VILLAGE OF CRETE

STATION AREA PLANS

September 2008

HNTB

In Association with:
Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc.

Adopted by the Village of Crete
Board of Trustees
September 8, 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Station Area Plans* for the Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park stations were prepared through the efforts of the Village of Crete, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra, and the project planning consultants, HNTB Corporation and Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc. Many citizens, staff and officials of the Village of Crete participated in the planning process. Their involvement and insights are sincerely appreciated.

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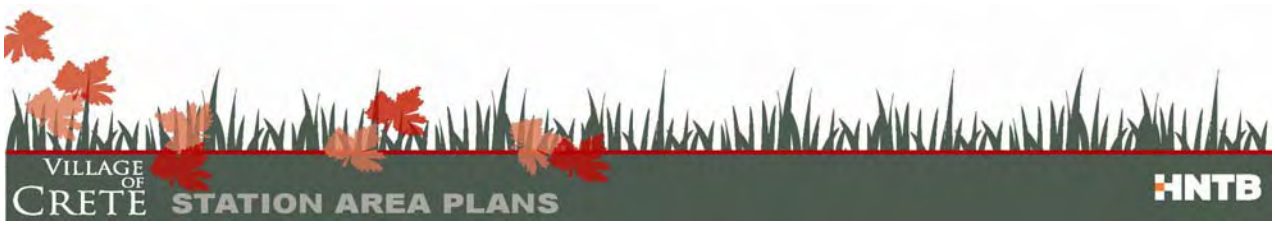
Preparation of this document was financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and the Regional Transportation Authority. The contents of the document do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, or the Illinois Department of Transportation.



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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Many communities throughout the Chicago region promote their existing commuter rail stations as an economic development tool, as well as an energy-saving alternative to the automobile. The Village of Crete is seeking these same opportunities as an active planning participant in Metra's proposed SouthEast Service (SES), a proposed new radial commuter rail line between the Village of Crete and Downtown Chicago. The Village conducted this independent station area planning study to determine community options for station locations and transit supportive land uses, utilizing grant funds secured through the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP). Ultimately, the Village sought to understand how its planning efforts would compare to federal New Starts planning and development program criteria, which will be used to analyze the overall SES corridor program and its potential to secure federal transit funding.

STATION AREA PLANNING STUDY

The Village of Crete hired HNTB Corporation and Valerie Kretchmer Associates to provide planning and economic consulting services for the *Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park Station Area Plans*. The planning process for this study included an existing conditions analysis, and the development of alternative concept plans and final station area plans. The planning process sought to engage local leaders, property owners, developers, and the public to help choose preferred station locations and development programs.

As part of this study, a Steering Committee of local stakeholders and transportation agency representatives met to provide oversight and direction on how the proposed station areas should be developed. In addition, the results of key person interviews with a variety of community leaders, property owners, and real estate experts, as well as the public through public meetings and workshops, provided in-depth knowledge of overall community preferences.

PROPOSED TRANSIT SERVICE

Figure 1. Metra's Proposed SouthEast Service

Source: Metra Connects, Proposed New Starts, online: http://metraconnects.metrarail.com/ses.php

The 33-mile SouthEast Service (SES) is proposed to run along the Union Pacific/CSX railroad tracks, enhancing Metra's commuter rail service between the south suburbs and downtown Chicago. The SES would link close to 20 communities in south Suburban Cook and Will counties, providing new opportunities for travel to downtown Chicago and economic growth and development for the south suburbs.[1] Currently there is a stop at Gresham on Metra's Rock Island District, but beyond that, the SES would serve an area not currently served by commuter rail.

Metra is currently conducting an Alternatives Analysis for the proposed SouthEast Service (SES) to study potential commuter alternatives including a no-build option, bus rapid transit option and rail option, including ridership and cost estimates and an assessment of land use and environmental effects. Along with eight other communities, the Village of Crete is situated along the proposed SES alignment from Downtown Chicago to Balmoral Park (see Figure 1). The final report for the SES Alternatives Analysis will document the planned transit service, including level of service and ridership. A critical funding consideration of the Alternatives Analysis is the project's evaluation based on the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts Criteria, which stress the importance of transit supportive land uses, plans and policies.

[1] Metra, *Metra's Primary Rail Alternative*, Online: http://metraconnects.metrarail.com/ses.php

II. STUDY AREA BACKGROUND

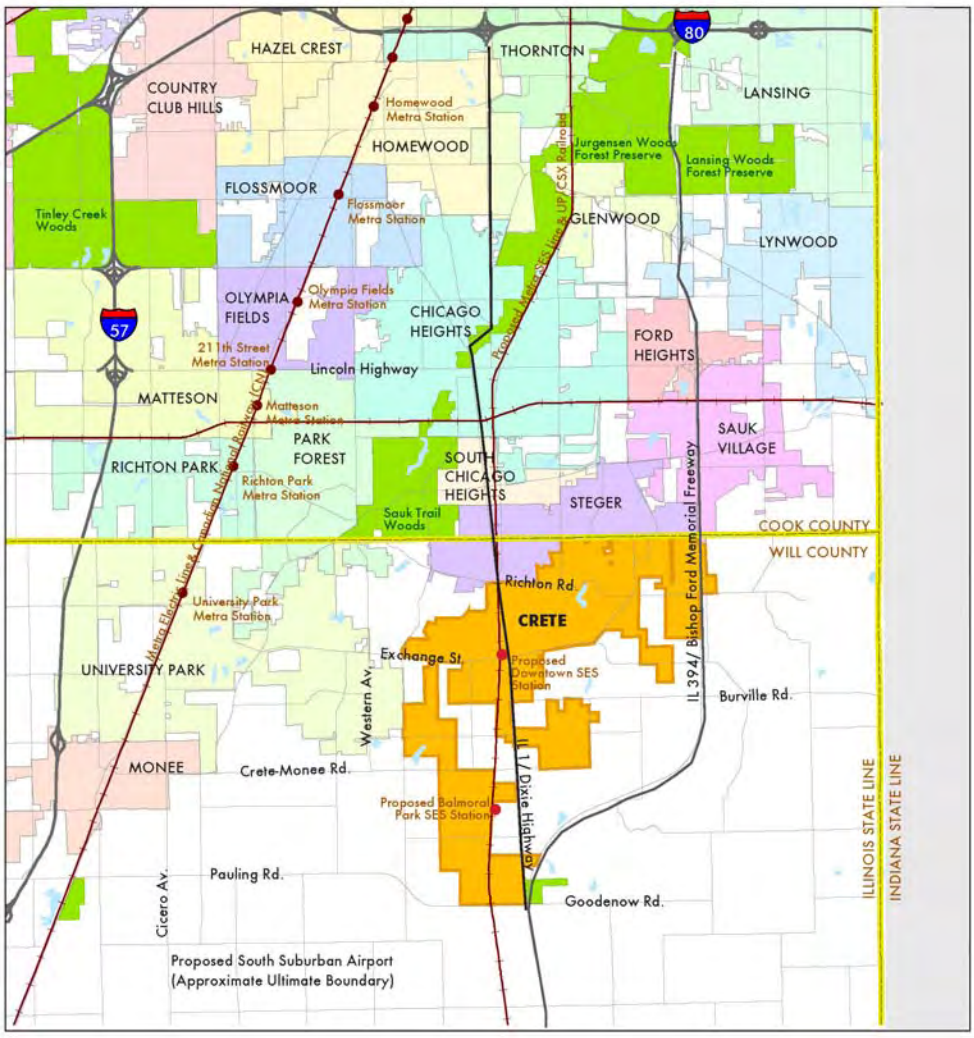
The Village of Crete is situated within the northern portion of Will County, just south of the I-80 corridor (Figure 2). With approximately 9,000 residents today (2007), Crete is estimated to grow to a population of 38,786 by the year 2030 according to regional projections from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Unincorporated parts of Crete Township have residential subdivisions with an additional population of 13,000 residents just outside the Village borders. The community's location in Will County, proximity to I-80 and IL-394, and available land create a market position poised for substantial suburban growth in the future.

STATION AREA PLANNING

The Village of Crete is considering two potential SES station locations within its community, Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park (see Figure 2). Two documents were prepared that reviewed both station area locations, within a one-half mile radius of the proposed station location as cited in Metra's Alternatives Analysis for the proposed SES. An "Inventory and Analysis Memorandum" (September 2007), prepared by HNTB, depicted and summarized key physical attributes of the Downtown area, including existing land use, access and circulation features, existing planning policies and key issues and opportunities. The overall existing conditions within each station area are important for understanding future potential and capacity for transit supportive development and transit improvements. This existing conditions analysis was used to assess the physical planning issues and opportunities within each station area, to help determine appropriate potential station locations, and to create transit supportive station area plans. In addition, Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc (VSKA) conducted a full market assessment, "Crete SouthEast Service Market Analysis for the Crete and Balmoral Park Stations" (August 2007), which included a discussion of population projections, demographic trends, retail trends and opportunities, office market trends and opportunities, residential trends and opportunities and supportable development opportunities in the station areas. Both of these reports are available under separate cover from the Village of Crete.

Drawing from an understanding of physical and market conditions, concept plans were developed for both station areas and brought to the public for community input. The team, including the Village, Metra, RTA and the Steering Committee, utilized the community input process to determine the preferred station area location and planning framework for each station area.

Figure 2. Location Map



Data Sources

Base Map: U.S. Census 2000 and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

South Suburban Airport Boundary: Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), March 2001

III. DOWNTOWN CRETE VISION AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

In order to best support the Village of Crete's aspirations in the progress and improvement of its potential future station areas, a vision statement and a set of corollary development principles were created with a special emphasis on the expansion of transit oriented development (TOD). The Development Principles include ideas that have guided the development of the concept plan by delineating key policies with regard to land use, access and circulation, and urban design.

VISION

In the Village of Crete, the Metra commuter rail service on a new SouthEast Service (SES) will stop at a well appointed station downtown, which provides a pleasant and pedestrian-oriented retail street connection to the historic area along Main Street. Commuter facilities such as shelters and seating areas have been installed, along with new landscaping improvements that harmonize with the existing downtown fabric. Commercial businesses in renovated buildings, converted houses and new infill structures welcome residents home, serve their daily needs – dry cleaning, banking, grocery shopping – and provide a social gathering spot. Other downtown businesses have redeveloped in this expanded walkable Downtown core, which provides streetscape amenities, shared rear parking and new public open spaces reflecting Crete's heritage.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Land Use Principles

1. Crete's unique identity should be strengthened in the station area.
2. Infill development should be encouraged Downtown to support existing Main Street businesses and expand the economic vitality of the Downtown area.
3. Existing structures of historic value and/or high quality should be preserved and enhanced, blending effectively with new infill development.

4. New residential development should be encouraged surrounding the Downtown core, which can benefit from the rail line and support local businesses. A diverse mix of housing types should be considered, including upper story units, town homes and smaller single family homes.
5. Convenience shopping should be located close to the proposed station to serve commuters (i.e. newsstands, coffee shops and bakeries).
6. Open spaces and plazas should be created Downtown as public gathering spaces.
7. Public uses, such as parks and schools, should be maintained and enhanced in the vicinity to support existing and new residential populations.

Access, Circulation and Parking Principles

1. The placement of commercial storefronts and parking areas should encourage a "park and walk" pattern of use, facilitating visits to Downtown by commuters and nearby residents.
2. A network of bicycle lanes/multi-use trails should be developed in and around the Downtown to encourage bicycle use and mobility.
3. Commuter parking should be located in areas convenient to the proposed station and where commuter walking patterns will encourage patronage of local businesses.
4. Adequate parking should be provided so that Village lots effectively accommodate both commuters and shoppers.
5. Existing vehicle access to the Downtown should be maintained while avoiding speeding and cut-through traffic in nearby residential areas, with auto-oriented uses focused along Exchange Street and north and south of the Downtown core along Main Street.
6. Signalized traffic control at the intersection of Division and Main streets should be provided as redevelopment progresses.
7. Access to the proposed Metra station should provide for efficient potential future routing of Pace buses and/or locally operated shuttle buses.
8. Shared use parking should be encouraged for commercial businesses that have high demand for parking in the evening hours, when demand for commuter parking is low.
9. On-street parking should be established and maintained in the Downtown core, including along Main Street; off-street parking should be maintained to accommodate

commuters and additional shoppers, especially near Exchange Street.

10. Future redevelopment of downtown neighborhoods should include completion of the sidewalk network to connect Main Street to adjacent neighborhoods.
11. Streetscape improvements (i.e. benches, sidewalks, lighting) should be provided to promote an environment that improves the Downtown experience for shoppers and pedestrians.
12. Bicycle parking should be accommodated in several locations.

Urban Design Principles

1. The potential future Downtown Crete Metra Station should serve as a visual anchor and activity hub for the Downtown, facilitating transit ridership and encouraging commuters to linger in the area.
2. Plazas, seating areas, water features and/or public art installations should be accommodated in key locations to enhance the pedestrian experience.
3. Design standards should be developed and enforced for new mixed use, commercial and multi-family development, to ensure compatibility with existing structures and a cohesive Downtown environment.
4. Design standards should be developed and enforced for the "perimeter" areas (i.e. historic residences converted to business uses) buffering downtown from adjacent single-family neighborhoods.
5. Facade and signage enhancements at existing buildings should be undertaken to preserve and enhance the character of the Downtown and contribute to a consistent visual identity.
6. Gateways treatments should be provided at key entry points to the Downtown.
7. Wayfinding signage should draw visitors into the Downtown from the broader area, utilizing a consistent Downtown "brand" that can also be used in advertising and marketing efforts.

