



Village of Winthrop Harbor

Station Area and Streetscape Plan

Village of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois
Regional Transportation Authority

January 2005



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan* for the Metra Station area was prepared through the efforts of the Village of Winthrop Harbor, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra, and the project planning consultants, HNTB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group. Many citizens, staff and officials of the Village of Winthrop Harbor participated in interviews and two Public Forums in the Spring and Summer of 2004. Their involvement and insights are sincerely appreciated.

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FOREWORD

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

This study was a collaborative effort sponsored by the RTA and led by the Village of Winthrop Harbor. A study Steering Committee was formed to guide the research and provide input throughout the course of the study. The Steering Committee included the RTA, Metra (Commuter Rail), Pace (Suburban Bus) and key stakeholders representing the Village of Winthrop Harbor.

I.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Village of Winthrop Harbor, with assistance from the Regional Transportation Authority's Regional Technical Assistance Program, completed the *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan*. The *Plan* identifies transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the vicinity of the Metra commuter rail station and recommends strategies that the Village may use to encourage and guide future development in accordance with the community aspirations and vision reflected in the *Plan*.

The study area encompasses publicly owned significant natural areas, commercial, and residential land uses. The natural areas, including the North Point Marina and the Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, are an important resource for both residents and visitors to Winthrop Harbor and serve as a backdrop for the proposed mixed-use development that is recommended in the *Plan*. The downtown area, which includes several retail buildings, a community center, and the Metra Station, serve as the focal point of activity within the Village. However, due to the lack of pedestrian connections and synergism between the Village's commercial area, the train station and the North Point Marina, the downtown has not benefited as much as it should from these nearby facilities resulting in a downtown which needs physical and economic rejuvenation.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Plan* makes recommendations for the short-term (5-10 years), referred to as Concept A-Near Term Plan, and the long-term (up to 20 years), referred to as Concept B-Long Term Plan. The Concept A-Near Term Plan recommendations are intended to spur development in the downtown and adjacent Southeast Development areas, while enhancing the Metra Station and pedestrian access between the downtown, Metra Station and Marina. The recommendations are supported by community input and a market assessment study. Development is focused on land that is currently vacant, government owned, or for sale. Near-term recommendations include:

- 30,000 square feet of new retail
- 118 condo units, some in mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail
- Improvements to the Metra Station, including a new warming shelter and an expanded commuter parking lot

- Urban design improvements, including landscaping, decorative paving and street lamps, and new sidewalk benches

The Concept B-Long Term Plan recommendations are intended to build upon earlier development, meet long-term demand for housing and retail, and more fully realize the community vision. Long-term recommendations include:

- 26,000 additional square feet of new retail, primarily at the northeast corner of Main and Sheridan
- 32 additional condo units in the downtown area, mostly on land that is currently single-family residential
- The creation of a community plaza in the center of the new downtown development
- Continued urban design enhancements

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of *Plan* recommendations requires strong Village action and support. The Village should first establish an Implementation Task Force. The task force will be comprised of Village representatives who will start the implementation process by assisting developers, reviewing Village codes and ordinances, and by seeking funding for *Plan* implementation. Implementation strategies include:

- Enacting and enforcing zoning and design codes
- Implementing urban design recommendations in new public infrastructure
- Providing development incentives, including public/private partnerships with developers
- Investigating the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing district
- Re-establishing a Chamber of Commerce to promote downtown businesses
- Hiring a part-time Economic Development Director

II. INTRODUCTION

In February 2004, the Village of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois began the important process of planning for the future of the area of the Village immediately surrounding the Metra Station on the Metra/Union Pacific-North (UP-N) Line. This *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan* is the result of a community-driven, consensus-based strategy for capitalizing on the assets of downtown Winthrop Harbor, including the Metra Station area.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was undertaken to identify transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the area surrounding the Winthrop Harbor Metra commuter rail station. The station is located at the intersection of Main Street and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, east of Sheridan Road.

The Metra/Union Pacific-North Line provides service from Kenosha, Wisconsin to the City of Chicago, terminating at the Ogilvie Transportation Center in downtown Chicago with stops in Lake and Cook Counties. The Winthrop Harbor Station is one of 27 stations along the line. Pace currently does not operate bus service in Winthrop Harbor.

In pursuing a TOD study for this station area, the Village of Winthrop Harbor wishes to develop a revitalization concept utilizing the principles of TOD, including mixed uses, higher density residential development, and creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

STUDY AREA

The study area is depicted in *Figure 1: Study Area Boundary*. The study area encompasses properties fronting onto Main Street (7th Street) from the Sheridan Road intersection on the west to North Point Marina on the east. The study area also includes Sheridan Road, one block north and one block south of Main Street. Included in the study area is Village owned property, state and county owned property, privately owned property, and public rights-of-way. The study area is approximately 593 acres in

Figure 1:
Study Area
Boundary



-  Study Area Boundary
-  Village Boundary



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size. Unique to the study and study area is the fact that Winthrop Harbor is home to North Point Marina, the largest marina on the Great Lakes. North Point Marina is a publicly owned facility, owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Since the Marina was constructed in 1990, the Village has hoped to capitalize on the economic benefits of the over 127,000 monthly visitors to the community every boating season. This study takes into consideration the relationship between the Village and the Marina and capitalizes on the expected economic relationship when developing the *Station Area Plan* concepts.

STATION AREA PLANNING PROCESS

HNTB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group assisted the RTA and the Village during the planning process. A Village-appointed *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan* Steering Committee worked closely with the consulting team throughout the process, providing ongoing feedback and direction to the consulting team. The Committee was comprised of representatives of the Village Board and Commissions, local businesses, local realtors, local developers, residents, North Point Marina, the RTA, Metra and Pace (see Acknowledgments for a complete listing).

Key activities and milestones during the planning process included the following:

- Data collection, which included surveys of existing land use and building conditions, an assessment of existing physical and landscape amenities within public rights-of-way, and an assessment of the current Winthrop Harbor Metra Station. The natural areas proximate to the station and the North Point Marina were also part of the study. The surveys and research were conducted during the Spring of 2004.
- A market study was conducted to determine the existing and potential market area for downtown Winthrop Harbor and to analyze the potential for increased residential, retail and commercial activity within the downtown in the future.
- A Vision Charette was held on June 7, 2004 to get public opinion on potential physical changes within the downtown.
- Based on input from the Vision Charette, two alternative concept plans were developed and presented to the community at an Open House/Public Forum on August 31, 2004. These concept plans included recommendations regarding future land use, conservation and redevelopment opportunities, transit facility improvements, and urban design and landscaping ideas to visually unify and beautify the area. A Vision Statement and a Visual Preference Survey to measure the public's reaction to various styles and densities of commercial and residential buildings were also presented at the meeting.
- Following comments by the Steering Committee and community, refinements were made to the concept plans, resulting in preferred station area development

concepts. These included streetscape concepts and illustrative sketches of key improvements within downtown Winthrop Harbor.

- An implementation strategy was developed to provide guidance to the Village and its partners as implementation of key *Plan* strategies is undertaken.

It is expected that the Village will work toward implementing key aspects of the *Plan*, to the ultimate benefit of both the Village and the regional transit system.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WINTHROP HARBOR STATION AREA PLAN

Chapter I provides a brief Executive Summary, summarizing key recommendations and implementation strategies. *Chapter III: Planning and Design Influences* provides a summary of the socioeconomic, market and physical characteristics of the planning context in the Village of Winthrop Harbor. *Chapter III* concludes with a discussion of issues and planning opportunities within the station area. *Chapter IV* presents a Vision for Downtown Winthrop Harbor, along with Planning Principles and Planning Goals and Strategies that form the basis for the urban design framework and concept plans. The station area development concepts are described in detail in *Chapter V*. The document concludes with *Chapter VI*, which outlines roles and responsibilities for *Plan* implementation and potential funding sources.

Previous reports produced during the planning process can be found within the *Appendix*, provided under separate cover. The following documents are reprinted in their entirety within the *Appendix* for ease of future reference:

- Inventory and Analysis Memorandum
- Market Assessment-Village of Winthrop Harbor (prepared by Goodman Williams Group)
- Visual Preference Survey Results

III. PLANNING AND DESIGN INFLUENCES

This chapter of the *Plan* summarizes relevant background information compiled throughout the planning process. The Chapter is organized into four sections: Socioeconomic Overview, Market Potential, Existing Conditions Overview, and Issues and Opportunities Summary. The data presented in this chapter serves as the basis for developing the *Station Area Plan*.

SOCIOECONOMIC OVERVIEW

This section summarizes pertinent demographic, housing, and economic characteristics of the Village and provides the socioeconomic context that supports the recommendations of the *Plan*. Further detail regarding many of these characteristics is available in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum* and the *Market Assessment* report included in the *Appendix*.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

(SOURCE=U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, YEAR 2000)

Population: 6,650
Median Age: 36.2
Total Households: 2,399
Average Household Size: 2.83
Percent of Single Family Housing Units: 89%
Owner Occupied Housing Units: 84%
Median Housing Value: \$143,900
Highest Educational Attainment:
 High School Graduation: 72%
 Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 18%
Occupations of Residents Over Age 16:
 Sales/service: 41%
 Management/professional: 29%
 Production/transportation: 18%
 Construction/maintenance: 11%
 Farming/fishing/forestry: 1%
Percent Unemployed: 2%
Median Household Income: \$62,795
Median Family Income: \$69,442

Number of Vehicles/Household:

0 Vehicles: 4%

1 Vehicle: 24%

2 or More Vehicles: 72%

MARKET POTENTIAL

This section summarizes the market analysis conducted by Goodman Williams Group. The full report is included in the *Appendix*.

A. COMMERCIAL MARKET OVERVIEW

Businesses currently operating in Winthrop Harbor depend on patronage from the boaters at North Point Marina, local residents, and the growing residential population in surrounding communities. With almost 1,500 slips for transient boaters and seasonal leases, North Point Marina is the largest marina on the Great Lakes, yet area businesses have not been as successful as they might be in maximizing the economic benefit from the Marina.

“Expenditure potential” measures the dollars available within a defined trade area to support retail sales. For purposes of this study, it is assumed that the primary trade area is a five-mile radius from downtown Winthrop Harbor. The size of this trade area reflects the area’s low density and residents willingness to drive relatively long distances to shop. The five mile radius extends into Kenosha County, Wisconsin and includes portions of the municipalities of Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, as well as Winthrop Harbor, Zion, and Beach Park, Illinois.

The estimated expenditure potential for boaters and residents within the five mile trade area has been translated into square feet of retail uses which could be captured by existing or new establishments in Winthrop Harbor. This square footage has been broken down into types of establishments as follows: food and beverage consumed at home; eating and drinking places; miscellaneous retail; and marine related supplies. In order to maximize year round sales, businesses will have to draw from both boaters and area residents.

Food and Beverage Consumed at Home: The combined expenditure potential could support a total of nearly 27,000 square feet of space selling food and beverage items to be consumed at home or on a boat. The existing grocery store and liquor stores have a combined total of 17,000 square feet, leaving a current market potential of 10,000 square feet of space selling food and beverages. Potentially, three to four smaller food stores would be appropriate along Main Street, including the following:

high quality meat or seafood store; wine and cheese store; bakery or bagel store; ice cream and candy shop; and coffee shop.

Eating and Drinking Places: The estimated \$7 million in combined boater and resident expenditure potential could support approximately 8,000 square feet of additional restaurant space in Winthrop Harbor, which translates into two or three restaurants.

Miscellaneous Retail: This category includes both specialty retail and convenience items, and encompasses seasonal apparel, small housewares, and household items, gifts and personal care products. The market could support up to 5,000 square feet of space in two to three small stores.

Marine-Related Supplies: Analysis suggests that the boater population could support slightly more than 5,000 square feet of marine-related supplies. This demand is currently being satisfied by West Marine Products and Skipper Bud's Ship Store within the study area.

B. RESIDENTIAL MARKET OVERVIEW

The Village has had a moratorium on multifamily developments since the 1960s. This moratorium was lifted in Spring 2004 creating an opportunity for condominium development in the study area.

It is thought that within the study area, there is the potential for two groups of condominium buyers:

- Boaters who are looking for a second home near the Marina
- Households without children who commute to work via Metra and enjoy an active lifestyle afforded by a waterfront community and extensive natural area

It is estimated that the market could support a total of 75 to 100 units built throughout the study area over the next ten years. Absorption would probably not exceed 10-12 units per year.

The potential for both the commercial and residential market is addressed in the station area concepts, presented later in this report.

EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

Physical planning influences, both internal and external to the study area, were an important consideration in the preparation of the *Plan*. These include the location context, the existing land uses, natural features, and transit, access, and circulation

issues. The most pertinent information is documented below. Additional information on existing conditions in the study area can be found in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum* in the *Appendix*.

A. LOCATION CONTEXT

The *Plan* process analyzed elements external to the study area in order to determine influences on market shed, tourism, and access. *Figure 2: Location Context Map* identifies some external factors including roadways, employment centers, and attractions including:

- Regional destinations, employment and retail centers including the Midwestern Regional Medical Center, Abbott Labs, the Waukegan Regional Airport, Great Lakes Training Center, Six Flags Great America, and Gurnee Mills Mall all in Illinois and the Pleasant Prairie Industrial Park and the Route 50 Outlet Mall in Wisconsin
- Natural areas including the Illinois Beach State Park, Sterling Lake Forest Preserve, Van Patten Woods Forest Preserve, Wadsworth Savanna Forest Preserve, Fossland Park and Village Park
- The regional arterials and interstate roads which provide regional access including Interstate 94, IL Route 131, IL Route 173/Rosecrans Road, IL Route 137/Sheridan Road, U.S. Route 41, and WI Route 50 in Wisconsin

B. EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land use is graphically depicted in *Figure 3: Existing Land Use*, and briefly described below. The existing land use serves as the footprint or the basis for determining the future land use and redevelopment recommendations that are exhibited in the *Plan*.

Single Family Residential: Single family homes in the study area are located primarily along Main Street, east of Fulton Avenue.

Multi-Family Residential: Two, three story apartment buildings are located on the west side of Sheridan Road, north of Main Street. An older duplex building is located on the east side of Sheridan Road, south of Main Street. Outside the study area in The Pines subdivision there is a low rise condominium building.

Commercial –Retail: Retail businesses are located along Main Street and Sheridan Road within the study area. A small strip center, Marina Plaza, is located at the southeast corner of Main and Sheridan. Marina Plaza includes a restaurant and a marine supply store. Across the street on the north side of Main Street is a traditional styled row of commercial buildings. Additional commercial-retail buildings are located

Figure 2:
Location
Context Map



-  Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Bike/Hike Trail
-  Metra Station
-  Regional Destination
-  Open Space
-  Areas of Interest

- 1: North Point Marina and Spring Bluff Forest Preserve
- 2: Fossland Park
- 3: Village Park



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Figure 3:
Existing
Land Use



-  Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Single Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Commercial - Retail
-  Commercial - Service
-  Commercial - Restaurant
-  Public/Institutional
-  Parking
-  Park/Open Space
-  Vacant
-  Marina



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along the east side of Sheridan Road, north and south of Main Street. Retail businesses along Sheridan Road include a bait shop and a computer store. A new strip center is located at the northwest corner of Main and Sheridan Road. It is not yet occupied.

