$52,459,145	\$20,684,637	31,774,507	43.4
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$53,431,558	\$39,188,973	14,242,584	15.4
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$117,233,729	\$83,691,068	33,542,661	16.7
Furniture Stores	\$74,559,097	\$59,018,836	15,540,261	11.6
Home Furnishings Stores	\$42,674,632	\$24,672,231	18,002,401	26.7
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$106,117,687	\$89,495,092	16,622,595	8.5
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$135,639,090	\$125,707,895	9,931,195	3.8
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$123,666,847	\$111,354,874	12,311,973	5.2
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$11,972,243	\$14,353,021	-2,380,778	-9.0
Food & Beverage Stores	\$697,727,252	\$600,382,609	97,344,643	7.5
Grocery Stores	\$646,351,783	\$563,302,150	83,049,633	6.9
Specialty Food Stores	\$20,975,069	\$7,712,033	13,263,036	46.2
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$30,400,400	\$29,368,426	1,031,975	1.7
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$102,569,642	\$133,080,723	-30,511,081	-12.9
Gasoline Stations	\$518,012,487	\$686,960,173	-168,947,686	-14.0
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$140,566,541	\$72,225,062	68,341,478	32.1
Clothing Stores	\$110,462,354	\$42,961,712	67,500,642	44.0
Shoe Stores	\$14,806,137	\$8,255,578	6,550,559	28.4
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$15,298,050	\$21,007,772	-5,709,723	-15.7
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$36,854,819	\$21,818,595	15,036,224	25.6
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$17,724,732	\$11,456,042	6,268,690	21.5
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$19,130,088	\$10,362,554	8,767,534	29.7
General Merchandise Stores	\$337,761,823	\$370,370,825	-32,609,003	-4.6
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$168,836,935	\$154,362,241	14,474,694	4.5
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$168,924,887	\$216,008,584	-47,083,697	-12.2
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$52,476,863	\$34,489,404	17,987,459	20.7
Florists	\$4,975,039	\$4,246,070	728,969	7.9
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$15,874,435	\$13,461,739	2,412,695	8.2
Used Merchandise Stores	\$2,322,874	\$3,132,797	-809,923	-14.8
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$29,304,516	\$13,648,798	15,655,718	36.4
Nonstore Retailers	\$132,490,252	\$52,620,803	79,869,449	43.1
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$90,171,281	\$24,346,162	65,825,119	57.5
Vending Machine Operators	\$10,710,675	\$4,615,984	6,094,691	39.8
Direct Selling Establishments	\$31,608,296	\$23,658,657	7,949,639	14.4
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$555,623,288	\$588,857,678	-33,234,390	-2.9
Full-Service Restaurants	\$256,735,889	\$253,683,949	3,051,940	0.6
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$219,454,458	\$283,085,224	-63,630,765	-12.7
Special Food Services	\$60,554,264	\$38,519,536	22,034,728	22.2
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$18,878,677	\$13,568,970	5,309,707	16.4

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Industrial and Office Market

Richton Park is within the South Suburban industrial market area with proximity and access to I-57, I-80, I-94, and I-294. While this is an advantage for Richton Park, it is generally shared by several other south suburban communities with industrial and business parks. According to Colliers International First Quarter 2013 data, the South Suburban market experienced nearly 1.2 million square feet of positive absorption, reducing the vacancy rate from 10.64% (fourth quarter 2012) to 9.38%. While this is a positive trend for the overall South Suburban market, there is still approximately ten million square feet of space available, of which more than one-third is in spaces between 100,000 and 300,000 square feet. The overall vacancy rate is also slightly higher than the 9.0% of the Chicagoland market in general.

While Richton Park is positioned to take advantage of continuing improvement in the market, it is not envisioned that new speculative construction is imminent. Filling vacancies and build-to-suit opportunities should be the focal point in the near to mid-term.

It is not anticipated that office uses will be a major component of overall development in Richton Park. However, professional office space, including medical related uses, may be incorporated into larger commercial spaces. Medical office space in particular is a growing regional need, especially in communities with aging populations such as Richton Park.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Comprehensive Plan process included an Existing Conditions Report that categorized and analyzed the existing land use and development patterns within Richton Park. The report also contained an inventory and analysis regarding the Village's transportation system, community facilities, parks and open space. This information, combined with the results of the community outreach process and technical analysis, formed the basis of the prevailing issues and opportunities that would be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The findings of the Existing Conditions Report are summarized below.

### Existing Land Use

Land use and development patterns have broad implications for the character, development, and overall well-being of the Richton Park community. A complete inventory of existing land use establishes the basis for understanding how the Village functions on a day-to-day basis. The Existing Conditions Report described fifteen (15) existing land use categories. All parcels in the Village were designated as one of the following uses shown in the Land Use Summary table.

#### Issues & Opportunities

- **Neighborhoods & Housing.** Richton Park has many strong and attractive neighborhoods with a variety of housing stock. Generally, residential areas are well-maintained. However, there are some areas that lack basic neighborhood infrastructure and are prone to flooding. Other newer developments have not yet been completed and create a gap-toothed pattern of housing and vacant lots. The Plan should consider ways to bring all neighborhoods to at least a baseline level of infrastructure, maintenance, and occupancy.
- **Housing Mix and Affordability.** Housing options in Richton Park include single family homes, duplexes, townhouses, and multi-story apartment buildings, many of which are near the Town Center. Generally, housing prices in Richton Park are competitive with other communities, making the Village an attractive place to invest in home ownership. The Plan should build on this foundation of housing variety and affordability in order to support local commercial development, enhance the quality of all neighborhoods, and provide multi-modal mobility for residents.

- **Business and Economic Development.** There is a local desire for an expanded commercial base in the Village. Several of the Village's primary commercial sites are underutilized or support secondary commercial activities. This is related to a highly competitive market for commercial development in neighboring communities. Plan recommendations should explore ways to strengthen existing commercial areas by making them more competitive for local and regional retail and service tenants.
- **Job Development.** There is a lack of employment-based development in Richton Park. However, parcels in attractive locations could accommodate significant industrial/office projects. The Plan should consider development that may be appropriate in these locations, and explore opportunities to relate local industries with education and job training programs.
- **Vacant Land.** The Village has few vacant parcels, though there are several that are prominent and sizable. Properties around the I-57 interchange, along Cicero Avenue, and in unfinished subdivisions represent opportunities for small- and large-scale investment in the local residential, commercial, or industrial markets. The largest tracts are west of I-57 and represent the greatest opportunity for substantial projects.
- **Agricultural Land.** The Village includes large parcels of agricultural land within both its municipal and planning boundaries. These areas present opportunities for future, long-term growth and development.

- **Utilities.** High-tension power lines and water towers are visible throughout the community. These elements have local impacts, as well, as they often dominate neighborhoods and affect local character. The Plan should consider techniques to preserve the character of residential neighborhoods through screening, relocating, or consolidating utility infrastructure.

#### EXISTING LAND USE TABLE

Category	Total Acres	% of Land
Single family	663.3	31.6%
Attached single family	58.5	2.8%
Multi-family	89.2	4.2%
General commercial	54.5	2.6%
Mixed commercial	20.8	1.0%
Industrial	20.2	1.0%
School	75.5	3.6%
Government	16.1	0.8%
Medical	1.0	0.0%
Religious uses	29.6	1.4%
Park	75.7	3.6%
Open space	173.9	8.3%
Agriculture	358.7	17.1%
Utility/infrastructure	132.3	6.3%
Vacant	330.4	15.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2099.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

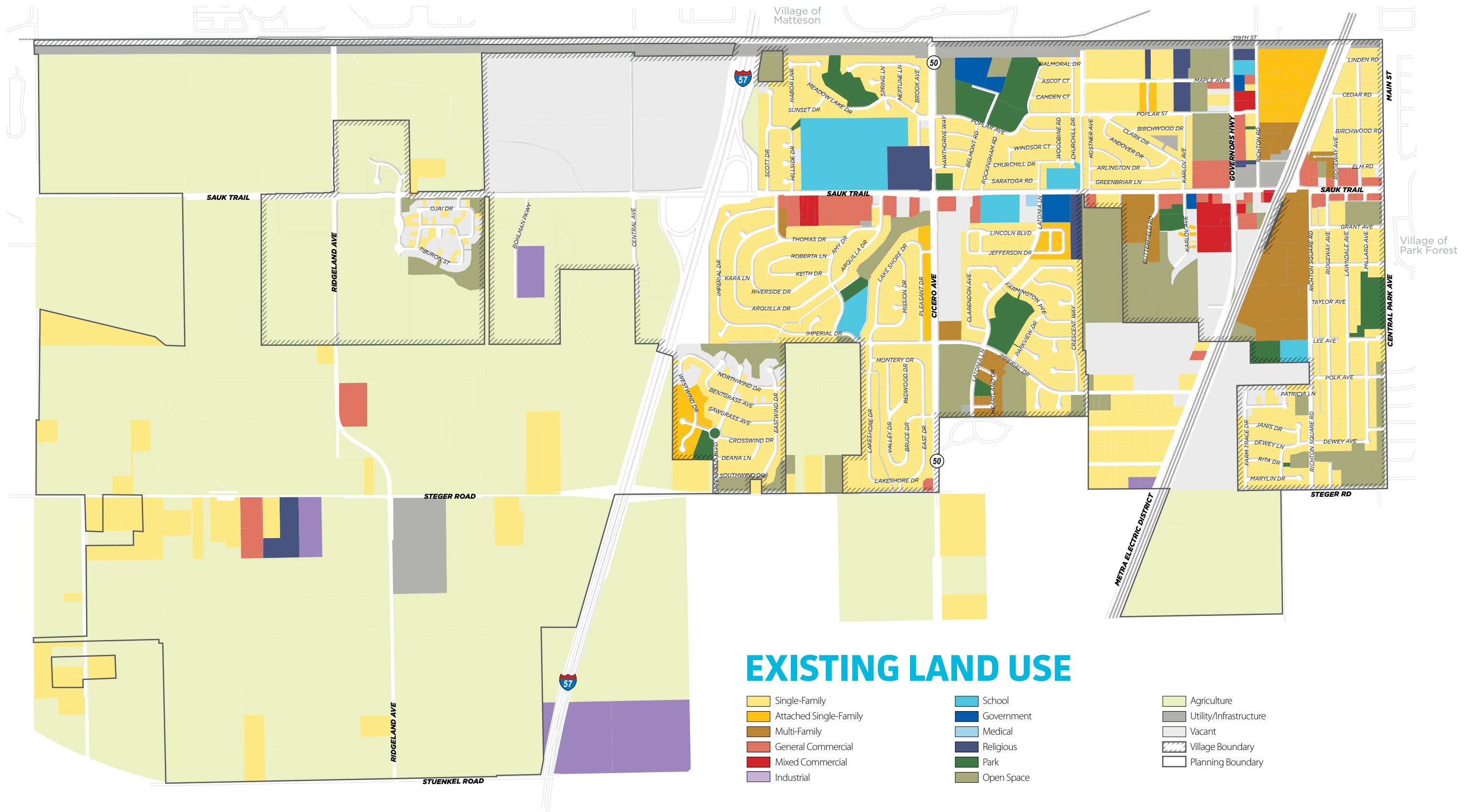
### Image & Identity

The physical elements of the Village's streetscape, public and private amenities, and the history of the Village work together to establish an identity for Richton Park. Sauk Trail and Governors Highway serve as the Village's primary entrance, shaping the perception of Richton Park's image. Throughout the planning process, many residents and business owners indicated a desire to see the Village's identity and "sense of place" improved.

#### Issues & Opportunities

- **Community History.** Richton Park has a rich history as a stop along a Native American trade route and a key piece of the Underground Railroad. However, few people recognize or celebrate this history and how it has shaped the Village over time. The Plan should explore ways that the Village can engage its history in a way that is meaningful to today's residents.
- **Community-based Facilities and Events.** The Village recently invested in a new Community Center, and the Library has built a new facility in Richton Park. However, many feel community facilities are still inadequate to meet local demand. The Plan should consider ways to maximize the use of current facilities and encourage events that gain momentum and sustain longevity.





## Transportation

The transportation network consists of an integrated system of roadways, transit services, and paths for non-motorized travel. The Village is serviced by a hierarchy of streets from local roadway to major arterial thoroughfares. Transit is provided by Metra and Pace, and bikes and pedestrians are accommodated on a network of off-street trails, on-street bikeways, and sidewalks.

### Issues & Opportunities

- **Interstate Access.** I-57 is a key component to Richton Park's regional identity and potential. However, the area around the interchange is greatly underutilized and faces challenges related to flooding and infrastructure provisions. The Plan should explore ways to coordinate investment in infrastructure with realistic market potential for this area.
- **Local Connectivity.** Richton Park is served by a regular grid of arterials and collectors. The most critical connectivity issue, however, is that there is only one crossing of the Metra Electric Rail corridor. The Plan should consider ways of enhancing local connectivity as well as mitigating the impacts of limited rail crossings.

- **Public Transit.** Metra and Pace provide the Richton Park community with commuter rail and suburban bus service, respectively. These offer important linkages to jobs and services throughout the Chicago region. The Plan should address ways to build of these services and work closely with transit agencies to ensure that long-range plans support the local vision for mobility and development.
- **Pedestrian Mobility.** Most neighborhoods and corridors in Richton Park include comprehensive sidewalk networks. However, some areas lack sidewalks, and most major streets are difficult to cross on foot. The Plan should address Village-wide walkability to ensure safe access to local amenities for residents of all ages.
- **Bicycle Mobility.** Local bike trails provides some level of local bicycle mobility in Richton Park, but do not link to all portions of the community, and lack key connections to the Old Plank Road Trail north of Richton Park. The Plan should consider opportunities to expand the trail system and connect it to the broader regional network.

## Community Facilities

Richton Park includes several agencies and organizations that provide community services and facilities for residents and businesses. These include services and infrastructure provided by the Village as well as other partner agencies. Collectively, community facilities help define the local quality of life and make Richton Park a desirable place in which to live and work.

### Issues & Opportunities

- **Government Services.** The Village provides a broad range of services to its residents. However, balancing these services with available resources is often a challenge. Many residents cited understaffed departments as a key issue to the stability of the community. The Plan should consider ways of maximizing the level of local services within the context of available revenue.
  - **Government Efficiency.** Several Richton Park residents are concerned about the ability of the Village to maintain local services while reducing costs. The Plan should highlight opportunities for collaboration or coordination that enhance the efficiency with which local services are provided.
  - **Tax Policy.** Richton Park is at a disadvantage for new development because of its location at the southern border of Cook County, which puts the Village in direct competition with Will County. The Plan should encourage local leaders to determine ways to remove barriers to development, fiscal or non-fiscal, and to establish private-public partnerships that enhance the likelihood of investment in Richton Park.
- **Public Safety.** Several residents cited public safety as a key concern in some neighborhoods. The Police Department uses staff, technology, and infrastructure to sustain a safe community. The Department is a member of several regional law enforcement task force groups that address public safety issues, including the Serious Major Accident Reconstruction Team, South Suburban Major Crimes Task Force, and the South Suburban Emergency Response Team. In addition, the Police Department has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Cook County Sheriff's Office to address regional crime issues. The Plan should highlight opportunities for the continued coordination of local resources to combat crime and ensure a safe Village.
  - **Educational Services.** Richton Park is served by several school districts striving to provide a high-quality education from pre-kindergarten through high school. Several facilities have recently been renovated, are in good shape, and meet current demands for capacity. However, school districts are facing increased financial pressures due to cuts in state funding for basic services (i.e. busing) and competition from local private schools. The Plan should explore opportunities for a coordinated local approach to educational services.
  - **Governors State University.** Governors State University is an important local educational asset. The Plan should highlight the importance of the Village partnering with the University to ensure that Richton Park residents are prepared for quality jobs that the local economy can provide.

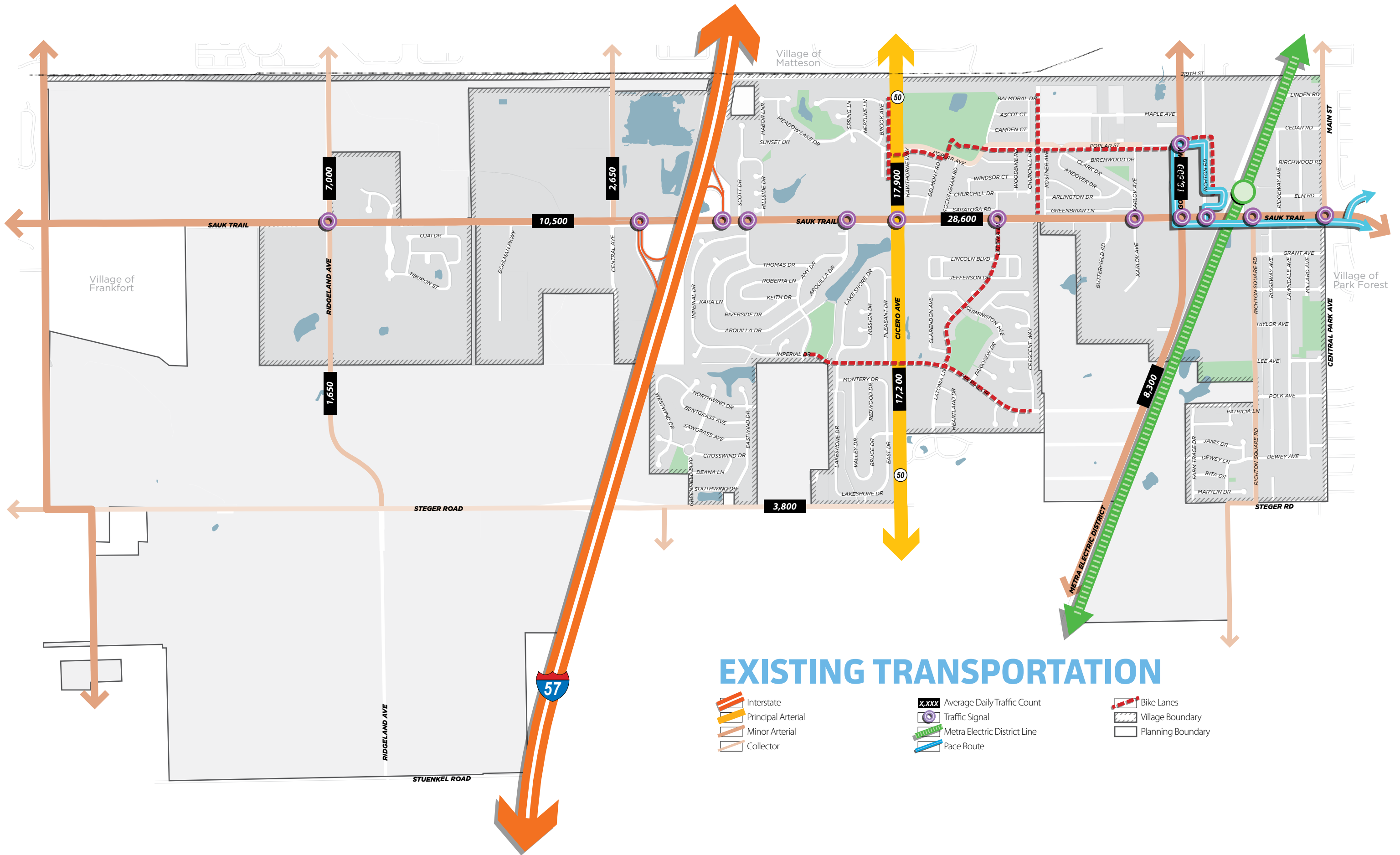
## Environment & Open Space

The Richton Park Parks and Recreation Department maintains 12 public parks as well as operates recreational facilities and programming. In addition to the Village's major parks, there are a number of smaller neighborhood parks and playgrounds, as well as pocket parks which are often the size of single residential lots.

### Issues & Opportunities

- **Recreational Programming.** Although the Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of programs, residents noted that the programs are not responsive to the needs of the community. The Plan should consider recreational programs targeted at youth and seniors, and explore opportunities for partnerships between the Parks and Recreation Department and other community facility providers in order to expand programming options.







# 3

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

A good community-based plan must be founded upon outreach to residents, businesses, service providers, and other stakeholders to ensure that the plan is specific to local issues and aspirations. The development of the Richton Park Comprehensive Plan included several tools and techniques for engaging the community. This chapter summarizes the results of the public participation and outreach program. A detailed review of the community outreach process and outcomes can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.



## TRADITIONAL OUTREACH

The Village hosted several events that allowed people to participate in face-to-face conversations about issues and challenges in Richton Park. These events included a Project Initiation Workshop, Community Workshop, Business Workshop, and stakeholder interviews.

### Project Initiation Workshop

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee convened on the evening of November 13, 2012, to kick off the Comprehensive Plan outreach process. Participants were asked a series of questions that identified issues and concerns, Village assets, and specific projects for implementation.

### Community Workshop

On January 31, 2013, a Community Workshop was held for Richton Park residents to actively participate in the plan-making process. The workshop provided the opportunity to discuss important issues facing the community, potential actions to address those issues, and values and assets that should be preserved as the community continues to grow. In all, approximately 40 residents attended the workshop.

### Business Workshop

On March 6, 2013, a Business Workshop was held in order to engage business owners and managers to better understand the issues and challenges they face. The structure of the workshop was similar to the Community Workshop, but the focus was specifically on issues related to the business environment, actions that can be taken to improve it, and values and assets that currently help businesses operate in Richton Park. In all, approximately 10 members of the business community attended the workshop.

### Stakeholder Interviews

A series of stakeholder interviews were held with people who have unique or specific insights regarding the Richton Park community. Participants included elected officials, Village staff, members of the business community, developers, local institutions, and other municipal districts.

### Visioning Workshop

Originally scheduled for July 12, but moved to July 18, 2013, due to severe weather, the Visioning Workshop provided an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to give input on their vision for the future of Richton Park. More than two dozen participants were broken into groups and given maps of the Village on which they could identify areas for future improvement and development, including parks, trails, and commercial and residential areas. Each group presented their maps, which sparked lively and productive discussions. The input from the Visioning Workshop provided the basis for the recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan, providing a true reflection of the community's vision for Richton Park's future.





## TRADITIONAL OUTREACH RESULTS

### Issues Identification and Priority

All participants were asked to identify issues or concerns confronting the Village. Participants cited a broad range of issues, reflecting the need for the Comprehensive Plan to address all aspects of local quality of life. However, throughout the various in-person events, the types of issues identified began to follow common themes. A summary of the responses are categorized below, which are listed in no specific order of importance or priority.

#### Land Use & Development

- Maintenance of property throughout the Village
- Vacant or foreclosed homes and businesses
- Incomplete developments
- Decrease in property values
- Need better housing options and services for senior citizens (i.e. "aging in place")

#### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Condition of Village streets
- Lack of public transportation to access jobs

#### Economic Development

- Need for quality/variety of businesses (i.e. major grocery store, restaurants, shops, etc.)
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Difficult approval process for business development
- Need for business attraction and recruitment

#### Community Services & Management

- Need better communication among Village, residents, businesses, other governments, etc.
- Taxes are too high/government is inefficient
- Understaffed Village departments and services (i.e. Public Works, Police, etc)
- Crime (drugs, gangs, vandalism, theft, etc.)
- Performance of schools/drop-out rate/standardized test scores
- Need for better recreation and school amenities/programs

#### Other

- The physical appearance of the Village (i.e. downtown, corridors, etc.)
- Lack of a brand or identity for the Village
- Lack of resident involvement in the community

## Actions to Improve Richton Park

Participants were asked to identify a series of specific actions that could be taken to improve Richton Park. Their responses are categorized and summarized below.

#### Land Use & Development

- Build a recreation/aquatic center that can host events and programs
- Enforce vehicle sticker requirements
- Enforce handicap parking requirements
- Inventory all development for poor maintenance or upkeep
- Use homeowners associations to enhance communication with Village
- Complete partially developed subdivisions

#### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists to access businesses, downtown, schools, etc.
- Make the train station an attractive and fun place to be
- Fix traffic issues at Governors Highway/Sauk Trail Road
- Maintain Village streets
- Reduce the impacts of rail traffic on local traffic and neighborhoods

#### Community Services & Management

- Hire more staff for various services (i.e. teachers, public works staff, police, etc.)
- Upgrade educational resources and facilities
- Consolidate school districts into one district for Richton Park
- Create services to support senior citizens
- Build a new library and to support new after-school programs
- Make Village budgeting and accounting more transparent
- Take fiscally conservative approach to lower tax burden
- Enhance governmental coordination

#### Image & Community Character

- Define a clear identity and implement it through redevelopment and public improvements
- Install gateways, landscaping, decorative light poles, etc.
- Enhance trash pick-up and litter prevention
- Establish a character and image for downtown Richton Park
- Create a Village-wide brand and market the community to the region
- Host summer concerts and other events
- Enhance the appearance of shopping centers

#### Economic Development

- Upgrade façade design in commercial areas
- Develop and revitalize the Town Center area
- Develop Governors Highway with quality major-brand businesses
- Actively attract new businesses through the use of incentives
- Education programs for business start-ups and entrepreneurs
- Acquire key properties for future redevelopment
- Promote infill of vacant storefronts with viable businesses
- Continue to seek creative funding sources for redevelopment
- Create a program that encourages people to spend their money in Richton Park
- Improve the Village/business relationship through the Merchants Chamber
- Enhance programs that encourage consumers to spend locally
- Remove regulatory barriers to new business development

#### Other

- Create ways for residents to be easily engaged in local issues
- Ensure that every house has a computer





## Local Strengths and Assets

Participants were asked to identify the strengths and assets that the Comprehensive Plan should build on in the future. Their responses are categorized and summarized below.