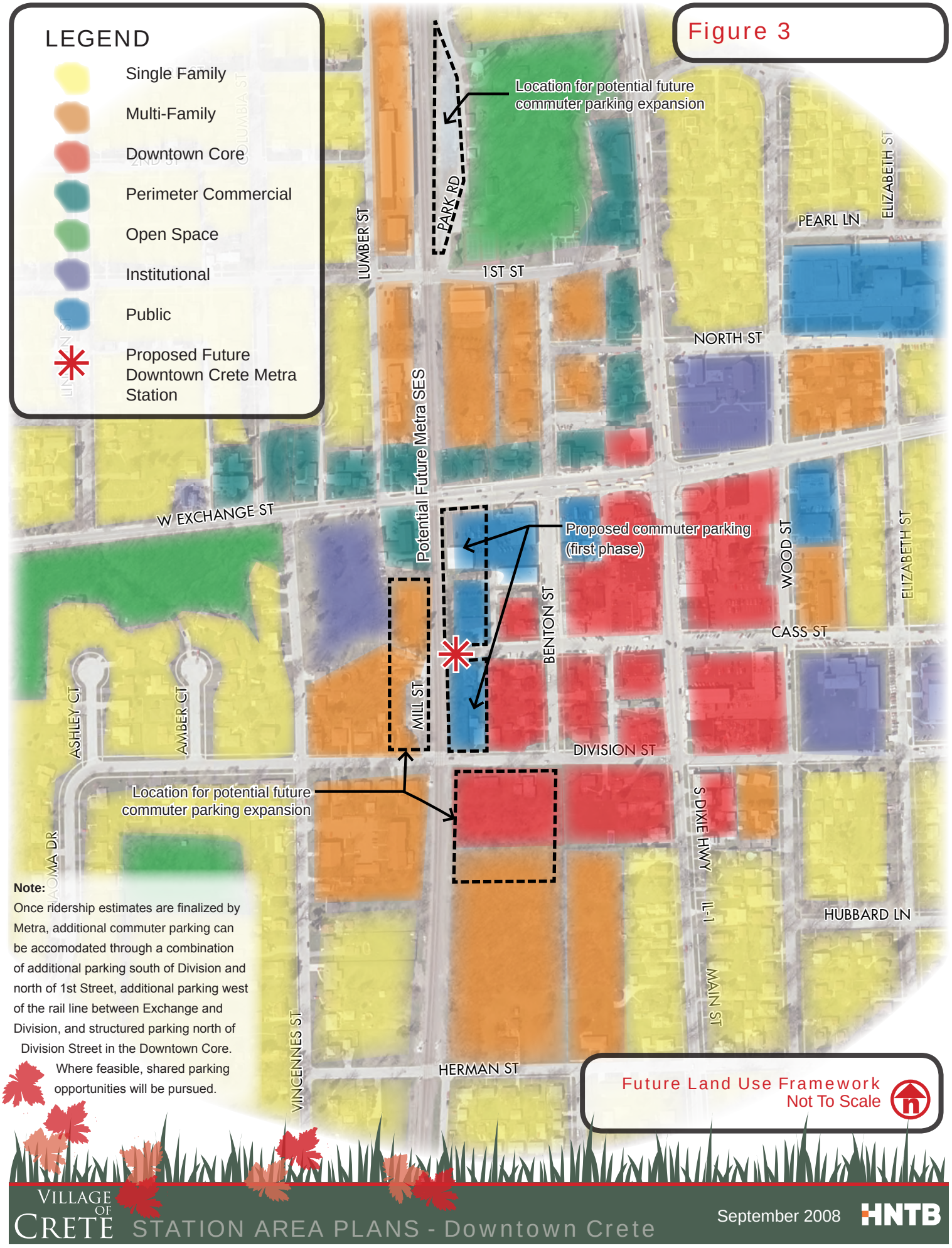
FRAMEWORK PLANS

Future Land Use Framework

The proposed Downtown Crete commuter rail station at the west end of Cass Street will provide long-term support to the existing Downtown as a center of the business and civic life of the community. Cass Street, west of Main Street, should be the focus of a phased redevelopment of new retail buildings on both sides of the street; the urban form emphasizing pedestrian access to storefronts with a wide sidewalk connecting the transit station facilities to Main Street (Figure 3).

The central Downtown area will be composed of a mix of "Downtown Core" land uses, including new retail and office space development, with upper story residential uses. Retail uses could include convenience-oriented uses typical of other train station locations, such as restaurants, carry-out foods, drug store, grocery and other specialized food stores, card and gift shops, florists, dry cleaners, banks, health club and day care centers. The office market in Crete consists primarily of small owner-occupied rental space for professionals and service companies. However, as the residential population increases, there will be increasing demand for small but high quality office space for doctors, lawyers, accountants, insurance agents, allied health professionals, etc. Some of these could be accommodated in mixed-use retail and office buildings. Office space for a medical group or hospital will be needed as the nearby population increases.

The Downtown Core should be surrounded by a mix of institutional and public uses, with "perimeter commercial" found in converted homes or smaller scale buildings. Multi-family residential should encircle the Downtown in the form of low-rise or multi-family single family attached residential units, with single-family and larger open space sites fanning out from the denser environment created around the proposed station.


LEGEND
Single Family
Multi-Family
Downtown Core
Perimeter Commercial
Open Space
Institutional
Public
Proposed Future Downtown Crete Metra Station
Figure 3
Location for potential future commuter parking expansion
PARK RD
LUMBER ST
1ST ST
PEARL LN
ELIZABETH ST
NORTH ST
Potential Future Metra SES
W EXCHANGE ST
Proposed commuter parking (first phase)
WOOD ST
ELIZABETH ST
BENTON ST
CASS ST
MILL ST
ASHLEY CT
AMBER CT
DIVISION ST
Location for potential future commuter parking expansion
S DIXIE HWY
IL-1
HUBBARD LN
MAIN ST
VINCENNES ST
HERMAN ST
Note:
Once ridership estimates are finalized by Metra, additional commuter parking can be accomodated through a combination of additional parking south of Division and north of 1st Street, additional parking west of the rail line between Exchange and Division, and structured parking north of Division Street in the Downtown Core. Where feasible, shared parking opportunities will be pursued.
Future Land Use Framework
Not To Scale

Access and Circulation Framework

The proposed Cass Street Station supports the long-term viability of the Downtown as the community grows by maximizing access from across the Village, utilizing existing arterials and traffic controls (Figure 4).

Commuter parking spaces will be provided in a linear manner along the rail line. The first phase of proposed commuter parking will be between Exchange and Division Streets. As ridership increases, additional commuter parking can be accommodated through a combination of structured parking spaces north of Division Street and/or surface parking lots south of Division Street adjacent to the rail line. Additional future commuter parking expansion can be accommodated north of First Street on the east side of the rail line. Where feasible, shared parking opportunities should be pursued. Access to and from the commuter rail parking lot at Exchange Street should be carefully controlled to ensure safe and efficient movement of vehicles. Left turns out of the commuter parking lot to westbound on Exchange Street will likely need to be prohibited through design of a right-out exit only. A more detailed traffic analysis will be needed to determine the feasibility of converting Cass Street to a two-way street in the future. Turning movements to and from Main Street will have to be carefully managed. Existing on-street parking should be maintained.

Improvements should be made to pedestrian facilities (i.e. sidewalks, crosswalks, mid-block connections) in the station area. Wider sidewalks should be constructed along the auto-oriented Main and Exchange Streets for safety purposes as part of future redevelopment projects, with Cass, Division and Benton Streets remaining pedestrian-oriented.

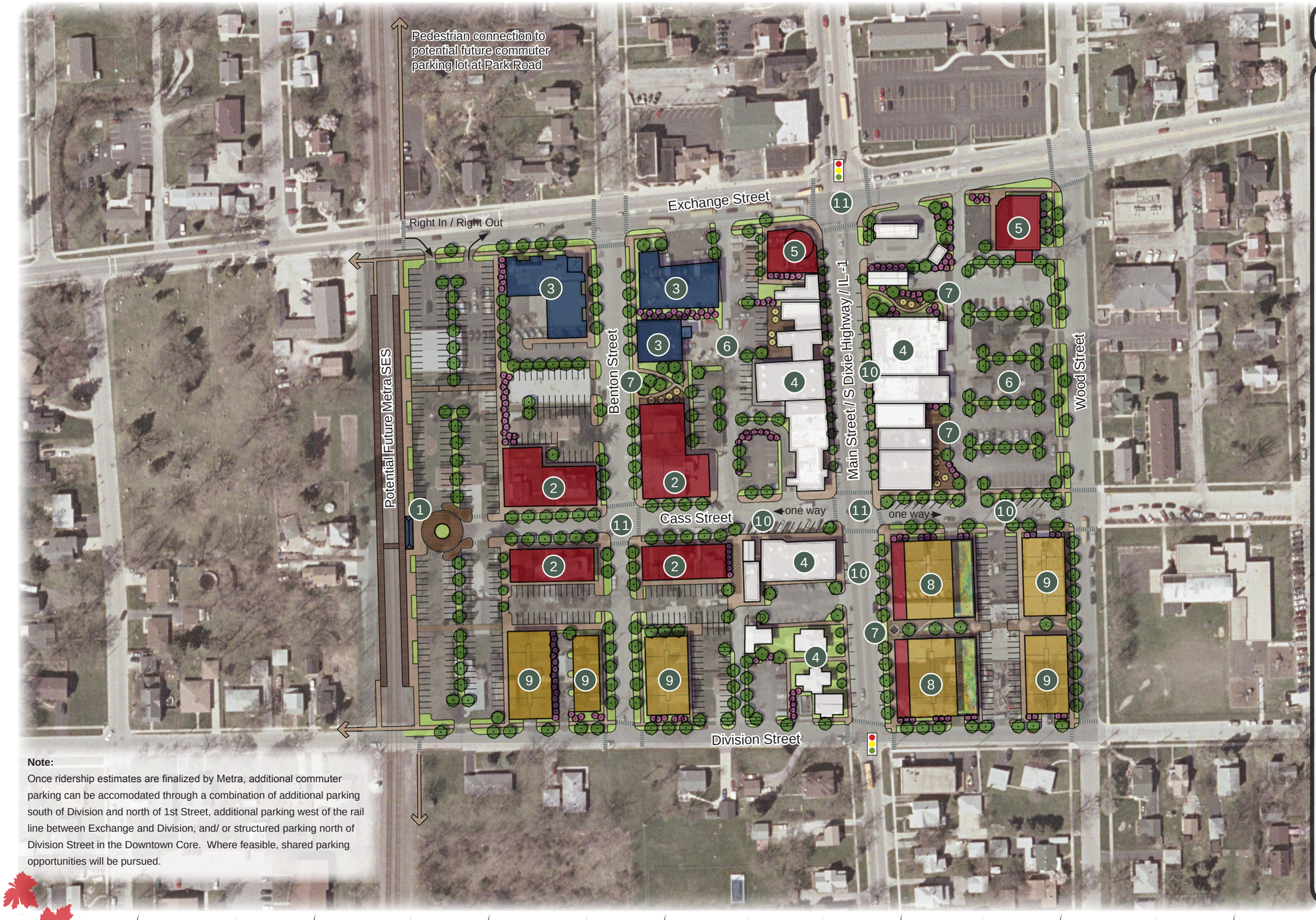
CONCEPT PLAN

The Downtown Crete Concept Plan (Figure 5) illustrates a conceptual future site layout of the Downtown Crete Station Area. As depicted on the concept:

- The potential future Downtown Crete Metra Station Area can accommodate approximately 246 commuter spaces adjacent to tracks between Exchange Street and Division Street.

Figure 4


LEGEND
Off Street Multi-Use Path
On-Street Signed or Striped Bike Path
Arterial: Pedestrian and Auto-Oriented
Arterial: Auto-Oriented Thoroughfare
Mid-Block Pedestrian Connection
Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape
Proposed Future Downtown Crete Metra Station
Proposed Future Boarding Platforms
Railroad / Proposed Metra SES
At-Grade Crossing
Signalized Intersection
Pedestrian / Bicycle Crossing Enhancements
Location for potential future commuter parking expansion
1st Street
Benton Street
Main Street / S Dixie Highway / IL-1
Potential Future Metra SES
Exchange Street
Cass Street
Division Street
Proposed commuter parking (first phase)
Location for potential future commuter parking expansion
Future IDOT Improvements to include Complete Streets Policy Compliance
Potential future street extension
Herman Street
Access and Circulation Framework
Not To Scale



Note:
Once ridership estimates are finalized by Metra, additional commuter parking can be accomodated through a combination of additional parking south of Division and north of 1st Street, additional parking west of the rail line between Exchange and Division, and/ or structured parking north of Division Street in the Downtown Core. Where feasible, shared parking opportunities will be pursued.

Figure 5

Legend

1. Potential future Downtown Crete Metra Station, with 246 commuter spaces adjacent to tracks between Exchange Street and Division Street.
2. New commercial and / or mixed-use development along Cass Street, creating a pedestrian- friendly connection to Main Street (IL Rt. 1) with near parking.
3. Public Facilities cluster adjacent to Downtown Core, with ready access to Exchange Street for public safety vehicles.
4. Existing commercial buildings to remain, with facade enhancements, including residential conversions. New structures in these areas to comply with design guidelines.
5. New commercial buildings along Exchange Street, offering both pedestrian and convenient auto access.
6. Consolidated rear parking areas to serve commercial businesses.
7. Small pocket parks and plazas offering mid-block connections to rear parking areas.
8. New mixed-use development with retail at ground floor and condominiums above with green roof feature.
9. Condominium or townhouse residential at perimeter of downtown.
10. Provide on-street parking wherever feasible.
11. Crosswalk features at intersections.

0 75 150

- New commercial and/or mixed-use development should be pursued along Cass Street and along Benton, Division and Wood Streets, creating a pedestrian-friendly connection to Main Street (IL Rt. 1) with nearby parking both on-street and mid-block.
- Public facilities should be clustered adjacent to the Downtown Core, with ready access to Exchange Street for public safety vehicles.
- Existing commercial buildings along Main Street should remain with facade enhancements. New structures in these areas should comply with the Downtown Crete Design Guidelines, discussed in the next section.
- Potential for new commercial building construction exists at key sites along Exchange Street, offering both pedestrian and convenient auto access.
- Consolidated rear parking areas serve commercial businesses while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly and active street environment.
- Small pocket parks/plazas offer mid-block connections to rear parking areas.
- Redevelopment opportunities are available Downtown, with potential for new mixed-use developments with retail at ground floor and condominiums above.
- Perimeter multi-family residential development is encouraged.
- On-street parking should be provided wherever feasible.
- Pedestrian pathways should provide connections between the potential future Metra station and commuter parking facilities. This pathway should be located outside the UP/CSX right-of-way.
- Crosswalk features are essential at intersections to maintain pedestrian connectivity and safety.

Figures 6 and 7 provide illustrative examples of potential future redevelopment, as viewed from two Downtown intersections that show potential planning concepts and design elements that will be further elaborated in the next section, Downtown Crete Design Guidelines.

Figure 6

Key Features

- New mixed-use development lining Cass Street, with ground floor retail
- On-street parking, bump-outs, and other traffic calming features on Cass Street
- Street trees along Cass and Main Streets
- New light fixtures and seasonal banners along Cass and Main Streets
- Upgraded sidewalk and crosswalk treatments
- Low parkway plantings at corner bump-outs

Figure 7

Key Features

- New retail or mixed-use anchor building at gateway corner
- On-street parking on Main Street where space permits
- Street trees along Main and Exchange Streets
- New light fixtures and seasonal banners along Main and Exchange Streets
- Upgraded sidewalk and crosswalk treatments
- Low plantings along Exchange Street parkway

IV. DOWNTOWN CRETE DESIGN GUIDELINES

These Design Guidelines provide an important tool for the Village of Crete to achieve its community vision for the Downtown Crete Station Area. These guidelines provide a framework against which the Village can consider and evaluate both public and private improvement proposals. They bring together many recommendations of the Plan, including: a transit-supportive and mixed-use development pattern, the desired intensity and scale of development, quality development character, appropriate parking solutions, access and circulation considerations, landscaping and other site enhancements, effective integration of public uses and open spaces, and streetscape and public area design features.

The Downtown was developed originally as a pedestrian-friendly and railroad-oriented activity center for the Village; therefore, the "building blocks" for a successful, traditional Downtown Crete are in place. Sensitively designed infill developments, enhancement of existing traditional buildings, and public area improvements are needed to restore the vitality and expand the "walkability" of the Downtown area, working within this strong existing framework.