Commercial – Service: The study area has several service oriented establishments, both along Main Street and along Sheridan Road including the Bank of Waukegan, a real estate office, two pet grooming stores, two hair salons, and a heating and cooling service company.

Commercial – Restaurant: There are four restaurants in the study area. The Dock Side Deli Restaurant is located on the north side of Main Street within the row of commercial buildings. The Blue Lagoon Restaurant is located within Marina Plaza. The Tavern Bar and Restaurant is located in a stand alone building on the west side of Sheridan Road near the corner of 8th Avenue. The Tropics Restaurant is located at the Marina.

Public/Institutional: The study area has four properties considered to be public/institutional; the Metra Station; the post office, located on the north side of Main Street, on the west end of the row of commercial buildings; the community center on Main Street, east of the municipal parking lot; and the Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA) building which is located immediately west of the Metra commuter parking lot and station facility.

Open Space: A large portion of the study area is open space, including property owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Village, and the Lake County Forest Preserve District. This open space is primarily located east of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and described in detail in Section D below.

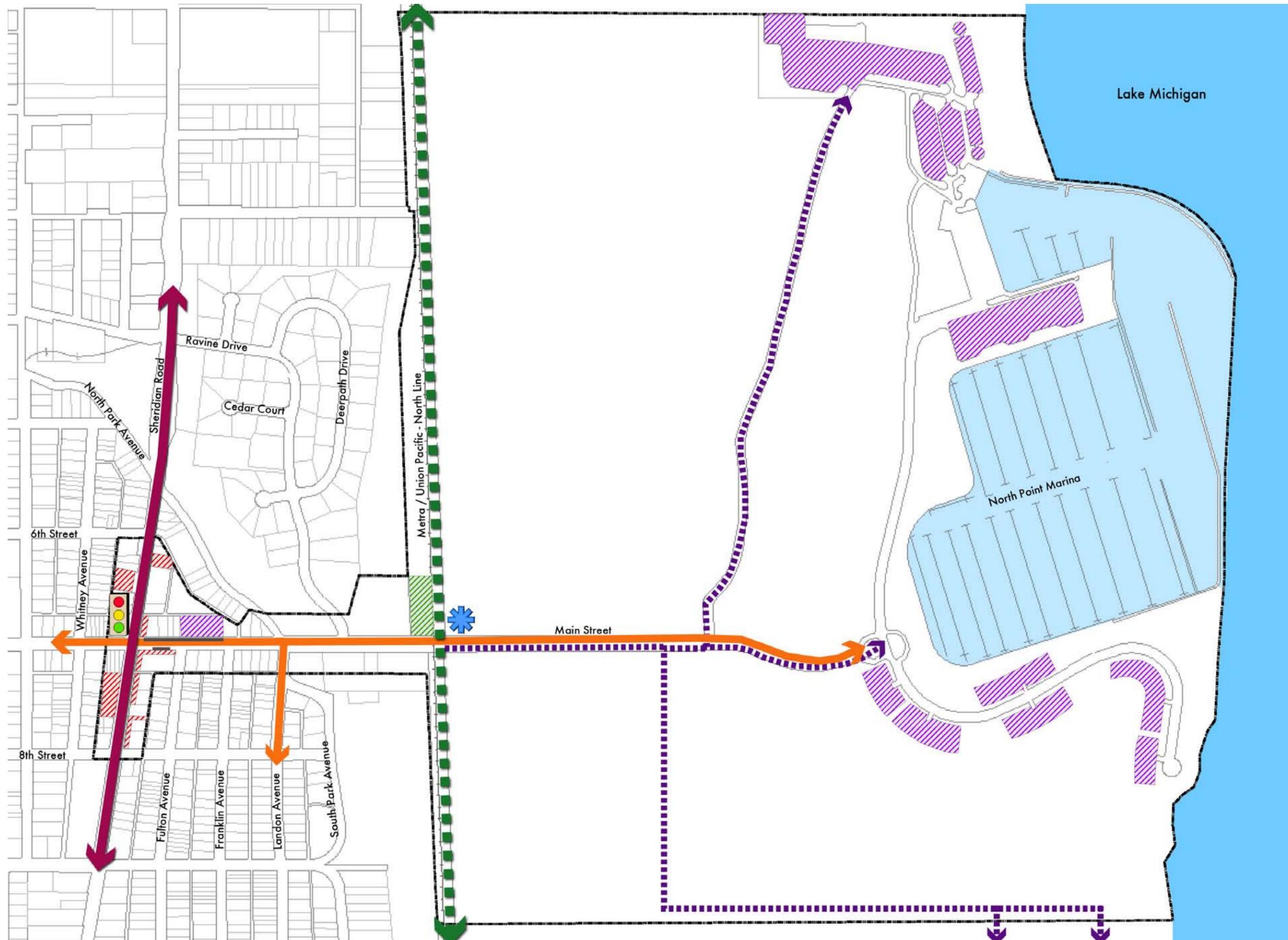
C. TRANSIT, ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

This section of the report summarizes existing Metra transit service to the Village of Winthrop Harbor, along with an assessment of vehicular access, circulation and parking facilities within the study area. An understanding of current access, access issues, as well as transit facilities and services, is essential for the formation of the *Plan*. *Figure 4: Transit, Access and Circulation* shows transit and roadway facilities, relevant to the study.

Transit Facilities and Services

Service levels, ridership and origin-destination data were analyzed to determine the potential impact that transit facilities would play in redevelopment scenarios.

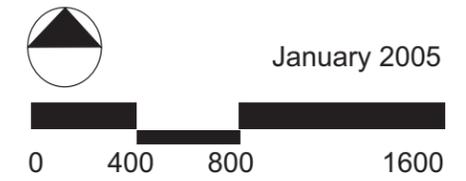
Figure 4:
Transit, Access,
and Circulation



-  Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Metra/Union Pacific North Line
-  Major Arterial Roadway
-  Major Collector Roadway
-  Bike/Hike Trail
-  On-Street Parking
-  Commercial Parking
-  Metra Parking
-  Public/Institutional Parking



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Metra Service: Commuter train service is provided to Winthrop Harbor by Metra through a purchase of service agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad. Winthrop Harbor is the 25th station furthest from downtown; Kenosha, Wisconsin is the next station to the north and last station on the Metra/Union Pacific-North Line.

In general, inbound service (Winthrop Harbor to Chicago) is provided every half-hour during the morning rush hour service between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.. There are a total of six rush hour trains and four other trains throughout the afternoon and evening traveling inbound to Chicago. Outbound service (from Chicago to Winthrop Harbor) during the evening rush hour operates every half-hour between 4:13 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.. There are a total of five evening rush hour trains and two other trains in the morning and two in the late evening traveling outbound from Chicago. Weekend service is provided by five inbound and five outbound trains throughout the day on Saturday, and three inbound and three outbound trains on Sundays. In comparison, weekday service at other stations along the line, such as Waukegan, are served by twenty-five inbound and twenty-five outbound trains throughout the day.

Service to Kenosha, Winthrop Harbor, and Zion to the south is reduced due to limited storage capacity for trains at the Kenosha yard. Metra is unable to store enough trains at Kenosha to provide more service to these stations. South of Zion, in Waukegan, there is a large yard facility to store trains traveling between Waukegan and Chicago.

Metra Ridership: An analysis of the weekday ridership counts at Winthrop Harbor indicates that the station has low ridership, ranking third lowest along the Metra/Union Pacific-North Line stations. This can be due in part to the limited parking facilities available to the public in close proximity to the train station as well as the limited train schedule. Table 1 summarizes the results of a ridership count conducted by Metra in the Fall of 2002. Of the riders using the station, the vast majority travel to Chicago during the morning peak periods and return to Winthrop Harbor during the evening peak period. As shown, only five percent traveling inbound did so off peak. Eleven percent traveling outbound from Chicago and returning to Chicago did so during off peak hours.

Table 1
Winthrop Harbor Station Boardings and Alightings by Time of Day and Direction
(Fall 2002)

Time of Day	Inbound (To Chicago)		Outbound (From Chicago)	
	On	Off	On	Off
AM Peak	72	1	1	0
Midday	3	0	0	3
PM Peak	0	0	0	64
Evening	1	2	0	5
Totals	76	3	1	72

Table 2 indicates station boardings over time data for Winthrop Harbor and adjacent stations. Boardings for Winthrop Harbor more than tripled over the last twenty years, although there is only an average of 77 passengers per day boarding at Winthrop Harbor. Metra systemwide counts show that an average station on the Metra system boards over 650 passengers daily.

Table 2
Weekday Station Boardings Over Time

Station	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2002
Waukegan	553	614	644	694	780	752	841	841	925	893
Zion	81	67	85	78	92	100	94	91	93	103
Winthrop Harbor	21	18	24	17	28	34	57	47	49	77
Kenosha	142	169	208	207	296	308	264	306	301	341

Metra Passenger Origin and Destination: According to an onboard passenger survey conducted by Metra in Fall 2002, approximately 40% of the commuters that boarded the trains in Winthrop Harbor were residents of the Village. Another 24% resided in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin and 22% resided in Kenosha. The remaining were scattered from several nearby municipalities including Zion. Sixty-six percent of the destinations were to downtown Chicago, 12% were to Evanston, 7% to Lake Forest, and 4% to Highland Park.

Pace Service: There is no Pace bus service in Winthrop Harbor. Pace Route 571 operates via Sheridan Road in Zion to the Zion/Winthrop Harbor border. There are no plans to extend this service or introduce any new service in Winthrop Harbor in the future according to the Pace Vision 2020 Plan.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Roadways: State Highway 137/Sheridan Road is the main arterial in the study area and a state route. Sheridan Road provides a connection between Winthrop Harbor and the State of Wisconsin to the north, and the communities to the south. Main Street (7th Street) is a major collector street. Average daily traffic (ADT) counts (year 2003) for Sheridan Road in Winthrop Harbor are 12,500 vehicles. There are no average daily traffic counts available for Main Street although counts have been done for the traffic at the entrance to North Point Marina. Average daily traffic counts from the year 2003 vary from 442 vehicles during the weekday and 838 on the weekends in January compared to a high average weekday traffic in the summer months of 3,360 vehicles and weekend traffic of 7,175 vehicles. A summary of average daily traffic by month can be found in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum*.

Traffic statistics provided key background data in developing land use recommendations for the *Plan*. Street character and street traffic, such as a major arterial versus a minor street, is an underlying factor when planning for future land uses and streetscape elements.

North Point Marina Shuttle Service: The Village of Winthrop Harbor offers a van shuttle service, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., during weekends from April to November, between the North Point Marina and surrounding areas. A log from the 2003 season indicates that trips were made between the Marina and various locations including Harbor Foods grocery store, Harbor Liquors, and the Blue Lagoon Restaurant in Winthrop Harbor, McDonalds and Dairy Queen in Zion and various other locations. It is estimated that twenty five percent of the trips are made outside the Village limits. A summary of the trip destinations is listed in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum*. This van service is one of the many marketing tools that the Village can use to promote current and future retail uses within the Village.

Biking/Hiking Paths: There are limited established biking and hiking trails in the study area. On the IDNR property, a hiking path provides a connection from the Illinois Beach State Park to Main Street. On the north side of Main Street, within the Spring Bluff Forest Preserve, a former roadway has been closed off and is now used primarily as a hiking path. Additional biking and hiking paths are introduced in the

Plan as a way to enhance pedestrian circulation throughout the study area and improve recreational opportunities.

Parking: There are various parking lots affiliated with the commercial uses along Sheridan Road and Main Street. These lots are typically located either next to or in front of the building they serve. On Main Street, the post office and Marina Plaza each have a parking lot dedicated to their customers. Additional on street parking along Main Street is also provided. A village lot which can accommodate approximately 60 vehicles is located next to the community center. It can be used for overflow parking for the Metra Station. There is no charge to use this lot.

The Metra Station has two parking lots, both located to the west of the platforms. The one lot furthest west holds 48 vehicles. The existing lot is 100% utilized by Metra commuters. Metra is expanding this lot by an additional 57 spaces for a total capacity of 105 spaces. A smaller lot closer to the station has four handicapped spaces and five unrestricted spaces. There is no charge to commuters to use these parking lots.

North Point Marina has its own supply of parking and assigns the lots according to types of use. Parking supply is reported to be adequate in the summer months.

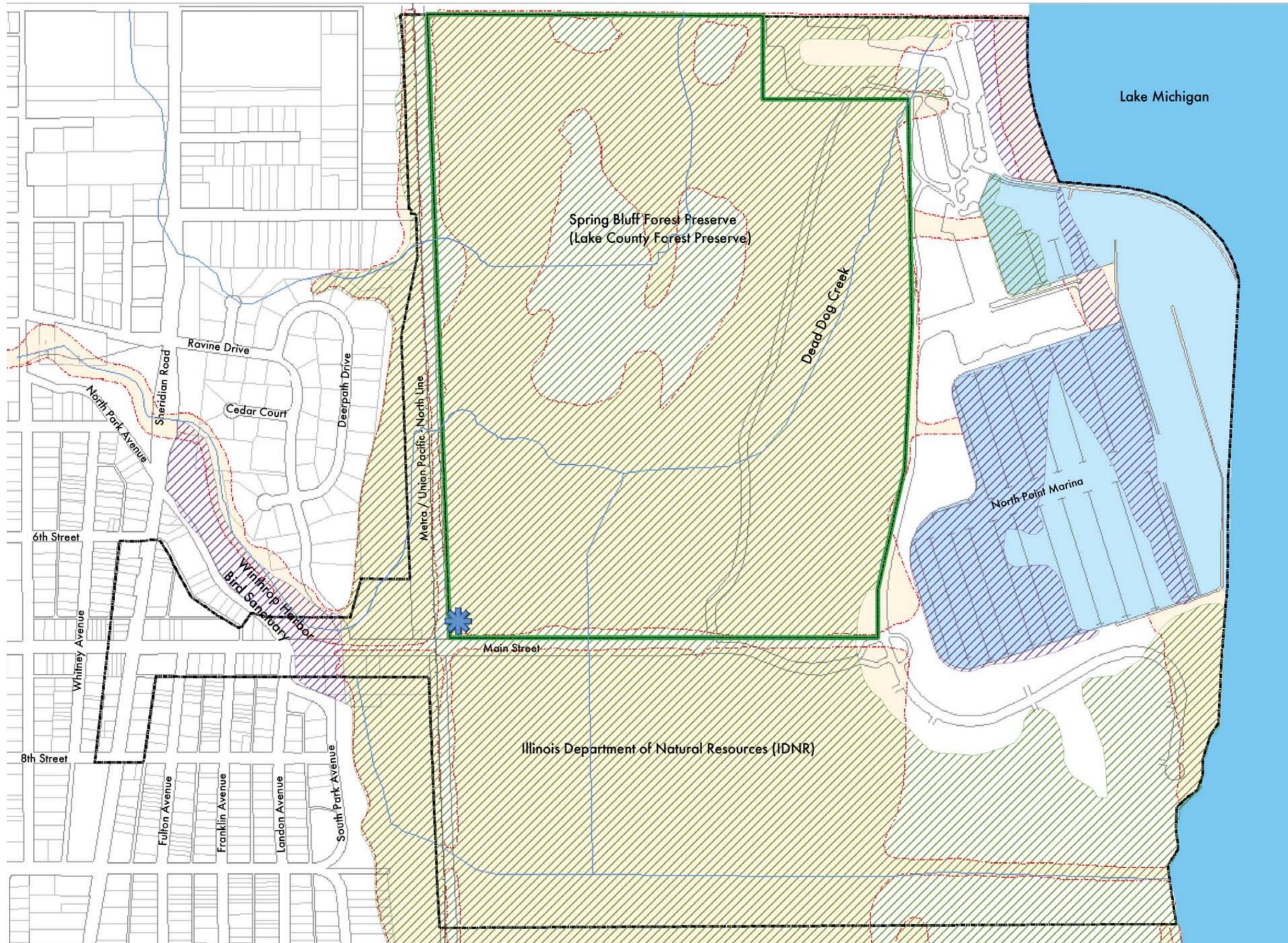
In general, except for the need for expanded parking near the Metra Station, there does not appear to be an immediate need for additional parking in the study area and therefore, no additional parking (except for Metra facilities) has been accommodated in either *Plan* concept.