### Land Use & Development

- Local homeowners associations
- Good neighborhoods and parks
- Community interest in being a better place
- Affordable homes
- Good variety of quality housing
- Available land for growth (especially to the west)

### Community Facilities & Management

- Administrative response and support
- On-line bill pay option for water bills
- Ability to procure grant funding
- Good government leadership
- Caring and supportive elected officials
- Relationship between local governmental entities
- High regard for education
- Police and fire departments
- Low crime rates
- Community Center
- Local library

- Charter school located in Richton Park
- Governors State University

### Transportation and Infrastructure

- Access to regional transportation
- Proximity to expressway
- Traffic counts and visibility on major streets
- Access to local and regional transit
- Good infrastructure
- Regional location

### Image & Community Character

- Diversity of residents
- Friendly residents
- Quietness of the community
- Longstanding history
- Native American history and heritage

## WEB-BASED OUTREACH

In addition to traditional outreach events, residents, businesses, and Village stakeholders had an opportunity to participate in the outreach process through web-based outreach tools. These included a project website, online questionnaires, and an interactive mapping tool.

### Project Website

To assist in community outreach and overall communication of the planning process, a project website was created and linked to the Village's website. The project website provided visitors with information on how to stay involved, announcements regarding future meetings, and posted copies of interim planning documents for public review and comment. It also included tools for members of the Richton Park community to provide input via on-line questionnaires and community issues mapping.

## Online Questionnaires & sMap

Richton Park residents and businesses that were unable to attend the in-person workshops had the option to fill out a resident or business online questionnaire. An additional tool available for residents included sMap, an interactive mapping program. While attendance for the traditional outreach events was high, online participation for the business survey and sMap tool was low; therefore, the summary that follows only includes the twelve responses to the residential questionnaire.

The large majority of those who responded to the web-based applications have been Richton Park residents from six to twenty years and moved there for the housing quality and schools. Residents would like to see more single-family homes, retail stores, and restaurants and fewer apartments. Residential neighborhoods and housing affordability were noted as the primary advantages for living in the Village, while lack of employment and shopping opportunities, as well as taxes, were listed as the primary disadvantages. There was plentiful support for drawing new businesses to the Village and using tax incentives to attract and retain them.

Most residents are satisfied with the quality of life in Richton Park, however, most also feel that the quality of housing in the Village is declining, representing the largest threat to Village's future quality of life. Respondents overwhelmingly praised the ability and responsiveness of the fire department, but feel that the Village lacked overall cultural facilities and programming. Respondents also expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of local government to handle community issues and concern.

More specific responses included improving the safety of Sauk Trail Road at the intersection of Governors Highway and at the Metra Electric crossing. Residents would like to take advantage of prominent lots and develop areas such as those at the Interstate 57/Sauk Trail Road Interchange and the Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway.





# 4 VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This chapter establishes the desired future character of Richton Park. It includes a two primary components; 1) a Vision that includes a narrative describing what Richton Park ought to look and feel like in the future, and 2) a series of Goals and Objectives that identify more specific actions or strategies to attain the Vision.





## A VISION FOR THE RICHTON PARK COMMUNITY

The Vision is the result of creative input from the community, and articulates concepts and ideas that paint a tangible sense of what Richton Park would look like and how it would operate. This Vision is written as a retrospective, describing life in Richton Park 15 years after the updated Comprehensive Plan is adopted in 2014. It is also a basis for identifying the specific goals and objectives that direct investment and decision making in the Village.

### In 2030...

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan fifteen years ago, Richton Park has become more prominent in both the Chicagoland region and the state of Illinois. It has accomplished this through a combination of local initiatives to improve the Village's neighborhoods, commercial areas, entertainment options, and employment opportunities, as well as regional initiatives that have enhanced the Village's accessibility and visibility. Today, Richton Park serves as an example of how a community can come together to plan for its future and build on its assets.

High quality and attractive neighborhoods are the foundation of the community's success. Within the Village are single family homes of all sizes, attractive condominiums and apartments, and a variety of senior living options. Older, stable neighborhoods like Richton Hills, Lincoln Crossing, and Falcon Crest have seen continued investment, maintaining the high standards that have continually made them desirable places to live. New homes have been built in areas established for development such as Las Fuentes, filling in gaps and creating rich, complete neighborhoods that contribute to the Village's diverse character. The community has taken advantage of available land, strong neighborhoods, and a quality education system to attract and retain local jobs.

Throughout all of Richton Park's neighborhoods, residents have access to first-rate services. The Village's three school districts and private schools provide quality education to all schoolchildren. Rich Township and other local service providers are working to ensure that quality of life for the entire community remains high. Village Hall, the Community Center, and the new Public Library are the "civic heart" and cultural center of the community. The police and fire departments are well staffed with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities. Partnerships with nearby Governors State University have expanded educational opportunities for Village residents of all ages.

The Town Center has become the focal point of the community. It is an active place where people work, live, shop, and play. Through a focus on building and site design, streetscaping, and the pedestrian experience, the Town Center has been transformed into a "destination downtown." Residents of neighboring communities, students from Governors State University, and people from throughout Chicago's "south suburbs" come to Richton Park's Town Center for its cafes, restaurants, retail and services.

The Town Center isn't the only thriving commercial district in the Village. Smaller businesses have located along major corridors like Sauk Trail Road, Cicero Avenue, and Governors Highway, serving the daily needs of local residents. Larger uses, including regional retailers, office space, and industrial development, thrive near the I-57 interchange, capitalizing on Richton Park's location and accessibility. The Richton Industrial Park, for instance, has grown into a major economic driver and employment center for the community.

The Village has had an active role in planning its transportation network, and as a result has improved access and mobility within the community and throughout the region. Today, the community is accessible to residents, workers, and visitors. New street connections provide residents and motorists with easier ways to move within Richton Park. The bicycle and trail network has been expanded, providing robust non-motorized access to all areas of the Village, as well as to the region through connections to the Old Plank Road and other trails. New bicycle lanes on Sauk Trail, Cicero Avenue, and other key corridors have enhanced access even further. These improvements have created a village-wide system that connects neighborhoods, parks, schools, shopping, and other important community destinations.

Transit has become a viable option for travel within the Village and beyond. Residents can take Pace buses within Richton Park to reach local jobs, shopping, and more, or outside the Village to access other nearby communities. Metra's Electric Line provides commuters with easy access to downtown Chicago and also brings visitors from throughout the south suburbs to Richton Park's Town Center. The station has helped turn the Town Center into an attractive, welcoming gateway into Richton Park.

Richton Park continues to be well served by its parks and recreation facilities. Community parks, such as Glaeser Park and Pierce Park, provide "close-to-home" recreation with amenities such as tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball fields, splash pads, picnic areas, and more. The Community Center's indoor gym, along with its computer lab, multi-purpose room, and other amenities, continues to be one of the most popular destinations in the Village. Some areas of the Village have been preserved as open space and agricultural land, while others have been developed according to overall Village goals. Flood control measures, particularly near Governors Highway south of Sauk Trail, have both protected physical investments and contributed to Richton Park's overall network of open spaces.





## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Village of Richton Park's Comprehensive Plan looks forward over the next 15-20 years and envisions what the Village wants to become in the future. The Plan's goals and objectives outline how the Village can achieve its desired outcomes and form the framework for planning recommendations, policies, future projects, and actions.

**Goals** describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. Though some may not be fully attained, they set a bar towards which progress can be made over time.

**Objectives** describe more specific actions that should be undertaken by the Village to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

Together, the goals and objectives provide specific direction and serve as a guide for the evaluation of development proposals and land use alternatives. They are based heavily on the input that resulted from the Comprehensive Planning process. In addition to the input received from public participation, these goals and objectives are based on input from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and technical analysis performed by the consultant team.

The goals and objectives are presented based on the following categories:

- Neighborhoods & Housing
- Commercial & Industrial Areas
- Community Facilities & Services
- Transportation & Mobility
- Parks & Open Space
- Infrastructure & Growth
- Community History & Identity
- Local Government

## Neighborhoods & Housing

### Goal

**Maintain and enhance the Village's neighborhoods to provide the housing, character, and supporting amenities to retain and attract residents to Richton Park.**

### Objectives

- Strengthen established neighborhoods through active code enforcement, preventative maintenance, home improvement and renovation grants, and other programs.
- Prioritize the completion of partially constructed subdivisions over new housing development.
- Encourage the development of multi-family and mixed use housing near transit service, particularly the Metra rail station in Town Center.
- Provide quality housing and support services for senior citizens.
- Require new housing areas to be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods in terms of character and connectivity.
- Require developers to provide local amenities that benefit residents (i.e. sidewalks, open space, trails, detention, etc.) to be fully installed as part of Phase I construction.
- Minimize the encroachment of and impacts from commercial areas, industrial uses, and rail corridors on adjacent neighborhoods through land use policy, screening, and buffering.
- Minimize the frequency of foreclosures and their impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

## Commercial & Industrial Areas

### Goal

**Strengthen the Village's commercial and industrial areas to better meet the daily needs of Richton Park residents, attract patrons from beyond Richton Park, and increase employment opportunities within the Village.**

### Objectives

- Establish a clear local vision for Richton Park that defines the kinds of industries the Village hopes to attract and what amenities or services are required to attract businesses and employees.
- Update the vision for the Town Center to reflect current development potential and maximize the use of remaining properties.
- Actively recruit new businesses that expand the diversity of the local marketplace and utilize existing unoccupied buildings and vacant properties in commercial districts.
- Encourage businesses and industries to locate in the Village that would bring stable, high quality jobs to the community.
- Encourage commercial development in areas served by public transit that is easily accessed by pedestrians and cyclists from surrounding neighborhoods.

- Enhance the function of prominent commercial corridors and districts through wayfinding and access management.
- Permit and encourage temporary or seasonal uses that can attract desirable and complementary activities to the Town Center, such as a farmers market or community yard sale, on underutilized sites and community open spaces.
- Ensure that the retail and service options within the Village meet residents' daily needs in order to encourage local spending.
- Create a detailed plan for the I-57/Sauk Trail interchange area, focusing on uses that might benefit from immediate interstate access and available land.
- Require large commercial developments to create a "sense of place" through building location, parking management, streetscaping, urban design, and other techniques.
- Improve the overall appearance of prominent commercial areas, especially the Sauk Trail corridor, Town Center, and I-57 interchange.
- Complete the build-out of industrial areas already served by infrastructure (i.e. Richton Industrial Park).
- Recognize and utilize local advantages to maintain competitiveness with surrounding communities, especially those outside Cook County.
- If viable, implement a public wi-fi system for the Town Center.



## Community Facilities & Services

### Goal

**Ensure effective and reliable services and facilities, including schools, libraries, police and fire protection, and social services, for all residents and businesses in Richton Park.**

### Objectives

- Work with local schools, Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation Department to assess and plan for the impacts of anticipated and proposed growth.
- Ensure that the Police and Fire Departments can provide effective and timely service to all portions of the Village.
- Continuously monitor local population and crime trends and prioritize law enforcement services and programs appropriately.
- Work with local school districts to implement their strategic plans, including identifying and applying for grants and other funding sources.
- Continue to utilize the Community Center and assess the need for expansion of the facility and programs.

- Seek opportunities to partner with the Public Library District through joint programming and shared facilities.
- Support Rich Township in providing quality services to the community.
- Collaborate with Governors State University to provide adult education programs that result in a highly-skilled local labor force.
- Partner with the Richton Park Merchants Chamber, Governors State University, and other organizations to offer business development courses, events, counseling, and other programs to local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Partner with Governors State University to establish a business incubator.
- Align education and mentorship programs to meet the needs of the current and emerging industry.
- Explore opportunities to expand local health care facilities and services and attract new facilities to the area.
- Utilize local churches as a network for reaching out to residents regarding social services and programs.

## Transportation & Mobility

### Goal

**Maintain a comprehensive system of roads, trails, sidewalks, and transit service that enhances local and regional mobility.**

### Objectives

- Continue to ensure that adequate funding is allocated in the Village's annual budget for road maintenance.
- Enhance circulation within the Village by extending key corridors, connecting "near misses" in the roadway network, and providing an adequate number of entry points to all neighborhoods.
- Where possible, realign "jogged" or offset intersections to enhance traffic flow and safety.
- Increase the number of crossings along Metra's Electric Line corridor.
- Preserve the right-of-way necessary to implement improvements identified in this Comprehensive Plan and other regional transportation plans.

- Work with Pace and Metra to provide regional and local transit access to jobs, commercial goods and services, recreation, and other destinations and amenities within the community and nearby.
- Enhance access and circulation to and within the Town Center area.
- Manage access to private lots on arterial streets by removing or consolidating excess curb cuts, encouraging cross-access easements between adjacent lots, and by encouraging access from side streets and internal roadway networks.
- Require large commercial developments to provide an internal circulation network that provides access to local uses and connects to the public transportation network.
- Create a comprehensive public pedestrian network, prioritizing improvements in areas with commercial, recreation, or educational uses served by transit.
- Install safe pedestrian crossings across high-traffic corridors such as Sauk Trail, Cicero Avenue, and Governors Highway.

- Require appropriate pedestrian and bicycle amenities in both private and public development projects.
- Expand and connect the existing bike trail network through the use of dedicated paths, on-street bike lanes, shared lanes, or regional open spaces.
- Connect the local bike network to the Old Plank Road Trail.
- Minimize the impacts of school access, parking, pick-up and drop-off, and other activities on surrounding neighborhoods.
- Study the costs and benefits of building railroad spurs that service the I-57 interchange area.
- Require the installation of a comprehensive pedestrian network as part of the initial construction of new development.
- Continue to monitor the state of regional transportation projects, such as the Illiana Expressway and Peotone Airport.





## Parks & Open Space

### Goal

**Provide a variety of passive and active recreational amenities to meet the needs of the community, and preserve and enhance the natural features that help define the character of Richton Park.**

### Objectives

- Continue to ensure that adequate funding is allocated in the Village's annual budget for park maintenance.
- Provide an appropriate amount of parkland within the Village for the community's current population and expected growth.
- Identify opportunities for public open space in the Town Center.
- Expand the recreational options available at Village parks by adding park equipment and improvements such as tennis courts, basketball courts, and splash pads.

- Work with local schools and the Parks and Recreation Department to create a robust program of after school and summer youth activities.
- Increase the accessibility of all parks within the Village by both motorized and non-motorized forms of travel.
- Utilize vacated rail and roadway rights-of-way, flood plains, preserved greenbelts, and other opportunities to link together the Village's open space network and connect schools, commercial areas, neighborhoods, and other destinations.
- Enhance access to existing indoor recreational facilities, such as the Community Center, and create additional, high-quality facilities if necessary.
- Require large developments, including commercial and residential, to provide trails and usable parkland that connect to the larger open space network.
- Coordinate investment in parks with other development and services.
- Encourage the use of flood prone land for public open space, recreation, wildlife habitats, and/or trails.
- Require development to provide appropriate buffers from critical natural areas.
- Identify areas that contain prime farmland, sensitive ecosystems, and important environmental features that should be considered poorly suited for future development.

## Infrastructure & Growth

### Goal

**Ensure that Richton Park grows in a responsible and sustainable manner and maximizes the effectiveness of municipal infrastructure and services.**

### Objectives

- Ensure that all neighborhoods have basic infrastructure, including stormwater management, sidewalks, and street lighting.
- Budget for the regular maintenance of the community's existing infrastructure.
- Coordinate infrastructure improvement projects undertaken by different agencies or departments to minimize the total cost of improvements.
- Strategically coordinate municipal infrastructure and services to guide development to priority areas.

- Prioritize the maintenance of infrastructure in already developed areas or in areas easily served by logical extensions to existing services.
- Prohibit development or investment in infrastructure that requires extraneous extensions to unserved areas.
- Require developers to assist in funding infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate new development.
- Adequately screen utility infrastructure, such as water towers, power lines, and substations, especially in residential neighborhoods.
- Minimize the required capacity of stormwater infrastructure through on-site detention and management.
- Implement best management practices to protect areas of the community most prone to flooding.

- Explore the viability of and implement local alternative energy sources, including wind, solar, and geothermal power.
- Provide information to residents regarding the reduced use of water, consumption of energy, and generation of refuse.
- Work with the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) to implement data infrastructure improvements along the I-57 corridor.
- Establish growth boundary agreements with nearby communities.
- Consider the annexation of unincorporated properties enclosed by the Village if it will preserve the character of Richton Park.
- Strategically annex properties on the periphery of the Village to capture important development areas, ensure quality development, and preserve important open space.



## Community History & Identity

### Goal

**Recognize and build upon Richton Park's unique history and character, establish a Richton Park "brand" and "identity", and seek to improve the way the community is perceived throughout the region.**

### Objectives

- Develop a coordinated program to brand and market the Village to prospective businesses and residents.
- Create prominent gateway features at key locations within the community to announce entry into Richton Park and to distinguish the Village from adjacent municipalities.

- Institute development standards for the Town Center area.
- Install streetscape elements that establish a unified theme for the community such as benches, trash cans, streetlights, way finding signage, and other amenities.
- Require landscaping and screening for properties along prominent corridors.
- Promote awareness of Richton Park history through local exhibits, events, public art and monuments, and education.
- Recognize and celebrate the historic role of Sauk Trail Road as a Native American trade route and key part of the Underground Railroad.

## Local Government

### Goal

**Create a reliable and effective government that is built on collaboration with residents, businesses, developers, and agencies through local regulations, communication, and responsiveness.**

### Objectives

- Amend the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Public Works standards to assist accomplishing the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain a level of Village staff and support that provides the community with high quality services.
- Encourage property renovation and construction through an expedient, yet thorough permitting process.
- Provide expedited review for commercial development that accomplishes broader community goals beyond basic zoning requirements.
- Ensure that zoning and property maintenance standards are enforced for all properties.

- Conduct regular periodic reviews of all codes and ordinances to ensure that they are clear and adequately address existing and emerging development issues.
- Communicate regularly with SSMMA, CMAP, and other local and regional governments and agencies in order to coordinate on mutually beneficial planning and projects.
- Continue active involvement with SSMMA, CMAP, and other local and regional governments and agencies to participate in regional policy and funding opportunities.
- Continue to partner with SSMMA, CMAP, and other local and regional governments and agencies to provide high quality, up-to-date data and information for the Village.
- Maintain open communication with residents and businesses through traditional and web-based public engagement.





# 5 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Land use and development are often the drivers of investment in transportation, community services, infrastructure, and the environment. As such, the Land Use Plan is frequently the guiding framework for other plan chapters, as well as regulations related to zoning and subdivision. The Land Use Plan outlines how properties in different parts of the planning area ought to be used, and identifies the type, character, and intensity of use for all areas of the community. The intent of the Land Use Plan is to ensure that future development takes into account land use compatibility, access, market viability, environmental features, and community services. Future land use should be carefully coordinated with the recommendations of subsequent chapters to ensure that development is closely linked to other aspects of the community.

The Land Use Plan is built on several key factors, including the existing pattern of development, the vision of the community for certain types of growth, the realistic potential for Richton Park to attract specific types of uses based on localized advantages, and the anticipated impacts on transportation, infrastructure systems, and other services. Subsequent chapters provide additional detail regarding specific land use and development principles. In addition to this Land Use Plan, previously adopted plans and policies should be used to guide specific decisions regarding land use and development.

## FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Richton Park is a mosaic of individual lots that collectively make up neighborhoods, commercial districts, industrial areas, civic centers, and natural environments. This section describes the future land use designations, while the accompanying map illustrates their location within the planning area.

All parcels within the Village have been assigned one of 14 land use designations. These land use designations cover the full range of different land use types and should serve as the basis for development review and approval and future zoning amendments that may be needed to implement the Plan's recommendations. Uses are arranged in a pattern that is intended to capitalize on the I-57 corridor, strengthen existing commercial areas, stabilize neighborhoods throughout the community, and take advantage of regional transit services.

The twelve land use designations include:

- Detached Single Family
- Attached Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Long-term Residential Growth Area
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Local Commercial
- Town Center/Mixed Use
- Light Industrial/Office Park
- Long-term Industrial/Office Growth Area
- Natural Areas
- Public Parks
- Public/Semi-Public
- Transportation/Utilities



*Detached Single Family*

### Residential Land Uses

Residential land uses include those areas where people typically live. Richton Park includes a variety of neighborhood types: traditional neighborhoods, contemporary subdivisions, and multi-family developments. The following residential land use designations recognize the varying character and intensity of development in these areas, and aim to reinforce their character accordingly. Detailed recommendations related to residential land uses can be found in the Residential Areas Plan section of this chapter.



*Attached Single Family*

### Detached Single Family

Detached Single Family areas are made up predominantly of lots with one stand-alone residence. These areas may include scattered attached single family or multi-family developments, but these types of uses are integrated into the character and structure of the overall neighborhood. Detached single family housing represents the predominant housing type in Richton Park, with housing typically arranged on a regular street pattern.

Existing agricultural parcels in the western areas of the Village are designated as future detached single family residential. However, in the short-term, these areas should continue to serve as agricultural land uses until residential development opportunities arise.



*Multi-Family*

### Attached Single Family

Attached single family areas include a series of lots with one or more single-family units that may share a wall, typically arranged horizontally with a dedicated entrance for each housing unit. These are often referred to as townhouse or duplex developments. Throughout the planning area, there are several clusters of attached single family housing arranged in subdivisions where structures create a consistent character on a planned residential street.

### Multi-Family

Multi-family areas in Richton Park typically include a series of structures built as part of the same development. The structures are often arranged with access to shared parking facilities. These developments are mostly near the Town Center and serve to transition between the surrounding commercial and residential development.





**Regional Commercial**



**Local Commercial**



**Light Industrial/Office Park**



**Natural Areas**



**Public/Semi-public**



**Town Center/Mixed-use**



**Long-term Industrial/Office Growth Area**



**Public Parks**



**Transportation/Utility**

## Commercial Land Uses

Commercial land uses include those areas used for the sale of goods and services. This Land Use Plan envisions a variety of commercial development types in Richton Park. The Village is striving to build an attractive Town Center around its Metra station, while much of the existing commercial activity lines the Sauk Trail and Governor's Highway corridors. The I-57 interchange represents an opportunity to establish a commercial destination that appeals to a broader regional market. The commercial land use designations described below recognize these different opportunities, and detailed recommendations related to commercial land uses can be found in the Commercial Areas Plan section of this chapter.

### Regional Commercial

Regional commercial areas include significant commercial development in high-visibility areas, such as the expressway interchange. Uses in these areas include big-box retailers, franchise restaurants, and large multi-tenant shopping centers. Often, regional commercial centers are arranged around an internal circulation system and with coordinated development.

### Local Commercial

Local commercial uses typically serve the needs of residents and the immediate surrounding area. These uses are typically aligned along a collector or arterial street or at a neighborhood center, and may include restaurants, gas stations, medium- or big-box grocers or retailers, small offices, etc. Many lots accommodate a single commercial use, while others host small multi-tenant shopping centers with shared parking areas.

### Town Center/Mixed-use

Town Center includes a variety of commercial uses, including restaurants, private offices, service providers, and residences. Uses are often mixed in a vertical arrangement, with several uses occupying a single building. Activities in the Town Center tend to be oriented towards pedestrian activity, specialty shopping, or the daytime professional population, though increased housing in Town Center could provide the market for complementary commercial uses.

### Light Industrial/Office Park

Industrial land uses include the processing of raw materials, or the manufacturing, production, and/or distribution of finished products that create minimal impacts on surrounding uses. Activities tend to occur inside structures, with outdoor areas limited to storage or distribution. This land use category also includes office parks used to support industrial operations, research, or logistics. These parks are typically developed as a coordinated subdivision with a dedicated roadway. In Richton Park, industry is generally located near highway infrastructure. Depending on the type of industrial activity, uses may be closely related to other uses, so long as proper buffering is provided. Detailed recommendations related to industrial land uses can be found in the Industrial Areas Plan section of this chapter.

## Public Land Uses

Public/semi-public land uses include areas that are generally accessible to the community, offer community-oriented services or activities, or provide benefit to the broader Richton Park population. Though some of these uses may not be owned or managed by public entities, they are viewed as providing benefits to the broader community and are critical in supporting local quality of life. More specific policies and recommendations are provided for these land uses in the Environmental and Open Space Chapter and Community Facilities and Infrastructure Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

### Natural Areas

Natural areas include portions of the community that remain undeveloped due to development constraints or important environmental benefits, including wetlands, forestation, streams, ecosystems, etc. They also include currently developed areas that could be adapted in the future to accommodate restoration of the natural environment. These areas may sometimes integrate passive, low-impact amenities such as trails and educational signage.

### Public Parks

Public parks include areas designated for active recreation, typically hosting fields, facilities, and supporting amenities related to athletics and public gathering.