The Design Guidelines are applicable within the Downtown, including areas designated as Downtown Core, Perimeter Commercial, Open Space, Institutional and Public in the Future Land Use Framework. The Guidelines should be used in association with the Village's development approval processes. Virtually all forms of development within the Downtown Station Area should be subject to review under these Design Guidelines. It is by design that the Downtown Crete Design Guidelines be specific enough to be used in the review of development proposals, while also providing flexibility in allowing creative design solutions to fulfill the overall objectives of the Plan. Village administration procedures should be codified to incorporate the Design Guidelines as part of the development review process for projects in the Downtown Crete Station Area.

The Design Guidelines are organized in the following five sections; Development Pattern, Architectural Design, Site Improvements, Public Realm Improvements, and Environment and Conservation.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Maintaining a mix of land uses in the Station Area is important to establishing a vibrant community activity node. Circulation and parking solutions convenient to the users are needed to support and complement these uses. The Design Guidelines provide general guidance with regard to site planning and the relationship of development sites to the public realm.

1. Focus on coordinated and contiguous, rather than piecemeal, redevelopment efforts. This provides a better opportunity for unified improvements and avoids small and isolated parcels. It also provides for economies of scale in parking and urban design improvements.
2. Keep viable structures that are already in place, in particular buildings which exceed one story in height. They establish a strong street edge, and serve as key building blocks for re-establishing a "walkable" Downtown.
3. Incorporate urban plazas, open spaces and focal points in the future redevelopment of the Downtown in key locations. Provide for a major open space for community gatherings and special events in conjunction with the proposed Metra station.
4. Maintain the existing street grid, except where limited street closures, one-way routing or other measures can result in improvements to pedestrian access and safety. Reduce unnecessary public rights-of-way, but only after careful consideration.
5. Develop an inviting and comprehensive pedestrian environment throughout the Downtown, particularly leading to the proposed Downtown Crete Metra Station. Utilize key open spaces as pedestrian areas to provide physical and visible links.

Incorporate urban plazas in the Downtown core

Create an inviting pedestrian environment

6. Maintain and maximize on-street parking capacity to allow for future commercial and residential uses.
7. Locate parking areas primarily behind buildings to minimize their visual impact on the pedestrian environment and to maintain a strong traditional architectural street wall.
8. Centralize parking to minimize curb cuts throughout the Station Area, to lessen vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and reduce visual disruptions of the streetscape.
9. Downtown core commercial and mixed-use buildings should occupy the most visible and accessible locations in the Downtown. New buildings should have higher density of uses. Traditional buildings should be maintained to preserve Crete's unique character.
10. Public civic and institutional buildings should occupy high profile locations within the Downtown and should be designed as "landmarks" of quality design and materials. Their location should be "framed" by the design of surrounding structures and related improvements.
11. In the perimeter commercial area, one- and two-story commercial buildings or converted residential structures are most appropriate.
12. To the extent feasible, multi-family residential development at the perimeter of the Downtown core should be contiguous, ideally transforming several adjacent lots with new development to minimize curb cuts and provide efficient access and parking.

Provide on-street parking in the Downtown core

Place commercial and mixed-use buildings on Main Street and Cass Street

Buffer single family residential neighborhoods with townhouses

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

High quality architectural design is a key factor for establishing a consistent urban character in the Station Area. The Design Guidelines address various aspects of building design, in particular as buildings relate to the street.

Siting and Orientation

1. Commercial and mixed-use structures should be built at the front lot line to create a pedestrian-oriented "street wall" along Downtown streets. Maintain this street wall at gaps between buildings with landscaping and fencing that visually defines the lot line.
2. Building entrances should be featured, and should take advantage of adjacent sidewalks, open spaces or plazas rather than being oriented toward parking areas.
3. Primary store entrances should be located along the street, with secondary entrances located behind the building or along a secondary street.
4. Access points to buildings should be easily identifiable and visible from Main Street. At corner sites, entrances should be oriented to the corner.
5. ADA accessible entrances should be integrated into the overall building design.
6. Service, loading and trash collection areas should be accessed from the rear, and screened from view from the street.

Provide a consistent street wall character in the Downtown

Screen trash collection areas from public streets and residential areas

Height, Bulk and Massing

1. Buildings should be at least two stories in height in Downtown Core areas, to establish a strong street presence.
2. The overall mass and bulk of commercial and mixed use buildings should be broken down with vertical storefront divisions and/or changes in exterior materials.
3. Upper story setbacks can be used on taller buildings to break down their perceived bulk and relate them to adjacent structures.

Break down storefront scale vertically and horizontally

Facade Articulation

1. Building facades should be articulated to address a pedestrian scale at the ground floor, yet also appeal to drivers with an overall facade bay structure or "rhythm" that breaks up the scale of larger buildings.
2. Commercial storefronts should be located along the street wall and have large windows for merchandise display, encouraging a window shopping atmosphere.
3. A continuous solid base should be provided, including a masonry bulkhead below storefront windows.
4. Inset and/or attached balconies can be used at upper story residential units to provide visual interest.
5. Windows and doors should reflect the traditional types found on more traditional structures in scale, proportion and construction. Horizontal or vertical strip windows, tinted or reflective glass, and glass block should not be used in the Station Area.
6. Residential buildings should include windows on the first floor where possible. In any event, detailed wall articulation and foundation landscaping should be incorporated.

Address pedestrians with facade details

Utilize traditional building types

Materials

1. Materials used in building construction should be of high quality, and varied yet complementary between adjacent projects.
2. Masonry, stone and other traditional exterior materials are most appropriate within the context of the Station Area for all development types.
3. Building accents should be of metal or wood; no plastic or other synthetic materials should be proposed. Garish colors should also be avoided.

Use complimentary materials

4. Avoid concrete block, precast concrete, glass curtain walls, plastic and other non-traditional materials.
5. Buildings of all types should include finished surfaces on all sides.

Applied Architectural Elements

General

1. Applied elements (such as stone accent bands, balconies and awnings) can break down the scale of larger buildings and provide visual interest.
2. Applied elements, lighting and signage should coordinate with and complement the overall architectural style and color scheme of the building.
3. Mechanical equipment and utility meters, etc. should be screened from view, and located either at the rear of the building or unobtrusively on the roof.
4. Security grilles should be fully retractable and inconspicuous to the extent practical.
5. Large architectural features should be added that provide interesting and significant enhancements (clock towers, turrets, etc.) to the streetscape.

Provide architectural features at transit facilities

Awnings

1. Awnings and signage should coordinate with the scale and color scheme of the building and neighboring buildings, and should not cover architectural details.
2. Simple, pitched awning profiles are most appropriate. Box awnings (enclosed from below), arched or rounded awnings, and internally illuminated awnings are not appropriate.
3. Weather-treated fabric awnings are recommended; shiny, reflective finished and garish colors are not appropriate in the Station Area.

Incorporate awnings at storefronts

Building Signage

1. Signage should generally be located in the sign band between first floor and second floor windows. Signage should not project above the cornice line or be mounted on the roof.
2. Plaque signs, projecting shingle signs, and signage applied to awnings or storefront glass are most appropriate. Box signs, whether flat or projecting, are not appropriate.
3. Back-lit individual letters and signs illuminated by wall-mounted fixtures are most appropriate. Internally illuminated box signs, and signs with flashing or moving text/parts are strongly discouraged.

Integrate signage with building design

Building Lighting

1. Exterior lighting should serve only to illuminate entries, signage, adjacent pedestrian areas and displays, or to highlight significant architectural features above the first floor.
2. Traditional light fixtures and/or appropriately scaled contemporary light fixtures should be used. Fixture color should be muted and coordinate with the overall color scheme.
3. Security lighting should be concealed to the extent practical.

Coordinate lighting with signage

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Quality site improvements are as important as building design for establishing a high quality and inviting station area. This section of the Design Guidelines addresses various aspects of site design, addressing how properties should relate to their surroundings.

Parking Lots and Structures

1. Off-street parking should be consolidated and shared within blocks to minimize curb cuts, and concealed from view but with visible access points.


Provide clearly delineated pedestrian routes

2. Where feasible, pursue shared access and shared parking between adjacent properties. Cross-easements should also be developed to facilitate vehicle movement between adjacent parking lots.
3. Pedestrian routes through parking lots should be clearly delineated with upgraded pavement, wayfinding and landscaping.
4. Off-street parking and loading areas should be screened by fences and/or landscaped material. Trees will be required for heat island reduction. The degree and type of planting is determined by the landscape ordinance or other code requirements.
5. Parking structures should be an integrated site design feature, with the following characteristics:
    a. Structured parking should be concealed from view to the extent practical.
    b. Design features should blend with associated buildings.
    c. High quality exterior materials should be used; eliminate large openings with treatments.
    d. Stairwells should be well lit and open to view.
    e. Plant materials should be incorporated to reduce the heat island effect of architecture surfaces. Consider green screening walls, window boxes and other landscape materials as part of an integrated design approach.
6. Wherever possible, parking for upper-story residential uses should be provided within the primary structure (i.e. below grade or on the first floor, accessible from the rear).

Add landscape buffers, in particular at parking lots

Integrate parking structures where warranted, reducing their visual impact

Site Signage and Lighting

1. Pole-mounted signage is not appropriate in the Station Area. Commercial businesses should rely primarily upon building-mounted signage.
2. At multi-tenant commercial developments and at public/institutional buildings, low monument signage that is integrated with the building design should be provided, located within a landscaped planting bed.
3. Signage should be located and sized appropriately to be visible to both drivers and pedestrians.
4. Clear directional signage and adequate lighting for wayfinding and security should be provided at all parking and walking areas.
5. Site lighting should be provided by a combination of building-mounted lighting. Lighting should be integrated with site landscaping and the adjacent streetscape and incorporate banner mounting brackets.
6. Light spillover onto adjacent properties should be minimized.

Signage should appropriately match building size and type

Encourage shade trees for an enhanced pedestrian environment

Urban Design and Landscape

1. Attractive and generous landscaping- incorporating shade trees, ornamental trees, shrubs and colorful perennial plantings- should be provided throughout the Station Area. At small developments, smaller scale plantings should be provided in planter boxes or pots to highlight building entrances. Maintenance requirements should be codified.
2. Where space permits, small pocket park plazas should be provided adjacent to pedestrian pathways.
3. Benches and waste receptacles must be provided, especially at building entries and at pocket park plazas.
4. Walkways and seating areas should be well lit and provide clear ingress and egress to ensure safety.

Incorporate outdoor dining areas where sidewalk width permits

5. At restaurants, defined areas for outdoor dining should be provided. Encourage utilization of the public sidewalk where space permits and by permit.

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The implementation and ongoing maintenance of high quality public improvements is an essential element of ensuring a pleasant and inviting pedestrian environment. The Design Guidelines address the appropriate treatment of the public realm, including street rights-of-way and on-street parking areas, public plazas, open spaces, the Downtown Crete Metra Station Area, and the Downtown.

Ensure adequate sidewalk space for display, dining and walking (minimum of six feet clear)

Streetscape

1. Provide continuous sidewalks that allow for an ADA compliant "walking zone" width adjacent to storefronts and an "amenity zone" at the curb to accommodate kiosks, planters, street trees, signage, benches and parking meters.
2. Sidewalks should be a high quality concrete, with consistent decorative paving material accents provided at corners and other key areas.
3. Where feasible, provide corner "bumpouts" to reduce the pedestrian crossing distance at key crossing points and increase area for furnishings, bicycles racks or outdoor cafes.
4. Pedestrian crosswalks should be identified with a material change, preferably utilizing a paving material consistent with sidewalk accent areas. Curb radii should be minimized to reduce auto speed and pedestrian crossing distances.
5. On-street parking should be provided except on Exchange Street. On-street parking reinforces the pedestrian character of the area by buffering pedestrians from traffic, while also slowing

Define crosswalks

traffic to accommodate parking and pedestrian movements. Additionally, convenient on-street parking provides a visual cue of downtown economic activity to drivers.

6. Street lights should combine both a full height fixture and a lower level pedestrian-scale fixture, and should incorporate mounting brackets for banners, flags, and/or flower baskets.
7. Benches and waste receptacles should be provided in appropriate areas.
8. Provide ample bike parking facilities at key destinations and throughout sidewalk amenity zones.
9. Street trees should be aligned within the amenity zone and spaced 25 to 30 feet on center. Provide trees with ample and proper growing medium such as Structural Soil™. Protect tree root zones with tree grates or permeable paving, according to landscape best management practices.
10. Work with business owners to provide and maintain a combination of pole-mounted flower pots and free-standing flower pots located in small clusters near street corners and parking lot entrances, planted with a consistent colorful array of seasonal plantings.
11. Maintenance must be considered in the design of the landscape (shared maintenance agreements, irrigation systems, etc.). Compliance with best management practice design and installation must be required by the Village.

Provide bicycle parking

Protect street trees and add seasonal flowers

Plaza and Public Areas

1. Integrate pocket park plazas and larger plazas to provide relaxation opportunities for shoppers and other visitors. Plazas and pocket park plazas should be strategically positioned, highly visible and of a high quality design and materials that are coordinated with the streetscape. The plaza must incorporate a

water feature, public art, statue or other focal feature, even of rotating temporary nature.

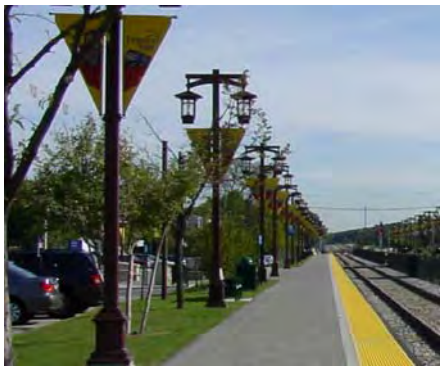
2. Provide pedestrian-scale ornamental lighting sufficient to ensure secure walking conditions after dark at areas not served by street lights throughout the Downtown core.
3. Coordinate benches, water fountains, trash receptacles and other pedestrian amenities with those used in streetscape areas.
4. Provide safety enhancements like bollards and enhanced paving to differentiate pedestrian, bike and vehicular areas.
5. Provide seasonal plantings and decorative lighting in plazas and pocket park plazas.

Identify parking areas with coordinated signage

Wayfinding and Gateway Features

1. Provide gateways and signage as landmarks for easy navigation within the commercial area.
2. Provide the Downtown core with arrival identifiers comprised of urban design elements and a signature Village feature at key locations on Main Street (IL Route 1).
3. Implement a coordinated wayfinding signage system to unify and define the Downtown Station Area and direct visitors to other places of interest.
4. Establish a consistent sub-style of signage for the Station Area and wayfinding purposes.
5. Establish a seasonal and event-driven banner program that provides a colorful and consistent identity for the Station Area and Downtown.
6. Incorporate public art such as sculptures and murals into parks and public plazas to enhance the character of the community.