D. NATURAL AREAS

Approximately one half of the study area is open space and publicly owned land, owned by the Village, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) or the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). These lands are a very unique amenity in the study area and are a source of significant tourism which could support future redevelopment efforts in the downtown.

Spring Bluff Nature Preserve and Winthrop Harbor Bird Sanctuary: *Figure 5 Environmental and Natural Features* depicts the nature preserve and the bird sanctuary property. The 226 acre Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District, is located on the north side of Main Street, east of the Metra Station. Its status as a nature preserve makes it a legally dedicated area that has been recognized for its natural significance and protected by law for scientific and educational purposes. The land is protected from development and is not included in any redevelopment scenarios.

Figure 5:
Environmental
and Natural
Features



-  Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Stream/Creek
-  Forest Preserve
-  Floodplain
-  Wetlands (LCWI: Lake County Wetland Inventory)
-  Wetlands (ADID: Advanced Identification)
-  Marina



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The Winthrop Harbor Bird Sanctuary located at Main Street to the west of The Pines subdivision is owned by the Village. The Bird Sanctuary is within the wooded ravine area created by Dead Dog Creek. Given its status as a bird sanctuary, it is considered to be protected from development and not shown in any development scenarios.

North Point Marina: North Point Marina is the largest marina on the Great Lakes. Construction of North Point Marina was completed in March 1990 by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). In the development of the Marina, prairie and wetland areas have been preserved through sensitive design and proper management practices. As a result, the Marina is unique from other marinas because it has a natural and lush recreational setting. The Marina facility is 140 acres with 70 acres on water and 70 acres on land. The Marina offers 1,478 slips for seasonal leases for boats ranging from 30 to 60 feet and end ties for boats up to 120 feet long.

Facilities available at the Marina include beaches, a playground, fishing pier and fish cleaning facility, restrooms, laundry facilities, parking, a restaurant, a yacht club and Skipper Buds. Skipper Buds offers boat and parts sales as well as indoor boat storage facilities. The Marina is open year round; the boating season is 22 weeks from mid-April to mid-October. Visitors number between 127,000 to 146,000 per month during the peak summer months.

North Point Marina, and the resultant tourism, is a driving force in the potential for increased economic development in the downtown area. The Market Assessment study concentrated on the expenditure potential of the Marina visitors and boat owners, as well as the residents within a five mile trade area. Although, the Marina operations are seasonal, the amount of visitors it could attract to the downtown during the peak summer months is a critical factor in determining future commercial development in the study area.

North Point Marina does have the potential for some redevelopment efforts, such as a hotel and restaurant, but this development would need to be initiated by the State of Illinois as it is owned and operated by IDNR. Such redevelopment efforts would require the State to enter into ground leases with private entities that would construct and operate these facilities. Due to this unique situation, the IDNR land has not been included in the development scenarios for the *Station Area Plan*.

Water Bodies: The Dead Dog Creek meanders throughout the study area. It bisects various properties including the bird sanctuary, some private residential areas, the IDNR property and the LCFPD property. Field observation and observation from an aerial map indicates that the creek bed is relatively dry. In the residential areas, the creek bed has carved out a ravine that is now wooded.

Lake Michigan anchors the study area to the east.

Wetlands: The majority of the land owned by the IDNR and by the Lake County Forest Preserve District is wetlands per 2002 mapping information from the Lake County Stormwater Management Agency. This agency uses a wetland classification system that is based on field observations and data collection. The wetland classification system consists of two categories: LCWI and ADID. The Lake County Wetland Inventory (LCWI) is a classification for lesser quality wetlands. Advanced Identification (ADID) wetlands are wetlands which are of a higher quality and grade. As Figure 5 indicates, the majority of the wetlands present in the study area are considered to be the higher quality ADID wetlands. These ADID wetlands also extend west of the Lake County and IDNR properties into the Metra Station area, on the land where the ESDA facility is and on the privately held property that is for sale on the south side of Main Street, west of the tracks. LCWI wetlands are observant within the bird sanctuary as well as along the shoreline and beach area of the North Point Marina.

The presence of wetlands, primarily high quality wetlands, will limit the amount of redevelopment acreage of the privately held property on the south side of Main Street. The potential limitation is reflected in the *Plan*. A technical analysis will need to be completed before the full impact of the wetlands on the development potential can be identified.

Floodplains: Floodplains as indicated in the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) are shown on Figure 5. Almost all of the natural areas within the study area are considered to be in the floodplain. The floodplain extends to the ravine area on the north side of Main Street where it parallels the dry creek bed, as well as to the privately owned parcel on the south side of Main Street, west of the tracks. The residential and commercial areas west of South Park Avenue are not within the floodplain. A technical analysis is needed to determine the full impact of the floodplain on future development in the area.

Topography and Drainage: In general, except for Dead Dog Creek ravine area, the topography of the study area is relatively flat.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

Given the data collected for this study, as well as the results of discussions with the Steering Committee and the public, an initial summary of the key “issues and opportunities” within the study area have been identified and listed below. Issues and

opportunities have been identified in three categories: Land Use and Redevelopment; Transit, Access and Circulation; and Urban Design.

A. Issues Summary

The following were considered to be key “issues” in the study area:

Land Use and Redevelopment

- Lack of desirable base of businesses (e.g. tourist based retail)
- Seasonal opportunities for businesses
- Not a large inventory of property to develop
- No unified “vision” for study area
- The lack of connectivity between the downtown area, the Metra Station and the North Point Marina
- Previous moratorium on multi-family development
- Balance between single family housing and commercial development
- No economic incentives in place for redevelopment
- Lack of recreational opportunities on state and county owned land
- The majority of the study area is within a protected natural area

Transit, Access and Circulation

- Perceived traffic issues on Sheridan Road and Main Street
- Minimal Metra train schedule
- Lack of amenities at the Metra Station including a station building and adequate parking
- Parking availability to serve future development
- Lack of contiguous sidewalks in the study area, particularly along Sheridan Road
- Lack of biking and hiking paths throughout natural areas

Urban Design

- No funding to implement proposed streetscape program
- No distinguishing or consistent physical character or design theme
- Weak appearance/maintenance of some commercial and residential properties
- Lack of identification signage for downtown area or North Point Marina

B. Opportunities Summary

The following were considered to be key “opportunities” within the study area:

Land Use and Redevelopment

- Vacant and Village owned properties within study area

- Recent approvals of the R6 and PUD zoning ordinances to allow for multi-family development
- Economic opportunities associated with North Point Marina
- Benefits of significant natural areas

Transit, Access and Circulation

- Proposed improvements to Metra Station including a larger parking lot and a warming shelter
- Proposed improvements to roadways within the North Point Marina

Urban Design

- Existing mature trees within the study area, particularly within the Bird Sanctuary area
- Natural areas and Lake Michigan that serve as attractive amenities
- Ample parkways along Sheridan Road and Main Street to accommodate streetscape and pedestrian amenities

IV. A VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement has been drafted and is presented below. The Vision Statement, a “Vision for Our Downtown” has been written as a retrospective from the year 2020 looking back and describes life in the downtown area as a result of the implementation of the *Station Area Plan*. It has been based on previous discussions with the Steering Committee, key person interviews, and a Vision Charette which was opened to the public.

A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN WINTHROP HARBOR

Winthrop Harbor has a thriving and vibrant downtown. The attractive landscaping, decorative streetlights, benches, and sidewalks along Main Street and Sheridan Road allow residents and tourist to enjoy a casual stroll through the downtown. New retail buildings have been constructed and the older buildings have received façade and signage improvements. A “harbor theme” is reflected throughout the downtown. Attractive signs direct visitors from Sheridan Road to the North Point Marina area and natural areas.

Several businesses that cater to boaters and residents alike are in existence, including a coffee shop, bakery, ice cream and fudge shop, wine and cheese shop, novelty store, and specialty grocery store. Restaurants including a steak and seafood restaurant are also being patronized.

There is a variety of housing available in the downtown area. Condominium buildings have been constructed. These condos allow “empty nesters” as well as boat owners an alternative lifestyle near the downtown and Marina. One of the houses along Main Street has been expanded to become a bed and breakfast.

The Metra Station is a vital part of the downtown area. Residential and commercial development in the station area, increased travel to the Chicago Central Business District and use of the station by Marina visitors has resulted in a larger station facility with a vendor and additional parking facilities. Train service has been enhanced to accommodate the thriving downtown.

There are many activities available for residents at North Point Marina. Symphonic, jazz and blues concerts are performed in the concert pavilion. Art and craft fairs are

held annually. A bike rental and jet ski vendor booth allows visitors recreational opportunities. In the winter, the same vendor rents out cross country skis for visitors to ski in the natural areas. Additional bike and hiking trails have been constructed to allow a continuous path throughout the Village with connections to outlying communities.

Visitors can stay at the Marina hotel and eat at a fine dining establishment overlooking the harbor. The hotel offers a weekend dinner theater package, a swimming pool, and other amenities. A small maritime museum is also on site to attract visitors. The Marina has become a year round revenue generator and entertainment center.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

In support of the Vision Statement, Planning Principles have been prepared for the downtown. These principles embrace several key elements of the Vision, and which can be implemented through the Planning Goals and Strategies that follow.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Develop the station area as a more economically viable area encouraging a mutually supportive mix of land uses.
- Build upon the existing tourist attractions, including the North Point Marina and the natural areas, to create a stronger “activity hub” within the downtown.
- Create a new “identity” for the Village of Winthrop Harbor based upon a “small town/harbor” theme.
- Facilitate an increased level of downtown commercial activity, including specialty and convenience retail, and local- and commuter-oriented services.
- Implement a “catalyst” project on government owned land to jump-start private sector efforts.

LAND USE

- Facilitate new condominium developments within the downtown area.
- Add publicly accessible open spaces where feasible and functional as redevelopment occurs.

TRANSIT, ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

- Improve pedestrian safety and access throughout the downtown by improving walkway connections and introducing traffic calming devices as part of the streetscape design.
- Strengthen the connection between the Metra Station and the surrounding downtown by improving physical and visual connections.

URBAN DESIGN AND STREETScape

- Improve and coordinate the overall image, appearance, and function of the downtown through a uniform streetscape and signage program.
- Implement design standards for commercial facades that reflect the Village's desired future appearance for the downtown.

PLANNING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Planning Goals and Strategies presented below will provide policy direction when considering future public and private improvements in the station area. "Goals" transform collective community values into operational guidelines; they describe a desired end state toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad based and long range in focus, representing a desired outcome. "Strategies" are action-oriented and designed to guide the implementation of each goal. They identify the means by which to achieve the desired outcome.

Preliminary Planning Goals and their related Planning Strategies are as follows:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Increase awareness of the assets and advantages of the downtown Winthrop Harbor station area, both locally and regionally.*
 - a. Utilize the *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan* as a marketing tool for advocating investment in the downtown.
 - b. Reconstitute a Chamber of Commerce whose members can promote and market the assets of the downtown.
 - c. Encourage coordinated marketing efforts by a Chamber of Commerce or the Village, to potentially include informational maps and brochures about

- downtown businesses and amenities, as well as, coordinating advertising and promotional events for North Point Marina and the natural areas.
- d. Organize community-wide events to occur within the downtown area, the Marina and the natural areas so that residents and tourists begin to view it as the “heart” of the community.
 - e. Aggressively market the downtown area as a first choice location for businesses and new residences due to its proximity to the Metra Station, the Marina, and the natural areas.
2. ***Create a “downtown” identity through consistent visual treatments in the station area.***
 - a. Create a consistent image through the use of recurring visual elements which focuses on a “small town/harbor theme”.
 - b. Delineate the downtown area through the use of “gateway” features at main entry points.
 - c. Place coordinated and attractive signage in key locations throughout the Village providing directional information to the downtown, Metra Station North Point Marina, and recreational areas.
 - d. Reinforce the concept of a “traditional” downtown with new commercial buildings built up to the sidewalk.
 3. ***Improve the overall “perception” of the downtown area, so that it is used by boaters, Metra commuters, and residents as a main retail hub.***
 - a. Encourage the development of a variety of retail uses in the downtown area to best meet the retail needs of boaters, commuters and residents.
 - b. Encourage the general maintenance and upkeep of private properties within the study area by providing seed money and urban design guidelines for façade improvements and signage.
 - c. Develop commuter oriented retail shops near the Metra Station which would be utilized by residents and visitors as well as commuters.

B. LAND USE

1. ***Encourage redevelopment of commercial uses on parcels that are currently underutilized.***
 - a. Based on market demand, encourage the development of contiguous parcels of land, such as the municipal parking lot and community center parcels, in order to maximize walkability and synergy between businesses.

- b. Utilize existing Main Street frontage as a catalyst for similar development along Main Street.
- c. Facilitate a “catalyst” redevelopment project(s) within the downtown by providing incentives for development on publicly owned parcels.

2. *Coordinate future redevelopment projects along both Sheridan Road and Main Street to result in more cohesive and functional land uses and a more pleasing aesthetic appearance.*

- a. Develop and implement design guidelines for the construction of new structures and the renovation of existing structures.
- b. Encourage pedestrian-friendly development along both streets.
- c. Provide continuity of future retail, residential, and Metra Station developments by encouraging design elements that are related in scale and appearance.

3. *Encourage new condominium development within the downtown area.*

- a. Rezone select parcels to allow for condominium or mixed use development.
- b. Focus new residential development in areas near the Metra Station to take advantage of the proximity to transportation and to the natural areas.
- c. Require high quality materials and design in new housing.

4. *Facilitate “catalyst” redevelopment project(s) within the downtown to demonstrate early success and generate interest in downtown improvements.*

- a. “Jump-start” the revitalization process by developing new retail/mixed use buildings on Village owned land through a public-private partnership.
- b. Working with businesses, property owners, and real estate professionals, focus on opportunities to leverage private investment in the downtown.