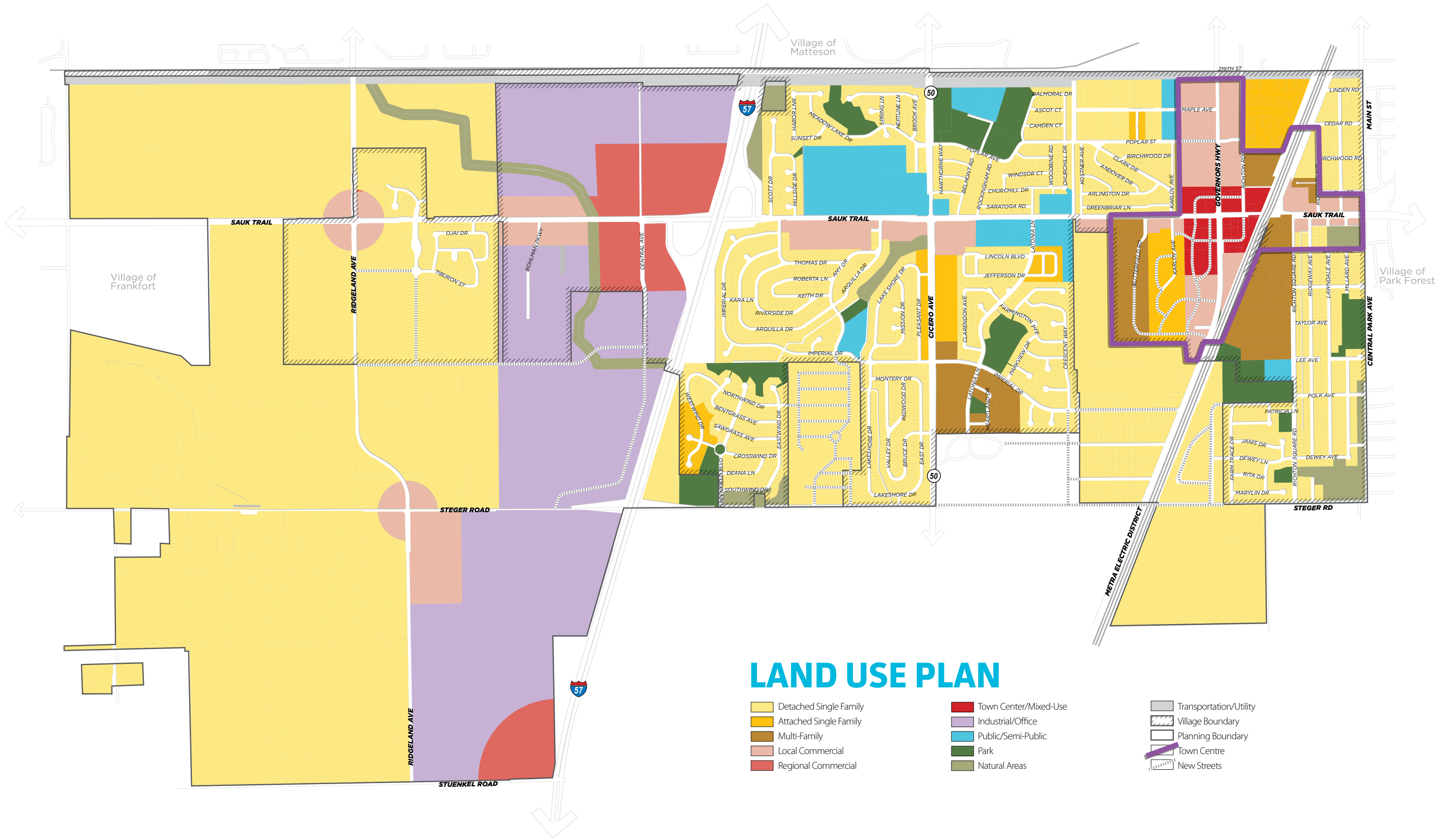
### Public/Semi-public

Public/semi-public uses include areas that support activities for the benefit of the general public. These include schools, places of worship, libraries, government offices, social service providers, etc. It should be noted that some of these uses occupy relatively little land and are integrated into the fabric of a residential area. As a result, they may be included in a residential or commercial land use category, while facilities included in the public/semi-public category tend to be uses that occupy larger areas and are less integrated into their surrounding context.

### Transportation/Utility

Transportation/utility areas include portions of the community dedicated to infrastructure related to transportation, electricity, water distribution, collection and refinement, etc. While these areas are not necessarily accessible to the public, they provide infrastructure or services that benefit the community.





# LAND USE PLAN

- Detached Single Family
- Attached Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Town Center/Mixed-Use
- Industrial/Office
- Public/Semi-Public
- Transportation/Utility
- Village Boundary
- Planning Boundary
- Town Centre
- New Streets
- Park
- Natural Areas





Existing Neighborhoods & New Development

## RESIDENTIAL AREAS PLAN

Richton Park's neighborhoods are one of its primary assets. The Village includes housing that offers a great variety of housing types and is generally in good condition. Given its context, it is also relatively affordable compared to neighboring communities. However, many residents indicated concerns about the decline of the Village's housing stock. In order to curb this trend, the Village should prioritize housing maintenance and rehabilitation.

This section presents policy recommendations related to the enhancement, revitalization, and preservation of Richton Park's residential neighborhoods. The following policies will assist the Village in future decision making regarding residential land use throughout the Village.

### Long-term Residential Growth

Richton Park's planning area includes a large portion of unincorporated rural land. In the long-term, this area may be viable for expanded development of the community. These areas should remain agricultural until residential opportunities arise.

More immediate priority should be given to the stabilization of existing neighborhoods and the development of a more focused footprint. This will ensure that "leapfrog" development does not occur that requires the inefficient provision of infrastructure and services.

### Housing Stock Maintenance and Restoration

Residents cited poorly maintained properties as one of the biggest threats to Richton Park's quality of life. In order to reverse this trend, the Village must be proactive in forming and implementing policies that support homeowner maintenance, including:

- The Village should consider local property tax abatements for investment in housing maintenance and rehabilitation.
- The Village should enhance code inspections and enforcement aimed at strengthening established neighborhoods by improving aesthetics and ensuring structural safety.
- The Village should collaborate with Rich Township, neighborhood associations, and other community service providers to offer foreclosure avoidance counseling, information about home loan and refinancing programs, and other assistance to homeowners.

### Infill and New Neighborhood Development

Richton Park has several residential developments that were affected by economic downturn. A number of residential lots remain vacant, leaving gaps in the sidewalk network and affecting overall neighborhood character. Infill residential developments and new housing developments should be guided by the following principles:

- The Village should utilize incentives and development regulations to prioritize the infill of existing subdivisions and neighborhoods over new "greenfield" residential development.
- Development approval should be contingent upon the requirement to completely install sidewalks, open spaces, stormwater systems, and other community amenities as a part of phase I construction.
- The Village should consider creating development guidelines that ensure new or infill development is consistent with the community's vision for its various neighborhoods.

### Anticipating and Meeting the Demand for Senior Housing

Senior housing is an emerging need for Richton Park, as it is anticipated that the age cohorts from 55 and up will see the greatest increase in population. Many residents expressed the desire to "age in place," which would allow them to remain in the community, but downsize from larger residential units. Such development allows the continued investment in the Richton Park community, and should be guided by the following principles:

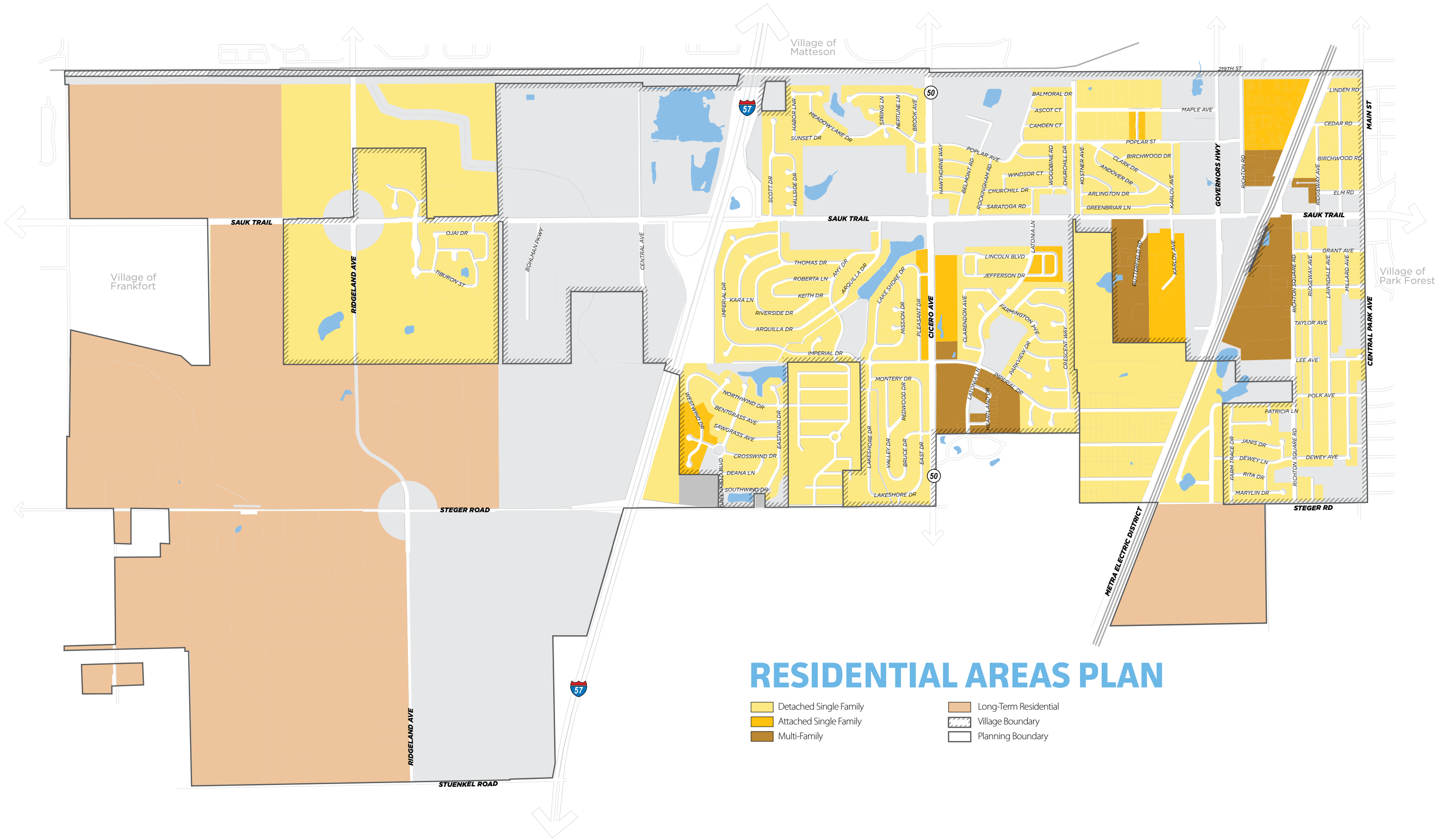
- Senior housing should be located in portions of the Village well served by basic goods and services sought by residents.
- Senior housing should be appropriately integrated into existing neighborhoods through access management and building design, rather than being located in isolated areas with no relationship to other uses or activities.
- Housing types should include flexibility that allows for the transition from independence to dependency, and allows for the future conversion of units to meet evolving market demands.

### Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Town Center

The Land Use Plan includes a Town Center designation that includes integrating commercial and residential uses. Mixed-Use areas should be characterized by uses and development patterns that provide a vibrant, safe, attractive, and "walkable" pedestrian environment. While the Town Center itself is given more detailed recommendations in the Town Center Subarea Plan, multi-family and mixed-use housing should be guided by the following principles:

- The densest multi-family housing should be concentrated near Town Center in order to maximize access to transit and pedestrian-oriented goods and services.
- Development should include on-site pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in order to allow for multi-modal access to surrounding uses.
- Parking should be appropriately managed through on-site and on-street parking to ensure that it does not impact the availability of parking or aesthetics for surrounding businesses or residences.
- Housing should be compatible with surrounding neighborhood architecture.









Richton Park Town Center

## COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLAN

Richton Park's commercial environment must respond to two markets. First, the I-57 and the Richton Park Metra Station provide the opportunity for a broader regional market draw. Secondly, these areas in conjunction with Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway must meet the need of residents from Richton Park and the immediate surrounding area. The types of development that responds to each of these markets will require different characteristics in terms of access and visibility, site capacity, and surrounding land uses.

This section presents policy recommendations related to the commercial and industrial areas throughout the Village. The following policies will assist the Village in future decision making regarding commercial and industrial land use throughout the Village.

### Long-term Industrial/Office Growth

There are several acres of land that provide the opportunity for short-term industrial or office development based on existing infrastructure or a high level of access to I-57. However, as these opportunities are realized, the Village should consider other areas for long-term industrial or office growth. These include areas that will benefit from proposed future infrastructure improvements, though current infrastructure and market demand do not warrant their development in the near term.

### Creating an Attractive Regional Retail Base

Richton Park's regional commercial nodes, such as the I-57 corridor, Town Center, and Sauk Trail Road, provide the potential for significant investment that serve a broad market area. These areas should be developed in such a way that they also benefit Richton Park residents and mitigate impacts on neighborhoods. Such development should be guided by the following principles:

- The Village should establish a comprehensive economic development strategy that establishes a clear vision related to the types of preferred uses, their locations in different portions of the Village, related infrastructure that aims to support investment, and incentives or programs available to attract development.

- Commercial areas should incorporate attractive design elements that enhance the image of the Village and create a "sense of place" through internal street networks, landscaping, quality building materials, decorative detention areas, street furniture, and appropriate signage.
- Commercial areas should maintain connections with surrounding neighborhoods to ensure that residents enjoy easy access to a broad range of goods and services, yet be appropriately buffered to minimize the impacts of traffic, noise and lighting.

### Developing a Vibrant Town Center

The Village's Town Center presents an opportunity for a focal point for residents and visitors. While the Town Center itself is given more detailed recommendations in the Town Center Subarea Plan, commercial development throughout the Town Center should be guided by the following principles:

- Program seasonal and temporary events and uses throughout the Town Center, transforming underutilized parcels and parking lots
- Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian mobility throughout the Town Center area through sidewalks, trails, storage facilities, traffic signalization, etc.
- Continue to implement the Town Center Design Guidelines in order to ensure an attractive visual character.



## Revitalizing the Village's Commercial Corridors

Sauk Trail Road and Governor's Highway are the Village's primary retail corridors. However, these areas are experiencing a significant amount of vacancy. The Village should work with partners to implement the following recommendations in order to improve the commercial environment on these critical corridors:

- Appropriately manage access through curb cut consolidation and cross-access agreements in order to minimize traffic conflicts and enhance circulation between commercial lots.

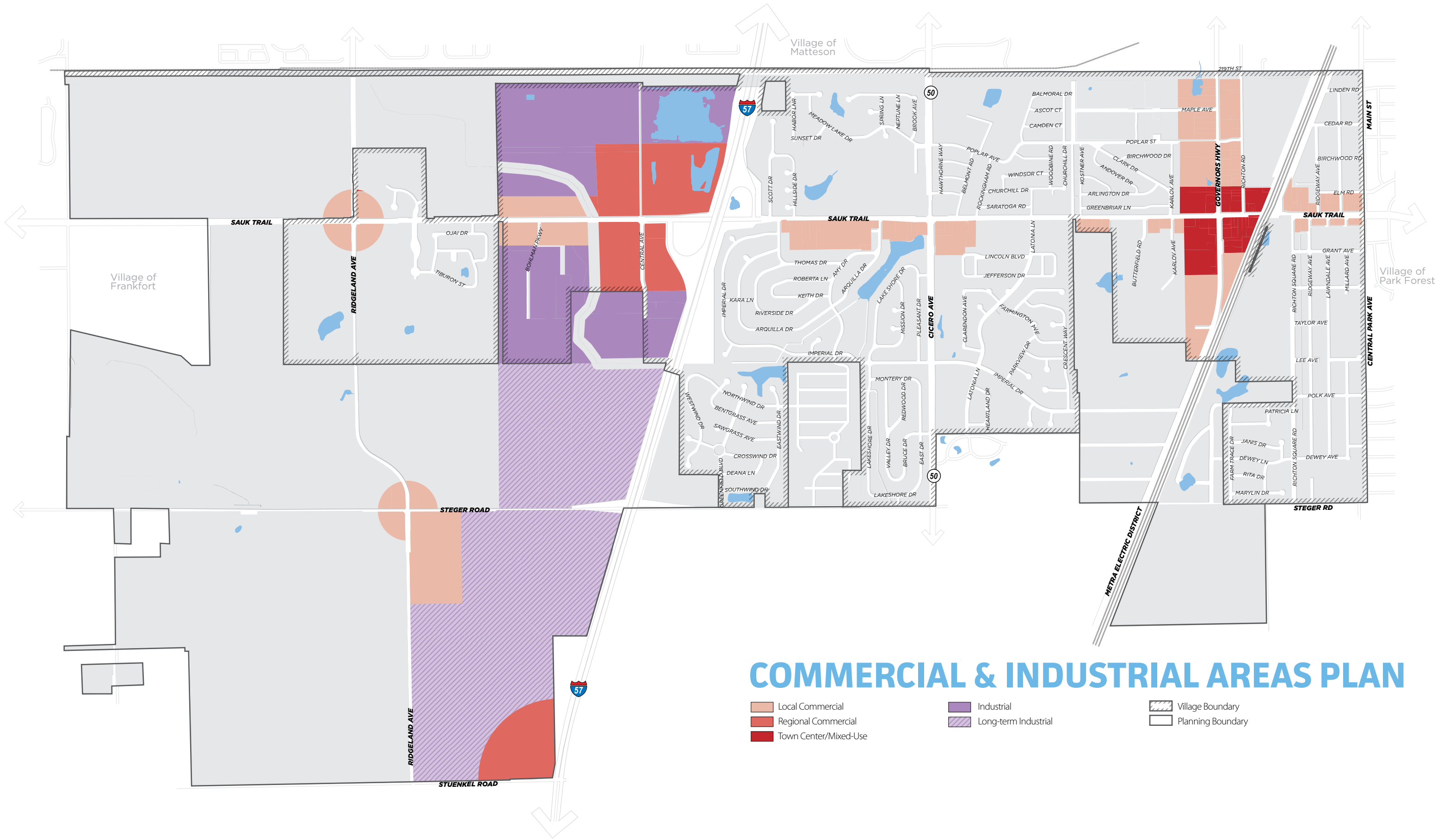
- Relocate or bury overhead utilities from the north side of Sauk Trail Road and the east side of Governor's Highway.
- Install attractive gateways and wayfinding signs that announce entry into Richton Park and orient visitors to the Town Center, civic campus, and I-57 commercial area.
- Implement design guidelines that ensure an attractive commercial environment that reflects the desired character of the Village.

## Building on Strategic Partnerships

The Richton Park commercial districts would benefit from building and fostering relationships among the business community and community entities. The following principles should guide strategic business partnerships throughout the Richton Park community:

- Expand and formalize the role of the Richton Park Merchants Chamber to include active recruitment of businesses, education about available programs and services, and promotion of local events.
- Work with the Merchants Chamber to create a comprehensive branding and marketing campaign that promotes the offerings in the Village and presence of the Metra rail service in order to encourage Richton Park residents to shop locally and residents from nearby communities to patronize local businesses.
- Promote the use of shared services, such as site maintenance, snow plowing, etc., among the business community in order to take advantage of economies of scale and ensure consistent conditions throughout the commercial areas.
- Work with the Merchants Chamber, Governor's State University, and others to provide local small business education programs aimed at improving the long-term success rate of home-grown entrepreneurs.





# COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLAN

- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Town Center/Mixed-Use
- Industrial
- Long-term Industrial
- Village Boundary
- Planning Boundary



## Establishing Strong Local Industry

Richton Park has invested in the development of new industrial areas along the western portion of Sauk Trail Road. This is important to the community's vision of increased job opportunities within the Village, as well as a diversified tax base to help stabilize local municipal finances. The Village should continue to build upon this investment and take advantage of unique advantages provided by the I-57 corridor.

Policies related to this include:

- Work with local industries to create a comprehensive marketing campaign that highlights the unique advantages of Richton Park and its viability as a center of industry for the south suburban area.
- Work with IDOT, Cook County, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, and others to provide transportation, technology and data infrastructure that supports innovative professional office and industrial development.
- Require industrial development to provide adequate access and mobility for all users, including freight vehicles, private vehicles, bikes and pedestrians.
- Allow and encourage industrial development to include uses that support employees, such as restaurants and cafes, recreation and fitness centers, child care, etc., through zoning and planned development.
- Encourage the development of an Industrial Council made up of business managers that is responsible for the maintenance, marketing, and operations of the industrial area as a whole.
- Work with local vocational schools and Governor's State University to provide technical training that prepares local residents for current and emerging industries in Richton Park.
- Monitor roadway conditions for freight mobility, to ensure local businesses and industrial areas are easily accessible by truck traffic.
- Monitor regional initiatives in order to take advantage of economic development opportunities to recruit and retain new and existing businesses.





# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY PLAN

The Village of Richton Park's transportation network is directly related to its development pattern. The transportation system in the community is made up of an integrated network of roadways, transit service and pathways for non-motorized travel. The community has a mature core with an established street network, as well as peripheral opportunities for growth and development. Local and regional traffic flow is provided by a hierarchy of roadways including Interstate 57, arterials like Cicero Avenue, Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway, collectors like Poplar Avenue and Imperial Drive, and local streets. The Metra Commuter Rail station provides the primary transit connection to the Chicago region, though local bus transit service provided by Pace Suburban Bus is limited.

This Transportation Plan focuses on strategic improvements to the existing street network in the more developed portions of the community, and provides guidelines for new streets and traffic control in the emerging areas that will influence the Village's character and functionality. The plan strives to provide a balanced transportation system through the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition to the recommendations included in this chapter, on-going consideration should be given to regional initiatives that could significantly influence the Village's ability to capture new economic development. For example, the Peotone Airport and Illiana Expressway could greatly enhance the prominence of the existing Sauk Trail/I-55 interchange, as well as the planned Stuenkel Road/I-55 interchange. While the airport and expressway projects are not programmed, the Village should monitor their status and amend the Comprehensive Plan to best posture the community to capture potential benefits of such improvements.

## ROADWAY NETWORK

The Richton Park roadway network is designed to serve several different functions. Roads provide access between uses within the Village, and mobility to surrounding communities. Richton Park includes many types of roadways whose characteristics vary based on the amount of traffic they carry, the land uses they serve, and the intended types of user. These functions differ dependent upon the use, location, and classification of streets within a roadway network.

### Functional Classification

The roadway network in Richton Park includes a hierarchy of functional classifications from interstates to local streets. The functional classification of a road describes the character of street and defines its role in balancing regional and local mobility through various modes of transportation. In Cook County, the functional classification of roadways include Interstates, Principal Arterials, Minor Arterial, Collectors, and Local Streets.

#### Interstates

Interstates accommodate large volumes of traffic at high speeds with access points limited to interchanges at major intersecting roadways. The Richton Park area has access to Interstate 57 through an interchange at Sauk Trail Road in the western portion of the community.

#### Principal Arterials

Principal arterials accommodate quickly moving, high volumes of traffic and provide less provision for adjacent land access than collectors or local roads. Principal arterials are typically continuous through a community and often span a region, interconnecting several communities and providing access to the interstate system. Often, there are access limitations along principal arterials with access occurring at managed intervals and at signalized intersections. Travel is intended to be at higher speeds and longer distances. Cicero Avenue is classified as a principal arterial.

#### Minor Arterials

Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway are both classified as minor arterials. These roadways accommodate quickly moving, higher volumes of traffic, but adjacent land access is more regular. They provide passage and circulation throughout the Village and typically connect to other communities, principal arterials, and the interstate system. Travel is intended to be at moderate speeds and for longer distances.

#### Collectors

Collectors aim to balance efficient traffic movement and access to local land uses. They may be continuous through a community, though their primary function is to connect local streets to arterials. Travel on collectors occurs at lower speeds and shorter distances than on arterials. Main Street, Richton Square Road, Poplar Avenue, Central Avenue, and portions of Steger Road serve as collector streets in Richton Park.

#### Local Streets

Local streets include all other streets within a community. They accommodate local traffic, typically are not continuous through a community and connections to arterials are limited. Travel speeds and volumes are low and adjacent land access is direct and frequent.

#### Recommended Changes

Several classification upgrades were noted when looking at development areas, intended roadway function, planned roadway connections, and the future land use plan. The recommended changes are as follows:

- Steger Road should be extended from Crawford Avenue to Cicero Avenue and, as growth begins to occur along the roadway and traffic volumes increase with the connectivity, it should be upgraded from a collector to a minor arterial west of Governor's Highway.
- Imperial Drive should be extended to connect with Polk Avenue and the roadway segment between Governor's Highway and Cicero Avenue should be upgraded to a collector in order to provide better connectivity alternates.
- Stuenkle Road should be upgraded to a Minor Arterial as long-term development occurs to accommodate increased mobility for new commercial and residential areas.

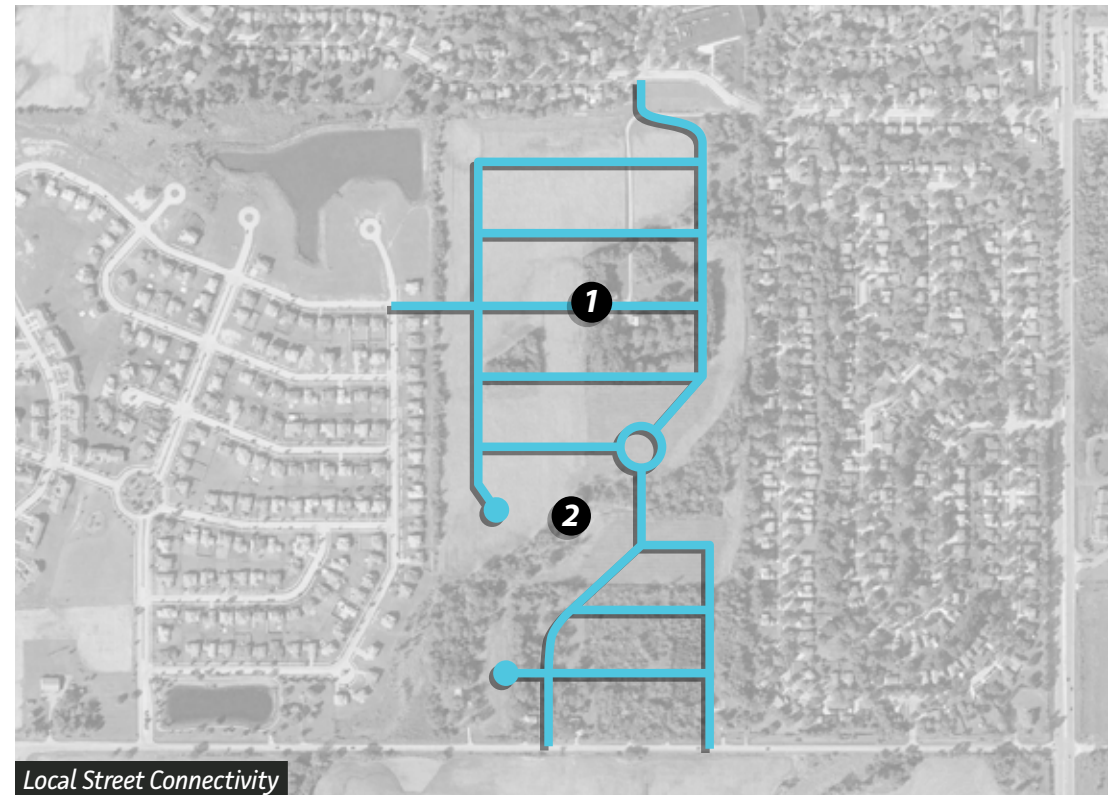


### Complete Streets

A Complete Streets policy formalizes a community's intent to plan, design, operate, and maintain streets so that they are safe for all users, regardless of age and level of mobility. It directs decision makers throughout a development process to plan, design, engineer, and construct community streets to accommodate all anticipated users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users and motorists. Complete Streets elements vary based on the surrounding context but may include separated sidewalks, bike facilities, accessibility improvements, pedestrian refuge islands, high visibility crosswalks, curb extensions and transit enhancements. Complete Streets elements should be incorporated into all new roadway projects, especially on Sauk Trail Road, Governors Highway, and Cicero Avenue. The Village should adopt a Complete Streets policy to ensure future projects accommodate all users.