Define the Downtown area with gateway features


Install decorative wayfinding banners at light poles

Transit Facilities

1. Construct a high quality Metra station and platforms with weather shelters. Materials selection and architectural style will create a strong visual and physical connection to the site and community. Informational kiosks and wayfinding should be placed throughout the Downtown to provide information such as train schedules, nearby businesses names and services and other destinations.
2. Provide an enhanced Metra station, including restrooms, additional seating, trash receptacles, attractive newspaper vending machines, information kiosks, plantings, bicycle parking and other amenities.
3. All Metra station furnishings and landscape features must be coordinated with the Downtown, communicating a strong sense of place.
4. Design proposed station with future bus access in mind, including sufficient turning radii, adequate driveway widths, bus stop locations convenient to rail platforms and minimization of conflicts with parking or exiting cars.
5. Provide covered bicycle parking at the Metra station.
6. Provide the commuter parking lot standards at the same level required of private developments within the Village and in compliance with *Metra's Parking Manual*.
7. Commuter parking lots should be visible from and readily accessible from the station and boarding platforms.

Create a unified streetscape program with plantings, lighting, benches and other pedestrian amenities

Note that any proposed station design and related improvements will be subject to review and approval by Metra and will need to comply with their established guidelines (i.e. *Metra's Station Manual, Metra's Parking Manual*) (see pages 69-70 for Metra preliminary considerations).

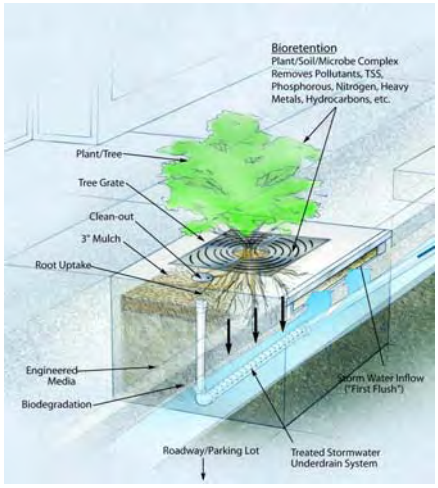
ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

Conservation of the natural open space environment and sustainable building techniques are essential for the long-term well-being of the Village. The Design Guidelines address the appropriate treatment of building construction and design, as well as the placement of new buildings in accordance with the environment.

Use recycled building materials wherever feasible

1. Buildings should implement LEED© (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles during design and construction practices.
2. Select street trees suitable for the site conditions and the design intent. Trees should be relatively self-sustaining and long-lived. Reduce irrigation needs.
3. Minimize the need for toxic or potentially polluting materials such as herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, or petroleum-based fuels within the Downtown area.
4. Incorporate planters as streetscape design elements, used to collect, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff.
5. Evaluate bioswales along roadways and parking areas to encourage groundwater infiltration of stormwater runoff.
6. Utilize native plants and construct rain gardens to reduce runoff and decrease pollution.
7. Reduce non-point source pollutions by constructing detention ponds near large parking lots to catch stormwater runoff.
8. Construct tree box filters, mini bioretention areas, beneath the street grates of all street trees. The runoff collected in the tree-box filters through curb inlets helps irrigate the trees.
9. Encourage installation of a "green" vegetated roof on all or portions of new and existing buildings.

Construct bioswales in areas of large impervious surfaces



Construct box filters beneath the surface to catch runoff and irrigate trees

10. Reduce the amount of non-pervious street cover by encouraging use of pervious pavements for parking lots, sidewalks and cross-walks.
11. Provide preferred parking for vanpools, carpools, users of public transportation and users of alternative fuel vehicles.
12. Evaluate structured parking in lieu of asphalt paved surface lots to provide additional 'green' areas and potentially reduce the size of storm sewer systems.
13. Consider full cutoff luminaries, low-reflectance, non-specular surfaces and lowangle spotlights for roadway and building lighting. Eliminate light trespass from the building and site and improve night sky access.
14. Provide incentives for usage of recycled or non-potable water for uses within a house or building, or for landscape irrigation purposes.
15. Encourage businesses to employ cardboard balers, aluminum can crushers, recycling chutes and other technologies to enhance a recycling program.
16. Encourage on-site renewable energy self-supply in order to reduce atmospheric pollutants, operations costs and the environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel energy use.
17. Install street furniture constructed from recycled materials.
18. The Village should provide leadership through practice and codified policies regarding the sustainable built environment.

Construct parking areas with pervious pavement types for stormwater management

Encourage on-site renewable energy supplies, such as rooftop photovoltaic cells (solar panels)

V. BALMORAL PARK VISION AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

In order to best support the Village of Crete's aspirations in the progress and improvement of its potential future station areas, a vision statement and a set of corollary development principles were created with a special emphasis on the expansion of transit oriented development (TOD). The Development Principles include ideas that have guided the development of the concept plan by delineating key policies with regard to land use, access and circulation, and urban design.

VISION

At the terminus of the SouthEast Service (SES), the Balmoral Park Station provides park-and-ride commuter access to downtown Chicago and destination access to Balmoral Park from the City of Chicago and other south suburbs along the SES. The Metra rail yard extends south of the station, with commercial and business park development between the station and the IL Route 1 corridor. Many entertainment options, such as a theater, restaurants and family-oriented entertainment venues, create a lively pedestrian atmosphere well into the evening hours in the commercial area between the station and Balmoral Park. A sports facility is located a short distance to the south, providing a venue for regional events and tournaments, in addition to Balmoral Park's seasonal festivals and other community events that are hosted in the area by the Village. A comprehensive system of off-street pedestrian and bicycle paths link all activities, encouraging movement around the area with minimal traffic generation. Wide boulevards and a consistent streetscape image tie the site together as a unified whole, visually and physically linked to Balmoral Park.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Land Use Principles

1. A diverse mix of business types should be promoted. Big box retail and business park uses should be set back from IL Route 1; retail, restaurant and entertainment uses should be placed along IL Route 1 for maximum visibility and access.
2. The Balmoral Park Racetrack should be preserved, enhanced and supported through

compatible land development such as development of a hotel to serve visitors.

3. Commercial uses should be sited to maximize the synergy between the proposed Metra station and Balmoral Park Racetrack and encourage movement throughout the area.
4. A regional sports facility/park could be sited within the station area to enhance recreational economic activity associated with the Balmoral Park Racetrack and provide a venue for large community events.

Access, Circulation and Parking Principles

1. The already strong existing transportation network around Crete should be capitalized upon to provide convenient access to the Balmoral Park Station.
2. Station Area access should be coordinated with existing access to Balmoral Park.
3. Vehicle access into the Balmoral Park Station Area should be maintained and enhanced while avoiding cut-through traffic in nearby residential areas.
4. Commuter parking should be located close to the proposed station, north of the proposed Metra storage and maintenance yard facility. Additional commuter parking could be available in parking lots near retail and sports uses, as demand warrants.
5. Shared use parking should be encouraged with commercial businesses that have the greatest demand for parking in the evening hours, when demand for commuter and sport event parking is low.
6. Depending on the ultimate layout of the proposed CenterPoint Intermodal Facility, opportunities to allow employees of the CenterPoint Intermodal Facility direct pedestrian connections to the proposed Metra station and commercial area should be pursued in the future. Any vehicular/pedestrian crossing changes or modifications would need to be discussed with UP, CSX, and Metra and would not be funded by Metra.
7. New roadways in the Station Area should not connect to or through existing residential neighborhoods; major access in and out of the property should occur on IL Route 1, with secondary access as needed from Elmscourt Lane.
8. A network of multi-use trails should be developed in and around the area to encourage bicycle use and pedestrian mobility, with particular emphasis on developing a multi-use path along IL Route 1 to provide non-vehicular access to the station area.
9. A local shuttle service could potentially be implemented at the station area to

transport visitors/commuters between the business park, sports facility, commercial shopping/entertainment area and Balmoral Park Racetrack.

Urban Design Principles

1. New development should be balanced with open space and attractive and generously scaled public right-of-way facilities.
2. Appropriate design standards should be established and reinforced for private developments; uses along IL Route 1 should be compatible with the historic Balmoral Park Racetrack.
3. Design standards should be developed for the edges of the site to ensure compatibility and a buffer with existing single-family residential neighborhoods.
4. Coordinated streetscape and design elements should be established for the Station Area, with consistent wayfinding signage.
5. Gateway treatments should be established at defined public entry points to the Balmoral Park Station Area.
6. Plazas, seating areas, water features and/or public art installations should be accommodated in key locations to enhance the pedestrian experience.
7. Wayfinding signage should draw visitors into the Balmoral Park Station Area from the broader area, utilizing a consistent "brand" that can also be used in advertising and marketing efforts.

FRAMEWORK PLAN

The Future Development Framework (Figure 8) for the Balmoral Park commuter rail station anticipates uses that are compatible with the adjacent intermodal facility and Balmoral Park Racetrack. Retail and business park development are proposed in the northern half of the station area, within close proximity to the station, as well as possessing visibility and access off of IL Route 1. Retail markets should not compete with businesses located Downtown, instead the station area should seek to attract complimentary commercial development. For example, a cinema complex or big box retailers can and should not locate Downtown because

of large site requirements and large parking lots, and would have synergy with the adjacent Balmoral Park Racetrack.

A regional sports facility is being proposed in the southern portion of the project site. Such a project is being considered for a South Suburban location and this use would also have an excellent synergy with Balmoral Park Racetrack. In addition, train service from Chicago and the proximity to Route 394 would make it very easy to access a sports facility, further complimented by the proposed I-57/IL 394 connector, also known as the Illiana Expressway.

The Balmoral Park station area location is not considered a likely location for future residential land uses because of the planned intermodal facility to the west of the tracks, the proximity of the proposed third regional airport and the potential close proximity to the proposed Illiana Expressway. These planned and proposed infrastructure improvements, along with the existence of the Balmoral Park Racetrack, provide the community the opportunity to attract a mix of uses geared to enhancing and expanding the tax base of the community, reducing the reliance on residential properties for tax revenue. Metra would be integral in delivering employees to future job opportunities in and around the station area. Metra's initial service plan for the proposed SES does not include weekend service.

The framework plan places the proposed Metra station in the northwest corner of the site, just off the mainline on the yard lead track. Parking will be provided adjacent to the station, as a component of the larger Metra yard. The new roadway network should align with existing or planned entrances to the racetrack. Opportunities for encouraging shared use of the commuter parking lots should be a priority in planning and site design of new businesses, including retail and entertainment uses, a regional sports facility, and to a lesser extent, business park uses. Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly pathways should be provided for safe and interconnected internal circulation of the site. In addition, a multi-use pathway should be pursued along the IL Route 1 corridor, providing an alternative connection to Downtown Crete and residential neighborhoods to the north. If feasible, the existing underpass beneath IL Route 1 near the Balmoral Park entrance should be upgraded and re-opened.


Figure 8
To Downtown
Potential Future Metra SES
Commuter Pkg 12 ac.
Business Park 15 ac.
Retail 10 ac.
Retail 24 ac.
CenterPoint Intermodal Facility
Balmoral Park
S Dixie Highway / IL -1
Metra Yard 40 ac.
Potential Sports Facility Site 24 ac.
Potential Hotel Site 12 ac.
UP / CSX
Elmscourt Lane
Legend
Retail / Commercial
Business Park
Metra Yard
Commuter Parking
Regional Sports Facility
CenterPoint Intermodal Facility
Proposed Future Balmoral Park Metra Station
Minor Vehicular Access Route
Boulevard Access Route
Entrances with Signage
Multi-Use Path
Gateway Marker
Signalized Intersection
Residential Buffer
Industrial Buffer
RR Tracks (UP/ CSX)
Future Development Framework
Not To Scale
VILLAGE OF CRETE
STATION AREA PLANS - Balmoral Park
September 2008
HNTB

VI. BALMORAL PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Balmoral Park Design Guidelines provide an important tool for the Village of Crete to achieve its Vision for the proposed Balmoral Park Metra Station Area. These guidelines provide a framework against which the Village can consider and evaluate both public and private improvement proposals in the Balmoral Park area. They bring together many recommendations, including: a transit-supportive and mixed-use development pattern, the desired intensity and scale of development, quality development character, appropriate parking solutions, access and circulation considerations, landscaping and other site enhancements, effective integration of public uses and open spaces, and streetscape and public area design features.

The Design Guidelines are applicable within the Balmoral Park Station Area, including areas designated as Retail, Regional Sports Facility and Business Park in the Future Development Framework. The Guidelines should be used in association with the Village's development approval processes. It is by design that the Balmoral Park Design Guidelines be specific enough to be used in the review of development proposals, while also providing flexibility in allowing creative design solutions to meet the overall objectives of the Plan. Village administration procedures should be codified to incorporate the Design Guidelines as part of the development review process for projects in the Balmoral Park Station Area.

The Design Guidelines are organized in the following five sections; Development Pattern, Architectural Design, Site Improvements, Public Realm Improvements, and Environment and Conservation.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The Balmoral Park Station Area site is a "greenfield". Development will be guided to support the station and the future strategic growth of the Village of Crete. To that end, maintaining a mix of land uses in the Station Area is important to establishing a viable commercial and economic activity center within the greater Crete community. Circulation and parking

solutions will support and complement the business and recreational uses. The Balmoral Park Design Guidelines provide land use recommendations for site planning, and guidance and standards for integrating the proposed uses with the proposed future Metra station.

1. Provide coordinated and contiguous development efforts, creating a unified site plan.
2. Develop a consistent architectural style and site furnishings palette for the design and placement of structures and circulation elements within the Balmoral Park Station Area.
3. Consider the strong physical proximity to Balmoral Park Racetrack in developing functional and visual linkages.
4. Incorporate green principles for site development such as pervious pavement types, stormwater infiltration, groundwater recharge zones and vernacular plant materials as part of the stormwater mitigation system.
5. Focus on the pedestrian and bicyclist while accommodating the automobile.
6. Provide spaces for public gathering; adorn the site with ornamental native plantings designed as an integrated streetscape system.
7. Develop a clear hierarchy that provides ease of access for all users of the public way connecting the Station Area to the existing community.
8. Provide a reduced heat island effect by incentivizing green roofs and mandating landscape islands within surface parking areas. Encourage creating smaller parking lots broken up with green areas. Provide clear pedestrian travel zones appropriately, but not unnecessarily.
9. Provide adequate bicycle parking areas, including covered parking in select areas.

Incorporate green site development principles, such as swales and lot drains

Create an inviting pedestrian environment at commercial areas

Minimize parking impacts with green infrastructure

10. Supplement retail parking areas with parking structures, where feasible, to maximize site potential.
11. If possible, provide parking structures for all but guest parking in business park areas.
12. Where feasible, pursue shared access and shared parking between adjacent properties. Cross-easements should also be developed to facilitate vehicle movement between adjacent parking lots.
13. Retail should occupy the most visible and accessible locations along IL Route 1.
14. Provide generous green areas and landscape buffers to create the pastoral sense of place and buffer adjacent residential areas.

Construct shared parking facilities where feasible

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

High quality architecture is key for establishing a consistent character in the new Balmoral Park Station Area. The Design Guidelines address building design and siting.

Siting and Orientation

1. Establish an appropriate visual identity for the whole site.
2. Locate buildings in a manner that supports the intended image of various site areas.
3. ADA accessibility should be an integral part of all design.
4. Service, loading and trash collection areas should be accessed from the rear, and screened from view from the street.

Create a unique and consistent identity for the Balmoral Park Station Area

Height, Bulk and Massing

1. Structures should generally be no more than four stories in height within the office park.
2. Structures within the retail area may be one to two stories, but should provide varied massing and roofline profiles.