C. TRANSIT, ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

1. *Address future commuter needs as redevelopment occurs in the downtown area.*

- a. As Metra ridership increases due to new developments in Winthrop Harbor, Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin and other surrounding communities, work with Metra to reassess the adequacy of the commuter station, parking facilities and level of service.

2. Strengthen the connection between the Metra Station and its surroundings.

- a. Create sidewalk linkages and signed bike routes to allow for better connections between the downtown area, the Marina area, and the station area.

3. Address traffic and parking needs as improvements are implemented.

- a. Introduce “traffic calming” devices such as bump outs for pedestrian crosswalks, landscaping, and decorative elements as part of the streetscape program.
- b. Develop small-scale, attractive parking lots throughout the downtown as part of redevelopment efforts.
- c. Pursue a shared parking agreement with Metra to utilize commuter spaces during the evening and weekends for community events at the Marina.

4. Provide transportation between the North Point Marina, the Metra Station, and the Village.

- a. Continue the use of the van service, or similar service such as a trolley, to encourage boaters to utilize the Metra service as well as businesses within the Village limits.

5. Provide better opportunities for pedestrian and traffic interface.

- a. Utilize streetscape enhancements to provide improved interactions between automobiles, pedestrians and bikes.

D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Work with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources(IDNR) to facilitate expanded and improved recreational facilities and resources at North Point Marina.

- a. Create an area within IDNR property for both active and passive recreation facilities such as bike riding, cross country skiing and water sports. Develop bicycle paths within the IDNR facilities to provide linkages between other bicycle paths in the area as well as increasing circulation within North Point Marina.

- b. Add vendor areas, such as bike and ski rentals, to encourage more year round utilization of the recreational areas.

E. URBAN DESIGN AND STREETScape

1. Establish coordinated streetscape treatments along commercial corridors in the downtown.

- a. Implement streetscape and urban design enhancements along Sheridan Road and Main Street, including benches, refuse containers, and decorative lights.
- b. Utilize recurring imagery and physical elements, which reinforce the “small town/harbor” theme, in order to visually unify the area.
- c. Implement a consistent downtown “wayfinding” signage system.
- d. Provide attractive perimeter buffer treatments and internal landscaping at all parking lots.

2. Create outdoor space(s) for community gatherings, cultural events and educational programs.

- a. Develop a community plaza in the downtown area which would be suitable for outdoor community events and programs.
- b. Encourage additional gathering places on Marina property by creating a pavilion or permanent exhibit area for concerts, arts and craft fairs, etc.

V. STATION AREA PLAN

STATION AREA CONCEPTS

Two station area concepts have been developed for the station area, *Concept A - Near Term Plan and Concept B - Long Term Vision*. Both concepts build upon the data collection and analysis, the market assessment, public input including the Vision Statement, and the planning principles and goals presented in this report and reflected in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum*.

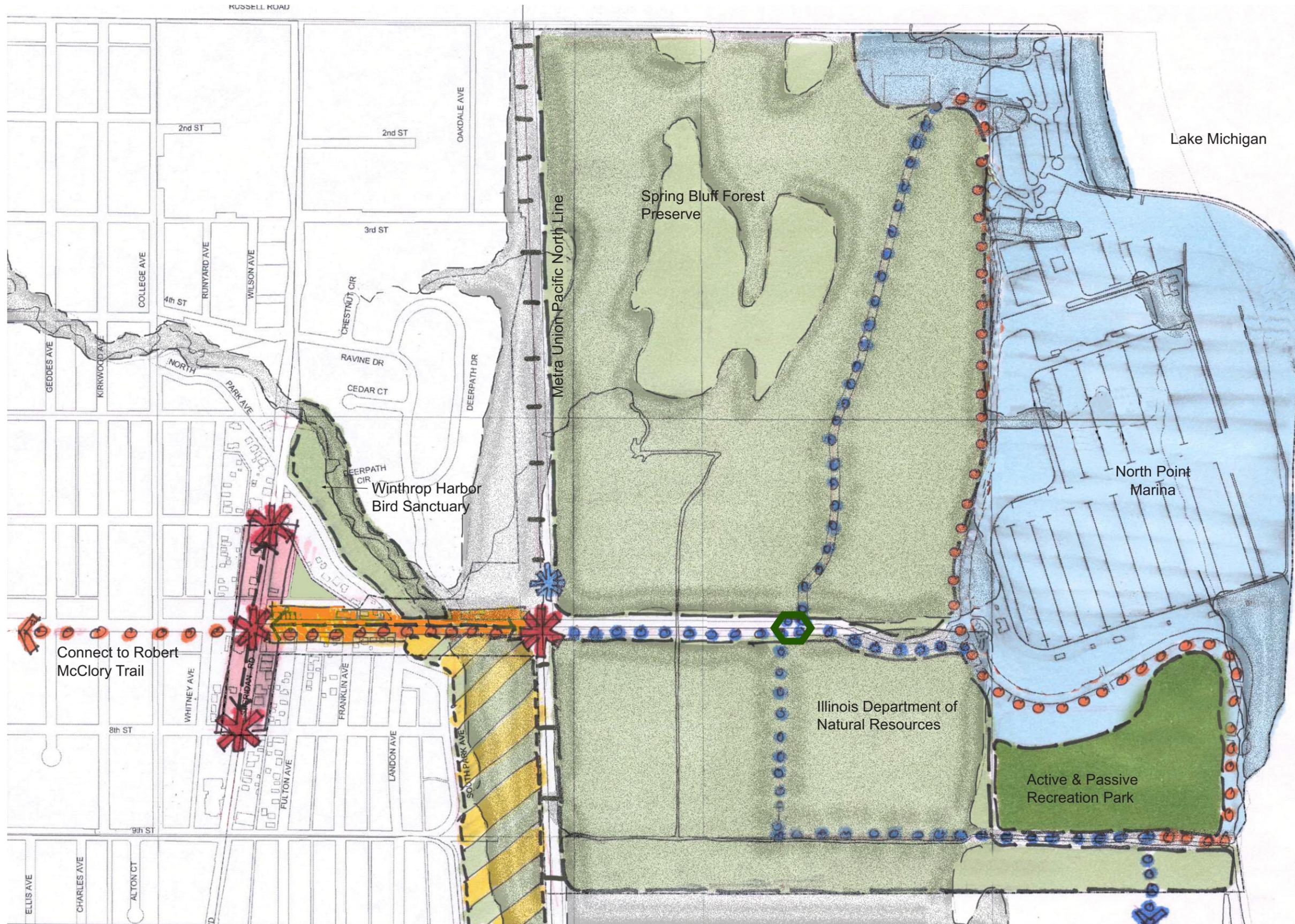
The concepts focus on redevelopment of areas most likely to change due to factors such as building age, condition, underutilization (i.e. a small building on a large parcel or vacant parcels), incompatibility with adjacent land uses, high visibility sites and/or proximity to the Metra Station. Included with the two station area concepts are support materials, including an Urban Design Framework, a Southeast Development scheme, and streetscape sections of Sheridan Road and Main Street. They are described in detail below.

Neither scenario includes redevelopment of the Spring Bluff Nature Preserve property or the land owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Spring Bluff is a legally dedicated area that has been recognized for its natural significance and protected by law for scientific and educational purposes. It will remain a nature preserve. The land owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does have the potential for some redevelopment efforts, such as a hotel and restaurant, but this development would have to be initiated by the State of Illinois and the State would need to enter into ground leases with private entities that would construct and operate these facilities. Due to these unique situations, the IDNR and LCFPD land has not been included in the development scenarios.

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The *Urban Design Framework (Figure 6)* sets the design setting for Concepts A and B. The *Urban Design Framework* establishes the underlying access and circulation patterns in the study area, highlights the natural areas, the floodplain areas and Metra facilities, and identifies appropriate locations for proposed design elements such as gateway features. As indicated on Figure 6, the *Urban Design Framework* proposes a pedestrian oriented environment for Main Street and accommodates the existing automobile oriented environment of Sheridan Road.

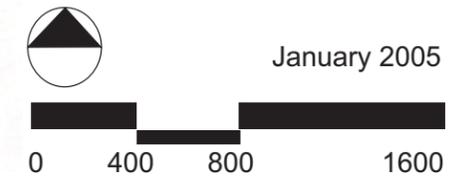
Figure 6:
Urban Design
Framework



-  Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
-  Automobile Oriented Streetscape
-  Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape
-  Natural Area
-  Southeast Development
-  Marina Area
-  Flood Plain
-  Existing Multi-Use Path
-  Proposed Multi-Use Path
-  Identity Node
-  Multi-Use Path Crossing



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CONCEPT A – NEAR TERM PLAN

Concept A - Near Term Plan (Figure 7), focuses on “infill” development for parcels in the study area which are currently underutilized or vacant. This concept best meets current market demand as stated in the *Market Assessment Study* prepared by the Goodman Williams Group and reflects a five to ten year timeframe. The concept highlights 30,000 square feet of retail and 118 units of condominiums within proposed multi-use retail and condominium buildings. These developments are recommended for the municipal parking lot/community center site, the Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA) site and the twenty nine acre vacant site on the south side of Main Street and labeled “Southeast Development”. More discussion of the Southeast Development occurs later in this section and is reflected on *Figure 9*.

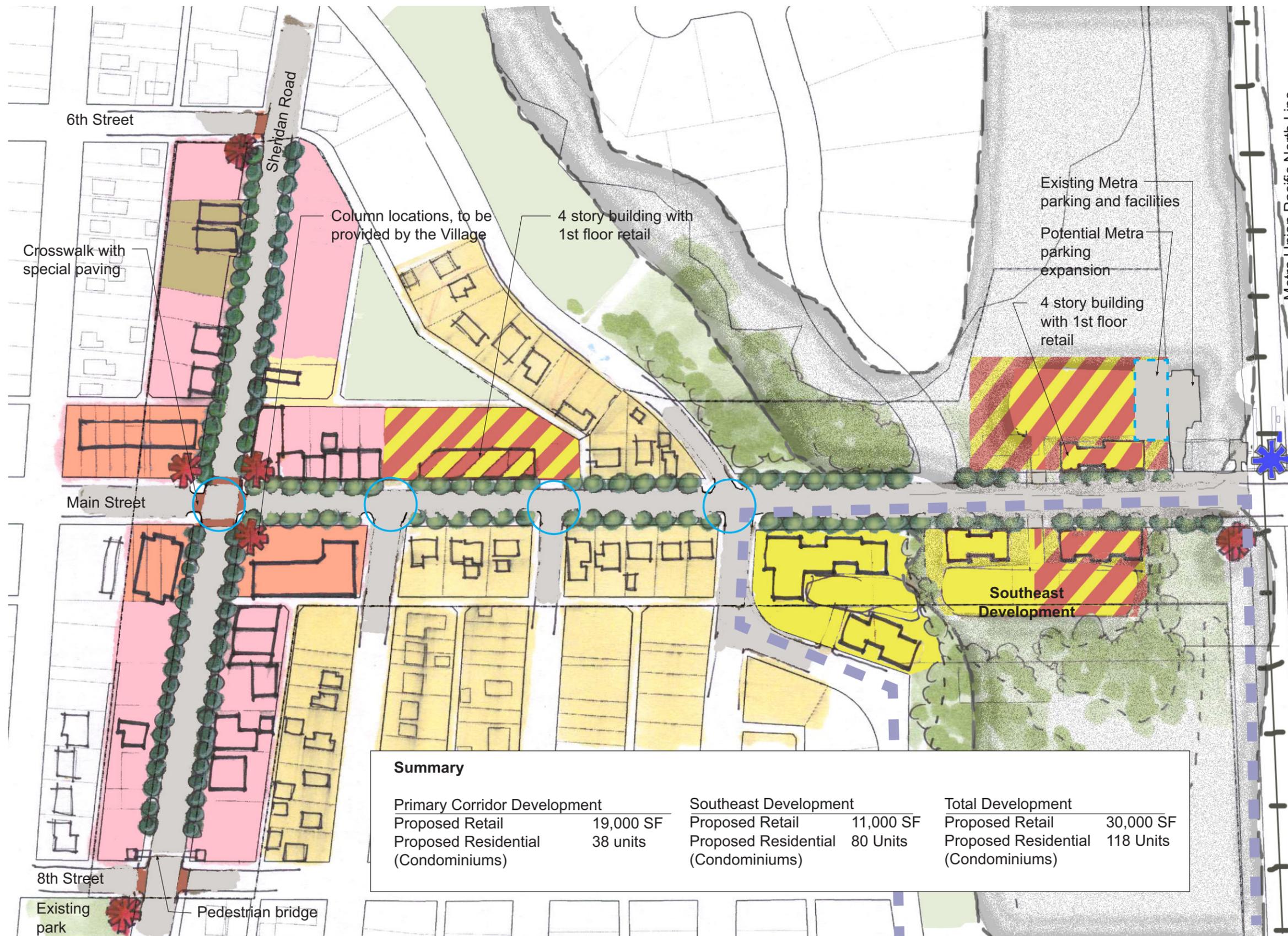
Concept A also highlights parcels labeled as “retail subject to change” and “existing retail”. Parcels that have been categorized as “retail subject to change” are retail uses along Sheridan Road and Main Street which, due to building age or condition, underutilization of the parcel or incompatibility with adjacent land uses, will most likely be redeveloped as market conditions warrant. Both Sheridan Road and Main Street are considered to be “high visibility areas” for the Village of Winthrop Harbor due to the amount of vehicular traffic as detailed in Chapter III. Subsequent redevelopment of underutilized parcels along both roadways would be key in creating a new identity for the downtown area. Parcels labeled “existing retail” are those parcels which have new retail developments or provide a relatively strong retail anchor for the study area, and are not considered to be as susceptible to change in the near future.

Concept A also reflects an expanded Metra facility from what exists currently. The concept highlights the 210 square foot warming shelter and the additional 57 parking spaces which will be constructed in 2005 as well as an expanded parking facility that could accommodate 100 additional vehicles when growth warrants.

CONCEPT B – LONG TERM VISION

Concept B - Long Term Vision (Figure 8) takes the proposed development in the study area one step further by creating a stronger redevelopment vision for the downtown area. This redevelopment vision is for a longer time horizon, perhaps 20 years, and goes beyond the market demand projected in the *Market Assessment Study*.