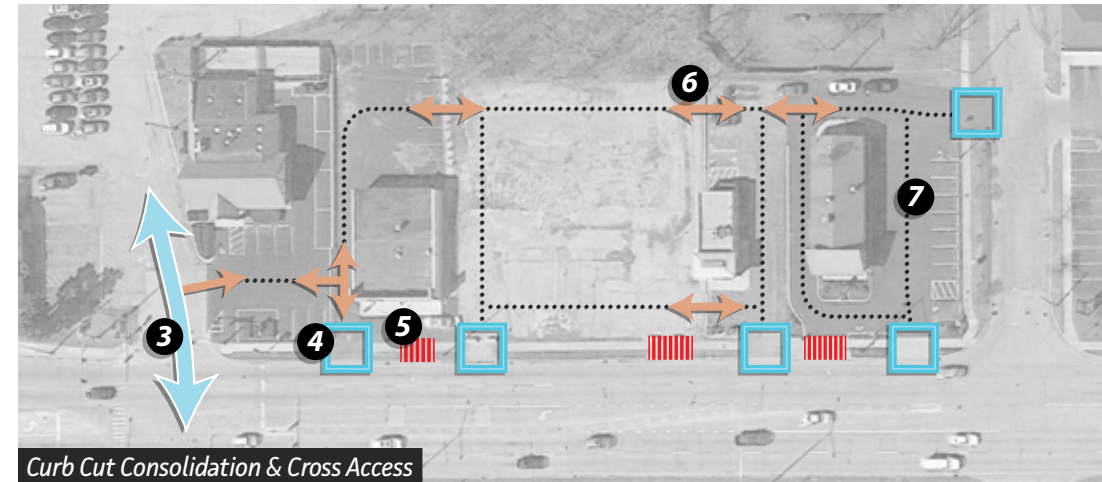
Local Street Connectivity

**Local Street Connectivity  
Conceptual Illustration (Left)**

1) Proposed local street connectivity and connections to surrounding neighborhoods, 2) on-site environmental factors that influence development pattern

**Curb Cut Consolidation & Cross Access (Below)**

3) Controlled intersection, 4) existing curb (to remain), 5) removed curb cut, 6) proposed cross-access, 7) on-site vehicular circulation pattern



Curb Cut Consolidation & Cross Access



**Roadway Connectivity**

I-57, Sauk Trail Road, Cicero Avenue and Governors Highway provide a high level of mobility to surrounding communities and throughout Richton Park. However, at the local level, mobility throughout the community is inhibited by a lack of neighborhood connections and the Metra Electric Rail which includes one crossing location at Sauk Trail Road. The following roadway extensions will help improve the safety and efficiency of vehicular circulation.

- Extend Steger Road from its current terminus at Crawford Avenue to Cicero Avenue. This would include a grade-separate crossing with the railroad tracks and new intersections, possibly signalized if warranted, at Governor’s Highway and Cicero Avenue. Efforts for the Steger Road extension should be closely coordinated with Metra and the Canadian National Railway Company, which owns the right-of-way adjacent to the Metra Electric rail line.
- Extend Poplar Lane between Governor’s Highway and Karlov Avenue to provide a continuous neighborhood collector.

- The Village has acquired right-of-way to extend Richton Road south of Sauk Trail to Governor’s Highway. Once the roadway has been constructed, the Village should re-establish two-way traffic on Richton Road to improve traffic flow and introduce parking and streetscape elements.
- Extend Imperial Drive to Polk Avenue and improve Polk Avenue to provide a collector roadway connection with on-street bike lanes.
- Generally, provide regular and logical links from new local subdivision streets to collectors and arterials, as well as adjacent existing subdivision street networks.

**Access Management**

There are several developments along Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway where traffic is disrupted by frequent curb cuts or intersecting streets. This can result in inefficient traffic flow, the increased likelihood of accidents, and a reduction in the amount of contiguous sidewalks. The Village should work with local property owners to establish cross-access agreements and reduce the amount of curb cuts along major streets. This often results in increased access to local land uses and on-site parking capacity, and can be done by:

- Providing access between adjacent parking lots where drive aisles logically align,
- Requiring new development to provide access and circulation aisles that enable connectivity to adjacent lots,
- Requiring access from side streets in lieu of additional curb cuts from arterials, and
- Combining two side-by-side curb cuts for adjacent lots into one curb cut that can serve both properties.

**Intersection Realignments**

As traffic volumes increase, safety and traffic operations may be improved by realigning intersection approaches at certain locations. The following intersections are offset as two closely spaced T-intersections and would potentially benefit from a realignment and creation of one four-legged intersection:

- Will County has identified the intersection of Steger Road and Harlem Avenue as a realignment project in its 2030 Transportation Plan.
- With the extension of Steger Road, the intersection of Crawford Road with Richton Square Road at Steger Road should be aligned to eliminate the existing offset intersections.

**Regional Access**

Will County has identified a new I-57 interchange at Stuenkel Road (in University Village) as a key road project in its 2030 plan. Interchange construction will include roadway and intersection modifications to accommodate the expected traffic volume growth. Richton Park should assess opportunities to take advantage of this new interchange in order to provide access to key commercial and industrial properties in the southern portion of the Village.





## Capacity Improvements

Several roadways in Richton Park are expected to experience increased traffic volumes. This may warrant roadway expansion over time. The Village should work closely with IDOT and Cook County to assess the need for roadway expansion, and where possible preserve right-of-way to accommodate such expansions, on the following corridors:

- Central Avenue
- Cicero Avenue
- Governor's Highway
- Harlem Avenue
- Ridgeland Avenue
- Sauk Trail Road
- Steger Road

## Traffic Control

Based on functional classification and traffic volumes associated with key roadway extensions and other factors, several intersections are anticipated to ultimately require traffic signalization. The Village should work with IDOT and Cook County to monitor traffic volumes and movements through the following intersections, and signals should be installed or improved where necessary based on the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines:

- Central Avenue & Sauk Trail Road
- Central Avenue & Steger Road
- Cicero Avenue & Imperial Drive
- Cicero Avenue & Steger Road
- Harlem Avenue & Steger Road
- Governor's Highway & Imperial Drive
- Governor's Highway & Steger Road extension



## Town Center & Richton Road

The Richton Park Town Centre is centered on the Metra station and the intersection of Governor's Highway and Sauk Trail Road. The Village has begun work on an extension of Richton Road south of Sauk Trail Road to bend and intersect Governor's Highway as part of the community's vision for the Town Centre. Traffic in the area has been studied and the extension is expected to alleviate peak hour traffic issues around the station. Once this improvement is complete, the Village should pursue its plans to convert Richton Road to a two-way street from its existing one-way northbound configuration. The conversion should be accompanied by on-street parking, multimodal accommodations and enhanced streetscape.

## Access in Growth Areas

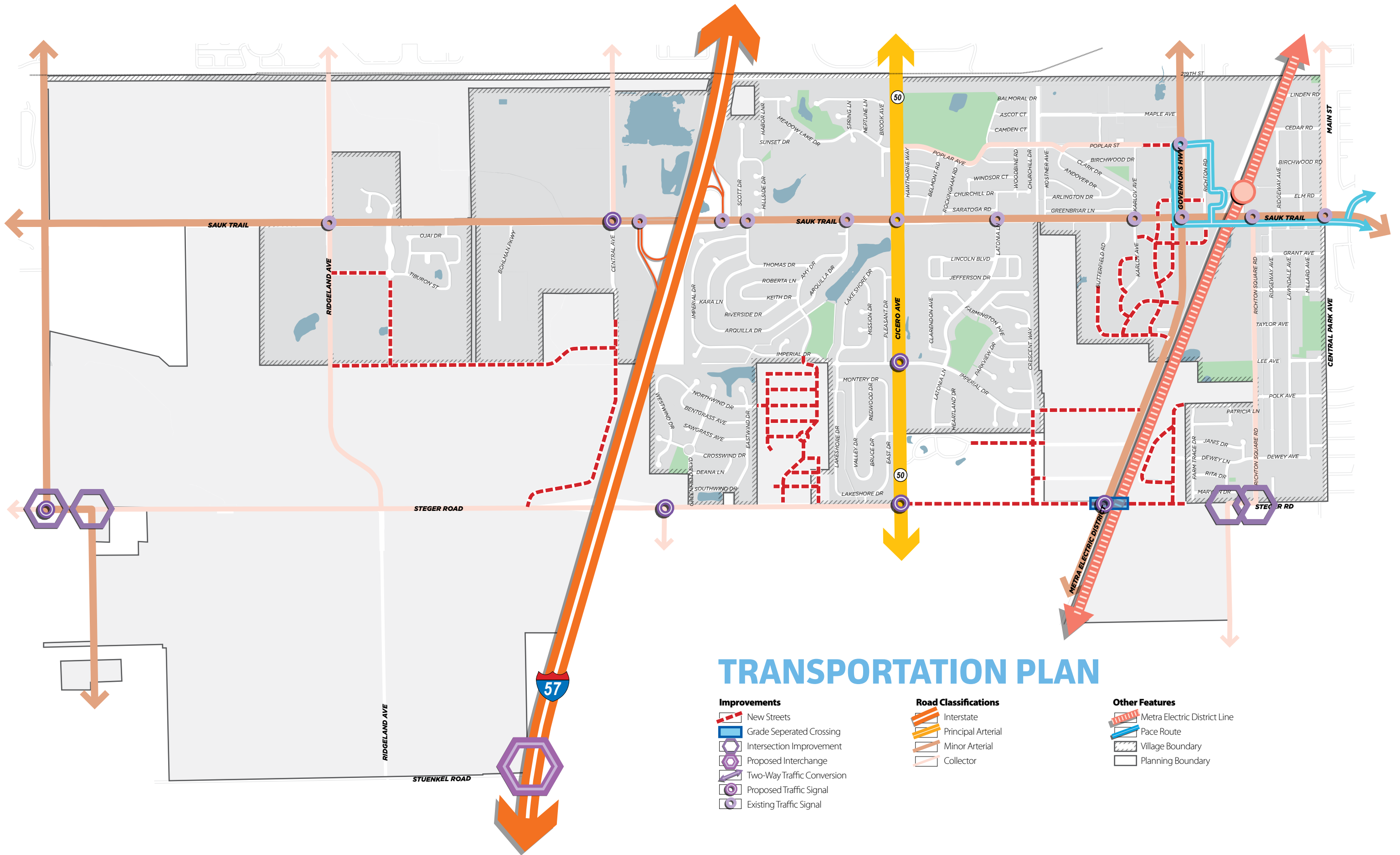
The Village is currently divided into sectors defined by I-57, Sauk Trail Road, Cicero Avenue and Governor's Highway. Mobility within each sector is dependent upon the street pattern of individual neighborhoods or subdivisions. Many of the older neighborhoods have regular street grids with high connectivity, while newer neighborhoods often have less structured layouts with fewer access points to the arterial street network. The future land use plan indicates several growth areas in the Village. Access and circulation in these areas is essential and should be provided based on the following principles:

- New development should provide local or collector street access to arterials approximately every ¼-mile.
- Block sizes in new residential areas should reflect the traditional pattern of the Village, with intersecting streets provided every 600-800 feet.
- Adjacent residential subdivisions should be planned with and take advantage of logical street connections that alleviate traffic on arterial streets for local mobility.
- Commercial and industrial development in the I-57 interchange area should include internal street networks that provide orderly access to local land uses and maximize the efficiency of Sauk Trail Road as an arterial.

## Truck Routes

I-57 is a Class I truck route and Cicero Avenue is a Class II truck route designated by IDOT. These truck routes should be strictly enforced to minimize maintenance costs for the Village and also limit the traffic and noise impacts to other commercial and residential areas.





## BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY

According to the 2012 American Community Survey (US Census), 3.2 percent of commuters walk or bike to work in Richton Park. However, bicycling and walking can also be a form of recreation and exercise, and a means to access local business and community facilities. This section of the Transportation and Mobility Plan includes recommendations aimed at maximizing these benefits, the positive environmental impacts of non-motorized transportation, and responsiveness to the community's desire for additional sidewalks and bike trails.

### Regional Trail Connections

Richton Park has a good foundation for a local trail network, but it lacks connections to nearby regional systems that would greatly enhance mobility throughout the south suburbs. The Village should work with IDOT and the Village of Matteson to establish a connection to the Old Plank Road Trail that runs 1/2-mile north of Richton Park's boundary. Options could include on-street paths on Cicero Avenue or Governors Highway, or dedicated trails on a new alignment. Alternatives should be identified and assessed based on their ability to connect to local trail networks and population centers, potential cost related to infrastructure improvements, and safety related to rail and roadway crossings.



Sidepath

### Multi-modal Trail Network

There are several ways that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can be incorporated into existing or future development. The following paragraphs describe appropriate techniques based on available right-of-way, traffic volumes, anticipated bicycle and pedestrian use, and other factors.

#### Off-street Facilities

The preferred configuration for safe and efficient bike and pedestrian mobility is an off-street facility. This type of facility is separated from vehicular traffic or may occupy its own right-of-way. Off-street facilities are often designed to be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users on a shared trail. These facilities are most easily accommodated where there is excessive right-of-way for a given street, or where private development provides an easement for integration of a trail.

#### Sidepath

Sidepaths are paved concrete or asphalt paths that are generally parallel to a roadway and wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. They are typically a minimum of 8-foot wide with 2 feet of clearance on either side of the path. They should be installed parallel to arterial and collector streets in areas where there are only a limited number of curb cuts. A substantial buffer should be considered on roads with higher speeds, such as Sauk Trail Road.



Cut-through

#### Trail

Trails are off-street paths that typically do not run parallel to a roadway. Trails should be at least 8 feet wide with 2 feet of clearance on either side. However, a 10- to 12-foot paved trail with additional clearance is recommended to accommodate people walking, running, and biking side-by-side. A trail can be either paved with asphalt, concrete, or crushed limestone.

#### Cut-through

Cut-throughs offer pedestrians and cyclists shorter and more direct routes to adjacent residential neighborhoods, schools, or parks. They help pedestrians and cyclists avoid crossing at or walking along higher traffic roadways to get to their destinations. They are usually composed of short sections of sidewalk or sidepath, and provide connections between developments where roadway connections may not exist. Potential cut-throughs should be closely coordinated with the Richton Park Police Department to ensure they do not inhibit crime prevention or jeopardize public safety.

#### On-street Facilities

Where off-street facilities cannot be accommodated, on-street facilities can be used to enhance bicycle mobility throughout the Village. The type of on-street facility implemented in a given area will depend on several factors, including the volume and speed of vehicular traffic, the width of the roadway cross-section, the presence of on-street parking, etc.

#### Signed Routes

Signed routes require the lowest amount of infrastructure investment as they incorporate existing traffic lanes and on-street or parkway signage to identify the route. Signed routes are most appropriate for roadways with low traffic volumes and travel speeds (such as residential streets) that provide connections to local destinations.

#### Paved Shoulders

Paved shoulders are areas adjacent to motor vehicle travel lanes that can accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity. They should be considered for roads where demand for bike lanes is limited and significant investment is not warranted, or on rural roads where shoulders are shared with pedestrians.

#### Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are dedicated areas of the roadway that are identified by on-street markings that can be supplemented with signs. They are appropriate on streets with moderate to heavy traffic. Bike lanes reinforce proper roadway etiquette, raise the visibility of cyclists, and help both bicyclists and drivers behave predictably when sharing road space.



Buffered Bike Lane

#### Buffered or Protected Bike Lanes

Buffered bike lanes provide a painted partition area to separate the vehicle travel lane from the bike lane. Protected bike lanes use a physical barrier to separate vehicle traffic from the bike lane. This buffer or barrier, usually 2 to 3 feet wide, can provide sufficient separation to improve cyclist comfort and safety on heavily traveled arterial corridors. Where there is sufficient space within the curb-to-curb area, buffered or protected bike lanes provide a more affordable solution than a sidepath.

#### Site Specific Recommendations

Overall bicycle improvement principles should be applied throughout Richton Park. However, the following paragraphs describe specific improvements that would enhance local mobility and build upon regional trails.

#### Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections to Old Plank Road Trail

The Old Plank Road Trail, located less than 1/2 mile north of Richton Park, provides an east-west bicycle and pedestrian route connecting to communities as far east as Chicago Heights and as far west as Joliet. A total of five streets connect Richton Park to the trail: Main Street, Governor's Highway, Cicero Avenue, Central Avenue, and Ridgeland Avenue. Each of these roads has an existing crossing at Canadian National rail corridor. Since underpasses at Main and Governor's Highway are too narrow to safely accommodate a bike path or lane, the Village should work with Matteson and IDOT to install bike trails along Cicero, Central and/or Ridgeland that would provide access to the Old Plank Road Trail.





### **Sauk Trail Road Bike and Pedestrian Accommodations**

Sauk Trail Road provides east-west connectivity through Richton Park. Several community destinations likely to generate pedestrian and bike trips are located along this roadway, including Sauk Elementary School, Rich South High School, Chicago Southland Charter High School, the new Public Library, Police Station, Village Hall, the Metra station, and Town Centre. The Village should work with IDOT and local property owners to implement the following improvements along Sauk Trail Road:

- Expansion of the existing sidewalk on the north side of the street to make it an 8' sidepath, and
- Expansion of the existing sidewalk on the south side of the street to make it a 10' multi-use trail.

### **Connection to Governor's State University**

Governor's State University is located approximately two miles south of the Village and is an employment and educational destination for many Richton Park residents. Three roads, Cicero Avenue, Governor's Highway, and Richton Square Road, connect the Village to the University. Potential improvements to enhance connectivity to the university include;

- Restriping of Richton Square Road to provide on-street bike lanes,
- New off-street sidepath along Cicero Avenue (in coordination with IDOT), and
- Coordination with University Park to ensure that Crawford Avenue south of the Village includes a bike lane that would complement the Richton Square Road bike lane and Stuenkel Road sidepath being planned by University Park as part of the I-57 interchange project.

### **Pedestrian Mobility**

In addition to trails and paths that accommodate a variety of users, the Village should consider improvements aimed specifically at improving pedestrian mobility throughout the Village. Pedestrian conditions vary throughout the Village. East of the Metra line and north of Sauk Trail Road, residential blocks lack sidewalks. In other portions of the community, local sidewalks and crosswalks are well established. In new growth areas, sidewalks have been installed on a lot-by-lot basis resulting in an incomplete network. Regardless of local sidewalks, the greatest barrier to safe pedestrian mobility is crossing the Village's major streets. The following recommendations include strategies for attaining the community's vision as a place that is safe and attractive for pedestrians.

### **Comprehensive Sidewalk Network**

The Village should strive to create a community-wide pedestrian network that provides safe mobility throughout neighborhoods and to key destinations throughout Richton Park. This can be accomplished through a multi-faceted approach that includes the following:

- New installations in existing neighborhoods that lack sidewalks through focused capital improvement investment,
- Sidewalk infill and maintenance in neighborhoods with sidewalks already in place through shared-cost programs or regular funds identified in the local capital improvement program,

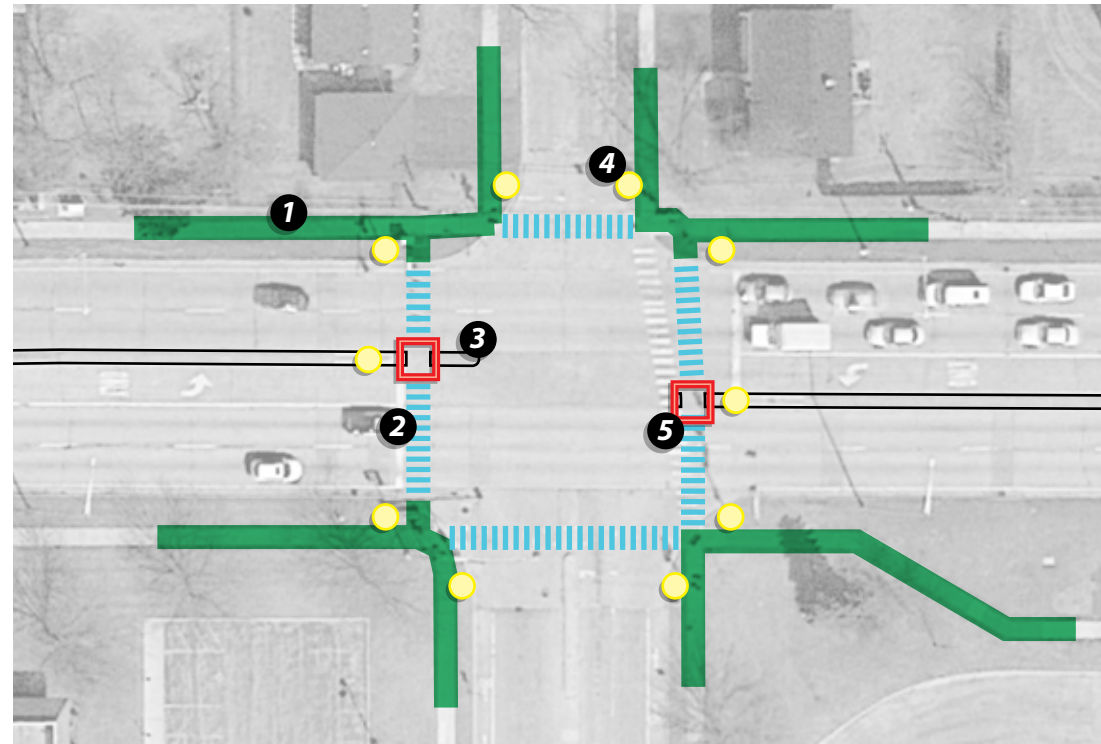
- Amendments to zoning and subdivision regulations to require future development and redevelopment to include sidewalks along public streets and on-site between the public network and building entries, and
- Investment in local street crossings to ensure that ADA-compliant curb cuts, surfaces, and striping is in place through capital improvement programming.

While the ultimate goal is to have a comprehensive system of sidewalks throughout Richton Park, short-term priority should be given to areas that would provide the most immediate benefit. These include areas around schools and parks, commercial centers, the Town Centre area, the Public Library, and other activity centers.



## PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL ELEMENTS

Crossing Tool	Signalized Intersection	Unsignalized Intersection
High visibility crosswalks at all legs of intersection	X	X
Curb ramps	X	X
Pedestrian crossing advanced warning signs		X
Pedestrian scale lighting	X	X
Pedestrian refuge islands/medians		X
Pork Chop Islands	X	
Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB)		X
High-Intensity Activated crosswalk beacon (HAWK)		X



### Intersection Crossing Improvements

- 1) Sidewalk/off street multi-use trail,
- 2) improved crosswalk markings and location,
- 3) curb line,
- 4) pedestrian crossing signals,
- 5) pedestrian refuge areas

## Major Street Crossings

Crossings at major streets are an important component of the Village's pedestrian network. Without safe crossings, a person's active transportation trips are limited to their own subdivision. To create a better connected walking and biking environment, the Village should apply the following elements at selected signalized and unsignalized intersections.

### Curb Ramp with Tactile Strips

Curb ramps with tactile strips make it easier for people in wheelchairs, the visually impaired, children, and people with strollers to cross from the sidewalk to the street at an intersection.

### Crossing Island

Crossing islands reduce crossing distance and allow pedestrians to cross only one direction of traffic at a time. Crossing islands are most beneficial at unsignalized pedestrian crossings, but they also can be useful to shorten crossing distances at signalized intersections.

### Pedestrian Friendly Turning Radius

The turning radius at a particular intersection needs to accommodate both the intended vehicles and any people crossing the roadway. A wide turning radius facilitates fast turns by vehicles, while a narrow turning radius will provide for a slower and safer turn by the vehicles. Intersections should be designed to be as compact as possible. On truck routes, designers should use the effective turning radius and allow turning to and from multiple receiving lanes.

### Crosswalk

Painted crosswalks alert drivers where to expect people crossing. A "zebra stripe" or "continental" crosswalk draws more attention to the crossing and tends not to wear away as quickly.

### Pedestrian Signal

Pedestrian signals indicate when a pedestrian is allowed to walk across a street. For a complete, connected pedestrian network, all intersections with traffic signals should have pedestrian signals at every corner.



Zebra stripe crosswalk



Crossing island



Pedestrian signal





## Supporting Policies and Strategies

In addition to the physical improvements described above, there are several policies or strategies that can enhance bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety in Richton Park.