Structures should be limited in height but with varied massing and rooflines

Facade Articulation

1. Retail storefronts should have large windows for merchandise display regardless of the building size or retail products.
2. Business park buildings must provide clear cues for finding entrances, directories and tenants. Architecture should be designed for human users, not automobiles.

Include windows for merchandise display

Materials

1. Buildings of all types should include finished surfaces on all sides. There should be incentives for providing green screens, landscaping and green roofs as part of the building design.
2. Materials used in construction should be of high quality and varied, yet complimentary between adjacent projects.

Applied Architectural Elements

1. Coordinate applied elements, lighting and signage to complement the overall architectural style and color scheme of the building and the site.
2. Consider applied elements such as stone accent bands to change the scale of larger buildings and provide visual interest.
3. Mechanical equipment, utility meters and other support should be integrated into the building design, screened from

Building signage should coordinate with architectural style and color scheme

view or located either at the rear of the building or unobtrusively on the roof.

4. Awnings and large windows contribute to a pedestrian-friendly scale and should be considered where appropriate.
5. Consider back-lit individual letters and signs illuminated by wall-mounted fixtures. Encourage icons and signs uniquely appropriate to particular businesses.
6. Provide visually coordinated site and building signage, sized and located to direct drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Quality site improvements are as important as building design for establishing a high quality and inviting station area. This section of the Design Guidelines addresses various aspects of site design, addressing how properties should relate to their surroundings.

Add landscape buffers, in particular at parking lots

Parking Lots and Structures

1. Parking lot landscaping should be used to reduce the heat island effect and enhance the overall quality of the site, especially internally to break up large expanses of pavement.
2. A varying degree of perimeter planting is an integral part of development of the site. The buffer width, density and other uses is dependent on the adjacent land uses and roadways.
3. Planting areas should be incorporated within parking lots for heat island reduction, cues to pedestrians and drivers and stormwater mitigation.
4. Off-street parking and loading areas should be screened by fences and/or landscaped material. Trees will be required for heat island reduction.

Integrate design features into structured parking

5. Pedestrian routes through parking lots should be clearly delineated with upgraded pavement, wayfinding and green infrastructure.
6. Parking structures should be incorporated as an integrated design feature of the overall site development, even if it is implemented in phases. Parking structures can be located behind other primary structures, can incorporate ground level storefront commercial space, or can otherwise be concealed with architectural design features consistent with nearby buildings.

Provide clearly delineated pedestrian routes

Site Signage and Lighting

1. Signage should be located and sized appropriately to be visible to drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. Clear directional signage and adequate lighting for wayfinding and security should be provided at all parking and walking areas.
3. Site lighting should be provided by a combination of building-mounted lighting, augmented by pedestrian-scaled light standards at larger sites. Lighting should be integrated with site landscaping and the adjacent streetscape, and incorporate banner mounting brackets.
4. Light spillover onto adjacent properties should be minimized.

Integrate site lighting into the landscape

Urban Design and Landscape

1. Sustainable and generous landscape areas, incorporating shade trees, ornamental trees, shrubs and highly ornamental native prairie plantings should be provided throughout the Station Area and incorporated into the overall site design.
2. Provide park/plaza nodes for leisure gathering convenient to pedestrian pathways and destinations.

Provide on-site plazas and clear pedestrian walkways

3. Provide appropriate furnishings at nodes. Include bicycle racks, benches, lighting, newspaper boxes and trash receptacles.
4. Walkways and seating areas should be well lit and provide views to other activities.
5. At restaurants, defined areas for outdoor dining should be provided.

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The implementation and ongoing maintenance of high quality public improvements is an essential element of ensuring a pleasant and inviting pedestrian environment. The Design Guidelines address the appropriate treatment of the public realm, including street rights-of-way and on-street parking areas, public plazas, open spaces and the proposed Balmoral Park Metra Station Area.

Define crosswalks

Streetscape

1. Design for pedestrians and bicycles and accommodate the automobile.
2. Consistent streetscape treatments should be incorporated along roadways and pedestrian pathways within the site, including elements such as upgraded sidewalk paving, decorative lighting, street trees, pole-mounted flower pots and banners, etc. Enhancements at Metra facilities or within the railway right-of-way will be subject to compliance with appropriate Metra and railroad guidelines.
3. Sidewalks should be a high quality concrete, with consistent decorative paving material accents provided at key areas.

Provide streetscape amenities

4. Pedestrian crosswalks should be identified with a material change, preferably utilizing a paving material consistent with sidewalk accent areas. Curb radii should be limited to 10 to 15 feet to minimize crossing distances.
5. Street lights should combine both a full height fixture and a lower level pedestrian-scale fixture, and should incorporate mounting brackets for banners, flags, and/or flower baskets.
6. Benches and waste receptacles should be provided in appropriate areas.
7. Provide bicycle parking facilities at key destinations within 50 feet of all building ingress/egress.
8. Pedestrian walkways should be exceptionally wide along both sides of the street within retail areas, ideally no less than 15 feet in width. This will help to accommodate both shoppers and commuters. They should provide a pedestrian walking zone directly adjacent to storefronts.
9. Roadways should be sized adequately to accommodate potential future bus/shuttle access to the proposed Metra station.
10. Provide on-street bicycle lanes.

Consider open spaces in site design

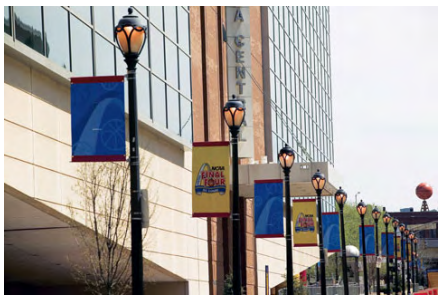
Plaza and Public Areas

1. Provide nodes for benches periodically along multi-use pathways.
2. At the proposed Metra station, provide seating, trash receptacles, attractive newspaper vending machines, information kiosks, plantings and other amenities to visually coordinate the station with the streetscape theme of the Station Area.

Create a unified streetscape program with plantings, lighting, benches and other pedestrian amenities

Wayfinding and Gateway Features

1. Establish gateway treatments to announce arrival into Balmoral Park Station Area at key locations to aid in orientation.
2. Implement a coordinated wayfinding signage system to unify and define the area, directing visitors to parking areas and public facilities and clearly notifying them of parking restrictions.
3. Establish a seasonal banner program that provides a colorful and consistent identity for the Station Area.
4. A wayfinding system should be developed, incorporating recurring visual elements and informational signage visible to both drivers and pedestrians, to aid in orientation when visiting the site. Signage in remote locations should guide visitors to the site from elsewhere in the Village.



Install decorative wayfinding banners at light poles

Transit Facilities

1. Construct a high quality Metra station and platforms with weather shelters. Materials selection and architectural style will create a strong visual and physical connection to the site and community. Informational kiosks and wayfinding should be placed throughout the Balmoral Park Station Area to provide information such as train schedules, nearby businesses names and services and other destinations.
2. Provide an enhanced Metra station, including restrooms, additional seating, trash receptacles, attractive newspaper vending machines, information kiosks, plantings, bicycle parking and other amenities.
3. All Metra station furnishings and landscape features must be coordinated with the site, communicating a strong sense of place.

Incorporate consistent streetscape improvements into Station Area design

4. Design proposed station with future bus access in mind, including sufficient turning radii, adequate driveway widths, bus stop locations convenient to rail platforms and minimization of conflicts with parking or exiting cars.
5. Provide covered bicycle parking at the Metra station.
6. Provide the commuter parking lot standards at the same level required of private developments within the Village and in compliance with *Metra's Parking Manual*.
7. Commuter parking lots should be visible from and readily accessible from the station and boarding platforms.

Provide covered bicycle parking

Note that any proposed station design and related improvements will be subject to review and approval by Metra and will need to comply with their established guidelines (i.e. *Metra's Station Manual, Metra's Parking Manual*) (see pages 76-77 for Metra preliminary considerations).

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

Conservation of the natural open space environment and sustainable building techniques are essential for the long-term well-being of the Village. The Design Guidelines address the appropriate treatment of building construction and design, as well as the placement of new buildings in accordance with the environment.

Use recycled building materials wherever feasible

1. Buildings should implement LEED© (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles during design and construction practices.
2. Select street trees suitable for the site conditions and the design intent. Trees should be relatively self-sustaining and long-lived. Reduce irrigation needs.

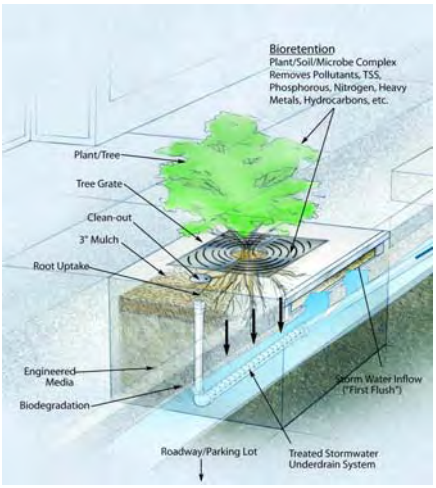
3. Minimize the need for toxic or potentially polluting materials such as herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, or petroleum-based fuels within the Downtown area.
4. Incorporate planters as streetscape design elements, used to collect, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff.
5. Evaluate bioswales along roadways and parking areas to encourage groundwater infiltration of stormwater runoff.
6. Utilize native plants and construct rain gardens to reduce runoff and decrease pollution.
7. Reduce non-point source pollutions by constructing detention ponds near large parking lots to catch stormwater runoff.
8. Construct tree box filters, mini bioretention areas, beneath all street trees. The runoff collected in the tree-boxes helps irrigate the trees. Tree boxes also add aesthetic value and reduce the urban heat island effect by providing shade and reducing dark surfaces.
9. Encourage installation of a "green" vegetated roof on all or portions of new and existing buildings.
10. Reduce the amount of non-previous street cover by encouraging use of pervious pavements for parking lots, sidewalks and cross-walks.
11. Provide preferred parking for vanpools, carpools, users of public transportation and users of alternative fuel vehicles.
12. Evaluate structured parking in lieu of asphalt paved surface lots to provide additional 'green' areas and potentially reduce the size of storm sewer systems.
13. Consider full cutoff luminaries, low-reflectance, non-specular surfaces and lowangle spotlights for roadway and building lighting. Eliminate light trespass from the building and site and improve night sky access.

Construct bioswales in areas of large impervious surfaces

Construct parking areas with pervious pavement types for stormwater management

Encourage on-site renewable energy supplies, such as rooftop photovoltaic cells (solar panels)

14. Provide incentives for usage of recycled or non-potable water for uses within a house or building, or for landscape irrigation purposes.
15. Construct tree box filters, mini bioretention areas, beneath the street grates of all street trees. The runoff collected in the tree-box filters through curb inlets helps irrigate the trees.
16. Encourage businesses to employ cardboard balers, aluminum can crushers, recycling chutes and other technologies to enhance a recycling program.
17. Encourage on-site renewable energy self-supply in order to reduce atmospheric pollutants, operations costs and the environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel energy use.
18. Install street furniture constructed from recycled materials.
19. The Village should provide leadership through practice and codified policies regarding the sustainable built environment.



Construct box filters beneath the surface to catch runoff and irrigate trees

VII. "NEW STARTS" EVALUATION OF CONCEPT PLANS

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) applies its "New Starts" criteria and measures to evaluate candidate transit improvement projects seeking federal capital funding assistance from the New Starts Program. Funding for New Starts projects is a nationally competitive process. The Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park Station Area Plans are part of the SouthEast Service (SES) New Starts commuter rail project, which will be judged against other major capital projects using several criteria. Land use is one of the criteria used by FTA in evaluating these projects, and the basic factors used to evaluate land use criteria are outlined below. In short, the degree to which a project can demonstrate land use and development planning and policy commitment to transit, the greater the chances for funding support. The Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park station plans are just two of several other potential station locations that illustrate these principles in the SES corridor.

The measures by which transit supportive land use and future development patterns are evaluated by the FTA include: existing land use patterns, plans and policies, and expected impacts. Transit supportive station area plans address and/or make recommendations with regard to the following factors, where applicable:

1. Regional and community ***growth management***, such as development concentrations and land conservation efforts;
2. ***Transit supportive corridor policies***, such as those which encourage higher density development patterns and enhance pedestrian access;
3. *Tools to* ***implement land use policies***, such as regulatory and financial incentives and outreach efforts;
4. ***Supportive zoning regulations near transit stations***, such as increased density, appropriate building placement, and reduced off street parking requirements;
5. ***Performance of land use policies*** to comply with transit supportive land-use regulations, such as current development proposals within one-half (1/2) mile of the station site; and
6. ***Potential impacts*** of a transit project on overall land use, such as the adaptability of station area land for development or redevelopment.

It is important to point out that not all of these tools need to be operating and in place, but that commitments are made and progress is shown to the point in time transit service begins. However, any early policy initiatives that can be undertaken consistent with the FTA New Starts criteria would enhance the project's overall competitiveness and future funding potential.

Because this station area planning process is being undertaken by the Village of Crete as the system-wide New Starts application for the proposed future SouthEast Service is being prepared, the Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park Station Area Plans have been evaluated based on the established New Starts criteria. Growth management, transit supportive corridor policies and tools to implement land use criteria are addressed on a community-wide basis below, followed by an assessment of each station area relative to supportive zoning regulations, performance of land use policies and potential impacts. Metra will ultimately prepare and submit a land use assessment to the FTA as part of the complete SES New Starts application, considering this assessment as it relates to the two proposed stations in Crete.

COMMUNITY-WIDE

Growth Management

FTA guidelines define growth management in two ways: one, as the concentration of development around established activity centers and regional transit; and two, as land conservation and management. Regional policies and agreements are necessary to concentrate development. Local plans, zoning and capital improvement programs are needed to support this objective and should give priority to infill development and/or provide opportunities for high density redevelopment. Land conservation means limiting development in certain areas through plans and policies, and may include open space, farmland, and natural resource preservation. There are several county and regional plans relevant to the Village of Crete which will seek to promote development within existing neighborhoods and around proposed transit systems, which are briefly summarized below.

- *Southeast Service (SES) New Starts project:* The purpose of this project is to introduce new rail service to connect communities in south suburban Cook and Will Counties with downtown Chicago, and encourage economic development within the proposed station areas. The SES is a potential tool for growth management because it would help concentrate regional growth near stations and minimize highway congestion. Crete is included in these studies, with an anticipated start of commuter rail service in approximately 2017. This project should accurately reflect the preferred stations locations included in this report.

- *Shared Path 2030:* This study is the most recent Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the six-county metropolitan planning organization (MPO) responsible for coordination between regional transportation and land use plans. It includes key strategies to improve the region's transportation system, including the introduction of commuter rail service in south Cook County and eastern Will County. When this plan is updated, it should accurately reflect the land use and transportation choices reflected in this report,

- *2040 Regional Framework Plan:* The 2040 Plan is a policy document for guiding the region's future land development, and proposes growth management through the designation of regional centers, corridors, and green areas. A key element of the Plan is a multimodal transportation corridor to connect population centers along the SouthEast Service corridor. Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park should be reflected as regional centers, with their station locations accurately represented, in the update of this regional plan.