Figure 7:
Concept A -
Near Term Plan



- Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
- Existing Retail
- Retail Subject to Change
- Proposed Mixed-use, Retail and Condominium
- Existing Residential, Single Family
- Existing Residential, Multi-family
- Proposed Residential, Condominium
- Open Space
- Flood Plain
- Proposed Parking
- Bump-out for Pedestrian Crossing
- Automobile Oriented Streetscape
- Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape
- Southeast Development Area
- Identity Node/ Wayfinding Signage

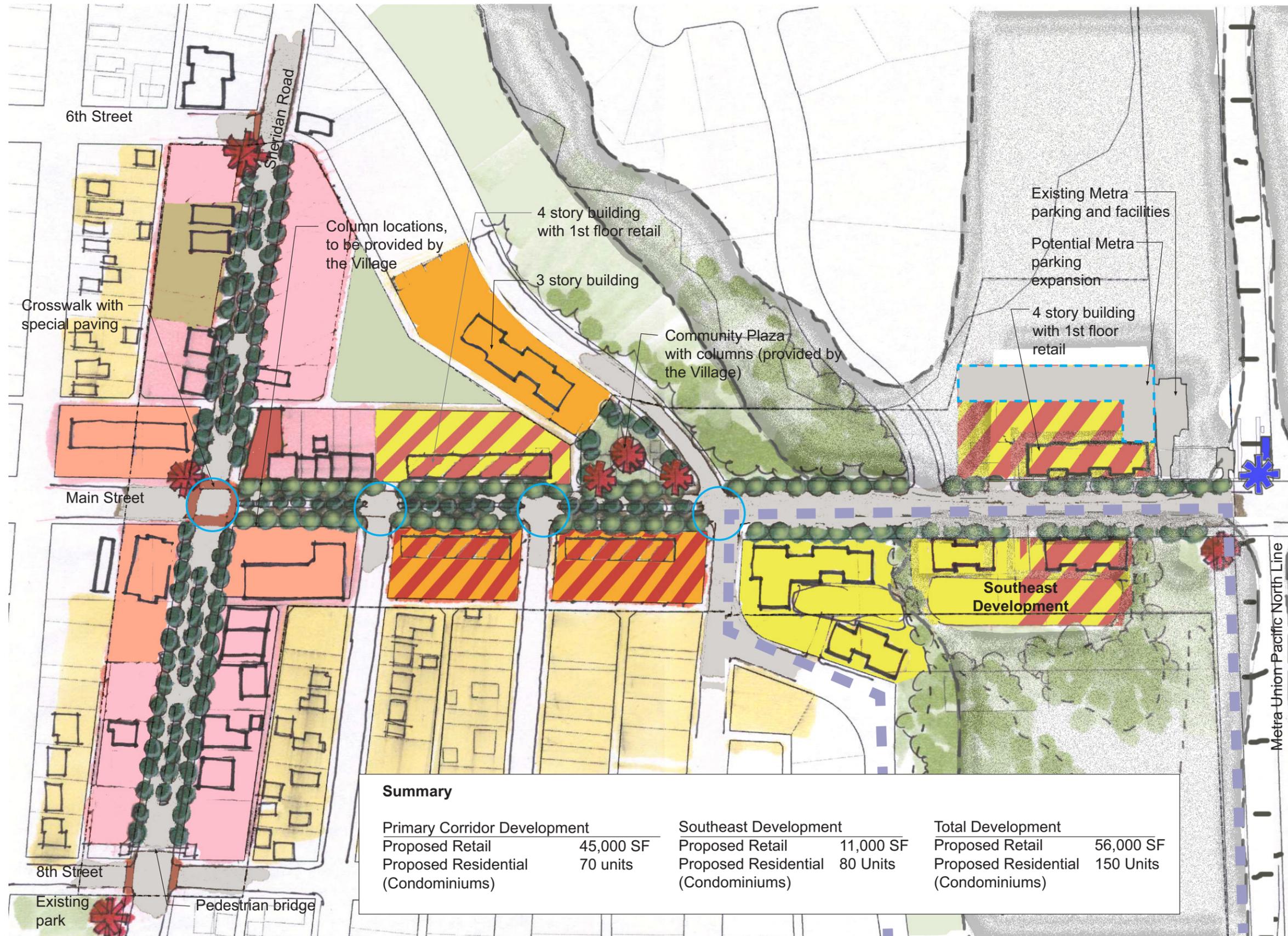
Primary Corridor Development		Southeast Development		Total Development	
Proposed Retail	19,000 SF	Proposed Retail	11,000 SF	Proposed Retail	30,000 SF
Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	38 units	Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	80 Units	Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	118 Units



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**Figure 8:
Concept B -
Long Term Vision**



- Winthrop Harbor Metra Station
- Identity Node/Wayfinding Signage
- Existing Retail
- Retail Subject to Change
- Proposed Retail
- Proposed Mixed-use, Retail and Condominium
- Existing Residential, Single Family
- Existing Residential, Multi-family
- Proposed Residential, Condominium
- Potential Residential, Condominium
- Potential Mixed-use Retail and Condominium
- Open Space
- Flood Plain
- Proposed Parking
- Bump-out for Pedestrian Crossing
- Automobile Oriented Streetscape
- Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape
- Southeast Development Area

Primary Corridor Development		Southeast Development		Total Development	
Proposed Retail	45,000 SF	Proposed Retail	11,000 SF	Proposed Retail	56,000 SF
Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	70 units	Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	80 Units	Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	150 Units

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The proposed mixed use retail and condominium buildings that appear in *Concept A* are also reflected in the same locations as *Concept B* but have been expanded in the amount of square feet. A proposed retail site, located at the corner of Main and Sheridan, is also included in this concept, and would serve as another retail anchor at the entrance of the downtown. *Concept B* assumes 56,000 square feet of retail uses, which is twice the current projected market demand.

Concept B also indicates a greater increase in condominium development, a total of 150 units, as compared to 118 units reflected in *Concept A*. Seventy of these units are shown in buildings within the downtown area and an additional 80 units are in the Southeast Development area.

Long term redevelopment of existing single family homes that are along Main Street or near the downtown area are also identified as a possibility on *Concept B* and called out as “potential mixed use, retail and condominium” and “potential residential condominium”. Land use changes would only occur *when and if* homeowners decide it is time to relocate from their homes, and as market conditions warrant. The *Plan* does not recommend Village intervention. It is not anticipated that redevelopment of these areas would occur before the rest of the downtown is redeveloped. The number of square feet of retail uses or condominiums has not been included in the summary total as it exceeds the demand reflected in the *Market Assessment Study*.

Similar to Concept A, Concept B also includes the “existing retail” category and “retail subject to change category”. These parcels also have not been included in the summary count of future retail and residential development as they far exceed the demand reflected in the *Market Assessment Study*.

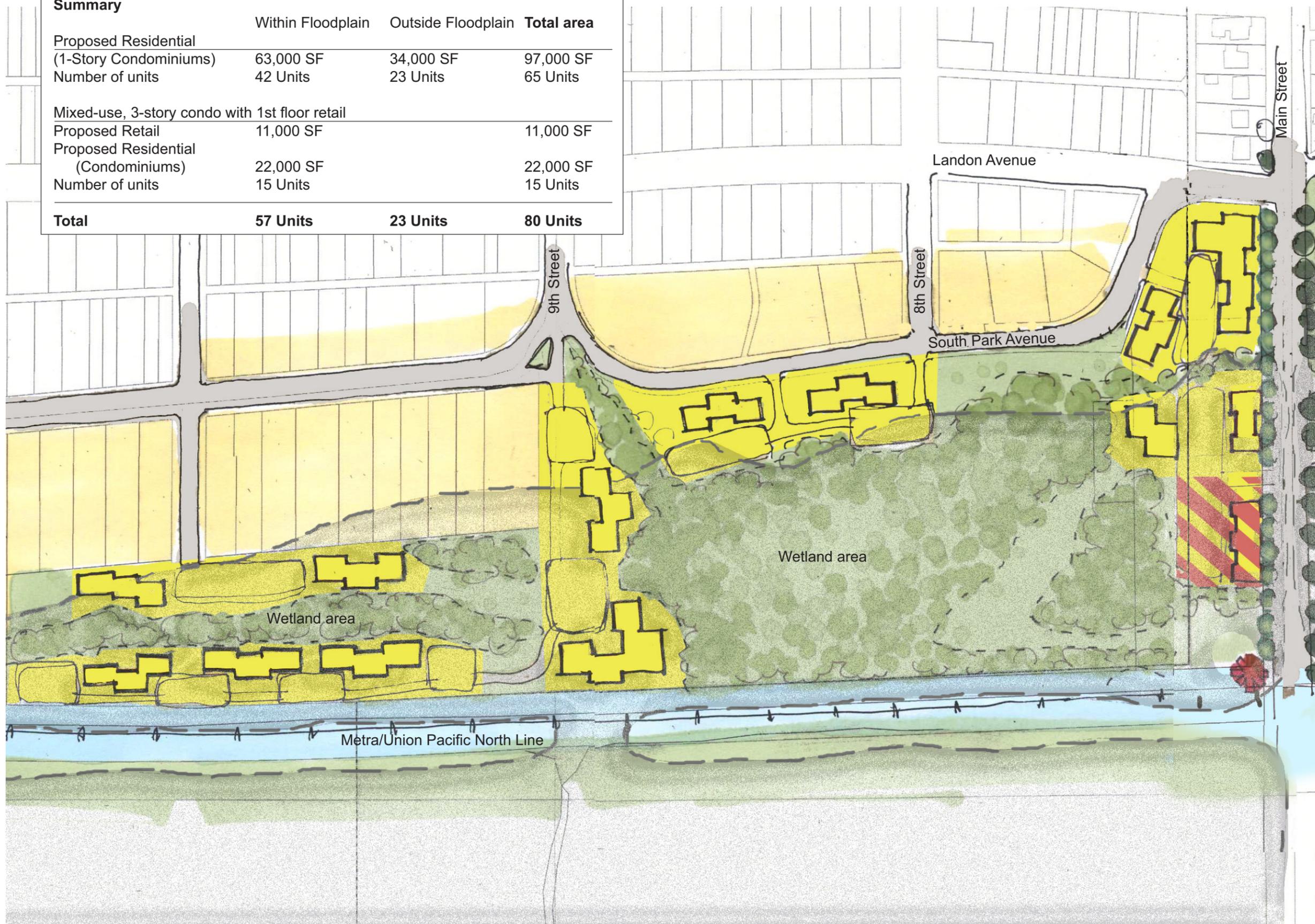
An increase in both Metra’s parking and station facility is envisioned and is based on the assumption that ridership will naturally increase as the surrounding communities continue to grow. The size of the parking lot and the station facility is based on an increase in ridership and reflects a 750 square foot station depot that could include a vendor or retail space, and a washroom. A larger parking facility which could accommodate 200 additional parking spaces is also shown near the existing Metra parking lot. The full buildout between Concepts A and B reflects a Metra parking lot of approximately 400 spaces.

SOUTHEAST DEVELOPMENT

The *Southeast Development (Figure 9)* shows potential development ideas for the twenty nine acre parcel which lies on the south side of Main Street, just west of the Metra/Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The majority of the site is either in floodplain or wetland and subsequently, a full technical analysis will need to be conducted to

Figure 9:
Southeast
Development

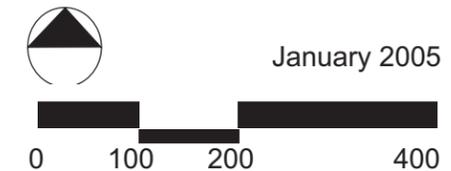
Summary	Within Floodplain	Outside Floodplain	Total area
Proposed Residential (1-Story Condominiums)	63,000 SF	34,000 SF	97,000 SF
Number of units	42 Units	23 Units	65 Units
Mixed-use, 3-story condo with 1st floor retail			
Proposed Retail	11,000 SF		11,000 SF
Proposed Residential (Condominiums)	22,000 SF		22,000 SF
Number of units	15 Units		15 Units
Total	57 Units	23 Units	80 Units



- Identity Node/
Wayfinding Signage
- Proposed Mixed-use,
Retail and Condominium
- Existing Residential,
Single Family
- Proposed Residential,
Condominium
- Open Space
- Flood Plain



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determine the feasibility of any development on the site. For purposes of this *Plan*, it is assumed that sites which lie outside the wetland are most appropriate for redevelopment. These areas are shown on *Figure 9* as areas for potential condominium or mixed use development. The development scheme for the Southeast Development indicates 11,000 square feet of retail development and 80 units of residential development. The quantities for future retail and residential development are the same in both *Concept A* and *Concept B*.

AUTO ORIENTED STREETScape

Figure 10, Auto Oriented Streetscape, Section of Sheridan Road, reflects sections of streetscape elements for Sheridan Road. *Alternate 1*, proposes a landscaped median along Sheridan Road that would still allow two lanes in both direction but would encourage traffic calming measures. Traffic calming also is a benefit for the commercial and retail venues along Sheridan Road as it encourages traffic to slow down and potentially patronize the retail stores. The concept allows for six foot sidewalks on either side of the street as well as six foot parkways. Trees, decorative light fixtures and other amenities such as street banners would be located within the parkways. It is assumed that by its classification as a state arterial route, Sheridan Road will remain auto oriented. However, streetscape enhancements will make the road a gateway to the downtown area. *Alternate 2* reflects similar treatment for Sheridan Road, but without a landscaped median.

PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED STREETScape

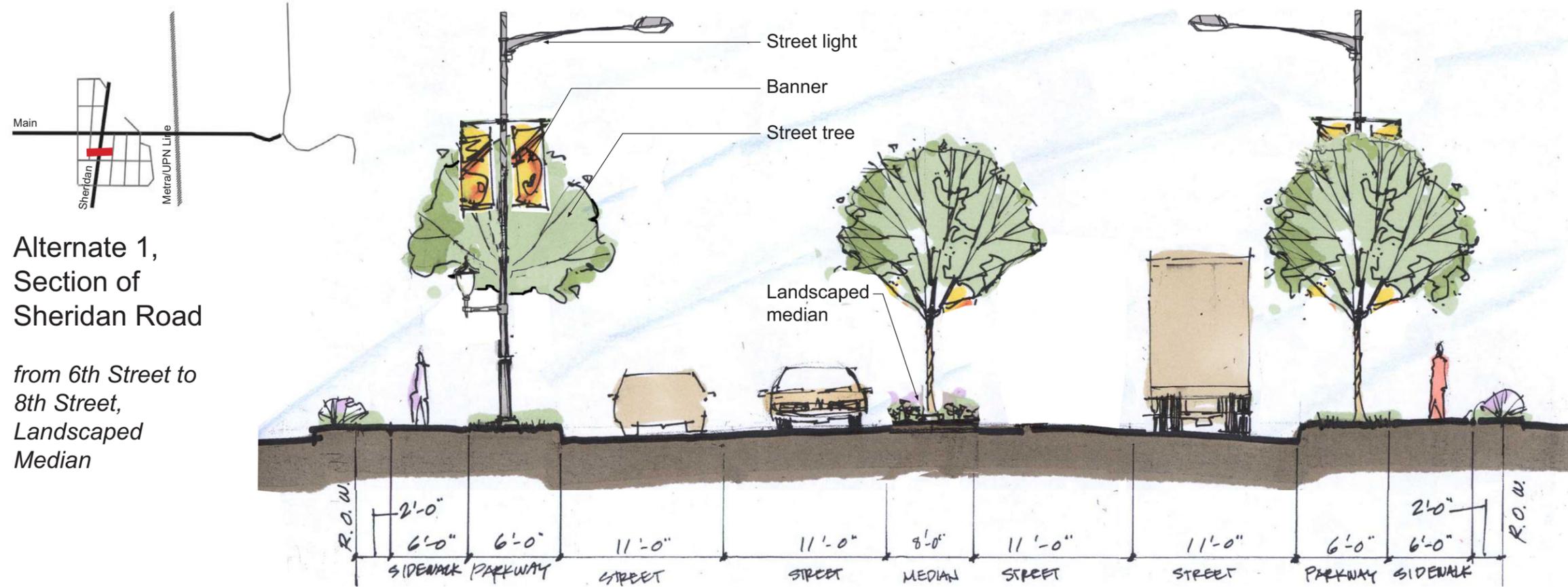
Figure 11, Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape, Section of Main Street Primary Corridor, assumes that Main Street will continue to be pedestrian focused with improved streetscape amenities to reflect a small town feel. Streetscape elements will consist of trees, decorative lighting, special paving, sidewalks, benches, and signage. *Alternate 1* shows angled parking, four foot bike lanes, and twelve foot combination sidewalks and parkways on both sides of the street. *Alternate 2* shows a landscaped median, with similar bike lanes, and parkways as reflected in *Alternate 1*. Parallel parking is provided.