### Development Regulations

New development within the Village should be seen as an opportunity to expand pedestrian and bicycle mobility. Residential areas that lack street connections to link subdivisions should be required to include pedestrian and bicycle cut-throughs as part of the Village's development requirements. These cut-throughs allow pedestrians and cyclists to avoid busy arterial roadways and typically reduce the length of local trips. Additional development regulations can be amended to the Code of Ordinances to require bicycle parking for new developments. By requiring bicycle parking, cyclists will be encouraged to ride more as they will be provided safe and convenient areas to store their bikes at destinations throughout the Village.

### Public Education

Public education initiatives educate residents about the benefits of walking and biking and rules of the road. In order to increase ridership and promote healthy lifestyles, Richton Park should consider implementing a Village-wide transportation education program. Potential programs could include monthly community bike rides, publishing a bike map for Richton Park, holding an annual bike rodeo for youth or including bicycle and pedestrian safety information in water bill or vehicle sticker mailings.

### Transit Connections

Safe and convenient non-motorized connections to transit increase walking and biking, and help promote active lifestyles. As part of its community-wide bicycle and pedestrian improvement strategy, the Village should identify routes for access to the Metra station and any future bus transit routes. The Village should also work with Metra to improve bicycle parking at the Richton Park Metra station. Ideally, this would include covered and protected bike parking in close proximity to the platform access points.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Richton Park benefits from Metra commuter rail service that provides direct access to Downtown Chicago, 11 suburban communities, and 18 neighborhoods in Chicago. Pace operates one route that terminates at the Metra station, but runs express to Park Forest and does not provide any stops in Richton Park. The following paragraphs describe how the Village can work with regional transit providers to build on the existing services and facilities.

### Metra

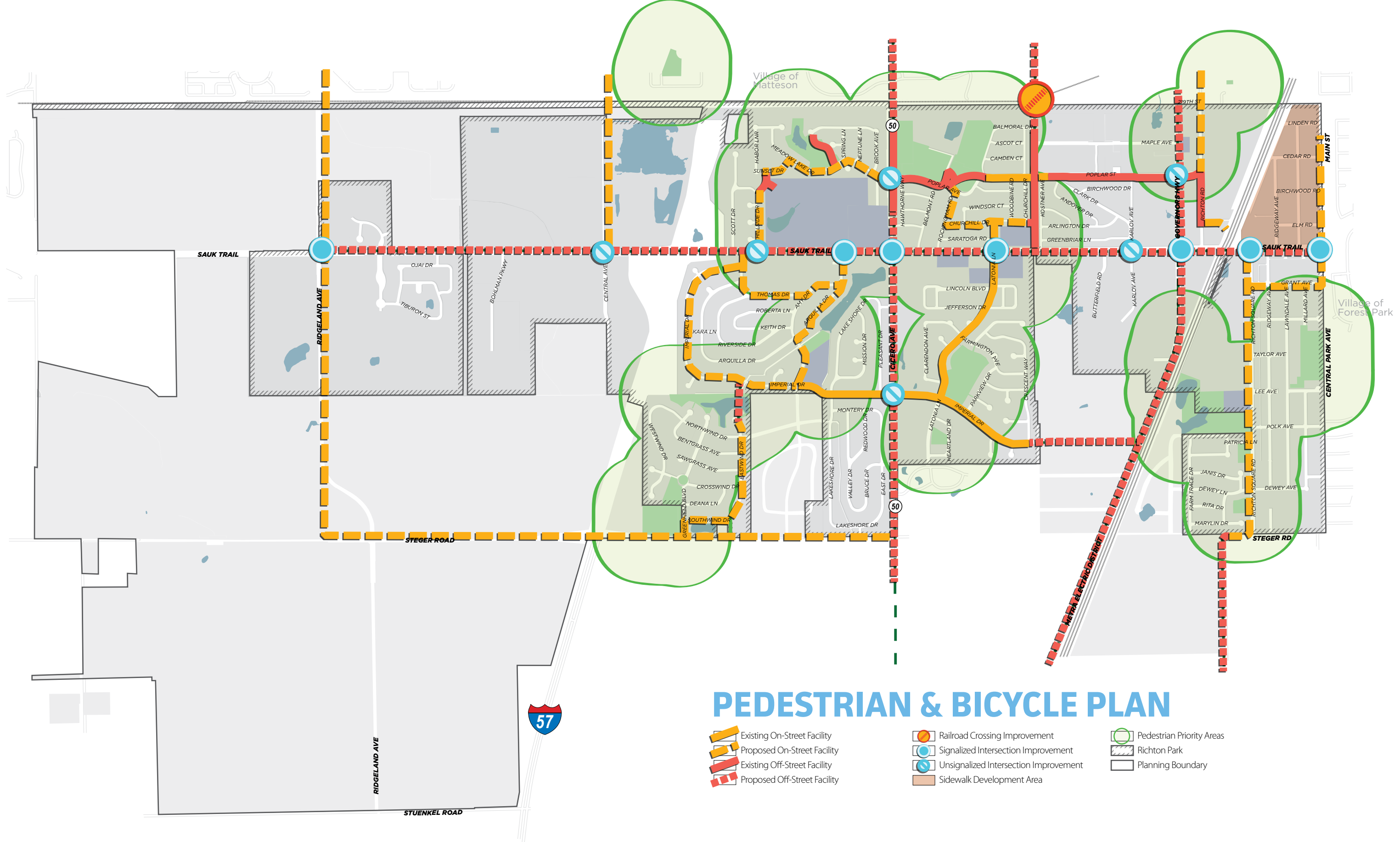
On the average weekday, the Richton Park Metra station, which operates on the Metra Electric Line, hosts 28 inbound trains and 26 outbound trains. The station is located in the Town Centre area and currently relies on a park-n-ride lot that can accommodate over 1,000 cars. In order to maintain and enhance services and access to the Metra station, the Village should:

- Coordinate with Metra and monitor ridership patterns, especially as ridership may change as new development occurs in Richton Park and in surrounding communities, and
- Ensure that adequate commuter parking is included in the Town Centre development program in such a way that it provides efficient access to the station and does not compromise the character of the area.
- Work with Metra and the Canadian National Rail Company to provide safe pedestrian access to the Metra station from the south side of Sauk Trail via a path that uses a portion of the rail overpass.

### Pace

Pace Route 362 terminates at the Richton Park Metra station and provides express service to Park Forest. The route carries an average of 167 riders per weekday (RTA, 2014), but does not provide stops along the route in Richton Park. In order to capitalize on the potential benefits of local Pace services, the Village should:

- Advocate Pace for local stops along the existing Route 362 alignment,
- Monitor employment and residential population trends along Richton Park's arterials and coordinate with Pace to determine the feasibility of new line-haul bus services along these corridors,
- Coordinate Pace bus access to the Metra station as Town Centre redevelopment occurs,
- Initiate discussions with Pace regarding potential local service operations that link together community, commercial, and institutional anchors, and
- As bus services are implemented locally, integrate the recommendations of Pace's Transit-Supportive Design Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region into public infrastructure projects and private development approvals.







# 7 ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE PLAN

Parks and open spaces are an important factor in defining the character of Richton Park and sustaining its natural environment. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan presents the policies and recommendations with regard to environmental features and open space. These include both natural resources that are critical to both local and regional ecologies, as well as parks and recreational amenities that support healthy lifestyle choices for residents of all ages. A primary goal of this chapter is to provide adequate open space and recreational opportunities to the community. In addition, the plan addresses public access to these areas and community-wide environmental sustainability.



## EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

Community Parks	Size (acres)	Amenities
Christina Covington Children's Memorial Park	10	multi-purpose area, open play area, picnic areas, playground, shelter, and walking/bike path
Glaesar Park	24	ball field, basketball, lighted ball field, multi-purpose area, open play area, picnic areas, playground, sand volleyball, shelter, soccer field, walking/bike path, and cross country course
Helen A. Jones Park	7.8	ball field, multi-purpose area, open play area, picnic areas, playground, shelter, walking/bike path, and nature sight-seeing pond
Klawitter Park	9	ball field, open play area, multi-purpose area, fishing pier, and stocked lake
Pierce Park	7	ball field, multi-purpose area, open play area, picnic areas, playground, shelter, soccer field, tennis courts, and walking/bike path
Neighborhood Parks	Size (acres)	Amenities
Farm Trace Park	0.25	playground
Greenfield Park	3.25	multi-purpose area, open play area, and playground
Indian Trail Park	0.4	playground, multi-purpose area, and walking/bike path
Heartland Courts	2.9	basketball courts, multi-purpose area
Richton Grove	0.25	multi-purpose area, and open play area
Rudolph A. Banovich Park	4.6	multi-purpose area, open play area, playground, and walking/bike path
Las Fuentes Subdivision Park (Planned)	TBD	TBD



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Village's park system, maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department, includes nearly 70 acres of land dedicated to recreational use. These include community parks, which are typically larger in size and provide amenities that serve an area beyond the surrounding neighborhoods, and neighborhood parks, which are generally less than three acres in size and serve the nearby residential areas. The Department runs youth summer camps, the Challengers after school program for Armstrong Elementary students, exercise classes for adults, and league sports.

## Future Growth and Expansion

The Parks and Recreation Department has several projects planned for the Village. These include a recreation center and baseball/softball complex at Glaeser Park, storage/washroom facilities at Pierce Park and Christina Covington Park, and a greenhouse/patio/washroom facility at Helen Jones Park.

As the Department develops additional facilities, it should consider increasing the amount of overall parks and open space. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends a standard of 10 acres of open space for every 1,000 people. Based on Richton Park's 2012 estimated population of 13,741, this would equate to a recommended service level of 137 acres. With just under 70 acres of parkland, the Village falls short of the recommended parks and open space standard.

Future park development, which can include public plazas in the proposed Town Centre, should be strategically located to serve all residents. This can be done through the use of vacant lots to provide infill open space in established neighborhoods, or through the development of new open spaces as residential growth occurs on the fringe of the community.

The development of new parks should consider potential impacts on existing parks, including changes in user demand and costs related to on-going maintenance. In order to establish a clear vision for an overall system of parks, the Department should update its Parks and Recreation Master Plan to address anticipated residential growth, land needs, facilities, programs, partnerships, and funding.

## Park Programs

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan outreach process, residents expressed a desire for access to parks and recreation programs that would be responsive to the needs of the community and promote community health. Two populations that should be specifically addressed are youth and senior citizens. The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to monitor the needs of Richton Park's youth to ensure they have access to programming that provides a positive outlet for their spare time and encourage physical activity. The Department should also explore opportunities to provide appropriate activities for senior citizens that enhance physical activity and promote social integration with other populations. Programming should consider the specific needs of each population, including times that they are offered, accessibility, coordination with other partners, etc. Additional strategies include conducting regular surveys of parents and Richton Park youth, and installing flexible amenities in local parks that can be adapted or retrofitted over time.

## Greenway Connectivity

As the Parks and Recreation Department works to provide additional park facilities, it should cooperate with other Village departments to enhance non-motorized connections between recreation areas, natural open spaces, neighborhoods, community facilities, and commercial services. This will require a collaborative approach that may include greenway dedications, easements, Complete Streets, the utilization of floodplains, and regional trail system coordination. Recommendations related to these items can be found in the Transportation & Mobility Chapter of this plan.



## School District Partnership

Several local schools are adjacent to public park land. Partnering with local schools on joint recreation facilities and programs can ease the burden of maintenance and operation for both parties. The Village should continue to partner with schools to provide the shared use of indoor facilities, classrooms, outdoor athletics, and other types of recreational spaces. The Parks and Recreation Department should also explore opportunities to partner with local school districts in grant applications aimed at funding capital improvements that would meet shared objectives.

## Parkland Dedication Ordinance

More recent residential development on the fringe of the community tends to lack public open space. As residential growth continues to occur over the next several years, the Village should be proactive about requiring developers to dedicate land for public use. The Village should revisit the requirements in its Parkland Dedication Ordinance and fee-in-lieu of park space alternative to ensure they identify the appropriate ratio of parkland to be provided, the amenities that should be included, and standards for the location of the open space, which together provide direct benefits to new residents.

## NATURAL AREAS

Natural wetlands and wooded areas are present throughout the planning area. These areas often provide important environmental benefits related to ecosystem preservation and stormwater management, and can be difficult to develop without significant investment in infrastructure and site preparation. Unlike active parks and recreational areas, natural areas are intended to be free of development, with the possible exception of low-impact amenities such as trails and educational signage, which allow residents to interact with nature.

Areas of Richton Park are included within the Forest Preserve District of Cook County 2012 Land Acquisition Plan. The Plan seeks to acquire land in order to fill gaps within the District's trail and greenway system as well as protect ecologically sensitive areas. The Village should work closely with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to consider future potential land acquisition that fits the requirements for the District while meeting the vision of the Village.

## Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands and floodplains are important factors to consider as the Village's development footprint expands. Floodplains include areas prone to surface flooding during significant rain events. These areas will typically require mitigation in order to be deemed feasible for development. However, mitigation must consider the impact on other portions of the Village, as a given floodplain may be an important part of a larger system that helps transfer stormwater. Wetlands typically include standing water and often support local vegetation or wildlife ecosystems. They are highly sensitive and should be appropriately buffered as new development occurs. Ways for minimizing the negative impacts on floodplains, wetlands and development include:

- Conduct a comprehensive inventory of floodplains and wetlands throughout the Village's planning jurisdiction, and provide mapped data to developers and designers during the approval and permitting process.
- Amend subdivision and zoning regulations to allow creative ways for development to appropriately integrate floodplains and wetlands into site design, such as clustering development onto unaffected areas of the site.
- Include regulatory incentives for development projects that proactively mitigate impacts to floodplains and wetlands through increased stormwater management, green infrastructure, and other best management practices (BMP's).
- Require development to provide adequate buffers from floodplains and wetlands in order to minimize risk associated with flooding and the negative impacts of development on natural systems.
- Utilize floodplains to implement low-impact community amenities that are resilient to flooding, such as passive open spaces, community-wide trails, and nature walks.

Flood mitigation and infrastructure improvements for areas surrounding the I-57 interchange and Town Centre are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8 – Community Facilities and Infrastructure.

## Tree Canopy

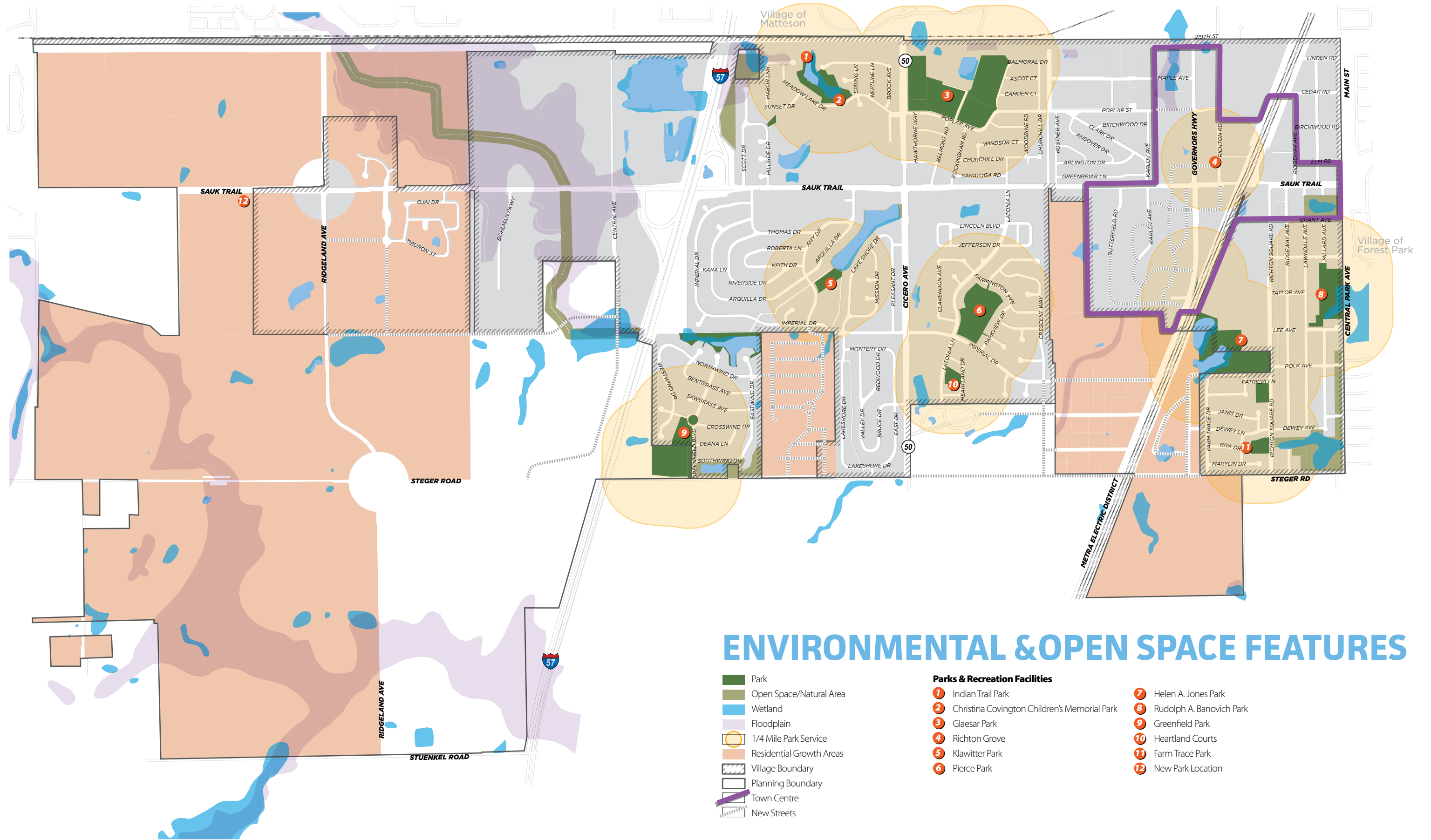
Throughout the planning area, trees help define the character of Richton Park. In its neighborhoods, they create a comfortable and attractive environment. In undeveloped and agricultural areas, they reinforce the character of Richton Park as a community with access to scenic natural areas. In order to preserve the tree canopy, the Village should consider the following actions:

- Properly maintain street trees in neighborhood and commercial areas to ensure that they are not impacted by roadway maintenance, polluted stormwater runoff, or other factors.
- Adopt a tree ordinance that requires the replacement of any trees removed through development, excavation, or other man-made occurrences.
- Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to require additional trees in parking areas and along property lines, including standards related to spacing, permeability around planting areas, and irrigation.
- Amend the permitted plant list in the Village's development regulations to include a variety of species that will be resilient to long-term anticipated climate change and disease.
- Amend the subdivision regulations to include provisions related to "cluster" development that allow the concentration of development on one portion of the site in order to preserve tree stands on another area of the site.

## AGRICULTURE

Richton Park is located near the fringe of the developed portion of the Chicago region. As such, it should be anticipated that as the region and community grows, farmland will become marketable for new residential, commercial or industrial development. In order to manage this transition appropriately over time, the City should regularly reach out to farmers in unincorporated areas in order to minimize negative impacts of incremental development. Techniques for accomplishing this include:

- Avoid leapfrog growth that leaves pockets of inviable farmland by requiring new development to logically connect and be adjacent to existing development.
- Identify unique aspects of the agricultural community and seek to preserve them through the preservation of important properties or the reuse of agriculture-related facilities in new community development.
- Require new development to provide buffers and screening that minimizes the impacts of farm operations on residents and businesses.



## ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE FEATURES

- Park
- Open Space/Natural Area
- Wetland
- Floodplain
- 1/4 Mile Park Service
- Residential Growth Areas
- Village Boundary
- Planning Boundary
- Town Centre
- New Streets

### Parks & Recreation Facilities

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">1</span> Indian Trail Park                            | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">7</span> Helen A. Jones Park      |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">2</span> Christina Covington Children's Memorial Park | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">8</span> Rudolph A. Banovich Park |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">3</span> Glaesar Park                                 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">9</span> Greenfield Park          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">4</span> Richton Grove                                | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">10</span> Heartland Courts        |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">5</span> Klawitter Park                               | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">11</span> Farm Trace Park         |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">6</span> Pierce Park                                  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid #ffc107; border-radius: 50%; text-align: center; line-height: 10px;">12</span> New Park Location       |





# 8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Community facilities and infrastructure provide important services and contribute significantly to the overall quality of life of Richton Park residents and businesses. These facilities create social gathering points for events and organizations, serve as resources for support services and public information, and are the built elements that support private investment. The Richton Park community includes several agencies and organizations that provide community services and facilities for residents and businesses. These facilities include schools, fire and police protection, libraries, utility providers, administrative facilities and meeting spaces, religious facilities, and other public and semi-public uses. The recommendations presented in the Community Facilities and Infrastructure Plan include strategies to ensure the Village continues to be well served as it grows.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities and services have a profound impact on the local quality of life in Richton Park. Since many of the community facilities are not under the purview of Richton Park, it is important that the Village maintains active communication and coordination with other agencies. The following recommendations describe ways the Village can work with other service providers to meet the needs of current and future Richton Park citizens.

### Village Government

Richton Park operates under a Board/Manager form of government in which an elected Board of Trustees appoints a Village Manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Village. Richton Park Village Hall houses the Administration, Community Development, Community Relations, Economic Development, Finance, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Police, and Fire Departments. Also connected to Village Hall is a \$3.5 million Community Center, which opened in 2011 with gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms, computer labs, and a kitchen. While the new Community Center currently provides sufficient space for Village programming, the Village should monitor the demand for additional community space as the population grows.

Municipal buildings not only carry out governmental functions, but also contribute greatly to the overall image of the Village. The appearance and maintenance of public buildings serve as a reflection of the overall community. As such, the Village should ensure all public facilities receive routine building and landscaping maintenance in order to showcase a positive image of Richton Park.



### Rich Township

The Rich Township serves all or part of Richton Park, Country Club Hills, Flossmoor, Hazel Crest, Homewood, Matteson, Olympia Fields, Park Forest, and Tinley Park. Available services include meals and transportation for senior citizens, after-school care and job placement for youth, and groceries, counseling, and emergency temporary assistance for those in need. The Township has a Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, which provides emergency assistance for major fires and accident injuries. Rich Township also performs certain governmental functions, such as administering property assessments. The Township's headquarters are on Governors Highway in Richton Park. The Village should work closely with the Township to identify any gaps in service and strengthen the relationship between the Village and Township. Strategies include holding regular meetings to review and coordinate programs and evaluate joint grant pursuits.



## Police & Fire Protection

The Village of Richton Park Police and Fire Departments are both headquartered in Village Hall. In 2012, the police department had 30 sworn officers and fielded 11,233 calls for service. While crime was rated a top issue confronting the community, the Police Department has responded by its increased its staffing numbers. In fact, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department has two more officers on staff than municipalities of similar populations in the Midwest. Fire protection within the Village is found to be very good, according to residents that evaluated the Richton Park Fire Department during the Comprehensive Plan process.

In order to maintain the current level of service, the Village should develop a long-term budget and staffing plan to ensure Richton Park has the adequate number of police and fire protection staff and fleet. In addition, collaboration with neighboring fire districts and municipalities can guarantee that the community maintains a high level of public safety protection, therefore, the Village should work with both departments to ensure mutual aid service agreements are in place with the Rich Township Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, neighboring fire districts, and municipalities. Lastly, the Village should maintain clear lines of communication with the Department to understand changing coverage and staffing needs and potential service impacts of new growth areas.

## Public Health & Healthy Communities

Public health involves protecting and improving the quality of life of communities by promoting physical and mental well-being through education and research. The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) is leading several initiatives in order to get Cook County residents to lead healthier, more active lifestyles.

### **Communities Putting Prevention to Work**

Communities Putting Prevention to Work is a CCDPH initiative in partnership with the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago. The project goals include increasing the availability and accessibility of nutritional food options, decreasing caloric intake from unhealthy foods and beverages, and increasing the availability and utilization of safe places for physical activity. The initiative, which is a project of the Alliance for Healthy and Active Communities, aims to meet these goals through partnerships, health campaigns, community training, and grants. The Village can increase the health of its community by promoting awareness and providing information about healthy eating and exercise. The Village should also consider revising its municipal ordinance to allow for food production and sales to increase access to local, healthy food.

### **Model Communities Grant Program**

CCDPH partnered with the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago to award \$4 million one-time Model Communities grant funds to local governments, organizations, and schools throughout suburban Cook County. Funding for the grants was made possible by a grant awarded in 2010 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Model Communities grants are intended to help communities support active living and healthy eating. Two organizations that serve the Richton Park community received grant funding: Matteson School District 162 and the South Suburban Mayors Association.

### **South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association**

Through the Model Communities Grant Program, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) were awarded \$135,000. SSMMA represents 42 communities throughout the south suburbs, however, the grant only applies to 12 municipalities, one of which is Richton Park. SSMMA is using the funds to make business areas more easily accessible by active and public transportation. The Village can also increase accessibility to its public transportation through development policies that require pedestrian amenities in and around transit stations. More specifically, the Village should work with Pace to determine existing transit facilities that do not meet standards identified in the agency's recently adopted Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region. The Village can then amend development regulations and public works standards to accommodate standards where appropriate to support access to efficient transit services.

### **Matteson School District 162**

Through a \$71,000 Model Communities Grant, the Matteson School District followed the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program (HSP) Framework to make policy changes to its seven schools. The Policy, System, and Environmental (PSE) changes included the adoption of a policies and/or procedures that support healthy eating, supports nutritional standards, and increases opportunities for physical activity during and after school. PSE changes were presented to the School Board in the Fall of 2011 and adopted in the Spring of 2012. As part of the policy changes, Wellness Councils or "M-Teams," were created at each school of the District's seven schools (two of which are in Richton Park) to implement an individualized action plan that would address one change to the food environment and one change to increase physical activity.