- *Will County Land Resource Management Plan:* Will County adopted this plan in 2002 to direct growth according to the following development forms: urban, suburban, town, hamlet, and rural. The Plan highlights areas within the County and their projected development form, and provides policy direction on how to accommodate growth and preserve open space and farms. Although the Village of Crete may currently be described as a rural village, future market forces will likely create pressure to build

more suburban-style residential subdivisions and commercial strip centers around the Village. For this reason, the Plan describes Downtown Crete's future development form as suburban. The Balmoral Park Station Area is described as rural. However, the placement of a new Metra station will likely create development pressures at the site and therefore the County should review and consider the Station Area Plan in the update of their Land Resource Management Plan.

Transit Supportive Corridor Policies

Local comprehensive and capital improvement plans should contain transit-supportive corridor policies that are aimed at increasing development within proposed transit corridors and station areas, to improve their transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly character. This can include such plans and policies related to pedestrian facilities and mobility-impaired access, parking management initiatives and/or mixed use and transit oriented development projects. The Village of Crete has completed a number of local plans and studies to encourage a transit supportive environment, which are briefly summarized below.

- *The Village of Crete Planning Workbook*: The Village's Comprehensive Plan lays out plans and policies for the future development of the Village. The plan projects that future village growth will occur around Downtown Crete, providing policies and recommendations for future land use, transportation, open space, sewer and water capacity. Significantly, the plan also identified some potential station locations and designated areas for transit-oriented development. The station locations are similar to those examined by the SES New Starts proposal – including a station site within the Village for local commuters (Main and Fifth Streets) which contains a proposed land use, access, and parking concept for the Downtown site stating that commuter parking is to be limited in order to encourage regional commuters to use the rail station to the south, as well as a larger site south of the Village for regional use (Main Street and Monee Road). The recommended site for Downtown was changed to the west end of Cass Street through the station area planning effort, resulting in a site that would both perform well under FTA's New Starts criteria and benefit community growth in the most sustainable fashion. Upon completion of the Station Area Plans, the Village

should amend their Comprehensive Plan to reflect the revised preferred Downtown Station Area location and related future land use designations.

- *Historic Business Corridor Streetscape Improvement Plan:* The Streetscape Improvement Plan defines goals and objectives for the revitalization and continued development of the historic Main Street business corridor, recommending specific streetscape and building facade improvements, as well as design guidelines for infill development and redevelopment. These recommendations include plan view drawings, illustrative concepts, and architectural renderings to highlight appropriate development and adaptive re-use. The improvements recommended in the Plan should be reviewed and updated for consistency with the Design Guidelines set forth in the Station Area Plans, with implementation of such a streetscape program enhancing the transit-friendly character of the station areas.

Tools to Implement Land Use Policies

According to the FTA New Starts criteria, the primary tools to implement land use policies that encourage transit supportive development include: planning initiatives to engage government agencies, the public, and the development community; regulatory and financial incentives in support of land use planning; and public involvement in corridor and station area planning.

- The Village has adopted one tax increment finance (TIF) district within the Downtown Crete Station Area that could be utilized to redevelop the area in a more transit supportive framework. The Village should consider designating a TIF district in the Balmoral Park Station Area to assist in redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites. During the current planning process, additional methods for implementing transit supportive land use policies will be considered by the Village.
- A public involvement process was carried out to gain community consensus and support for the station area plan concepts.

DOWNTOWN CRETE

The Downtown Crete Station proposed in this document differs from the recommendation proposed in the initial Metra SES New Starts application. The initial site was located at Fifth and Main Streets (north of the central business district) whereas this study recommends a Downtown Crete station at Cass Street. In this planning study undertaken by the Village, four total sites were analyzed, as depicted in Figure 9. Because FTA funding is discretionary based on the New Starts criteria, from a transit supportive policy standpoint, the "best performing" station for a Downtown Crete location is the Cass Street station. In addition, this station garnered the most community support. A short description of the station alternatives follows, with a description of the merits of a Cass Street location.

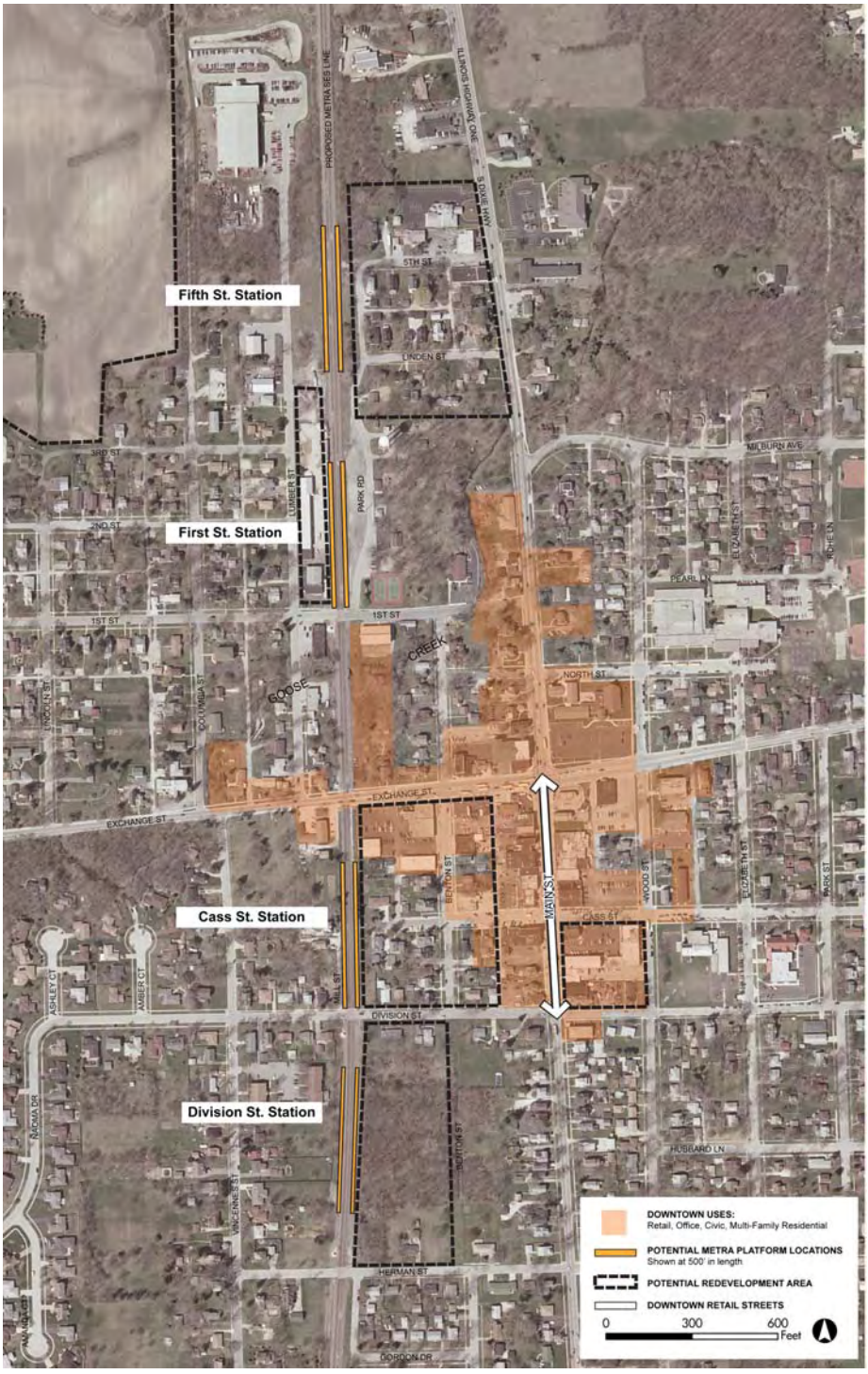
Fifth Street Station

The Fifth Street Station was the proposed concept put forth in interim documents for the Metra SES New Starts project application, which has not yet been completed for the SES. This concept depicts the proposed Metra station platform west of Fifth and Linden Streets, including a parking lot for commuters. Both Linden and Fifth Street are cul-de-saced to preclude commuter traffic permeating the adjacent residential neighborhood. Redevelopment opportunities include development of the farm west of the station for residential uses with access to the station. An advantage of this concept is that the Village owns a 75-foot wide piece of land parallel to the tracks where the station and parking could be located. A disadvantage of this concept is that the location is approximately one-half mile from the intersection of Main and Exchange Streets, with little potential for supporting the historic business district on Main Street or for creating a transit-supportive environment.

First Street Station

The First Street Station concept depicts the proposed Metra station platform west of Crete Park along the existing Park Road, including a parking lot for commuters. Both Linden and Fifth Street are cul-de-saced to preclude commuter traffic permeating the adjacent residential neighborhood. A First Street Station has many of the same advantages and disadvantages of a Fifth Street station. The advantage of this location is that the Village owns a 75-foot wide

Figure 9. Downtown Crete Station Alternatives



piece of land parallel to the tracks where the station and parking could be located. However, even though this location is a little closer to the Downtown core than a Fifth Street station, a First Street Station would still have little relationship to the historic business district on Main Street. In addition, Crete Park currently has no redevelopment potential.

Division Street Station

The Division Street Station concept depicts proposed new Metra station platform south of Division Street on land that is currently vacant. The station and its parking lot can be developed without acquiring any developed property. The philosophy behind this concept is to create a traditional commuter rail station area with parking along the tracks and mixed retail and residential buildings facing the station. To achieve this transit-supportive pattern, several houses located between the tracks and the undeveloped Benton Street right-of-way would have to be acquired and redeveloped. Another disadvantage is that new retail businesses would not be visible nearby arterials, limiting the market to convenience retail and destination businesses. The proposed north-south street next to the station would also not have a direct link to Main Street. Conversely, advantages to this concept include that the majority of the block is currently undeveloped; the location is close enough to the existing business district that it is a viable location for expanding the Downtown; and project implementation could be accommodated as a single phase project.

Preferred Concept: Cass Street Station

The Cass Street Station concept is located just south of Exchange Street. Commuter parking spaces could be provided in a linear manner along the rail line. Parking along the rail line between Exchange and Division Streets would occur as the first phase, with future potential to expand facilities through a combination of structured and/or surface parking south of Division Street, north of First Street, and west of the tracks/north of Division Street, adjacent to the rail line; all within visible site distance of the station platforms. More space can be made available with this linear pattern without occupying land that could instead by used for other development, such as the opportunity to create new storefronts along Cass Street linking directly to the existing business district on Main Street. Main Street already has transit-supportive development uses and policies in place, including a presence of retail and the

establishment of one tax increment finance (TIF) district. Redevelopment would primarily include retail space, but could include office space and/or residential units on an upper level, and peripheral multi-family residential development. Downtown Crete has a connected sidewalk network, making the area walkable and interconnected to adjacent neighborhoods. Likewise, the Downtown street network is situated on a grid and provides street continuity beyond just the station site, facilitating easy access to the train station on foot or by bicycle. Both the street and sidewalk grids provide a direct connection from regional transportation corridors to the station site and commuter parking areas.

Supportive Zoning Regulations

Zoning regulations determine future land uses and development patterns, as they relate to: types of uses and allowable densities, parking regulations, pedestrian access provisions, and development incentives. Hence, zoning regulations could either encourage or hinder transit supportive development and amenities. The following is a brief assessment of existing zoning within the proposed station area.

The Downtown Crete Station Area is regulated by the Village of Crete's zoning code. The station area encompasses ten of the Village's seventeen zoning classifications, including five residential districts, four business districts, a limited industrial district, and an agricultural district. Future zoning amendments should be guided by the recommendations of the final Station Area Plan.

The most important districts for transit supportive development include the R-3 and R-4 multi-family residential districts, because they would increase the station area's residential population and potential ridership base. R-3 allows for townhomes and condominiums, which are regulated for a maximum of eight units per structure. R-4 allows for apartments, as well as for townhomes and condominiums. Both districts have a 40-foot building height maximum (3.5 stories) and 8 units per structure limits on townhouses and condominiums. Presently, these districts occupy small parcels near the Downtown; the Village should designate additional R-3 and R-4 multi-family residential districts surrounding and within the central business district, per the Future Land Use Framework. Additionally, the Village should

consider amending the R3 and R4 zoning within the Downtown area to reduce setbacks and encourage a more pedestrian-oriented configuration.

The majority of the Downtown area is zoned B-1 central business district. The purpose of this district is to maintain the quality and character of the Village's Downtown core, while allowing for expansion and redevelopment. A significant component of transit supportive development is provision of mixed commercial uses and upper-story apartments. Crete's B-1 district does not allow for mixed business and residential uses within the same building, although some non-conforming uses exist Downtown. The zoning ordinance should be amended, however, to allow a mix of uses in this B-1 district. Also, special uses are allowed to be granted for auto-oriented uses such as drive-through fast food restaurants. These uses should be limited to the B-2 highway service district. Expansion is limited to areas within 200 feet of an exterior district boundary. The Village should designate additional expansion areas for the Downtown in order to provide stronger connections to the proposed station site, utilizing the strong urban grid street and sidewalk network for access.

A business buffer district exists for businesses within close proximity of the Downtown residing within structures that are architecturally or historically significant to the community. This district allows for the aesthetic preservation of historic buildings, while equally allowing a buffer between the intense commercial areas and primarily single-family residential neighborhoods. This district fits within the "perimeter commercial" land use desired around the Downtown. Currently, designation within this district requires an application process. This district should be codified as an overlay zone for the mixed residential and business area surrounding Downtown Crete.

The Village's off-street parking regulations affect the station area's pedestrian environment, because of conventional parking standards of two spaces per residential unit and four spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space. Changes to these regulations will be important to facilitate more efficient parking strategies, encouraging shared municipal parking areas and reducing off-street parking requirements. For new residential development near the station, one or 1.5 spaces per unit may be sufficient, depending upon unit sizes. In addition, the Village

should update its parking standards to encourage on-street angled parking on collector streets, as well as provide designated areas for bicycle parking.

Performance of Land Use Policies and **Potential Impacts of Transit Project on Regional Land Use**

According to the FTA, the performance of land use policies may be judged by demonstrated cases of development affected by transit supportive policies and station area development proposals. The potential impact of a transit project on land use may be judged by the adaptability of station area land for development and the overall economic environment. This section presents a summary of the development environment for the Village of Crete and within each station area. It is excerpted from the full market assessment conducted for the Village, which is documented in a separate report titled the *Crete SouthEast Service Market Analysis for the Crete and Balmoral Park Stations* (August 2007) by Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc (VSKA).

As of 2006, the estimated population of Crete is 9,000; however projections by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) call for tremendous growth over the next 25 years to almost 39,000 by 2030 (including current township areas), with an increase in the number of households from the estimated 3,100 in 2006 to almost 13,000 by 2030. Regardless of the SouthEast Service status, Crete will experience a faster pace of growth than it has over the past six years. Nearby communities are also projected to grow significantly during this period. The area within 1/2 mile of the proposed Downtown Crete Station has only 1,500 residents as of 2006 and a somewhat higher residential density than the Village as a whole.