These streetscape enhancements will tie the station area with the downtown via a unified, pedestrian friendly connection.

NATURAL AREA STREETScape

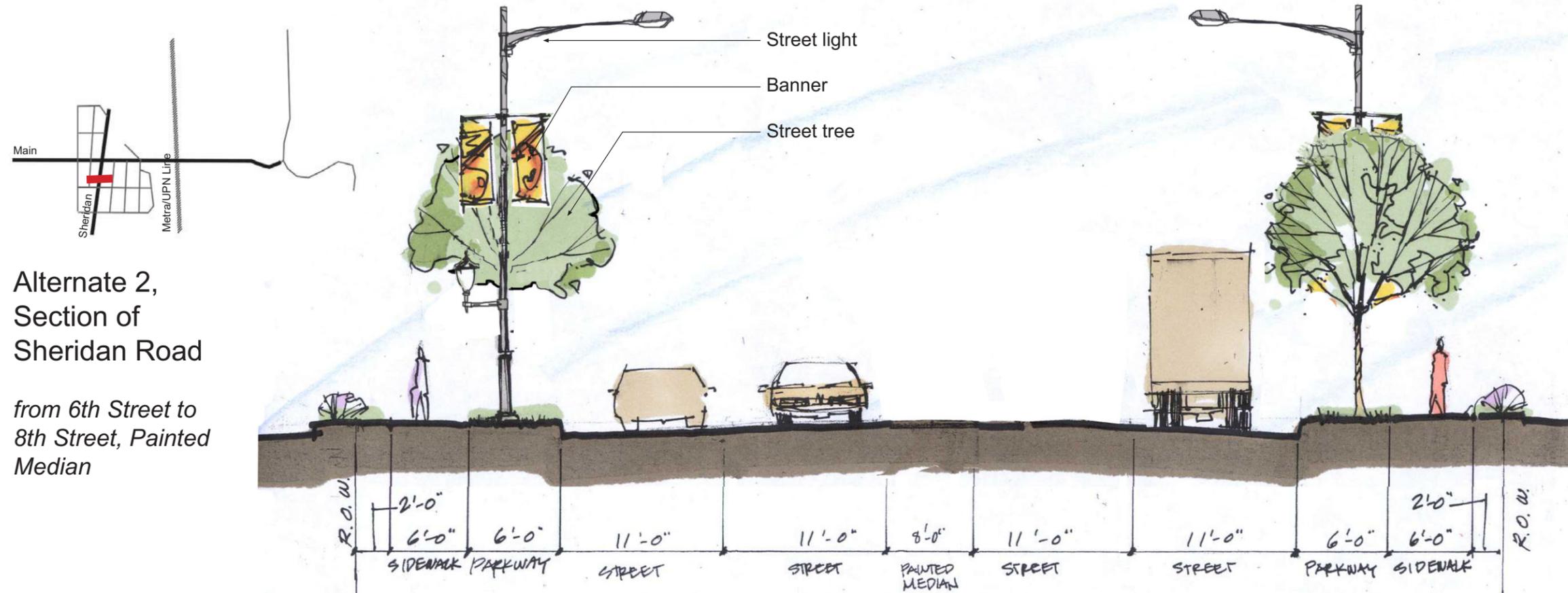
Figure 12, Streetscape, Section of Main Street, Natural Area, reflects a streetscape immediately east and west of the Metra/Union Pacific-North Line tracks. The section

Figure 10:
Auto Oriented
Streetscape -
Section of
Sheridan Road



Alternate 1,
Section of
Sheridan Road

from 6th Street to
8th Street,
Landscaped
Median



Alternate 2,
Section of
Sheridan Road

from 6th Street to
8th Street, Painted
Median



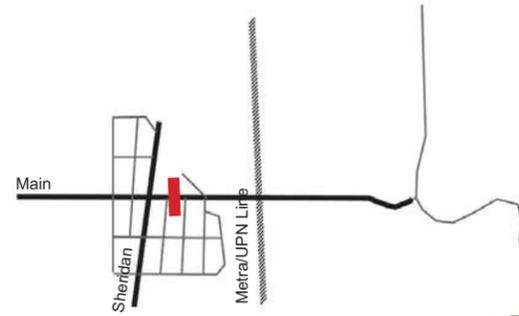
Village of
Winthrop Harbor
Station Area Plan



January 2005

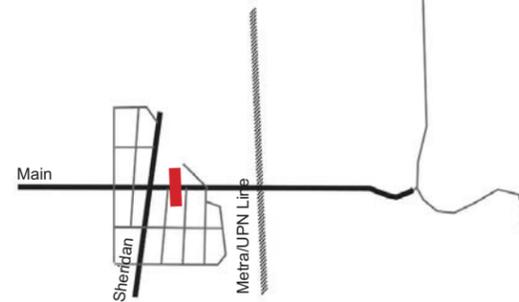
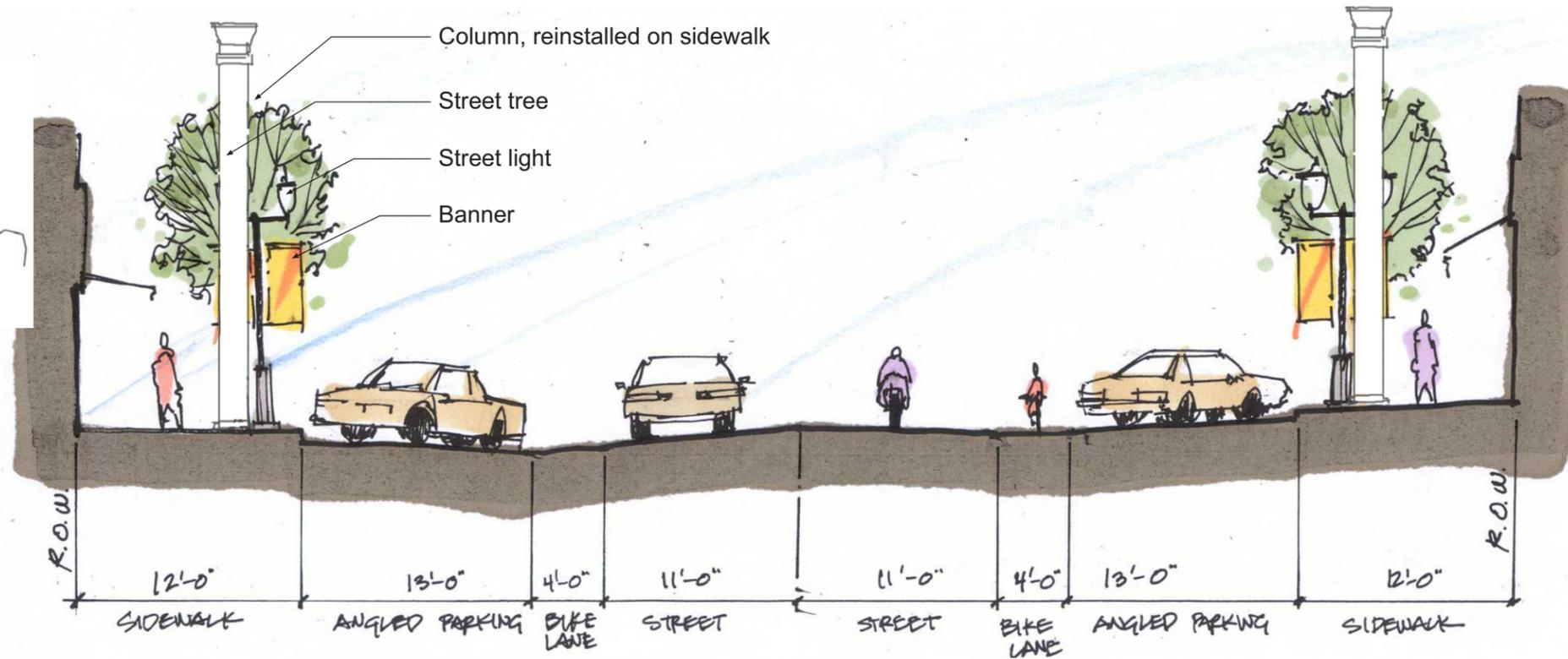


Figure 11:
Pedestrian
Oriented
Streetscape -
Section of Main
Street, Primary
Corridor