Actions included disallowing sweets to be used as rewards in the classroom, while M-Team leaders and several teachers received training on how to integrate exercise into the classroom. Once the grant funding is exhausted, M-Team leaders will continue to implement action plans that will provide for long-term sustainability of healthy school programs. The Village should work with the Matteson School District to promote and maintain the healthy school programs initiated from the Model Communities Grant. This can be accomplished through coordinated programs with the Community Center and other public facilities.

## Library

The Library District recently completed construction of a new 18,000 square foot library facility located along Sauk Trail Road at Latonia Lane. The new library is more than double the size of the existing facility and includes new, user-oriented technologies and facilities. The library provides the following services and programs to the Richton Park community:

- Project Next Generation (PNG) that aims to mentor students to become more tech-savvy
- Family of Local Authors, Visionaries and Artists (FLAVA) that promotes new aspiring local authors, musicians, artists, and other creative expressionists
- Various teen programs related to reading, creative arts, and social engagement
- Various adult programs related to book reading and discussion, health and beauty, home maintenance, and history and culture

The Village should provide for the continued support of the new library by facilitating program coordination among the Library District, local schools, and the Village. The Village should also ensure that residents and visitors have safe, non-motorized access to the library from surrounding neighborhoods.

## Education

### Grade School

Richton Park is served by a number of elementary and high schools operated by three school districts. Generally, local public schools have adequate capacity to accommodate the existing population. Enrollment projections anticipate minimal growth, though any significant housing development may require investment in new facilities and potential restructuring of the current districts.

- Elementary School District 159: Neil Armstrong Elementary, located at 5030 Imperial Drive, has 300 students enrolled from kindergarten through 5th grade. Students matriculate to Colin Powell Middle School in neighboring Matteson. The school abuts Klawitter Park and uses it for some recreational activities.
- Matteson School District 162: Richton Square School, located at 22700 Richton Square Road, has 147 pre-K and kindergarten students. Sauk Elementary, located at 4435 Churchill Drive, has 436 students enrolled in 4th through 6th grades. Both elementary schools filter into O.W. Hurth Middle School in Matteson.

- Southland College Prep Charter High School, currently with 498 students, is open to 9th through 12th graders who reside in the District 227 boundary. The curriculum and nine-hour school day are focused on preparing students to attend colleges or universities. The school building also houses the Matteson School District main office.
- Rich Township District 227: Rich South Campus High School, located at 5000 Sauk Trail Road, has 1,374 students enrolled in 9th through 12th grades.

There is also one private elementary school, Immanuel Crossroads. The school is located at 4800 Sauk Trail Road and provides pre-school programs for 3- and 4-year olds, and elementary school programs for kindergarten through 2nd grade.

### Inter-agency Cooperation

Communication among the Village, residents, and the various school districts is challenging. The Comprehensive Plan public outreach process revealed that communication with the school districts and the performance of local schools present concerns for Village residents. The Village should support the continued operation and improvement of both public and private school facilities by facilitating and strengthening the communication between residents and local school districts. This can be done through email-mail communications, backpack flyers, and other traditional or web-based techniques.

### Youth Activities

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan process, residents expressed the need for additional after-school activities for students. As public schools that are dependent on per pupil funding allocation, partnerships with the Village to facilitate use of local parkland, recreation facilities, and even auditorium space can maximize limited resources. The Village should coordinate with schools regarding the shared use of facilities among the Village, Parks and Recreation Department, and schools. This will maximize the utilization of facilities already in place. As new activities and programs are provided within Richton Park, the Village should ensure that impacts related to traffic, lighting, and intense activity are minimized for surrounding development. Such cooperation may require agreements to ensure maintenance of public sites and facilities.

### Governors State University

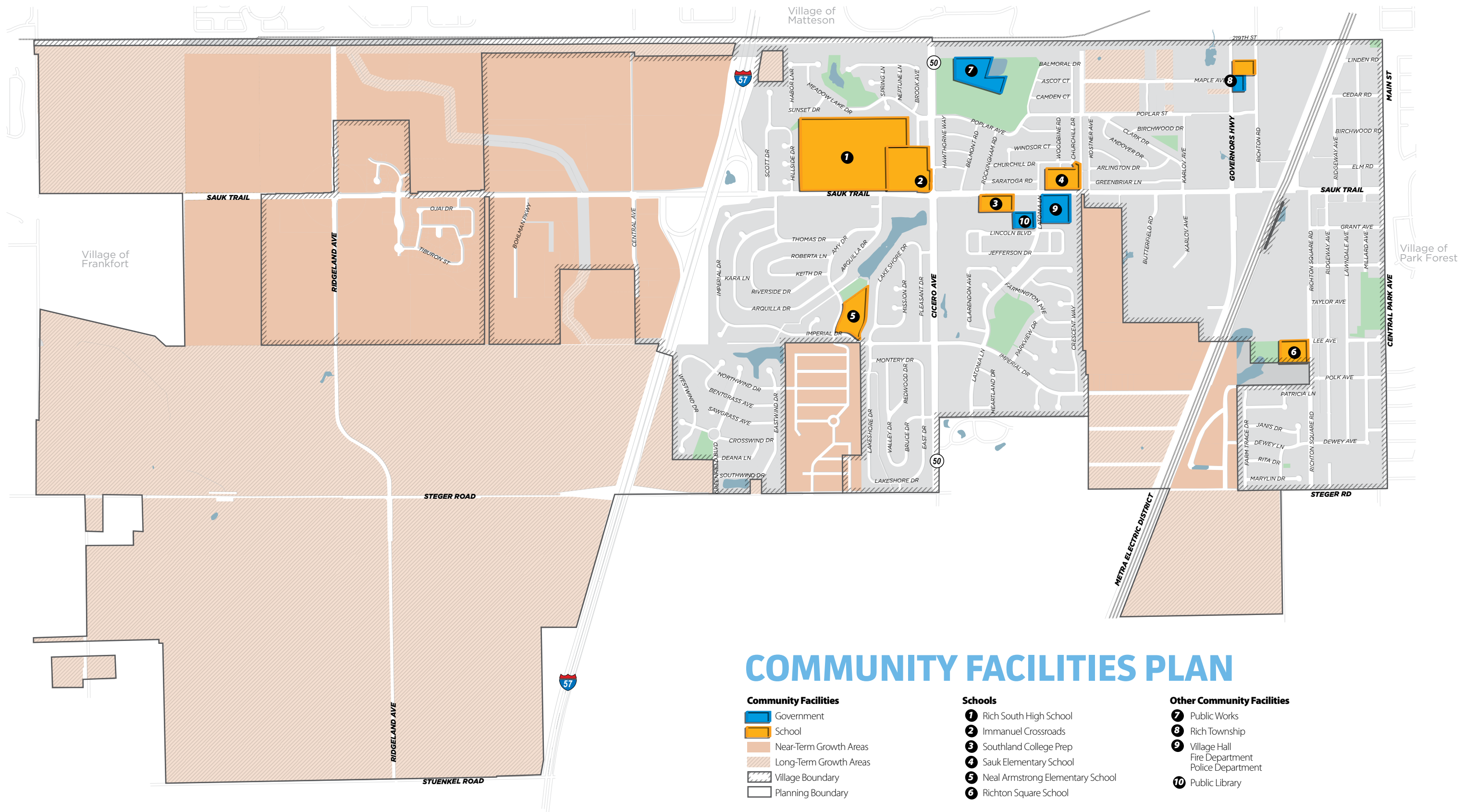
Governors State University is located in University Park, less than three miles south of Richton Park's Town Centre. Prior to 2014, Governors State has been an upper-division institution with only junior and senior level undergraduates, master's students, and doctoral programs. Beginning in 2014, Governors State enrolled its first freshman class, becoming a four-year institution. The University has a number of ongoing building projects, including the main campus building and student residences. Additional renovations and expansions, such as the school's library and a new multi-purpose building, are planned as the student population grows. Available public transit to and from campus is an ongoing concern.

The close proximity of Governors State University provides an opportunity for partnerships with local schools and businesses. Opportunities to be explored include dual enrollment programs that allow high school students to take college courses at reduced tuition cost and adult education programs that would create a workforce with the skills needed to attract businesses to Richton Park. The Village should work with Governors State University and local schools to foster partnerships that enrich academic programs and provide adult education programs. The Village should also leverage its location to Governors State University as a means of attracting new businesses.

### Early Childhood Education & Daycare

Richton Park can take an active role in promoting early childhood education within the community. Early childhood education programs better prepare kids for school, making them less likely to fall behind. Such programs have also been shown to enhance school performance, improve social skills, and increase lifelong learning. The Village should work with early childhood education and daycare providers to facilitate early education programs, link provider facilities to healthy places such as parks and playgrounds, and ensure parents can easily access these facilities on their daily commutes.





# COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

## Community Facilities

- Government
- School
- Near-Term Growth Areas
- Long-Term Growth Areas
- Village Boundary
- Planning Boundary

## Schools

- ① Rich South High School
- ② Immanuel Crossroads
- ③ Southland College Prep
- ④ Sauk Elementary School
- ⑤ Neal Armstrong Elementary School
- ⑥ Richton Square School

## Other Community Facilities

- ⑦ Public Works
- ⑧ Rich Township
- ⑨ Village Hall  
Fire Department  
Police Department
- ⑩ Public Library



## INFRASTRUCTURE

The Village's infrastructure is primarily handled by the Public Works Department. Based out of Village Hall, the Department is responsible for several services and programs including street maintenance and snow removal, garbage collection, recycling of electronics, one-day collections of certain household waste, water and sewer infrastructure maintenance, and tree branch removal and tree donation.

### Streets

The Public Works Department is responsible for street maintenance, which includes repaving, sidewalk repair, and snow removal. Through Motor Vehicle Tax Funding, the Department is resurfacing roadways and replacing sidewalks. Priority is being given to roads based on existing conditions, traffic volumes, and utility conditions. Sidewalk replacements are directed towards those that pose tripping hazards. As the Village makes roadway and sidewalk repairs, it should integrate streetscape design elements as discussed in Chapter 9 – Image and Identity.

## Water Purification and Distribution

The Public Works Department provides potable water to the Village of Richton Park to meet all the domestic, industrial and fire protection needs. Three wells and three ion exchange and aeration facilities pump an average of 1.5 million gallons of water a day, having a total pumping capacity of 4.9 million gallons. Distribution is handled via 42 miles of water mains of various sizes from six to sixteen inches, 650 hydrants, and 600 water main-line valves. In 2011, the Village experienced 17 main breaks. Three elevated water towers with a total capacity of 1 million gallons store the Village's emergency water supply.

In order for the Village to ensure effective public works services are maintained throughout the community and meet the needs of Richton Park residents, the Village should consider implementing the following actions:

- Create a Capital Improvement Plan that maps out infrastructure improvement projects over the long term, including both repairing failing facilities and upgrading those that may be inadequate.
- Require the Public Works Department to review new development plans with regard to the capacity of the water distribution system and the footprint of service, making sure that service areas are closely coordinated with future land use and development objectives.
- Seek outside funding and grants to assist with infrastructure upgrades.
- Coordinate infrastructure improvements with other municipal projects or initiatives undertaken by other agencies.



On-site stormwater detention areas

## FLOOD INFRASTRUCTURE & MITIGATION

The Village has taken steps to mitigate flood disasters through the use of infrastructure such as stormwater detention basins and storm sewer bypass systems. In order to complement this investment, the Village should implement the following actions:

### Stormwater Management & Private Development

The Richton Park Code of Ordinances requires additional review for development within floodplains. In addition to these requirements, the Village should amend regulations to reduce the amount of stormwater generated by development in other portions of the Village. Elements addressed in such regulations could include:

- Implementing BMPs to manage a larger amount of stormwater on-site.
- Increasing the amount of permeability and filtration rather than delayed detention.
- Using a set percentage of stormwater to be managed on-site.



Vegetated landscape islands in parking lots provide infiltration areas for rainwater

## Municipal Infrastructure Improvements

The Village uses traditional stormwater infrastructure, such as storm drains, to manage stormwater runoff. Nevertheless, parts of Richton Park still experience heavy flooding during heavy rains. The Village should amend its design and construction standards to include the use of stormwater best management practices and green infrastructure techniques to minimize the demand placed on municipal stormwater infrastructure systems.

While traditional stormwater infrastructure tends to focus on the movement of water through engineered pipelines, best management practices (BMPs) encourage the diversion of runoff through on-site stormwater management and filtration. BMPs include the use of naturalized detention basins, permeable pavement, and green parking design to manage all or a majority of stormwater on-site. BMPs such as rain cisterns, vegetated roofs, and rain gardens can be used to manage the quality and quantity of stormwater on existing developments.

Implementing green infrastructure can decrease demand on municipal stormwater infrastructure. Green infrastructure is an approach that uses soil and vegetation to manage stormwater where it falls. Examples include detention basins, bioswales, and rain gardens. Green infrastructure protects development from the impacts of floodplains while also preserving floodplains in their current state and could be applied to all portions of the Village.



Inlet to direct stormwater into vegetated areas



## SITE-SPECIFIC STORMWATER MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Some portions of the Richton Park community that are impacted by floodplains have real opportunity for future development due to a high level of access or the nature of surrounding land uses. In these areas, the opportunity for development may warrant investment in infrastructure to mitigate the flood risk and increase the amount of developable land. These areas include the I-57 interchange and the Town Centre.

### I-57 Interchange

The I-57 interchange provides the regional access to support long-term commercial and industrial investment. From a site development standpoint, the area west of Interstate 57 along Sauk Trail has the greatest potential for development. However, large floodplains make much of the area challenging for development. According to the future Land Use Plan, this area is designated for Regional Commercial, Local Commercial, and Industrial/Office uses based on its proximity to the I-57 interchange and available infrastructure.

#### Existing Site Conditions

The project site in this analysis consists of an approximately 433-acre area located west of I-57, north and south of Sauk Trail. Currently, the majority of the project corridor consists of farmland with several isolated buildings. The parcel east of Central Avenue and north of Sauk Trail appears to be an existing landfill site with several existing ponds located on-site. It appears the ponds were artificially created through excavation activities completed on the site.

The Cook County two-foot topography shows approximately 32 feet of fall through the project corridor. There are two waterways, Hickory Creek and Hickory Creek Tributary, that flow northwesterly through the project corridor. The existing high point is located in the southwest corner of the site (elevation of 650 ft) and the low point is the channel of Hickory Creek at the outlet of the site (elevation of 618 ft). There are also significant elevation changes through the existing landfill parcel, with elevations varying between 648 ft and 622 ft, which is the bottom of the excavated pond at the northern end of the site.

### Floodplain/Floodway

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 2008 Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Cook County and Incorporated Areas, there are floodplain and floodway associated with Hickory Creek and Hickory Creek Tributary mapped through the project corridor. The total area of the floodway through the project corridor is approximately 67 acres. Development in the regulatory floodway is regulated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources - Office of Water Resources (IDNR-OWR) and is limited to only those activities classified as "appropriate uses." While commercial and residential structures are not considered appropriate uses, at-grade or below-grade parking lots and grading activities (without fill) are considered appropriate uses.

To determine the limits of the 100-year floodplain through the project corridor, the 100-year flood elevations for Hickory Creek and Hickory Creek Tributary were taken from the Cook County Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and delineated on Cook County two-foot topography. A portion of the Hickory Creek floodplain is shown on the FIRM as Zone A (unstudied), and therefore a flood elevation was assumed to estimate the floodplain area at the southeastern corner of the project site. There are approximately 172 acres of mapped floodplain through the project area, which includes the approximately 67-acres of floodway. It should be noted that prior to developing this parcel, a detailed study of Hickory Creek would be required to establish 100-year flood elevations in this area.

Unlike the floodway, there is no restriction on development activities within the floodplain, but any floodplain fill that results from development must be compensated for at a 1.1 to 1 ratio, in accordance with the Cook County Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO). In addition, any insurable structures constructed as part of the development would have to be elevated to at least two feet above the 100-year flood elevation of Hickory Creek and Hickory Creek Tributary.

### Wetlands/Waters of the U.S.

The parcels located within the study area are all encumbered by wetland and/or "waters of the U.S.," as defined by the Clean Water Act. The parcel south of Sauk Trail, contains a waters of the U.S. (Hickory Creek) and associated wetland. It also contains a potentially isolated wetland area to the south of the building on-site and a wetland drainage swale that extends off-site to the west and drains north to Hickory Creek by way of a culvert under Sauk Trail and another tributary drainage swale.

The parcel north of Sauk Trail and west of Central Avenue also contains a portion of Hickory Creek and associated wetland that extends north to a wooded wetland area. This parcel contains an excavated pond, to the north of Hickory Creek, within a wooded area on-site, and a wetland drainage swale that extends off-site to the north into the Utility/Railroad right-of-way. The identified wetlands associated with Hickory Creek and the drainage swales are likely jurisdictional and therefore subject to federal regulation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The wetland in the south parcel and the excavated pond may be considered isolated and subject to regulation by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

The parcel to the east of Central Avenue, north of Sauk Trail is significantly disturbed. Review of the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), Steger (1984) and Frankfort (1981) quadrangles, indicates excavated wetlands were mapped on-site. These excavated areas were part of a previous landfill operation, and because the wetlands on this parcel were artificially created, it is unlikely that they would be regulated by the USACE or MWRD. When future development of this parcel takes place, historical documents and/or plans showing the pond excavations may need to be submitted to the USACE during the jurisdictional review as evidence that these areas were man-made.

### Infrastructure

Sauk Trail is currently serviced by public water and sanitary mains. In 2005, sewer improvements were constructed from Bohlmann Parkway extending west to Harlem Avenue, and water improvements were constructed from Bohlmann Parkway extending west to Harlem Avenue. The main sizes installed suggest they were sized for future development. The water main is 16 inch ductile iron and the sanitary sewer is 24" PVC. The improvements connected to downstream infrastructure that exists between Bohlmann Parkway and Interstate 57. In 2006, a booster station was constructed near Interstate 57 to improve water pressure for the potential development area.

The current infrastructure layout is favorable to future development. As the market dictates, future development along Sauk Trail or along Central Avenue can be serviced either along Sauk Trail or by means of main extensions along Central Avenue extending north and south from Sauk Trail. Overhead electric and communications also exist along Sauk Trail which could service future development. The roadway configuration between I-57 extending through Ridgeland is a two lane, two way with a designated left turn lane. This roadway configuration is sized to accommodate any future development in the area.



### Developable Area

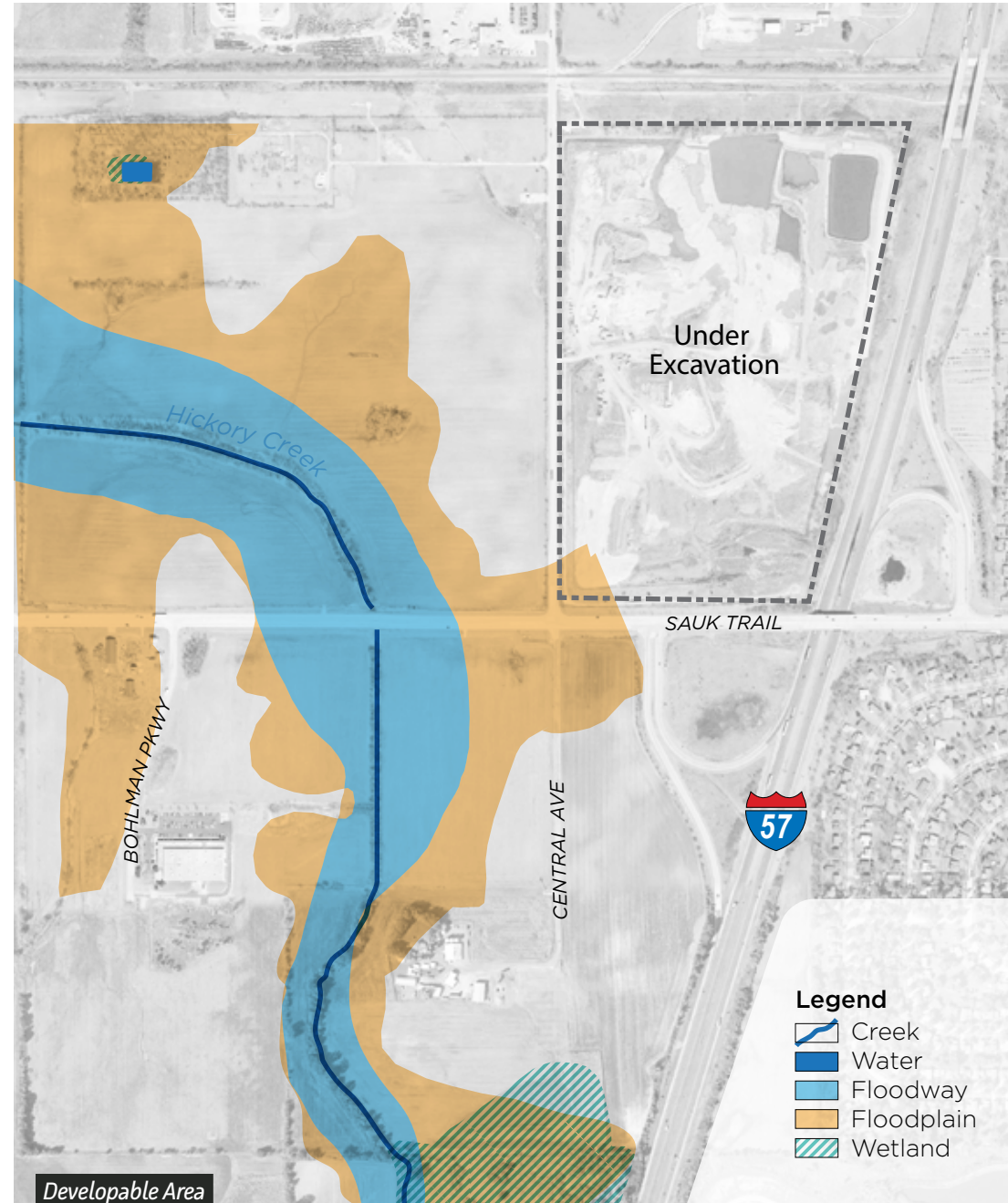
As described above, there are three major obstacles to development through the project corridor: (1) mapped floodway of Hickory Creek, (2) mapped floodplain associated with Hickory Creek and Hickory Creek Tributary, and (3) wetlands and waters of the U.S. located on-site. To maximize the developable area through the project corridor, the areas currently shown as floodplain (outside of the floodway/channel) may be filled with compensatory storage provided in other locations. Compensatory storage may be provided in the floodway or other locations. At-grade or below-grade parking lots may also be constructed in the floodway. It should be noted that floodplain fill for Hickory Creek must be provided in the floodway/floodplain of Hickory Creek and floodplain fill for Hickory Creek Tributary must be provided in the floodplain of Hickory Creek Tributary.

### Planning Strategy

Because the existence of floodplains and wetlands within the area make development challenging, the Village should assess the level of investment necessary to mitigate the floodplain, and measure it against the long-term return of active uses.

The starting point for future development should be the areas located east of Hickory Creek, to both the north and south of Sauk Trail, but not including the landfill site. This area can be developed to the limits of the floodway with compensatory storage provided in the floodway and/or along the western edge of the creek. Any required parking could also be provided in the floodway, as long as the parking lot is at or below existing grade. Any impacts to wetlands/waters of the US would require permitting through the USACE and/or MWRD. Impacts to the identified wetlands associated with Hickory Creek and the drainage swales that are greater than 0.1 acres would require mitigation, in addition to permitting through the USACE. Impacts to the wetlands in the south parcel that are greater than 0.1 acres would require mitigation, in addition to permitting through MWRD.

Because there is a small portion of floodplain on the existing landfill site, and the on-site wetlands are unlikely to be regulated, this parcel has the potential to be highly-developable. However, because of the past landfill operations on the site, it appears that significant fill operations would have to take place before the site is suitable for development. At the time of this analysis, this site was under remediation for future development. Once remediation activities are complete, this site represents the most feasible option for development given its proximity to infrastructure and the lack of floodplain and regulated wetlands.



### Town Centre

The community envisions its Town Centre as a vibrant core that includes retail, housing, and unique destinations for residents and visitors. However, Butterfield Creek, which runs west of Governor's Highway, subjects the area to flooding. As redevelopment occurs in this area, the Village should have a coordinated strategy for improving infrastructure to reduce the amount of stormwater added to the Butterfield Creek and improve the efficiency of the creek in transmitting stormwater. The Town Centre Stormwater Management Plan, adopted in 2014, provides strategies to mitigate potential flood events. The Village should implement the Plan's recommendations, which include:

- Construction of stormwater detention facilities along Governors Highway and Sauk Trail
- Increased capacity of the existing culverts at Sauk Trail and Governors Highway
- Relocation, widening, and restoration of the Butterfield Creek channel
- Increased capacity of the Maple Street culvert





# 9

## IMAGE & IDENTITY PLAN

Image and identity play an integral role in building Richton Park's reputation as a place rich in history and welcoming of new development. Creating a positive image for the Village requires a comprehensive approach that addresses branding, messaging, awareness, and built character. The Image and Identity Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan identifies opportunities for the Village to distinguish itself as a thriving community.