Approximately 365,000 square feet of retail space can be supported at average sales of $300 per square foot over approximately the next ten years. This leaves 50,000 square feet of retail space above and beyond the new Crete Marketplace Development on Route 394; a portion of this could be attracted to the Crete station areas. As future population and development warrants, a shuttle or trolley could be initiated that connects both station areas and the Crete Marketplace Development, providing residents and visitors shopping and entertainment options.

The Downtown Crete Station Area Plan provides opportunities for a walkable commercial core, including both additional retail and office space (up to a potential net increase of 50,000 square feet over approximately the next decade).

The Station Area Plan also accommodates several opportunities to increase and diversify housing in the Downtown area, notably on upper floors within the Downtown core and in multi-family residential areas at the perimeter of the Downtown.

BALMORAL PARK

Supportive Zoning Regulations

Zoning regulations determine future land uses and development patterns, as they relate to: types of uses and allowable densities, parking regulations, pedestrian access provisions, and development incentives. Hence, zoning regulations could either encourage or hinder transit supportive development and amenities. The following is a brief assessment of existing zoning within the proposed station area.

The Balmoral Park Station Area is regulated by Will County's zoning code. However, the Village has extra-territorial jurisdiction over the station area, and could negotiate appropriate zoning regulations through annexation agreements with property owners. The Village should amend portions of the current zoning regulations in order to promote the station area vision and begin the improvement program.

The proposed station site is zoned A-1 agricultural with the purpose of providing such environmental benefits such as the provision of open space, preservation of a continuing food supply and maintenance of an agricultural economic base. This zoning classification does not allow for any commercial development and should be amended to reflect the final recommendations of the station area plan.

Lands to the east of IL Route 1 are zoned C-6 commercial recreation district, with the purpose of providing lands and structures that provide amusement, recreation or entertainment for the

general public. Other uses that can be permitted, with authorization of the County Board, include hotel/motel accommodation, a potential land use proposed to be accommodated at the south end of the Balmoral Park Racetrack site. While this is outside the limits of the Balmoral Park Station Area, station area land uses as proposed are intended to be compatible with, and compliment, the C-6 zoning.

Performance of Land Use Policies and **Potential Impact of Transit Project on Regional Land Use**

According to the FTA, the performance of land use policies may be judged by demonstrated cases of development affected by transit supportive policies and station area development proposals. The potential impact of a transit project on land use may be judged by the adaptability of station area land for development and the overall economic environment. This section presents a summary of the development environment for the Village of Crete and within each station area. It is excerpted from the full market assessment conducted for the Village, which is documented in a separate report titled the *Crete SouthEast Service Market Analysis for the Crete and Balmoral Park Stations* (August 2007) by Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, Inc (VSKA).

As of 2006, the estimated population of Crete is 9,00; however projections by CMAP call for tremendous growth over the next 25 years to almost 39,000 by 2030 (including current township areas), with an increase in the number of households from the estimated 3,100 in 2006 to almost 13,000 by 2030. Regardless of the SouthEast Service status, Crete will experience a faster pace of growth than it has over the past six years. Nearby communities are also projected to grow significantly during this period. The area within 1/2 mile of the proposed Balmoral Park Station has only 450 people and a very low population density. The median income is much lower than in the Village or Downtown Station Area and the median age considerably higher.

There are plans for a 315,000 square foot shopping center (Crete Marketplace Development) on Route 394 north of Richton Road, anchored by Kohl's. This would keep more sales tax dollars in Crete and give residents more opportunity to shop locally. The Balmoral Park

Station Area would be a great location to compliment the Crete Marketplace Development with additional commercial uses. As future population and development warrants, a shuttle or trolley could be initiated that connects both station areas and the Crete Marketplace Development, providing residents and visitors shopping and entertainment options. Additionally, as Route 1 is updated, an adjacent multi-use path should also be improved to allow bicyclists and pedestrians north-south connectivity through the Village.

With Balmoral Racetrack and a potential Metra station, the Balmoral Park Station Area has the potential to be a major sports and entertainment activity center in the region. In addition, the Balmoral Park Station Area also offers great potential for high quality office development on a greenfield site with excellent transit and expressway access, building off the planned intermodal facility immediately to the west.

The Balmoral Park Station will likely have riders accessing the train by car, bus or bicycle, rather than by walking. This station area should focus on attracting business park and regional commercial land uses, taking advantage of the market potential from the proposed Illiana Expressway and providing additional market support for new residential development in the Downtown Station Area where synergies with nearby pedestrian-oriented development can be fostered.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Village of Crete can facilitate development in the station areas in a variety of ways. The implementation strategies for transit-oriented development initiatives in the proposed Metra station areas build upon the principles and guidelines contained in this report and are described and detailed in this section. The implementation strategies will require support from elected officials and staff, as well as a range regional and local partners.

Successful plan implementation will require the involvement of various public and private sector partners. They include:

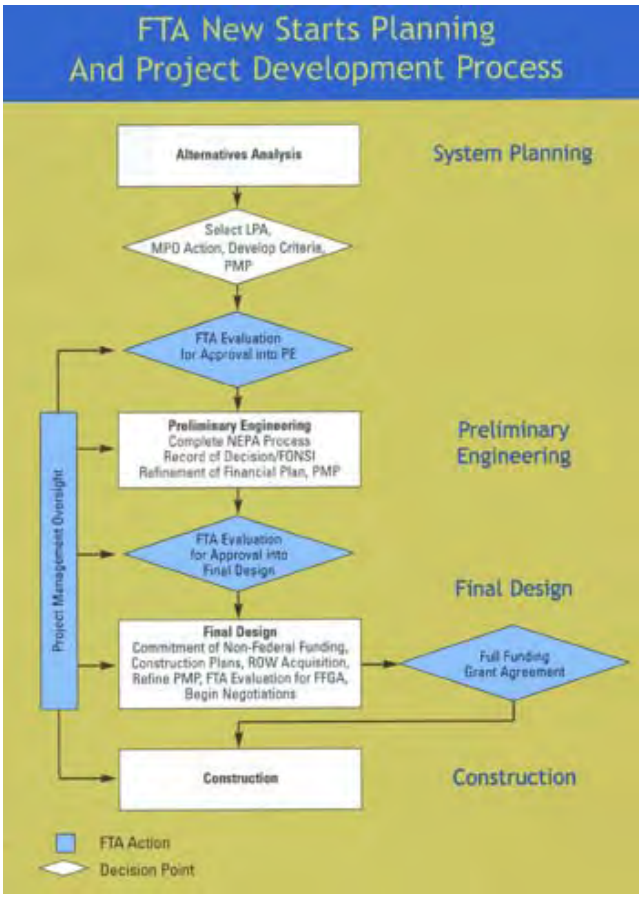
- Metra, Pace, RTA and IDOT who can assist with the design, coordination and implementation of transit improvements based on funding and demand;
- Federal and state agencies to provide funding for transportation infrastructure improvements as noted in the station area plans;
- The Village of Crete can assist in overall coordination, planning, redevelopment, finance and program guidance related to the station area development.
- The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association and the proposed Southeast Corridor Rail Development Board, who can play integral roles in funding the proposed commuter rail facilities;
- Local business and property owners who can assist with marketing and business recruitment, as well as undertake improvements to their own properties per the "vision" of the station area plans;
- Local financial institutions who may be interested in providing financing assistance for the implementation of private sector aspects of the station area plans;
- The Crete Area Chamber of Commerce who can provide marketing and promotional activities for businesses in the station areas;
- The Crete Main Street Association who can assist by promoting cultural and business activities in the station area, specifically the proposed Downtown Crete Station;
- The Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau who can provide marketing for activities in the station areas;

- CenterPoint Properties who can assist with business and ridership recruitment, specifically for the proposed Balmoral Park Station;
- Technical assistance providers including the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Small Business Administration (SBA), who can provide training and assistance to business owners;
- Builders and developers who may pursue development within the station areas once the plan is in place and the Village actively begins to market the "vision";
- The citizens who can get involved in a myriad of ways to further station area plan initiatives, including patronizing and supporting station area businesses;

The *South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study: Phase II* was completed in December 2007 to present information on how communities located along the proposed SouthEast Service line can begin to initiate formal intergovernmental agreements to govern creation, management and oversight of a joint funding pool to help pay for the land acquisition and construction of stations and parking facilities along Metra's SES commuter rail line. These potential implementation strategies will be included in the discussion below.

Village implementation of the station area plans should occur concurrently with FTA's New Starts process. Timeframes can vary significantly depending on the project, but a typical timeline includes the following milestones:

Figure 10. FTA New Starts Process



Source: Federal Transit Administration, 2008

- Alternatives Analysis (3 years)
- Preliminary Engineering (4 years)
- Final Design (2 years)
- Construction

Implementation strategies for both the Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park proposed stations are generally organized to relate to these FTA milestones (Figure 10). The ability to refine and further develop the proposed Downtown Crete and Balmoral Park concepts is still awaiting completion of the ridership projections being prepared by Metra's consultants for the New Starts application process. Once those projections are released, minimum station requirements will be known and the station area plans can be refined to more closely reflect expected ridership and parking demand.

DOWNTOWN CRETE

The proposed Downtown Crete commuter rail station at Cass Street will provide long-term support to the existing downtown as a center of the business and civic life of the community. Redevelopment should focus on phased redevelopment of existing and new structures to create an urban form emphasizing pedestrian access to the station and Downtown storefronts.

Alternatives Analysis (Years 1 to 3)

During the Alternatives Analysis phase, station sites will be finalized and funding sources identified for both construction and ongoing operations. At this point, the Village should move forward with the following strategies:

Intergovernmental Agreement

The eight municipalities along the SES should enter into an initial intergovernmental agreement. The initial intergovernmental agreement should:

- Formalize the desire of the eight communities to work together to promote and fund station and parking facilities along the SES;

- Designate the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) as the management or sponsoring agency;
- Create a Southeast Corridor Rail Development Board (SCRDB);
- Direct the SCRDB to create bylaws and/or other operating procedures for municipal approval;
- Empower the SCRDB to begin creation of a joint funding pool for municipal approval; and
- Direct the SCRDB to begin considering other recommendations made later in this report, as appropriate.

Beyond creating by laws, the SCRDB initial purpose would be to:

- Address the many details that need to be examined so that an acceptable joint funding pool can be created.
- Create the joint funding pool;
- Develop consistent design standards and guidelines for stations above and beyond the design standards of a basic station as defined by Metra to be provided along the corridor; and
- Address other issues in a timely manner that are outlined later in this report.

Amend Development Regulations

The current zoning regulations for the station area are not fully conducive to creating a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use station area environment. The Village should amend portions of its current zoning regulations in order to promote the "vision" and begin the improvement program. A description of the Village's zoning codes relative to the station area are described earlier in the "New Starts" evaluation of the Concept Plans. Zoning revision recommendations are below.

- Amend the current zoning map to permit additional R-3 and R-4 multi-family residential development surrounding the Downtown, and reduce setback and lot size requirements to encourage a pedestrian-oriented configuration. Multi-family residential

development is key to increasing densities and pedestrian activity in and around the proposed station and commercial area.

- Amend the current B-1 central business district regulations to allow mixed use development. Certain B-1 properties in the Downtown are already mixed use; this change would bring these properties into conformance and encourage additional development in this format.
- Amend the current B-1 central business district regulations to eliminate auto-oriented uses. Current code allows for drive-through and other auto-oriented uses through a special permit. These uses are not appropriate in the pedestrian-oriented core of the Downtown.
- Allow for additional B-1 expansion areas. Expansion is limited to areas within 200 feet of an exterior district boundary. The Village should designate additional expansion areas for the Downtown in order to provide stronger connections to the proposed station site.
- Codify the Business Buffer District as an overlay district in the Downtown. Currently, designation can only be sought through an application process. This district would allow for "perimeter commercial" land use desired around the Downtown and the ability to implement compatible transitional land uses between commercial and residential.
- Adjust the front yard requirements in the station area to set maximum allowable front setbacks (i.e. 5 feet maximum). The B-1 district currently has a minimum 10-foot front setback and the R-3 and R-4 have minimum 30-foot and 35-foot minimum setbacks, respectively. The revised standard would require buildings to be located up on the public sidewalk or set back to allow space for outdoor dining, architectural overhangs and pedestrian amenities. Pavement and parking would not be permitted within any setback area provided. Reduced setbacks at perimeter residential areas should be required with parking provided in the rear or through a shared parking facility.
- Amend development regulations to require new development proposals in the station area to submit a preliminary sketch plan and conduct a design review meeting with staff to ensure conformance with the Downtown Crete Design Guidelines.

- Reduce parking requirements and allow for parking fees-in-lieu of providing individual on-site spaces for new development. Permitted parking reductions recognize the proximity of transit and other modes of transportation. Parking requirements for multi-family residential can be reduced to 1.0 to 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit dependent upon the availability of shared parking. Allowing fees-in-lieu of individual on-site parking for non-residential development will help pay for the construction and maintenance of public parking facilities. In addition, the Village should update its parking standards to encourage on-street angled parking on collector streets, as well as provide designated areas for bicycle parking.

Establish a Downtown Crete Station Task Force

The Downtown Crete Station Task Force would be responsible for helping to initiate and monitor the Station Area Plan activities and to visibly advocate for the redevelopment of the station area. Meetings should be held on a regular basis to review ongoing initiatives and implementation progress. Under the authority granted by the Village Board, activities would include, but not be limited to:

- Meet with key developers to promote and facilitate redevelopment;
- Issue Request for Proposals (RFPs) related to high priority development projects;
- Continue acquiring key properties from willing sellers to move the Station Area Plan forward;
- Seek and secure funding for key initiatives and coordinate with other agencies as needed;
- Provide assistance to property owners and developers to verify that projects meet the standards and intent of the Station Area Plan;
- Monitor and address the demand for parking and arrange shared parking facilities as redevelopment occurs over time.

Acquire Land at Key Sites

The Village should begin to acquire parcels of land in the Downtown to accommodate the future station and commuter parking lots, as well as other parcels for potential Downtown redevelopment projects. The market may not be ripe for development at the time of

acquisition; the Village must be prepared to hold the land for uses that will be compatible with the station. Redevelopment may not occur until transit service is imminent or active.

Determine Financing Opportunities and Assistance

While redevelopment may not begin immediately, the Village should determine potential funding opportunities and create financial incentives to encourage the implementation of the Station Area Plan, including securing necessary funding for the station facility and commuter parking. The sources most relevant for the Village's implementation process are summarized at the end of this chapter.

Preliminary Engineering (Years 4 to 7)

All environmental documentation as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be completed during the Preliminary Engineering phase, with a final decision in place regarding the construction and mitigation of any potential impacts of the station. Preliminary station designs will be completed and land acquisition for stations should be completed during this phase. Strategies to be carried out by the Village during this time period include:

Commuter Facility Development Agreement

Prior to the initiation of rail service, and in conjunction with the efforts of the Southeast Corridor Rail Development Board (SCRDB), each community with a station will enter into a *Commuter Facility Development Agreement* with Metra. This agreement formally establishes the community's adherence to Metra's station and parking design and construction standards and sets standards for the following station and parking issues:

- Parking fees;
- Station, parking, and access maintenance;
- Funding of routine maintenance;
- Landscaping upkeep; and
- Utility fees and provisions.