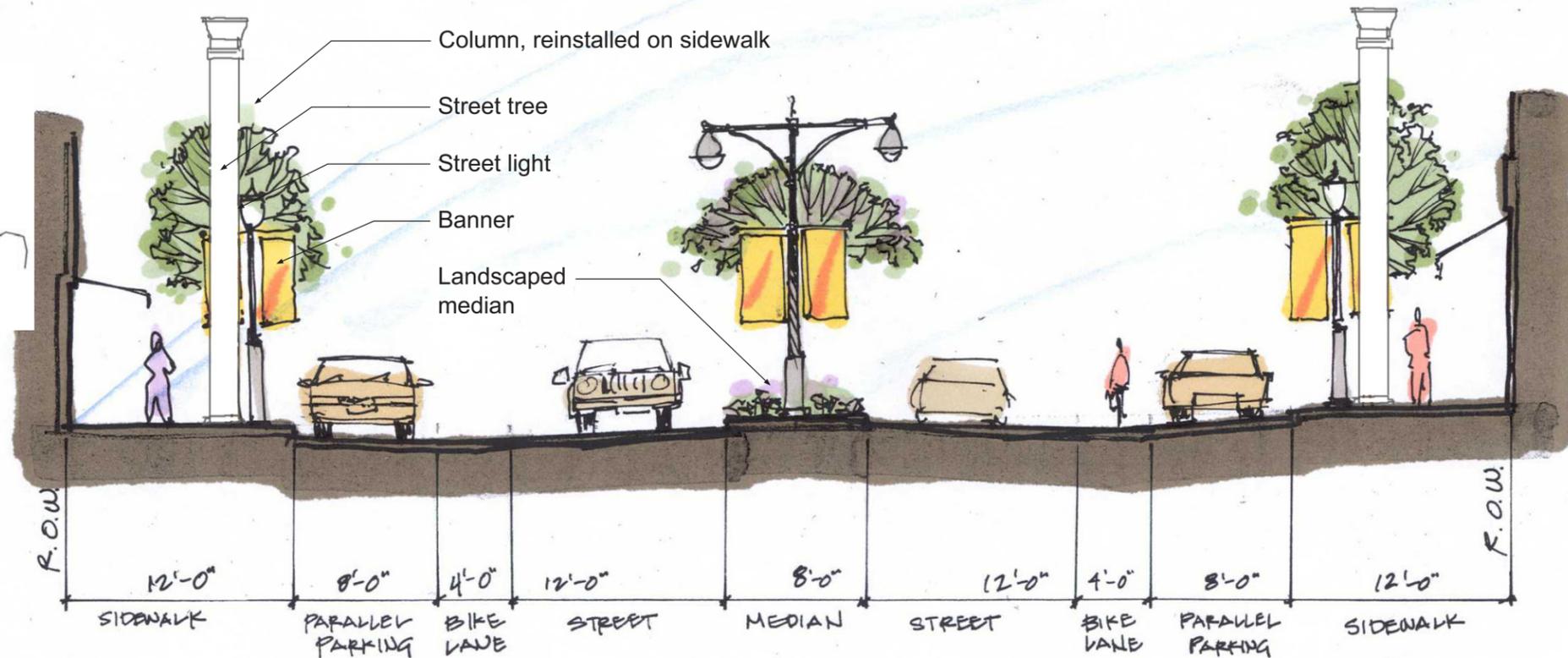
Alternate 1,
Section of Main Street

from Sheridan to Landon,
Angled Parking Option



Alternate 2,
Section of Main Street

from Sheridan to Landon,
Parallel Parking and
Median Option



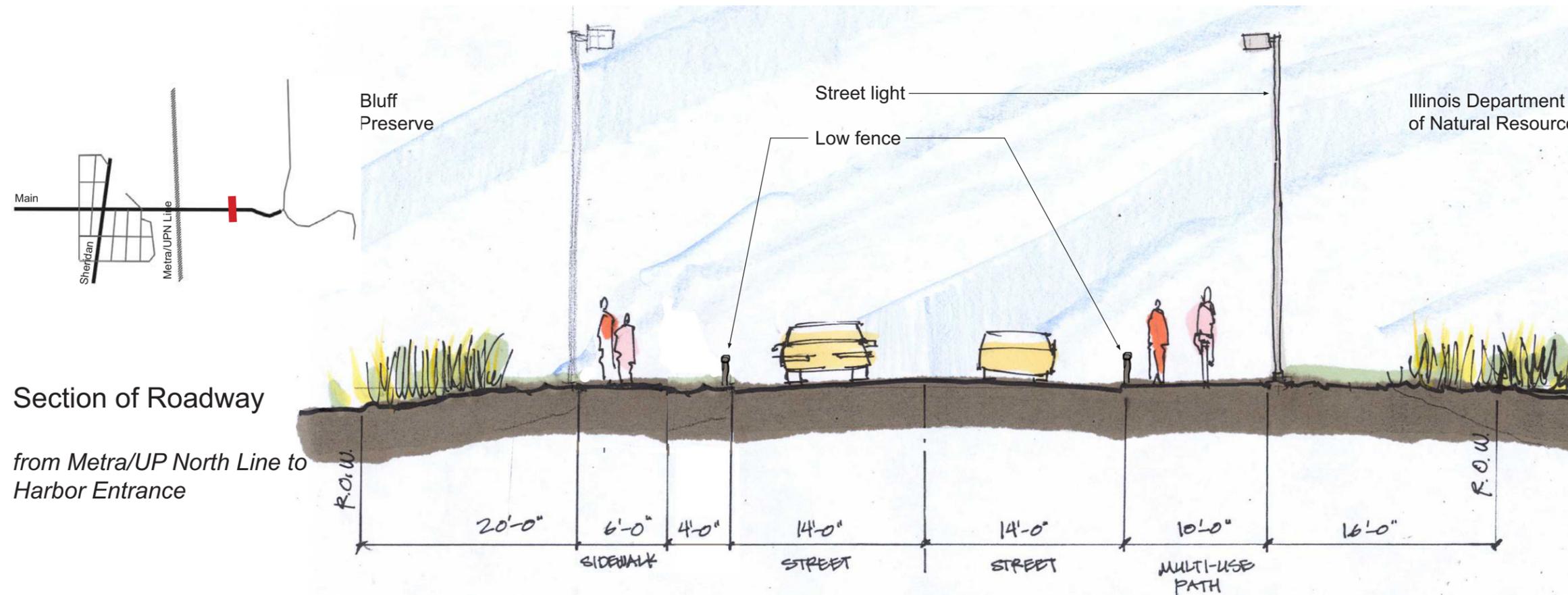
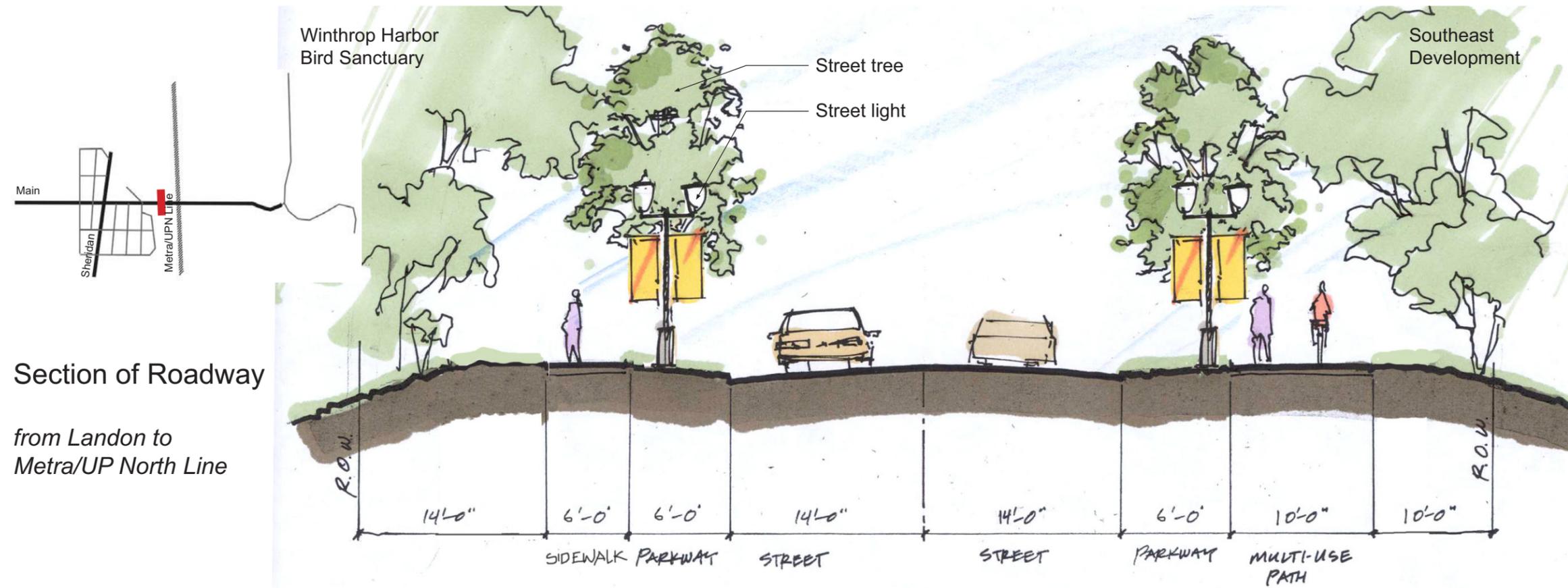
Village of
Winthrop Harbor
Station Area Plan



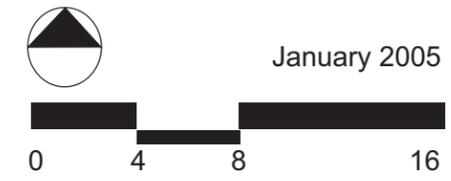
January 2005



Figure 12:
Streetscape -
Section of Main
Street, Natural
Area



Village of
Winthrop Harbor
Station Area Plan



of roadway from Landon to the tracks is more reflective of the streetscape treatments presented in *Figure 6*. The section of roadway east of the tracks shows a streetscape that is more reflective of the natural setting and would consist of a continuous sidewalk on the north as well as a protected multi-use path on the south to allow for continued pedestrian circulation throughout the Marina.

The streetscape elements will utilize visual clues and elements to tie together and unify the natural areas, Metra Station area, and downtown areas and promote a pedestrian friendly environment.

ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTS A AND B

An analysis of *Concept A-Near Term Plan* and *Concept B-Long Term Vision* follows.

Concept A - Near Term Plan emphasizes:

1. Infill development for parcels which are currently vacant or which are considered to be obtainable due to the fact they are government owned;
2. Proposed retail and residential units which best meet the *Market Assessment Study* projections for current unmet commercial and residential demand over the next ten years;
3. Mixed use retail/condominium buildings in the vicinity of the current municipal parking lot, the ESDA site and on the vacant Southeast Development site- these buildings are represented as four story buildings with first floor retail;
4. Eighty condominium units on the Southeast Development site;
5. “Existing retail” parcels which are shown in three locations along Sheridan Road- these parcels are considered to be relatively stable due to building conditions and retail uses, and they serve as anchor buildings to the downtown;
6. Parcels along Sheridan Road which are classified “retail subject to change” due to building condition, use, or incompatibility with adjacent land uses;
7. An automobile oriented streetscape along Sheridan Road which would still allow for pedestrian amenities and walkways;
8. A pedestrian oriented streetscape along Main Street and a pedestrian connection to the Metra facilities and North Point Marina;
9. Expanded Metra parking facilities to serve an increase in ridership.

Concept B – Long Term Vision emphasizes:

1. A more “assertive” approach to redevelopment opportunities, focusing on layers of development of which the time frame exceeds the ten year *Market Assessment Study* timeframe;

2. A larger Metra Station and parking facility to accommodate and encourage a future growth in ridership;
3. A community plaza which would act as a small gathering area for town residents.

REALIZING THE VISION - URBAN DESIGN

This section addresses design considerations associated with the proposed station area concepts. The design recommendations are based on the results of a Visual Preference Survey that was conducted at a Public Meeting/Open House on August 31, 2004. The complete results of the Visual Preference Study can be found in the *Appendix* to this report.

The Visual Preference Survey was conducted in order to gauge the community's level of expectation and preferences with regard to architectural design in the downtown. Based upon the results of the survey, the following characteristics should be incorporated into the design of new buildings and into the renovation of existing buildings where feasible. Examples of images that were ranked positively and those that were ranked negatively follow each category.

Commercial and Mixed Use Buildings- Positive Elements

1. Buildings are set close to the street; parking is located on street or behind the building
2. High quality and traditional materials: brick, stone
3. Facades can be varied but there is a common element in terms of appearance, height, building materials, etc.
4. Decorative elements and features are important: clock tower, awnings, signage
5. Open and inviting storefront windows and displays
6. Neat, clean, well-maintained and updated appearance
7. Good parking; easy in and out
8. Good lighting
9. Uniform appearance of signage

Examples of commercial buildings ranked positively during the Visual Preference Survey



Examples of commercial buildings ranked negatively during the Visual Preference Survey



Multi-Family Residential – Positive Elements

1. Historic and traditional elements
2. Architectural details such as gables, balconies
3. Three stories in height
4. Interior courtyards, front yard set backs
5. High quality materials and construction: brick, stucco, stone
6. Non prominent garages
7. Modestly scaled buildings (break up long rows or large blocks)

Examples of condominium and townhouse buildings ranked positively during the Visual Preference Survey



Examples of condominium and townhouse buildings ranked negatively during the Visual Preference Survey



Streetscape, Parking, Open Space and Plazas- Positive Elements

1. Continuous concrete sidewalks, decorative brick paver sidewalks, or sidewalks with decorative brick treatments to provide a continuity in design
2. Decorative street lights, historical appearance in nature, with brackets for mounting banners, flags, and flower pots
3. Parkway trees, evenly spaced, within the parkway
4. Planter boxes, benches, and garbage cans that reflect a consistent decorative theme
5. Smaller, less obtrusive but decorative street signs
6. Decorative bump outs, enhanced by landscaping and brick pavers, at main intersections
7. Landscaped medians
8. Parking lots that are set back from the street with landscape buffers
9. Well lighted parking lots

Examples of streetscape elements ranked positively during the Visual Preference Survey.



Examples of streetscape elements ranked negatively during the Visual Preference Survey



Examples of plaza and open space elements ranked positively during the Visual Preference Survey



Examples of plaza and open space elements ranked negatively during the Visual Preference Survey.



Transit Facilities - Positive Elements

1. Traditional looking station with amenities including vendor selling coffee and newspapers
2. Benches
3. Adequate parking

Examples of transit facilities ranked positively during the Visual Preference Survey.



Examples of transit facilities ranked negatively during the Visual Preference Survey



C. HARBOR TOWN IMAGES

The following photographs from other harbor towns are presented in this report in order to present images of attractive developments. These images were selected based on input on the Visual Preference Survey and reflect the Visual Preference Survey results on scale, building mass, building materials, and type of positive development.

Chesapeake Harbor, Maryland



Harborpark, Kenosha, Wisconsin



Port Royal, Pensacola, Florida



Port Royal, Pensacola, Florida



VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This Chapter sets forth the Village’s “road map” for implementing its new *Plan*. It identifies critical relationships between the Village and its partners with regard to implementation strategies. It discusses the key partnerships that the Village will need to establish in order to move ahead with implementation. A summary of potential funding sources is also included.

The implementation strategies described in this section build upon the principles and goals contained within this *Plan* and within the Village’s Comprehensive Plan. They provide more detailed direction for implementing improvements within the study area.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The strategies and planning concepts described in Chapters IV and V will require varying degrees of involvement and/or direct action by the Village in order to facilitate *Plan* implementation. The Village can act in a variety of roles, as appropriate, in order to move *Plan* recommendations forward. These varying levels of involvement are described below and detailed in the pages that follow.

- **Enacting and Enforcing Policies and Codes:** The Village will need to amend the zoning ordinance text and map in order to align them more closely with the intent of the *Plan*. In addition, ongoing enforcement of both amended and existing codes and regulations will be critical to the *Plan*’s success.
- **Implementing Public Improvements:** Although funding is an issue, the Village will need to undertake several important physical enhancement projects within public areas in the downtown in the coming years, as outlined in this Chapter. These projects will need to be undertaken by the Village alone or in partnership with other public agencies, as appropriate.
- **Providing Development Incentives:** The Village can spur the implementation of other key aspects of the *Plan* through the offering of appropriate development incentives to the private sector, to effect positive change on private properties within the downtown and its surroundings. In order to spur economic development, the Village can create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district in the downtown. Other options could include a Special Service Area or a Business Improvement District.

- **Public/Private Partnership:** The Village may need to consider taking on a more direct and active role in order to overcome development hurdles. For example, the Village may need to continue ownership of properties and lease them to private sector developers in order to make development projects financially feasible, and shorten the overall time frame for development.

A. POTENTIAL PARTNERS

To effectively pursue implementation of the recommendations in this *Plan*, the Village of Winthrop Harbor will need to solicit the involvement of various public and private sector partners. Some of these may include the following:

1. **Metra, the commuter rail agency**, who can assist with the design, coordination and implementation of transit facility improvements.
2. **The Union Pacific Railroad**, who can work with the Village and Metra to facilitate station area and railroad right-of-way improvements.
3. **Other public agencies**, including the Lake County Forest Preserve District, North Point Marina, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, who can assist and implement improvements to the natural areas to increase recreational amenities.
4. **Local businesses and local property owners**, who can assist with marketing and business recruitment, and undertake improvements to their own downtown properties.
5. **Local financial institutions**, who may be interested in providing financing assistance for the implementation of private sector aspects of the *Plan*.
6. **Technical assistance providers**, including the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Small Business Administration, who can provide training and assistance to business owners.
7. **Builders and developers**, who will be motivated by the existing and future market potential of the area to get involved in implementing aspects of the *Plan*.
8. **The citizens** who can get involved in a myriad of ways with various *Plan* initiatives, and can patronize and support downtown businesses and utilize downtown community resources whenever possible.

IMPLEMENTATION – CATALYST ACTIVITIES

Plan implementation is a complex process, influenced by many variables – financial resources, community participation, property owner involvement, and intergovernmental relationships – just to name a few. While these variables will change over time, it is important to identify key actions, and the relationships among these actions, to begin effective implementation. These strategies include many of

the activities described throughout the *Plan*. Strategies are grouped into two general categories as they relate to implementation: High Priority Actions, and Other Important Actions.

- **High Priority Actions-** These activities should be initiated as soon as possible, ideally within the next year. The Village and its partners should seek to make significant progress on them within a year or two of *Plan* adoption. These are actions that require strong leadership by the Village and, as a group of activities, are important for creating momentum for change in the downtown.
- **Other Important Actions-** These are activities that should be initiated within two to three years of *Plan* adoption, with significant progress achieved within four or five years. While these actions are important for successful implementation, they can follow behind the “High Priority Actions.”

A. HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

High priority actions require the Village of Winthrop Harbor to act as a direct “catalyst,” in order to jump-start implementation and achieve early, visible successes. This will build and sustain momentum in the implementation process. Activities should be initiated immediately. They will serve to demonstrate a sustained commitment to the area by the Village to the private sector and local businesses and residents, thus increasing interest in private investments.

1. Establish an Implementation Task Force

As soon as this *Plan* is adopted by the Winthrop Harbor Village Board, an “Implementation Task Force” comprised of key Village representatives, members of the Steering Committee, and others should be established to move the *Plan* forward. The group would not only be responsible for helping to initiate and monitor *Plan* activities, but to publicize and visibly advocate for the downtown, and celebrate successes. Meetings should be held on a regular basis to review ongoing initiatives and implementation progress. Key actions to be spearheaded by the Task Force will be long-term, involving the full breadth of downtown revitalization. Activities would include, but not be limited to:

- a. Provide assistance to property owners and developers to verify that projects meet the standards and intent of the *Plan*.
- b. Review Village codes, ordinances and enforcement activities to determine that they are appropriate and supportive of the *Plan*.

- c. Seek and secure funding for key initiatives, and coordinate with other agencies as needed.
- d. Meet with key developers to promote redevelopment in the downtown.
- e. Identify sites for relocated municipal facilities as necessary (e.g. if the ESDA facility and the community center need relocating).
- f. Acquire key properties or secure property owner agreements, as appropriate, to move the *Plan* forward.
- g. Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to high priority development projects.
- h. Monitor and address the balance of downtown parking and arrange shared parking facilities as redevelopment occurs over time.

2. *Align Development Regulations to Support the Plan*

Working with Village staff, the Task Force should spearhead the preparation of appropriate code and map amendments, outlined below. The redevelopment process should be reviewed for its compatibility with the Village’s 1995 Comprehensive Plan.

- a. Amend the zoning ordinance text and map as needed to align Village regulations more closely with the intent of the *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan*. At a minimum, actions will include the following:
 - Consider rezoning of vacant or government owned parcels within the study area to either the R6 or Planned Unit Development Zoning Classification
 - Review and amend as necessary setback and other bulk requirements for application in the downtown to more closely reflect the desired “traditional” character within the TOD core area
 - Review and amend as necessary off-street parking requirements within the TOD core area to facilitate appropriately located and scaled off-street parking lots behind and/or between buildings

3. *Explore Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*

In order to spur economic development, the Village should explore the possibility of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District in the downtown area. A TIF District could greatly aid in securing developer interest and investment in proposed development projects, as well as the implementation of public improvements that the *Plan* has identified as high priorities. TIF assistance can include site acquisition/assembly and preparation, infrastructure upgrades and low-interest financing, which can reduce development costs significantly.