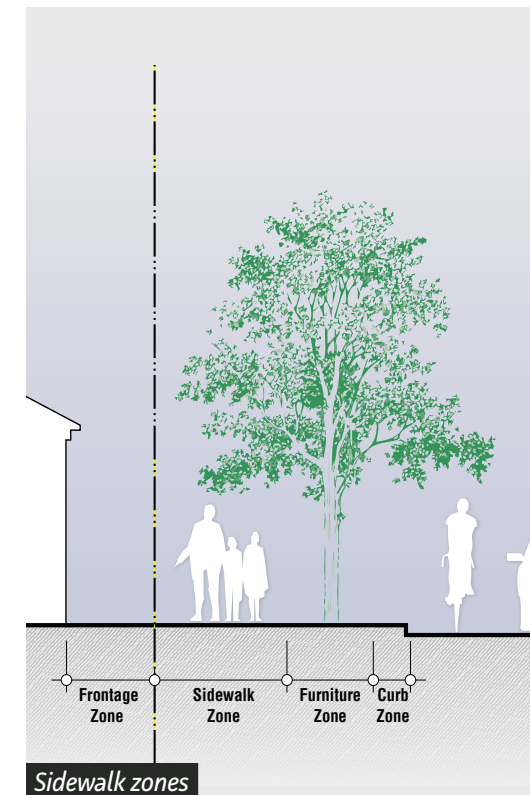




Street landscaping furniture example



Lighting example



Sidewalk zones



Sidewalk zone example

## BRANDING AND MESSAGING

It is critical that Richton Park be proactive with its message about what it offers for residents and businesses. Richton Park already uses a unique logo and motto that reflects the history of the Village. A branding strategy can play on the “Proud Past, Bright Future” motto, creating an identity that reflects the vision for the Village. The Village should develop a branding strategy and integrate the Richton Park brand and message in all outreach activities and marketing efforts. The Village logo should be used widely in all Village-related material so that it is highly recognizable and strongly tied to Richton Park. The Village should work with the Merchants Chamber and the Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau to deliver the chosen message and aid in promoting the brand.

## STREETSCAPE DESIGN

The appearance of Sauk Trail and Governors Highway have a significant effect on the perception of Richton Park. Streetscape design improvements such as lighting, street furniture, and sidewalk design contribute greatly to the overall identity of the Village. Uniform design elements and themes define neighborhoods, creating a sense of place. The 2009 Town Centre Streetscape Manual provides detailed treatments that should be implemented to create a safe, vibrant, and unified Town Centre. Variations of the concepts presented in the manual can be implemented in other commercial areas throughout Richton Park.

Streetscape improvements could include the following elements:

- **Lighting.** Lighting not only contributes to the safety of Richton Park, but also adds visual interest. Decorative light poles such as those proposed in the 2009 Town Centre Streetscape Manual can be used in a similar context to define the Village’s commercial and residential neighborhoods. For example, as development moves into the I-57 interchange commercial district, uniform lighting design throughout the district will make it a distinct retail node.
- **Street Landscaping Furniture.** Street furniture plays an important role in placemaking and includes such elements as seating, trash receptacles, bollards, bike racks, and more. Public seating provides opportunities for relaxation, people watching, and public gathering, while other landscape elements help to define space. Similar to lighting, design elements do not need to be repeated throughout the entire Village, but should be used consistently throughout a defined area. Because form dictates function, the design, orientation, and placement of furniture have a profound impact on how they will be used by the public. The Village should install street furniture at strategic locations for which placemaking would be most viable, such as near the Metra station and in commercial districts.

- **Sidewalks.** More than solely moving pedestrians, sidewalks serve as the canvas for which streetscape elements are placed. As roads and pedestrian infrastructure are repaired and constructed, the Village should implement a four-zone sidewalk design, which includes frontage, pedestrian, furniture/utility, and curb zones. The frontage zone is a buffer between the building and pedestrian zone wherein stores can display merchandise, restaurants can put out tables for al fresco dining, or businesses and residents can set out planters and other decorative elements. The pedestrian zone is where people travel and should be free of any obstacles. The furniture zone is where seating, planters, trees, lights, and utility boxes should be placed. Finally, the curb zone is the transition zone between the entire sidewalk and road, and should function as a stable surface to allow ingress and egress to parked vehicles. Dense commercial areas should utilize wider sidewalks to allow for larger frontage, pedestrian, and furniture zones. All commercial areas should consider the use of on-street parking to further buffer the sidewalk and create a sense of greater safety for pedestrians.



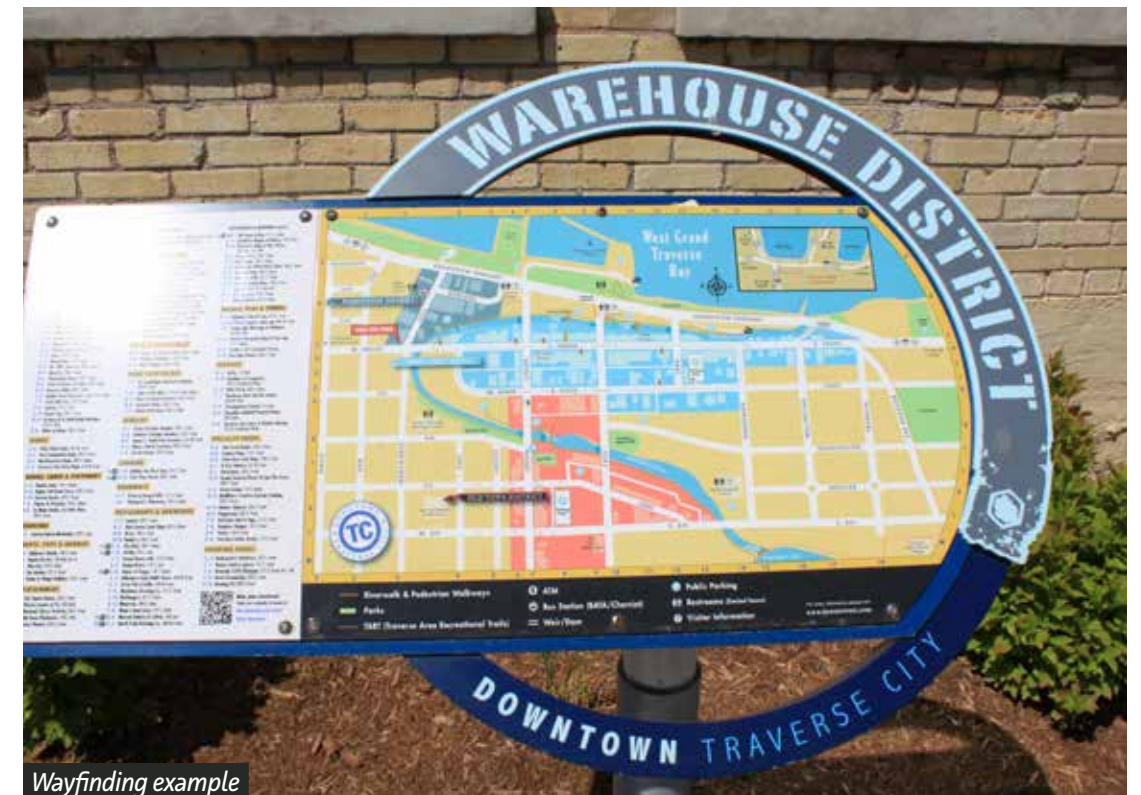


Historical marker example

Jorelli, Flickr



Existing gateway



Wayfinding example

## WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

Richton Park enjoys local points of entry on Sauk Trail and Governors Highway, as well as a regional point of entry from I-57. The points should demarcate entry into the Village and convey the character of the community. The Village should implement a wayfinding and signage plan that defines the placement and design of the following elements throughout the Village.

### Community History

Richton Park has a rich history that spans several centuries. The Village was originally a stop along a Native American trade route known as Sauk Trail. Before the Civil War, the Sauk Trail was used as part of an Underground Railroad to provide safe passage of slaves to Canada and the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad transformed Richton Park into an agricultural village. During World War II, women manned the fire department hoses, and more recently, Richton Park has matured into a Village with vibrant neighborhoods and commercial areas on the fringe of the Chicago region. As part of the wayfinding plan, the Village should install educational placards and commission local artists to create tributes to historical events and figures. These should be placed throughout the Village and marketed in publications about the Village.

### Gateways

Sauk Trail, with access to both I-57 and the Metra Electric Station, serves as the primary entrance to the Village. The corridor should be a focal point for gateway signage, which should incorporate the Richton Park logo and have similar landscaping and hardscape features. Local gateway elements should be installed on Governors Highway and at the entry point to special areas within the Village, such as the Town Centre.

### Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signs should be used to direct motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians to points of interest throughout Richton Park. These signs should have a uniform design and incorporate the Village logo. Wayfinding should be placed at prominent intersections of community entries, and guide travelers to a variety of destinations, including Village Hall and the Community Center, the new public library, Town Centre, and Richton Park Metra station. The size of the signs should vary depending on the speed of travel, with smaller pedestrian-oriented signage in the proposed Town Centre and larger, auto-oriented signage in busier corridor areas.



Wayfinding example



## DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Private development has a significant effect on the Village's identity. As such, the Village should create design guidelines to direct future development throughout Richton Park. Development standards and design guidelines promote high quality, attractive development through landscape features, building orientation and placement, parking character, and building materials. Guidelines for site layouts and building features promote high quality improvements and developments that will complement and enhance the overall character of the Village. Rather than seen as piecemeal development, separate parcels should be viewed in conjunction with one another to maintain consistent and compatible design and development patterns. These guidelines can be integrated into the existing zoning code or by a stand-alone ordinance. The guidelines should not only apply to private development, but also serve as standards for the beautification of public buildings and spaces.

The Village should also integrate development standards within the design guidelines to promote pedestrian oriented developments that are accommodating to vehicular traffic. The guidelines should include landscape patterns that frame public spaces for people such as plazas, pocket parks, or attractive building entrances. Parking areas should be seen as places of human activity not just a place to store automobiles; and as a result, be attractive and inviting spaces. Building material guidelines will ensure that adjacent developments complement one another, enhancing the image of Richton Park.



Architectural style example



Façade enhancement example



Parking lot landscaping example



Parking lot screening example



Andy Wilkes, Flickr

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Festivals and events offer the opportunity to promote the Village's brand, showcase businesses, and provide a forum for residents to interact and enjoy their community. Richton Park hosts annual events throughout the year including the International Cycling Competition and Metra's Holiday Train as well as more regular events such as senior coffee and cards and community workshops. The Village should host several year-round events in various commercial and residential locations throughout the Village to activate underutilized space, bring business to local shops, and enliven neighborhoods. Events should have adequate health and safety staff and facilities to accommodate all attendees, ensuring a family-friendly atmosphere.

Strategies to promote and organize additional community events include:

- Integration of an event/flex space in the Town Centre
- Coordination with the Merchants Chamber and other community partners
- Facilitation of neighborhood-based events, such as block parties
- Use of underutilized commercial parking lots to host larger events such as summer concerts and festivals





# 10 SAUK TRAIL SUBAREA PLAN

As the main thoroughfare through Richton Park, Sauk Trail presents an opportunity to showcase the character of the Village, provide commercial and retail amenities, and serve as a convenient transportation route between I-57 and the Richton Park Town Center. Underutilized land along the south edge of Sauk Trail provides opportunities for new development that could increase the tax base and help to create a robust commercial corridor. This Sauk Trail Corridor Subarea Plan includes a series of recommendations aimed at maximizing the potential of the corridor in terms of supporting economic development, improving the access and mobility along the corridor, and enhancing the image and overall appearance of Richton Park.



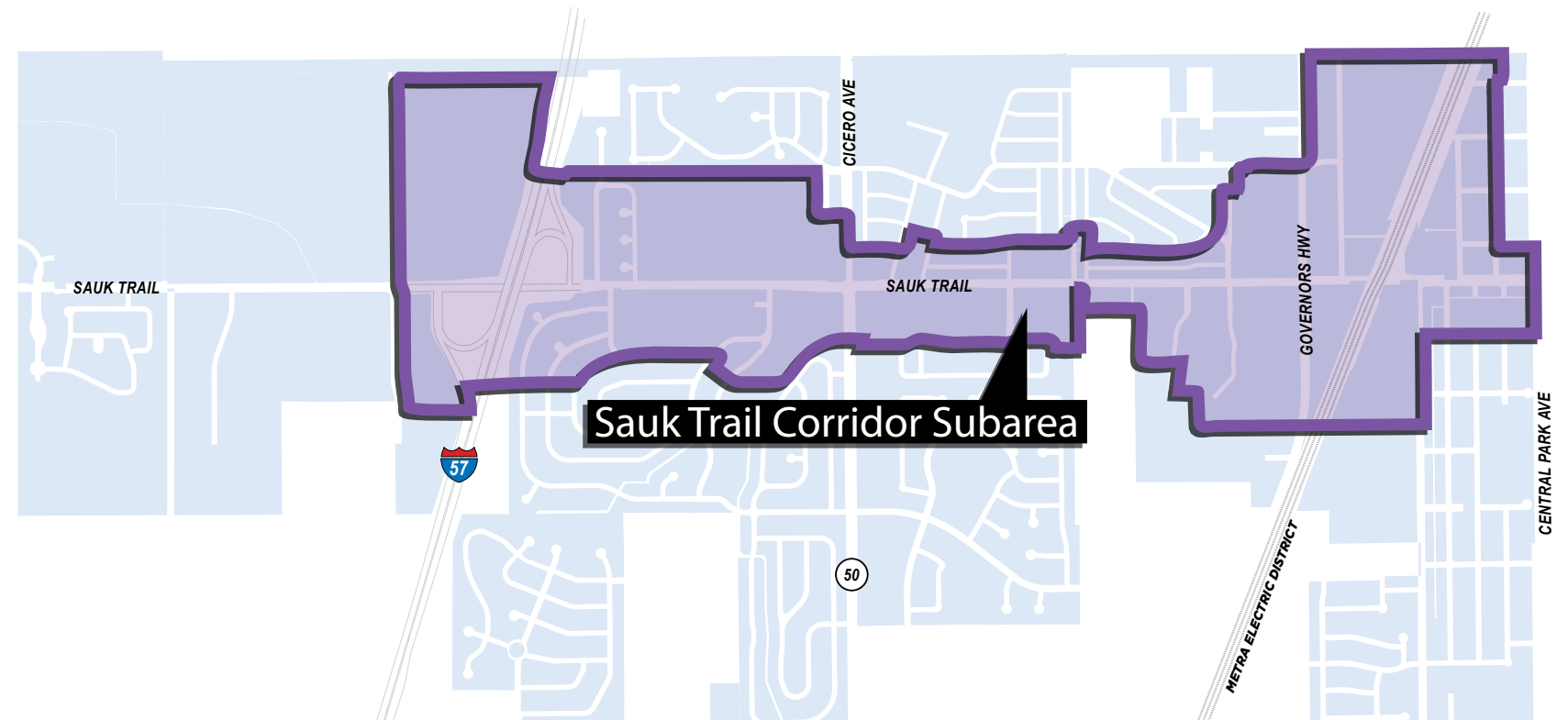
## Town Center Streetscape Manual

Village of Richton Park, Illinois  
October 2009

### Integrating Previous Plans

This subarea plan is built upon several factors, including the vision expressed by the community, realistic opportunities for development, and previous planning. Two specific concept plans, the Lakewood Plaza Conceptual Master Plan and the Town Center Streetscape Manual, have been integrated where appropriate into these recommendations. However, the Town Center Streetscape Manual includes certain characteristics of development that may not be attainable based on changing market conditions and demographics.

The land use and development recommendations included in this subarea plan describe attainable aspects of the Town Center Plan to be advanced, and others that may need modification to align with realistic opportunities and market realities. The access and mobility and urban design recommendation of the subarea plan describe where short-term improvements can be made while the Village awaits long-term redevelopment as described in the Town Center Plan.





# Sauk Trail Corridor Subarea: LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Land use and development will play a significant role in defining the future of the Sauk Trail corridor. Seven development opportunity sites have been identified with the potential to expand the Village's commercial and retail service offerings and create a more complete and cohesive commercial corridor. Coordination and cooperation between the Village and among corridor landowners will be key to ensuring the success of these opportunity sites.



## Development Opportunity Sites

### 1 I-57 Commercial/Industrial Node

Best suited for regional commercial and industrial uses, this opportunity site takes advantage of the I-57 interchange as well as a future high-speed fiber-optic network. Retail uses should take advantage of frontage areas along Sauk Trail and easy access from Central Avenue, while industrial businesses could be positioned adjacent to the rail line, which has the potential for spurs to serve such development. Central Avenue should be the primary access point to an industrial circulator road north of Sauk Trail.

Close proximity to the Sauk Trail interchange provides convenient access for both commercial and industrial traffic. However, the site is also within a flood plain. Flood mitigation and effective stormwater management will be key development factors. Further studies will be needed to fully realize the development potential in this area.

### 2 Sauk Trail and Arquilla Drive

This site is located west of Arquilla Drive on the south side of Sauk Trail. At nearly 18 acres and with a maximum lot depth of 720 feet, the site should house a large retail anchor consistent with the Lakewood Plaza Conceptual Master Plan. Future development should build upon the adjacent commercial development and include outlot uses. Residential parcels abut the site to the east and south and new commercial development should provide a significant buffer against existing residential properties. The existing curb cut opposite the South Rich High School access road should be used to access the site and may require signalization as commercial development impacts traffic movement and volumes.

### 3 Lake George Site

Located between a Walgreens and McDonald's, this parcel should include corridor commercial development that is consistent with surrounding lots. Newer development will benefit from the visibility of Sauk Trail, though curb cuts to the roadway should be minimized and direct cross access to adjacent lots should be provided.

### 4 Southwest Sauk and Cicero Site

This corridor commercial site sits at the intersection of Sauk Trail and Cicero Avenue that hosts approximately 45,800 cars per day. As such, any development of the site should provide a "strong corner" at the intersection, with attractive architecture and prominent building orientation. Curb cuts to Sauk Trail and Cicero Avenue should be minimized and cross-access should be provided to the adjacent McDonald's site.

### 5 Frontage Development

This site currently hosts a detention pond; however, the portion of the site that fronts Sauk Trail could be developed for active uses. Small office or stand-alone commercial uses, such as retail shops or a restaurant, are best suited for the site. Access and circulation should be provided via adjacent sites through the use of direct cross access, minimizing the need for additional curb cuts onto Sauk Trail.

### 6 Civic Campus

This parcel lies between a small medical clinic and Southland College Prep. The Village is currently completing construction of a new 18,000 square foot library along Livonia Lane to the south of the site. This opportunity site should be used as an extension of the office use currently fronting Sauk Trail. The new building could reflect the design of the existing structure and the existing easily extend the existing rear parking lot.

### 7 Commercial Transition Site

This site includes four relatively isolated single-family residences on five parcels with no direct relationship to other housing. These lots should be assembled as opportunities become available over time, resulting in one commercial development site. Potential commercial uses include small offices, stand-alone retail, and/or restaurants.

## Relationship to Town Center Plan

### Town Center Plan Area

The following bullet points highlight Town Center Plan recommendations that should be advanced or modified.

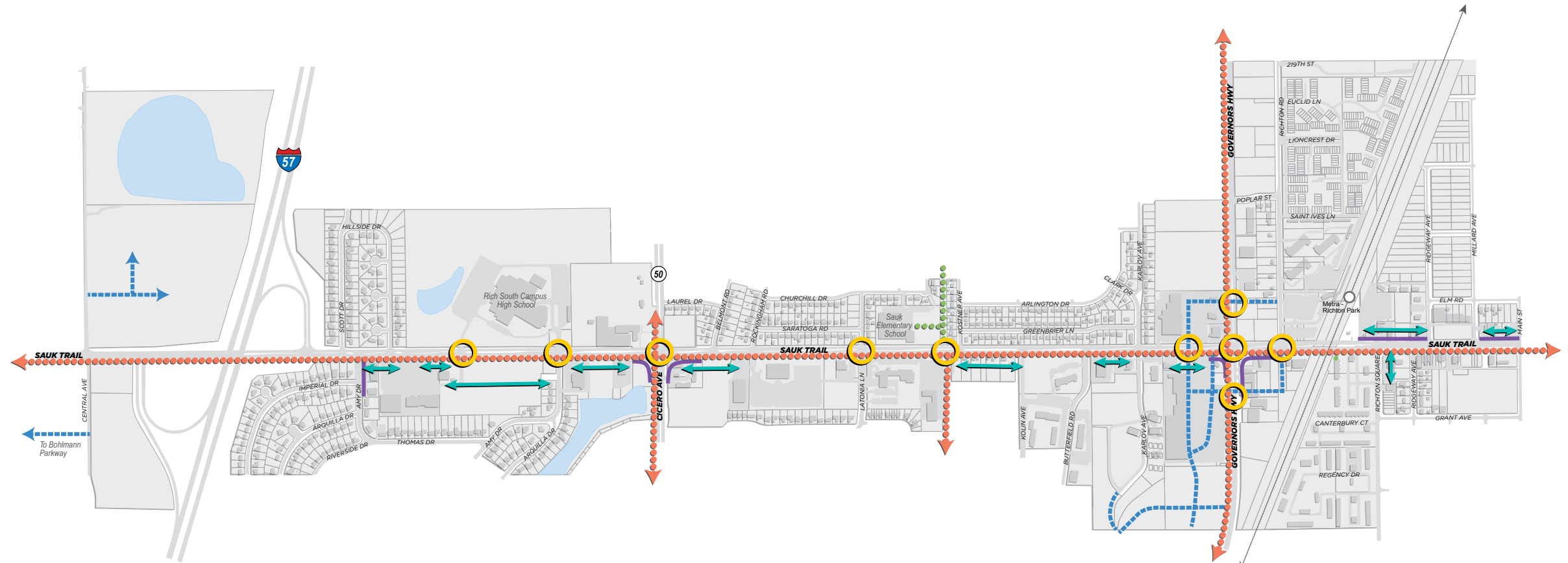
- Integration of transit-supportive land uses, including restaurants, daycare, and others
- Mix of commercial and residential uses that build on access to the Richton Park Metra station
- Creation of attractive and usable open spaces
- Interconnection of floodways and stormwater detention and distribution infrastructure
- Primary commercial uses at Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway, with secondary commercial development east of the rail corridor
- Multi-family development that increases residential density without precluding commercial development along primary streets
- Additional single-family or townhouse development south of the Town Center

### Recommendations Requiring Modification

- **Reconfiguration of the proposed promenade based on the findings of the on-going Town Center stormwater management study.**  
The current Town Center Plan includes a promenade that is part of the floodplain that runs north-south just west of Governor's Highway. The Village is currently conducting a Town Center Stormwater Management Study. This study may include findings that would warrant the relocation or modification of the promenade concept in order to better address overall stormwater management goals.
- **Reduction in the scale of anticipated development to reflect 2-3 story mixed-use.**  
The current Town Center Plan illustrates mixed-use development as high as seven stories and spanning several blocks along Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway. This is well beyond the realistic market potential of the Village and these particular sites. While a mixed-use approach in this area is appropriate, the scale and intensity of development should more closely align with realistic market capacity.

# Sauk Trail Corridor Subarea: ACCESS & MOBILITY

New development along Sauk Trail will place additional demand on the roadway network. Sauk Trail serves as the Village's primary east-west roadway that handles 28,600 cars per day. Improvements to the overall transportation network will help regulate traffic flow and improve safety for all roadway users.



## Access & Mobility Improvements

### New/Extended Street Network

Development to the west of I-57 will require building out the roadway network to accommodate increased traffic demand. Central Avenue and Bohlmann Parkway have already been constructed but remain incomplete and unconnected. Future roadway additions include the creation of an east-west connection between Central Avenue and Bohlmann Parkway south of Sauk Trail, and a new east-west road that bisect Central Avenue north of Sauk Trail. A new internal street network is also proposed as part of the Town Center plan. This will increase circulation within the Town Center and provide better traffic flow along Sauk Trail as the Town Center develops.

### Commercial Cross Access

Several commercial parking lots on Sauk Trail Road abut other lots that could be connected to enhance access and safety. Cross access will not only help reduce traffic on Sauk Trail, but also decrease points of conflict by limiting the number of curb cuts. These improvements should be applied to future and existing developments.

### Curb Cut Consolidation


While curb cuts provide access to businesses and residences along Sauk Trail, they also increase vehicle conflict points and disrupt the pedestrian network. Some businesses can reduce their number of access points by taking advantage of cross access and using side streets for access. This has the potential to enhance parking circulation and capacity, improve pedestrian safety, and reduce potential traffic conflict points.


### Pedestrian Intersection Improvements

As development occurs throughout the subarea, pedestrian improvements should be made to increase safety and improve access. Pedestrian improvements at signalized intersections should include highly-visible, painted crosswalks that utilize pedestrian walk signals. Intersection signal phasing, such as the use of leading pedestrian intervals and countdown timers, should provide adequate time for pedestrians to cross the roadway. Priority improvements should be located near schools, civic buildings, and trail crossings.

### Trail Network Improvements

Development along Sauk Trail Road should benefit from the City-wide, off-street trail network. This will require improving access to existing segments and adding new ones that enhance mobility.

 An **existing trail** intersects the subarea just west of Kostner Avenue, and additional trails on Cicero Avenue, Imperial Drive, Latonia Lane, and Poplar Avenue provide access to surrounding areas. These should serve as the foundations for new segments that enhance connectivity.

 **New trails** should be provided that enhance mobility along Sauk Trail Road and to surrounding segments. These improvements include the creation of a multi-use trail on the south side of Sauk Trail Road, as well as connections on Cicero and just west of Kostner running south.

### Railroad

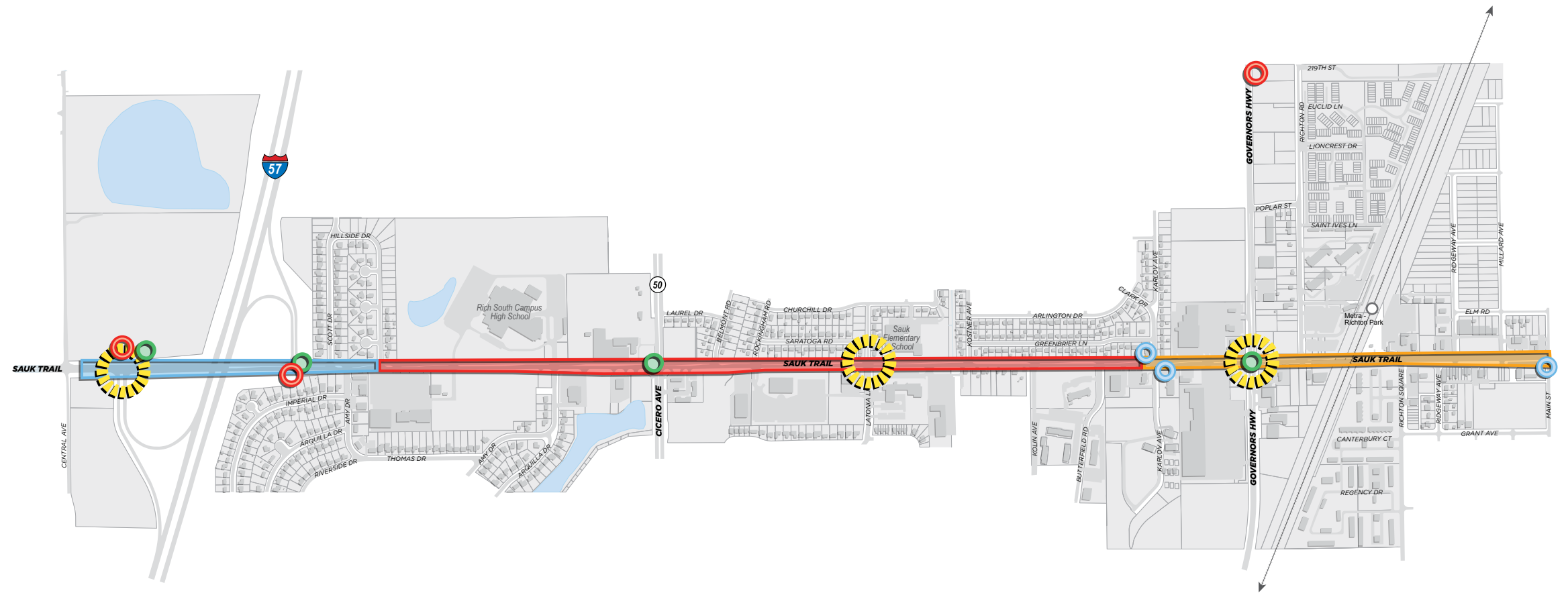
The EJ&E railroad, which runs along the north side of the I-57 interchange, is an active freight line that provides opportunities for rail-based industrial uses adjacent to the tracks. The I-57 opportunity site is well-positioned to link to the railroad via an industrial rail spur that would allow potential users access to regional and national shipping routes.



# Sauk Trail Corridor Subarea: URBAN DESIGN

## Public Realm Improvements

Sauk Trail is the primary gateway to Richton Park from both I-57 and the Metra station. Through thoughtful and strategic urban design improvements, the corridor should establish the character and identity of Richton Park.



## Gateways, Wayfinding & Intersection Improvements

### Streetscaping

Sauk Trail Road is the gateway to Richton Park. As such, it should present a positive image for residents and visitors. The City should invest in a streetscape program that conveys that image and reflects the varying character of the community.

**Town Center Streetscaping** should be guided by the recommendations of the Town Center Streetscape Manual. These include a traditional palette aimed at creating a comfortable pedestrian environment through the use of lighting, benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and other elements.

**Corridor Streetscaping** should include decorative lighting, banners, and sidewalks that provide connections between the Town Center, I-57 interchange area, and surrounding neighborhoods.

**I-57 interchange Streetscaping** should include modern elements and signage that provides an attractive point of entry from throughout the region. This area could include modern lighting, public art, landscaping, and other elements.



### Gateways

Gateways should be placed along Sauk Trail to mark entry into the Village or unique parts of the community and convey a desired character for the community.

**Community Gateways** Significant community gateways should be located at entry points to the Village. These should have a consistent character, yet be unique to the type of streetscaping in each part of the subarea.

### Local Gateways

Local gateways should be provided at entry points to the Town Center. These should be smaller than community gateways to reflect the pedestrian character of the area, and integrate materials and landscaping that are compatible with Town Center streetscaping.



### Wayfinding

Sauk Trail Road offers access to several local destinations. Wayfinding signs should be designed and installed to exhibit the desired community character and display information regarding local Village facilities and attractions, including Village Hall, the new library, the Metra station, and local schools, and regional destinations such as Governors State University.



Signs should be appropriately sized to be context specific. Some wayfinding signage should be easily viewable by passing cars, while others should be sized and sited appropriately for pedestrians. Where possible, they should be integrated into the design of gateway elements.



### Key Intersection Improvements

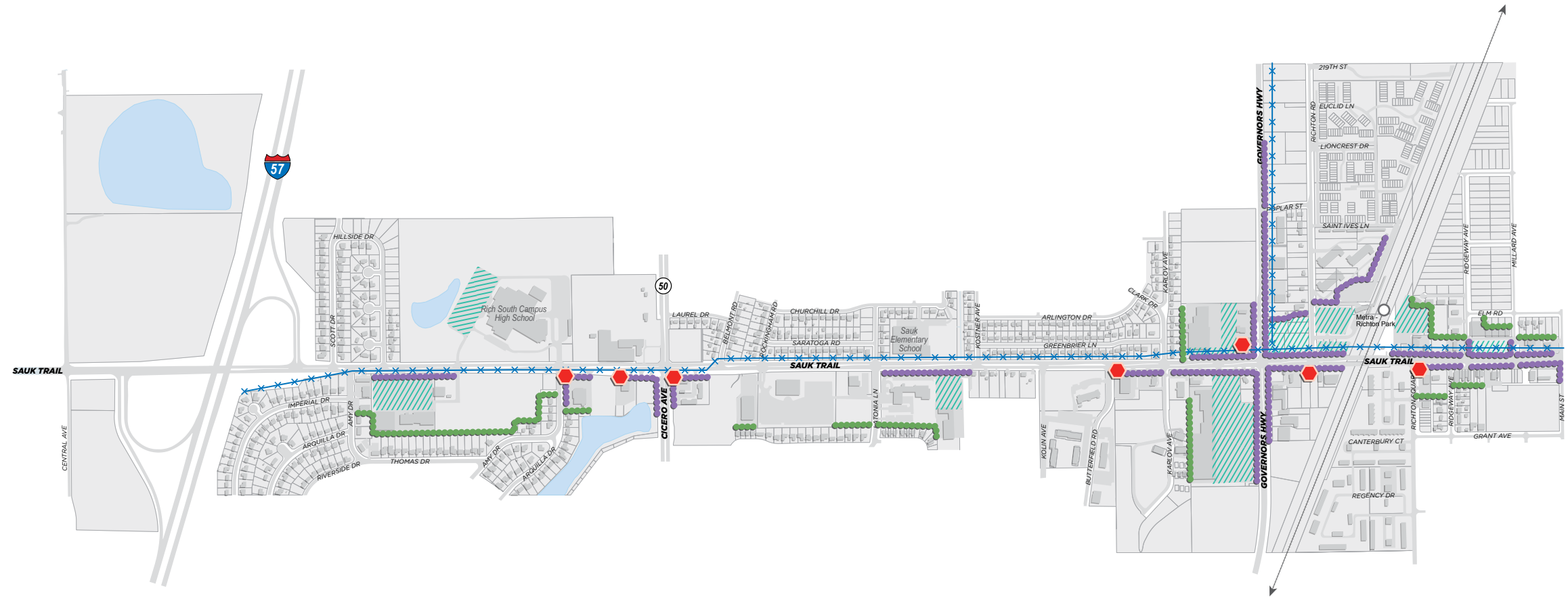
Sauk Trail intersections at Governors Highway, Latonia Avenue, and the I-57 southbound exit ramp represent key existing or future intersections. Attractive elements should be installed at these intersections, including decorative crosswalks, landscaped parks or plazas, decorative signage and lighting.



# Sauk Trail Corridor Subarea: URBAN DESIGN

## Private Realm Improvements

Sauk Trail is the primary gateway to Richton Park from both I-57 and the Metra station. Through thoughtful and strategic urban design improvements, the corridor should establish the character and identity of Richton Park.



### Parking Lot Landscaping

In conjunction with screening improvements, parking lots should include landscaped islands and planting areas that can help manage stormwater. The addition of natural landscaping material enhances local character, helps manage stormwater, and reduces the urban heat island effect.



### Screening & Buffers

Most of the commercial development along Sauk Trail is adjacent to residential areas. Screening and/or buffers should be used to reduce the impacts of commercial uses. The installation of fences in conjunction with landscaped and natural screening such as berms, dense trees, and other treatments should be used to provide physical and visual separation against residential uses.



### Building Design

Building design throughout the corridor should be compatible with requirements of the Town Center Design Guidelines. Buildings should display attractive façade design and landscaping. The Village should encourage high-quality design and construction for all new developments, as well as assist property owners to improve the appearance of existing buildings and properties.

### Pole Sign Replacements

There are several pole signs located along Sauk Trail Road that, while of an appropriate size, do not reflect the preferred local character. Signs along Sauk Trail Road should be of a lower profile and include materials, landscaping and lighting that are consistent with building architecture. Pole signs and flashing or animated signs should be prohibited as they can negatively impact the character of the corridor.

### Parking Lot Screening

Parking lots are a dominant feature of many of the current developments along Sauk Trail. Where parking areas abut the public right-of-way, decorative fencing or landscaping should be installed. Parking lot and property edge screening should clearly designate the public realm and delineate vehicular access points.

### Utilities

Overhead utilities run along much of the Sauk Trail Road and Governors Highway corridors. Removing, relocating, or burying overhead utilities and poles will improve the aesthetic character of the corridor. Since this can be costly as a stand-alone improvement, utilities should be buried incrementally as part of development, streetscape improvements, or other capital improvement projects.





# 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan provides policies and recommendations for actions the Village should take over the next 15-20 years. For the vision of Richton Park to be realized, the Village must be proactive and have the support and participation of local leaders, other public agencies, various neighborhood groups and organizations, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents. The Village should be the leader in promoting cooperation and collaboration with these partners to implement the Plan.

This chapter presents an implementation framework that the Village can use to initiate and undertake key recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan. The actions and strategies identified in this section establish the “next steps” to be taken in continuing the process of community planning and investment.





## USE PLAN ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS

The Comprehensive Plan should become the Village's official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement. It is essential that the Plan be adopted and then used on a regular basis by Village staff, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development. Community Development Department staff should meet with Department heads to explain the purpose and benefits of the Comprehensive Plan.

To further educate the community about the Plan, the Village should:

- Make copies of the Plan available on-line for free, provide hard copies at Village Hall for purchase, and have a copy on file at the public library for reference;
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate;
- Assist the Board of Trustees and Community Development Department in the day-to-day administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan;
- Provide a Comprehensive Plan orientation for new elected or appointed officials;
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from the Comprehensive Plan.

## AMENDING DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

While the Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision for the Richton Park community, the Village's development regulations are the primary tool that can be used to implement the Plan. Once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the Village should conduct a full review of its zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and public works standards. In doing so, the Village should review relevant technical resources that may offer guidance related to emerging best practices. These may include IDOT's Complete Street's Manual, Pace's Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region, and others. Amendments to development regulations and design standards should consider complementary programs and incentives that can be used to achieve the community's vision for economic development, neighborhood character, connectivity, and other aspects of the Plan.

Specific recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan that development regulations can address include:

- Managed growth areas on the periphery of the community;
- The appropriate scale, design character, and configuration of Town Center development;
- The integration of stormwater management infrastructure as new neighborhood development occurs; and
- The accommodation of trails, sidewalks, and transit facilities in new neighborhoods, along Sauk Trail, and in emerging commercial areas.

## ANNEXATION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Richton Park planning jurisdiction includes several hundred acres of undeveloped and unincorporated land. It is critical that the Village take steps necessary to ensure long-term control over these areas. This will provide several benefits, including regulatory control over the type of development that can occur, and benefits related to tax revenue. In the short term, the Village should pursue annexation agreements with property owners to provide some predictability of the community's ultimate footprint. The, incrementally over time, the Village should formally annex portions of the planning area as development potential is realized. This can be done in conjunction with strategic infrastructure investment in order to manage growth in a sustainable and responsible way. As incremental development occurs, special consideration should be given to community-wide infrastructure systems and services, such as stormwater management, multi-modal transportation networks, public safety, education, and others.





## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Some recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan may require Village capital investment. To support implementation of these recommendations, the Village should establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). A CIP establishes schedules, priorities and estimated costs for all public improvement projects over a five-year period. Through this process, all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates are prepared, and potential funding sources are identified.

The CIP typically schedules the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities and infrastructure. The CIP should also consider investments related to infrastructure and open space in new growth areas, flood mitigation and stormwater management, and public streetscaping.

Some of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan that can be included through capital improvement planning include:

- Strategic infrastructure development to emerging development areas;
- Regular maintenance of streets, trails, and other transportation systems;
- Investments in streetscaping and gateways on Sauk Trail and other key corridors that would enhance the image of the community;
- Intersection improvements along Sauk Trail, Governors Highway, and Cicero Avenue that would enhance pedestrian and bike safety and mobility;
- Investments in the maintenance of existing parks and facilities, or the development of new facilities that would meet the evolving demand for recreation and activity; and
- The development of green infrastructure that maximizes the efficiency of municipal systems, reduce the likelihood of flooding, and minimizes the impacts on sensitive environmental features.

## ACTION AGENDA

The Comprehensive Plan provides more than a hundred policy and program recommendations. In order to address the myriad of strategies presented within the plan, the Village should prepare an “Action Agenda,” to highlight the projects and activities to be undertaken within the next few years. The action agenda should be developed in conjunction with the Village’s Capital Improvement Program. To remain current, the action agenda should be updated once a year. The action agenda may consist of:

- A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken;
- The priority of each project or activity;
- An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and
- Potential funding sources and assistance programs that might be available for implementing each project or activity.

## JURISDICTIONAL & ORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION

For the Comprehensive Plan to be successful, there must be strong leadership from the Village of Richton Park and firm partnerships between other public agencies, community groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector. The Village should assume a leadership role to cooperate and coordinate with local school districts, the Richton Park Library District, Richton Park Police Department, Richton Park Fire Department, Illinois Department of Transportation, and Metra, among others. In addition, the Village should actively work with and encourage, developers and the business community to undertake improvements that conform to the Comprehensive Plan and improve the quality and character of Richton Park.

Some of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan that will likely require coordination and cooperation include:

- Annexation agreements with property owners in unincorporated portions of the planning area;
- Advocacy for and implementation of local transit services in conjunction with Pace that would serve the Town Center, emerging interstate commerce, and Governors State University;
- Local community health initiatives done in conjunction with the Cook County Department of Health;
- Roadway and intersection improvements on corridors under the jurisdiction of IDOT;
- Establishing regional trail connections to adjacent communities;
- Coordination with Rich Township, local school districts, and others to strengthen local public services; and
- Collaboration with a health care provider to increase access to local health care.





## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a list of possible funding sources that the Village could pursue to fund the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. These programs are organized by funding category, which includes:

- General Economic Development
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Parks, Trails and Open Space

It should be noted that while the information regarding these funding sources was deemed accurate at the time this Plan was written, the long-term availability of funds for some of these resources cannot be guaranteed. The Village should revise, update, and expand this list of potential funding sources as a component of any future Comprehensive Plan updates.

## General Economic Development Sources

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The purpose of TIF funding is to incentivize and attract desired development within key commercial areas. TIF dollars can typically be used for infrastructure, streetscaping, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development.

TIF utilizes future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for improvements and further incentivize further reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established, is reinvested in that area. Local officials may then issue bonds or undertake other financial obligation based on the growth in new revenue. Over the life of the district, existing taxing bodies receive the same level of tax revenue as in the base year. Provisions exist for schools to receive additional revenue.

The maximum life of a TIF district in the State of Illinois is 23 years, although a district can be extended beyond that horizon through authorization from the State Legislature.

TIF funds could be used to finance property acquisition, infrastructure development, streetscaping, and other improvements in the Town Center, I-55/Sauk Trail interchange area, Sauk Trail and Governors Highway corridors, or other prominent portions of the community.

### Revolving Loan Fund

A revolving Loan Fund is administered to provide financial support and assistance to new or expanding businesses and is funded through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. The borrower may use the low-interest loan for construction, property rehabilitation/improvements, and land acquisition, among other things.

As the Village seeks to develop key commercial nodes, this funding opportunity should be marketed to local entrepreneurs seeking to grow their businesses.

### Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to general units of local governments and states. A grantee must develop and follow a detailed plan that provides for, and encourages citizen participation. This process emphasizes participation by persons of low- or moderate- income, particularly residents of low-income and moderate-income neighborhoods, blighted areas, and areas in which the grantee proposes to use CDBG funds. CDBG funds are often used for neighborhood infrastructure improvements, flood management, housing rehabilitation, and other related investments.

### Façade Improvement Program

Façade and site improvement programs can be used to beautify the Village and improve the appearance of existing businesses by offering low interest loans or grants to improve the exterior appearance of designated properties. Such a program could be implemented in the Town Center.

### Special Service Area (SSA)

SSAs, also known as Business Improvement Districts, can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated service area. An SSA is essentially added to the property tax of the properties within the identified service area and the revenue received is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. An SSA can be rejected if 51% of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. SSA funds can be used for such things as streetscape improvements, district marketing, and special events. This could be effective in supporting maintenance of the Town Center area, festivals and civic functions that would strengthen local pride, and marketing the Town Center and I-55/Sauk Trail areas as emerging centers for commerce, innovation, and high quality of life.

### Incubators

Business incubators provide low-cost space and specialized support to small companies. Such services might include administrative consulting, access to office equipment and training, and assisting in accessing credit. Incubators are typically owned by public entities such as municipalities or economic development agencies who then subsidize rents and services with grants. In addition to job creation and generating activity, the goal is to have startup businesses grow and relocate to larger spaces within the Village. To share resources and knowledge, an incubator within Richton Park should consider working in partnership with Governor State University.

### Foundation & Specialized Grants

The successful implementation of the Plan requires realization of projects that range in scale and scope. One type of funding source that becomes increasingly significant when issue-specific projects or programs (tourism, performing arts, historic preservation, small business assistance, etc.) are considered is the foundation grant. The Village should dedicate resources to monitoring and exploring foundation grants as a funding tool.





### **Payment in Lieu of Taxes**

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) is a tool similar to tax abatement. The Village can use PILOT to reduce the property tax burden of desired businesses for a predetermined period. In this instance, the Village and a property owner will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of the property taxes. Payments are generally made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property.

In addition, PILOT can be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the Village of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity locating to a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services because they do not pay taxes. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the Village to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

### **Business Districts**

Business district development and redevelopment is authorized by Division 74.3 of the State of Illinois Municipal Code. A municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area of the municipality as a Business District. This could be applicable in the Town Centre, near the Sauk Trail interchange, or in emerging industrial portions of the community.

Business district designation empowers a municipality to carry out a business district development or redevelopment plan through the following actions:

- Acquire all development and redevelopment proposals
- Acquire, manage, convey, or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired pursuant to the provisions of a development or redevelopment plan
- Apply for and accept capital grants and loans from the federal government and the State of Illinois for business district development and redevelopment
- Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment, and in this connection, issue such obligation or revenue bonds as it shall be deemed necessary, subject to applicable statutory limitations.
- Enter into contracts with any public or private agency or person
- Sell, lease, trade, or improve such real property that may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment plans
- Expend such public funds as may be necessary for the planning, execution, and implementation of the business district plans
- Create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as an agent for the municipality for the purposes of business district development and redevelopment

### **Community Development Corporation**

Many communities use Special Service Areas or Tax Increment Financing to fund the start-up and/or operation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to oversee a range of redevelopment activities for a specific geographic area, particularly commercial areas and central business districts. A CDC is typically an independent chartered organization, often with not-for-profit status, that is governed by a board of directors. The directors typically bring expertise in real estate or business development along with a demonstrated commitment to the community. CDCs are often funded through public-private partnerships with financial commitments from local financial institutions or businesses and a public funding source to provide for both operating expenses and programs, as appropriate. CDCs may undertake traditional chamber of commerce-like activities such as marketing, promotion, workforce development, information management, and technical assistance to small businesses, but may also administer loan programs or acquire or redevelop property.

CDCs are often created under the umbrella structure of an established chamber of commerce in the community so that missions are complementary and do not overlap. An example of a distinctive CDC activity is the facilitation or administration of a revolving loan fund or a community lending pool capitalized by commitments from local financial institutions to provide low-interest/low-cost loans. Such funds typically target both new and expanding businesses for such redevelopment activities as interior improvements, façade and exterior improvements, building additions, and site improvements. Some state and federal small business assistance programs are structured to work in combination with CDC administered programs. Another distinctive activity of a CDC is property acquisition and redevelopment, which is most successful when the organization is mature in both expertise and capabilities. In some cases, CDCs may transfer properties to local land banks for redevelopment, such as the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority.

### **South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority**

The Village of Richton Park is a member community of the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA). Formed in 2012, SSLBDA provides the financial resources to “legally hold, manage and develop tax or bank foreclosed properties and put them back into productive use.” In addition to acquiring property through negotiated purchase and donation, SSLBDA is able to receive properties from nonprofit organizations and community development corporations. The Village should continue to work with the SSLBDA for assistance with addressing vacant properties.



## Transportation Funding

### MAP-21

In July 2012, the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21) bill was signed into law. This two-year transportation reauthorization bill replaces the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU), which expired in September 2009. The goal of MAP-21 is to modernize and reform the current transportation system to help create jobs, accelerate economic recovery, and build a foundation for long-term prosperity.

The following discussion summarizes several grant programs covered under MAP-21 that could be utilized by the Village to make enhancements to local transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, sidewalks, and trails.

### Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

The Illinois Department of Transportation administers ITEP and has funded projects including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, landscaping, historic preservation, and projects that control or remove outdoor advertising. In the past, federal reimbursement has been available for up to 50 % of the costs of right-of-way and easement acquisition and 80% of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs.

ITEP fund may provide the opportunity to implement several of the recommendations in this Plan, including:

- Expanded bicycle trails, including potential connections north to the regional Old Plank Road Trail;
- Streetscaping along the Sauk Trail and Governors Highway corridors;
- Intersection enhancements that would improve bicycle and pedestrian safety; and
- The removal or relocation of utilities along Sauk Trail Road.

### Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

As part of the MAP-21 program, Congress created the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), which provides funding for non-motorized transportation projects. Projects range from on-street bike facilities to multi-use paths and sidewalk infill programs to Safe Routes to School projects. TAP funds are administered by CMAP through a formal application process.

#### Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

SRTS, a program TAP, has provided funding for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bike to school, including:

- Sidewalk improvements;
- Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements;
- Pedestrian and bicycle-crossing improvements;
- On-street bicycle facilities;
- Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Secure bicycle parking facilities; and
- Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.

### Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has been the administrator of CMAQ funds for the northeastern Illinois region. CMAP has supported a wide range of projects through the CMAQ program including improvements to bicycle facilities, transit facilities, intersections, sidewalk improvements, and signal timing. Funds have also been used to make transportation improvements to eliminate traffic bottlenecks, limit diesel emissions, and to create promotional campaigns to enhance use of transit and bicycles.

#### Surface Transportation Program (STP)

STP funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway-related items. Projects in this funding category require a local sponsor and are selected based on, among other factors, a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors. STP funds are used for a variety of project types including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration; widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements; traffic signal improvements; and green infrastructure funding.

### Illinois Bicycle Path Program

The Illinois Bicycle Path Program is a grants program administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that provides funding assistance up to 50% to acquire and develop land for public bicycle path purposes. Funded by a percentage of vehicle title fees, maximum grant awards are limited to \$200,000.



## Transit-Oriented Development Funding

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), in conjunction with the Regional Transit-Oriented Development Working Group, provides a comprehensive list of funding sources available for transit-oriented development (TOD). The list includes local, state, and federal resources, as well as private foundation grants. The Village should periodically review the RTA list of TOD funding sources to understand application deadlines and eligibility requirements.

## Parks & Open Space Funding

### ***Illinois Department of Natural Resources***

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers several grants-in-aid programs to help municipalities and other local agencies provide a number of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The programs operate on a cost reimbursement basis to a government or not-for-profit organization. Local governments can receive one grant per program per year, with no restriction on the number of local governments that can be funded for a given location. IDNR Grants are organized into three major categories: Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD); Boat Access Area Development (BAAD); and the Illinois Trails Grants Program.

### ***Open Space Land Acquisition & Development (OSLAD)***

The OSLAD program awards up to 50% of project costs up to a maximum of \$750,000 for acquisition and \$400,000 for development/renovation of such recreational facilities such as playgrounds, outdoor nature interpretive areas, campgrounds and fishing piers, park roads and paths, and beaches. IDNR administers five grant programs to provide financial assistance for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of trails that are used for public recreation uses.

OSLAD funding could be used to implement several recommendations included in this Plan, including the development of new open spaces in future growth areas, the improvement of existing parks and recreation facilities, and the expansion of Richton Park's trail network in order to make connections to local amenities and regional trail systems.

### ***Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)***

LWCF grants are available to municipalities, counties, and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 55% match. All funded projects are taken under perpetuity by the National Park Service and must only be used for outdoor recreational purposes.

### ***Recreational Trails Program (RTP)***

The Recreational Trails Program is a federally funded grant program for trail-related land acquisition, development, or restoration. The grants are awarded based on the results of a competitive scoring process and the application's suitability under MAP-21. A minimum 20% match is required by the applicant. Grants are to be used for motorized or non-motorized trail development, renovation, and/or preservation. All projects must be maintained for 25 years. Eligible applicants include municipalities, counties, schools, non-profits, and for-profit businesses.