4. Re-establish a Chamber of Commerce

An organized and well managed Chamber of Commerce can actively market and promote downtown business opportunities to business prospects, boaters, and other visitors. They can provide a link between Winthrop Harbor and area attractions, such as Great America and Gurnee Mills Shopping Center. The Chamber can encourage its members to be part of other organizations as appropriate, such as the Lake County Chamber of Commerce and the Lake County Illinois Convention and Tourism Bureau which have a wider audience.

5. Hire a Part Time Economic Development Director

An Economic Development Director can be invaluable in promoting Village businesses, identifying funding sources, and assisting with development issues. The Village should explore the possibility of hiring a staff person to assist the Village on a part time basis.

6. Initiate Key Public Improvements

Although actively pursued by Village officials, the Village has not been able to secure funding for the Sheridan Road/Main Street streetscape project. The Village should continue to pursue funding for this important project. In addition, a façade improvement program to assist property owners in the downtown could be established by the Village. Further, the Village should continue to maintain and improve infrastructure including sidewalks, streets, sewer and water service and utilities. The Village should consider introducing a 50/50 sidewalk replacement program to encourage property owners to provide new or replacement sidewalks.

7. Establish a Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Process

In order to better meet the infrastructure needs and prioritize capital improvement projects, the Village should establish a capital improvement planning process. This process will enable the Village to better plan for upcoming needs and identify potential funding sources on a long term (5 to 10 year) basis. This process will also plan for the infrastructure needs associated with any redevelopment project in the downtown area.

8. Create a Web Page for the Economic Development Committee

Using the existing Village website, create a web page for the Economic Development Committee. The web page would have current information on economic development opportunities in the Village.

B. OTHER IMPORTANT ACTIONS

These actions should be initiated within two to three years of *Plan* adoption, with significant progress achieved within four to five years. They are divided into related groups of actions for ease of reference. Like the High Priority Actions above, they should be undertaken in parallel, as each provides support to the other in the overall *Plan* implementation process. Should the opportunity arise, of course, they should be initiated as soon as possible.

1. Promote Downtown and Marina Activities

There will need to be key players and partners in promoting downtown and Marina activities. Potential partners include a Chamber of Commerce, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the North Point Marina, the Lake County Forest Preserve District and village officials. Actions to help solidify the downtown's image within the community and beyond include:

- a. Undertake marketing efforts to potentially include: informational maps and brochures about downtown businesses and amenities; coordinated advertising and promotional events such as sidewalk sales; and the recurring use of the term "downtown" in describing the area.
- b. Encourage year-round recreational opportunities at North Point Marina including a hotel development, restaurants, cultural activities, a concert pavilion, bicycle and ski rentals, etc.
- c. Organize community-wide events to occur within the downtown area, so that Winthrop Harbor residents and others begin to view it as the "heart" of the community.
- d. As downtown redevelopment occurs, create a civic plaza or park to provide a gathering place for town residents and visitors.
- e. Encourage and facilitate the creation of lakefront amenities and activities including multi use walking and bike paths.
- f. Continue the operation of van service (or possibly a trolley) between the North Point Marina and other destinations. As more businesses develop within Winthrop Harbor, consider restricting van service to within Village boundaries.

2. Land Use and Redevelopment

The *Station Area Plan* provides land use and redevelopment guidelines. Funding for these initiatives will consist largely of providing support as needed to developers and businesses who are seeking financing and technical assistance available directly to them.

- a. Encourage and facilitate the establishment of additional commercial businesses within the downtown station area.
 - Concentrate commercial and mixed used developments on vacant or government owned parcels. Businesses to encourage in the area include: coffee shops, wine and cheese stores, fudge stores and ice cream shops, casual and full-service restaurants, arts-oriented shops, and other specialty shops and convenience services.
- b. Facilitate and encourage new housing in the downtown area.
 - Create incentives and/or secure funding to support the development of market-rate owner-occupied condominiums to encourage increased foot traffic in the downtown.

3. Establish Sign and Landscaping Ordinances

In order to achieve a unified “theme” in the downtown area, the Village should create a detailed sign and landscaping ordinance.

4. Access, Circulation, Transit and Parking

Federal and State funding secured with the assistance of public agency partners will be critical for the implementation of these access improvements as will close coordination with regional and state agencies and impacted property owners.

- a. Implement the following improvements related to pedestrian access and safety:
 - Create a complete pedestrian circulation network, including sidewalks and crosswalks, throughout the downtown area.
 - Create attractive pedestrian linkages between the downtown, the Metra Station and to North Point Marina, the Forest Preserve and other recreational amenities nearby.
- b. Introduce traffic calming measures including bumpouts, landscaped medians, and visual clues, to slow traffic in the study area.
- c. Focus Village efforts on the general maintenance and upkeep of public areas in the downtown. While the Union Pacific Railroad is actually responsible for maintenance of the Metra Station facilities, it will be necessary for the Village to

periodically supplement these efforts to maintain standards of quality and appearance.

- d. Work with Metra on an expanded transit facility, and additional transit service, including a larger station with amenities and sufficient parking as ridership grows.

5. *Urban Design*

Design recommendations will result in public and private design improvements and amenities that will create a stronger traditional downtown environment.

- a. Implement the following improvements related to streetscape and downtown signage:
 - Create a unified streetscape image within the commercial core area through the use of consistent and recurring visual elements. Streetscape improvements are described in more detail in Chapter V, and include: upgraded paving and lighting at sidewalks, gateways, benches, refuse receptacles, banners, planters and pole-mounted plantings.
 - Announce arrival to the downtown area through the use of “gateway” features at main entry points.
 - Implement a consistent downtown “wayfinding” signage system.
 - Improve the appearance of the Metra Station facilities.
- b. Implement the following landscaping improvements throughout the downtown area:
 - Provide attractive perimeter buffer treatments and internal landscaping in downtown parking lots.
 - Provide streetscape trees, flowers, planters, and other landscape elements within the downtown area.
 - Provide natural landscape features in front of the IDNR and Lake County Forest Preserve Property.
- c. Implement and/or create incentives to encourage the following improvements related to architectural design and preservation within the downtown area:
 - Develop design guidelines for the construction of new, and the renovation of existing commercial and multi-family residential structures.
 - Establish a Design Review Committee to enforce the design guidelines.
 - Support private sector efforts to improve and restore downtown building facades and business signage to a more traditional and authentic appearance, including any necessary stabilization of deteriorating facades.

FUNDING SOURCES

Potential funding sources for the implementation of *Plan* initiatives can be considered as falling into three general categories: economic development tools, federal and state resources, and private resources. While programs and funding levels at the state and federal level will change over time, those most appropriate to Winthrop Harbor are cited below to provide a basis for initiating implementation efforts. Of course, the *Plan* assumes that the Village will continually remain abreast of funding availability and will leverage all available resources.

A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

These tools can provide the necessary funding mechanism to spur economic growth in the downtown area.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis. TIF allows a community to capture the increase in local property taxes that results from a redevelopment project in order to pay for the public costs involved in the projects. The Village could create a TIF District to encompass most of the study area. (i.e. the non-natural areas). The presence of a TIF District will aid greatly in securing developer interest and investment in proposed development projects, as well as the implementation of public realm improvements that the *Plan* has identified as high priorities. TIF assistance can include site acquisition and preparation, infrastructure upgrades and low-interest financing, which can all reduce development costs significantly.

Business Improvement District: Business Improvement Districts are authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois. A community may designate, after public hearing, an area as a Business Improvement District. In carrying out a business district development or redevelopment plan, a municipality may:

- Acquire, manage, convey or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired pursuant to the provisions of a development or redevelopment project
- Exercise the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of real and personal property for the purpose of a development or redevelopment projects
- Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment, and issue obligation or revenue bonds as necessary

Special Service Area Financing (SSA): The SSA program was authorized by state statute in 1973. It is a finance tool that utilizes a real estate property tax levy to fund

“special services” in a targeted area where property owners voluntarily tax themselves for these services. SSA services and programs are in addition to—and go beyond—the normal programs and services provided by the community. Typically, commercial and industrial areas are subject to an SSA tax, although it is frequently extended to residential properties. When introducing an SSA, SSA services and improvements are funded entirely through the tax revenues generated by the SSA tax. The revenue is derived from a computation using the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of the taxable parcels within the special service area boundaries.

Tax Abatements: The Village, pursuant to state law, can offer abatement of municipal taxes to industries and commercial enterprises. The purpose of the tax abatement is to encourage the growth and establishment of industry and commercial enterprises. Typically, companies would be located within a “reinvestment zone” within the Village to be eligible for a tax abatement.

Creative Financing: Although some of these funding programs are still in the infancy stages, the Village and developers can work hand in hand in identifying which of these programs could assist in redevelopment. Creative financing strategies include State Infrastructure Banks, Section 129 funding, and tapered match. State Infrastructure Banks can provide many types of financial assistance ranging from loans to credit enhancements. Forms of assistance may include interest subsidies, letters of credit, capital reserves for bond financing, construction loans, and purchase and lease agreements for transit projects.

Additional Sources: A variety of other funding assistance is available for real estate development projects, including grants, loans, bonds and tax credits. These can be used to lower development costs for a municipality directly involved in a project, or for a developer who can demonstrate community support for a project. These funds can be secured from agencies such as the Illinois Development Finance Authority and the Illinois Housing Development Authority. In addition, programs are available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to alleviate costs for environmental remediation and increased energy efficiency. Assistance with economic development, including direct support to new businesses through low-interest financing and technical and workforce training assistance, is also available through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), among others.

B. FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES

Grants and loans can be secured from a variety of federal and state sources to aid in both public sector enhancement projects and to reduce certain private sector development costs. In some cases, public agencies such as Metra or IDOT can secure

and administer these resources on the Village's behalf for use in local transit projects. In other cases, the Village can secure funds and administer them independently or in conjunction with a public agency. Annual funding cycles are used to allocate federal funds, often to state and regional agencies who then review applications for funding from local communities. Some funding, however, will be available through direct application to federal agencies.

Although this is not an exhaustive listing, government funding sources to aid in *Plan* implementation may include the following:

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) includes several programs that can support local transportation, transit and infrastructure projects. TEA-21 will either be extended or replaced with a new program at the federal level, and is likely to still include the following programs, or similar successor programs: OGL (Operation Greenlight); ITEP (Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program) administered by IDOT; STP (Surface Transportation Program) sponsored by a regional agency such as the Chicago Area Transportation Study/CATS; and CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) for projects that can demonstrate regional air quality and congestion improvements and administered by CATS. Other more focused programs are also available under TEA-21, including programs related to public transit, bicycle access and trail systems.

Operation Greenlight and Access to Transit (OGL): Currently, FY 2004 is the last year of funding for the Operation Greenlight and Access to Transit program. However, there is some expectation that this program may continue beyond FY 2004, although with possible changes in the program structure. Funds are currently allocated to any project that is related to transit. Two types of funds are available: general grants and access to transit funds. General grants are for any transit project including station projects, commuter parking lots and pedestrian bridges and tunnels in a station area. Access to transit funds are available for any project that allows direct access to the station area, including sidewalks and access roads.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement (ITEP): This funding source is administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation. Among the projects that are eligible include bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, landscaping, and historic preservation. Federal reimbursement is available for up to 50% of the cost of the right of way and easement acquisition, and 80% of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs.

Surface Transportation Program (STP): These funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category must have a local sponsor (i.e. the Lake County Council of Mayors) and are selected based, among other factors, on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project. STP funds are allocated among the following programs: demonstration projects, enhancement, hazard elimination, and urban funds.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ): The CMAQ program focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types include transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects, and projects that results in emissions reductions. These projects are federally funded at 80%. The program is administered through the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS).

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (DCEO) RESOURCES

Business Development Public Infrastructure Program (BDPA): This program provides funds for infrastructure improvements in support of economic development in Illinois. Funding is available only for infrastructure projects which lead directly to private sector expansion. Program funds may be used for a wide variety of public infrastructure improvements needed to induce job creation and retention including local roads and streets, access roads, sidewalks, water and sewer line extensions, and public transit systems.

Affordable Financing of Public Infrastructure Program (AFPI): This program helps local governments finance public infrastructure needed to support economic and community development. Program funds may be used for acquisition, construction, and improvements of local public facilities and sites and associated equipment.

Training and Technical Assistance for Local Governments: DCEO conducts technical workshops to assist municipalities with financial management, disaster planning, and how to finance new infrastructure improvements among other training topics.

ADDITIONAL STATE PROGRAMS

Illinois Main Street Program: This program is administered by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor in order to rekindle the economic vitality of a downtown. Illinois Main Street helps communities build an effective volunteer-driven management organization guided by a professional staff (municipalities need to hire a program

manager), enhance the downtown's design and appearance through historic preservation, create a unified quality image, develop promotional strategies to bring people downtown, recruit and strengthen existing downtown businesses, recruit new businesses, and develop economic restructuring strategies to sustain the vitality of the downtown. In recent years, this program has seen limited funding.

Historic Property Tax Freeze: The Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program, administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, provides tax incentive to owner-occupants of certified historic residences who rehabilitate their homes. Through the Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program, the assessed valuation of the historic property is frozen for eight years at its level the year rehabilitation began. The valuation is brought back to market level over a period of four years.

C. LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES

Lake County Partners: Lake County Partners is a non profit economic development corporation working to maintain economic vitality in Lake County. This organization facilitates a wide range of financial assistance and incentives for local businesses including assistance to companies needing start-up funding, financing to purchase machinery and equipment, new building loans, business loan programs, and support to identify state and local economic development incentives and tax credits.

Lake County, Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau: The Convention and Visitors Bureau serves as a promotional and marketing arm for Lake County tourism. Membership is open to businesses which are tourism in nature (e.g. North Point Marina). The Bureau provides individual travelers, groups, or convention attendees with travel and tourism information. They also publish a monthly Calendar of Events to advertise special programs and activities throughout the county.

Lake County Chamber of Commerce: The Lake County Chamber of Commerce supports and provides promotional and networking opportunities for Lake County businesses. Membership is open to individual businesses. The Chamber publishes a business directory, provides business to business marketing opportunities, holds seminars, provides networking opportunities, and provides information on tourism, businesses, and employment opportunities within the County.

D. PRIVATE RESOURCES

Private sources of funding can often be secured for specific projects or initiatives, in particular those with a cultural, historical or beautification emphasis. These sources could include grants or loans from philanthropic organizations or foundations, or loans from local financial institutions.

CONCLUSION

The Village of Winthrop Harbor in cooperation and partnership with others as described in this final section of the *Plan*, is poised to begin the vitally important process of reestablishing downtown Winthrop Harbor as the heart of the community, both symbolically and functionally. This *Winthrop Harbor Station Area Plan* provides the vision, policy guidance and implementation direction needed by the Village and its partners to capitalize on positive regional development trends, existing transit services, established civic and recreational amenities, and the community’s desire to “raise the bar” in its redevelopment efforts.