In accordance with the *Commuter Facility Development Agreement*, a commuter parking capital investment fund will also be established. The revenue generated from the commuter parking fees will be deposited into this fund to be used for maintenance.

Expand and Enforce Design Guidelines

The communities that plan to host a station(s) will need to fund the proposed station(s) and parking areas. It is important to note that the communities would need to fund any additional design enhancements not required by Metra. Metra will provide each community that proposes to host a station along the SouthEast Service corridor with the design guidelines that must be included in a "basic" station. Metra currently has three sizes for basic stations, based on projected levels of ridership that are not yet completed. Metra's basic station and parking design guidelines are documented in *Metra's Station Manual* and *Metra's Parking Manual*. These documents contain the minimum guidelines that each municipality will need to follow regarding station and parking design elements including:

- Vehicular access to the station;
- The distance between parking areas and the station;
- Pedestrians and bicycle access to station;
- Bus access to the station;
- Landscaping;
- External lighting; and
- Basic station amenities (seating, restrooms, ticket agent office, etc.).

Since each municipality may have ideas of what should be included in a station above and beyond Metra's requirements for a basic station as well as how it wants to approach the development of its station, the SCRDB, using the *Metra Commuter Facility Development Agreement* as the starting point, should develop a written and/or graphic description of what the proposed stations should include. This discussion should occur after Metra has determined the required size of each of the proposed stations. Some design elements that are considered above and beyond a "basic station" include:

- Higher-quality building materials;
- Brick pavers;

- Retail space inside a station;
- Additional or higher-quality indoor and outdoor amenities;
- Open space at and within one-quarter mile of the station;
- Additional landscaping;
- Security; and
- Access to retail space.

As redevelopment begins to occur, to encourage economic vitality and a pedestrian-friendly station area, the Village should require conformance with the Design Guidelines created for this Station Area. The Guidelines could be administered as part of the development review process for new construction. As the Village works to implement the "vision", the built environment will change for the better over time if the Village consistently enforces the basic principles contained in the Design Guidelines.

The Village should provide the Design Guidelines to all designers and developers proposing development within the station area and amend the development review process to require a preliminary sketch plan submission and design review meeting. This review process will enable the Village to review a developer's application and convey the basic principles of the Design Guidelines. This could be administered by the Plan Commission, Village Board, or the Downtown Crete Station Area Task Force.

Implement Capital Improvements

The Village should implement key public improvement projects to help the station area become a more positive, aesthetically-pleasing environment. As a catalyst for attracting private development within the station area, the Village should continue to implement a streetscape program and make other infrastructure improvements as recommended. By adding streetscape trees, benches, decorative streetlights, banners and gateway features, the Village is signifying to developers that they are intent on attracting high quality redevelopment to the station area. Establishing a railroad "quiet zone" through the community is a Village priority as one component of these improvements.

Final Design (Years 8 to 9)

At the completion of final design, several strategies previously put into place (i.e. non-federal funding, land acquisition) will lead to a firm timeline for station construction. Before transit service is in place, the Village should carry out the following strategies:

Focus on Key Redevelopment Projects

Although this could occur at any time during the implementation period, the Village should spearhead development by assisting in the initiation of one catalyst project. After a financing plan is in place, the Village should focus on acquired parcels or those parcels where the owners are most willing to sell or redevelop, and issue requests for proposals to interested developers. As redevelopment takes place, the Village should offer assistance to existing business owners by helping them to relocate within the Downtown if their existing location is impacted.

Construction (Year 10 and beyond)

When construction of the station is complete and service commences, the Village should continue to focus its development efforts on infill construction and additional transit connections.

Foster Residential Development

The Village should encourage mixed use development with upper story residential, as well as other infill multi-family development within the Downtown area. Residential development will provide a population base for the station area, supporting both transit service and business activity in the Downtown.

Promote Regional Transit Service

The Village should explore options to connect the proposed Metra station with other regional transit services, such as Pace bus service within the community and connecting to nearby communities and economic activity centers.

BALMORAL PARK

The proposed Balmoral Park commuter rail station seeks out uses that are compatible with the intermodal facility, a Metra terminal yard and the racetrack. The Village should consider the impacts on Downtown Crete of future retail and entertainment development in the Balmoral Park Station Area and seek to avoid creating competition, but instead encourage complimentary commercial development that cannot be accommodated Downtown due to limitations. Development should focus on phased construction of retail, office, recreation and supportive service uses. While access to the site may primarily be vehicular, internal circulation should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.

Alternatives Analysis (Years 1 to 3)

During the Alternatives Analysis phase, station sites will be finalized and funding sources identified for both construction and ongoing operations. At this point, the Village should move forward with the following strategies:

Intergovernmental Agreement

The eight municipalities along the SES should enter into an initial intergovernmental agreement. The initial intergovernmental agreement should:

- Formalize the desire of the eight communities to work together to promote and fund station and parking facilities along the SES;
- Designate the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) as the management or sponsoring agency;
- Create a Southeast Corridor Rail Development Board (SCRDB);
- Direct the SCRDB to create bylaws and/or other operating procedures for municipal approval;
- Empower the SCRDB to begin creation of a joint funding pool for municipal approval; and
- Direct the SCRDB to begin considering other recommendations made later in this report, as appropriate.

Beyond creating by laws, the SCRDB initial purpose would be to:

- Address the many details that need to be examined so that an acceptable joint funding pool can be created.
- Create the joint funding pool;
- Develop consistent design standards and guidelines for stations above and beyond the design standards of a basic station as defined by Metra to be provided along the corridor; and
- Address other issues in a timely manner that are outlined later in this report.

Amend Development Regulations

The Balmoral Park station area is regulated by Will County's zoning code. However, the Village has extra-territorial jurisdiction over the station area, and should annex willing landowners and negotiate appropriate zoning regulations through annexation agreements with property owners. The Village should amend portions of the current zoning regulations in order to promote the "vision" and begin the improvement program. A description of the Village's zoning codes relative to the station area are described earlier in the "New Starts" evaluation of the Concept Plans. Zoning revision recommendations are below.

- Amend the current zoning regulations and develop a planned unit development (PUD) zone. This zone should permit flexibility related to building location, height and density, and offer density bonuses for inclusion of design elements and amenities related to such characteristics as site size, lot coverage, provision of common space and structured parking. The PUD designation is intended to be designed as a large-scale separate entity with a focus toward transit. In addition, it will serve to provide design elements to transition land uses between the intermodal facility and more pedestrian-friendly areas.
- Amend development regulations to require new development proposals in the station area to submit a preliminary sketch plan and conduct a design review meeting to ensure conformance with the Balmoral Park Design Guidelines.

- Reduce parking requirements and allow for parking fees-in-lieu of providing individual on-site spaces for new development. Permitted parking reductions recognize the proximity of transit and other modes of transportation. Fees-in-lieu of individual on-site parking for non-residential development will help pay for the cost of the construction of public parking facilities.

Establish a Balmoral Park Station Task Force

The Balmoral Park Station Task Force would be responsible for helping to initiate and monitor the Station Area Plan activities and to visibly advocate for the redevelopment of the station area. Meetings should be held on a regular basis to review ongoing initiatives and implementation progress. Under the authority granted by the Village Board, activities would include, but not be limited to:

- Meet with key developers to promote and facilitate development
- Issue Request for Proposals (RFPs) related to high priority development projects
- Seek and secure funding for key initiatives and coordinate with other agencies as needed
- Provide assistance to developers to verify that projects meet the standards and intent of the Station Area Plan
- Monitor and address the demand for parking and arrange shared parking facilities as development occurs over time (i.e. shared facilities to be used as overflow by Metra during the day and for use by a cinema complex at night).

Acquire Land at the Station Site and Vicinity

The Village should begin to negotiate land acquisition for the station site as well as for the larger station area. Development will not likely occur at the time of acquisition; the Village must be prepared to hold the land for uses that will be compatible with the station. Redevelopment may not occur until transit service is imminent or active. Interim uses should be considered while maintaining overall Village control as to long-term development options.

Determine Financing Opportunities and Assistance

While redevelopment may not begin immediately, the Village should determine potential funding opportunities and create financial incentives to encourage the implementation of the Station Area Plan, including securing necessary funding for the station facility and commuter parking. The sources most relevant for the Village's implementation process are summarized at the end of this chapter.

Preliminary Engineering (Years 4 to 7)

All environmental documentation as required by NEPA will be completed during the Preliminary Engineering phase, with a final decision in place regarding the construction and mitigation of any potential impacts of the station. Preliminary station designs will be completed and land acquisition for stations should be completed during this phase. Strategies to be carried out by the Village during this time period include:

Commuter Facility Development Agreement

Prior to the initiation of rail service, and in conjunction with the efforts of the Southeast Corridor Rail Development Board (SCRDB), each community with a station will enter into a *Commuter Facility Development Agreement* with Metra. This agreement formally establishes the community's adherence to Metra's station and parking design and construction standards and sets standards for the following station and parking issues:

- Parking fees;
- Station, parking, and access maintenance;
- Funding of routine maintenance;
- Landscaping upkeep; and
- Utility fees and provisions.

In accordance with the *Commuter Facility Development Agreement*, a commuter parking capital investment fund will also be established. The revenue generated from the commuter parking fees will be deposited into this fund to be used for maintenance.

Select Master Developer and Refine Site Plan for the Station Area

With the "vision" in place, the Village and Task Force should work together to select a master developer and create a more detailed site plan for the Balmoral Park Station Area, and begin active marketing of development opportunities.

Pursue IL Route 1 Enhancements

To advance regional connectivity, the Village should pursue IL Route 1 enhancements to make the corridor more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly by implementing a multi-use path along IL Route 1 connecting Balmoral Park to destinations further north and south for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Final Design (Years 8 to 9)

At the completion of final design, several strategies previously put into place (i.e. non-federal funding, land acquisition) will lead to a firm timeline for construction. Before transit service is in place, the Village should carry out the following strategies:

Expand and Enforce Design Guidelines

The communities that plan to host a station(s) will need to fund the proposed station(s) and parking areas. It is important to note that the communities would need to fund any additional design enhancements not required by Metra. Metra will provide each community that proposes to host a station along the SouthEast Service corridor with the design guidelines that must be included in a "basic" station. Metra currently has three sizes for basic stations, based on projected levels of ridership that are not yet completed. Metra's basic station and parking design guidelines are documented in *Metra's Station Manual* and *Metra's Parking Manual*. These documents contain the minimum guidelines that each municipality will need to follow regarding station and parking design elements including:

- Vehicular access to the station;
- The distance between parking areas and the station;
- Pedestrians and bicycle access to station;
- Bus access to the station;
- Landscaping;

- External lighting; and
- Basic station amenities (seating, restrooms, ticket agent office, etc.).

Since each municipality may have ideas of what should be included in a station above and beyond Metra's requirements for a basic station as well as how it wants to approach the development of its station, the SCRDB, using the *Metra Commuter Facility Development Agreement* as the starting point, should develop a written and/or graphic description of what the proposed stations should include. This discussion should occur after Metra has determined the required size of each of the proposed stations. Some design elements that are considered above and beyond a "basic station" include:

- Higher-quality building materials;
- Brick pavers;
- Retail space inside a station;
- Additional or higher-quality indoor and outdoor amenities;
- Open space at and within one-quarter mile of the station;
- Additional landscaping;
- Security; and
- Access to retail space.

This phase is listed as a later action for Balmoral Park than Downtown Crete because development is expected to occur later in the process, as Balmoral Park will be master planned and not piecemeal redevelopment. As development does occur, the Village should encourage economic vitality and a pedestrian-friendly station area, the Village should require conformance with the Design Guidelines created for this Station Area. The Guidelines could be administered as part of the development review process for new construction. As the Village works to implement the "vision", the built environment will change over time if the Village enforces the basic principles contained in the Design Guidelines.

The Village should provide the Design Guidelines to all designers and developers proposing development within the station area and amend the development review process to require a preliminary sketch plan submission and design review meeting. This review process will

enable the Village to review a developer's application and convey the basic principles of the Design Guidelines. This could be administered by the Plan Commission, Village Board, or the Balmoral Park Station Area Task Force.

Implement Capital Improvements

Once a clear timeline for station construction is in place, the Village should begin to implement key public improvement projects to help the station area become a more positive, aesthetically-pleasing environment. As a catalyst for attracting private development within the station area, the Village should begin to implement a streetscape program along station access roadways and at the Metra station, and make other infrastructure improvements as recommended. By adding streetscape trees, benches, decorative streetlights, banners and gateway features, the Village is signifying to developers that they are intent about attracting high quality redevelopment to the station area. Establishing a railroad "quiet zone" through the community is a Village priority as one component of these improvements.

Construction (Year 10 and beyond)

When construction of the station is complete, the Village should focus its development efforts on increasing the variety of land uses and services as well as making regional transit connections.

Focus on Site Development

The Village should work to implement the more detailed site plan in conjunction with the master developer, attracting big box retailers and other service and entertainment-oriented uses as well as corporate businesses to locate on site. Connections with the Balmoral Park Racetrack should be stressed in marketing efforts.

Promote Regional Transit Service

The Village should explore options to connect the proposed Metra station with other regional transit services, such as Pace bus service within the community and connecting to nearby communities and economic activity centers. On a smaller scale, the Village could jointly operate a shuttle or trolley around the Balmoral Park Station Area, connecting the different

uses (i.e. train platform, regional sports facility, shopping/entertainment, business park) to the Balmoral Park Racetrack.

FINANCING ALTERNATIVES

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The Village has designated one TIF district within the greater Downtown area that offers significant opportunities for redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites. The Village should designate a TIF district at and surrounding the preferred station area location to assist in redevelopment and infill of existing Downtown structures and parcels.

Although not used as commonly as TIFs, other financing programs that the Village could pursue for the station area would be establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID), Special Service Area (SSA), tax abatements, and forms of creative financing including state infrastructure banks that would provide assistance such as letters of credit, construction loans and capital reserves for bond financing.

Real Estate and Economic Development Resources

The Illinois Development Finance Authority and the Illinois Housing Development Authority administer a variety of funding programs for real estate development projects such as grants, loans, bonds and tax credits. These funding programs 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.

Additionally, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers programs to help new businesses through low-interest financing and technical training assistance. This type of funding may also be available through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

For real estate projects with specific environmental issues, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers programs to alleviate costs for environmental remediation and increased energy efficiency.

Transportation and Infrastructure Resources

Grants and loans may be secured through various federal and state programs to both aid in public infrastructure programs and reduce certain private sector development costs. Annual funding cycles are typically used to allocate federal funds to state and regional agencies, who then review application for funding from local municipalities. However, some funding may only be available by direct application to federal, state and regional agencies. Although not an exhaustive inventory of potential funding, the following government funding resources should be explored to aid in Station Area Plan implementation.

- Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP): This program is administered by IDOT and used for projects such as train station improvements, streetscape improvements and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements. Funding reimbursement is available for up to 50 percent of the cost of right-of-way and easement acquisition and 80 percent of the cost for preliminary and final engineering, utility relocations and construction costs.
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ): This program is administered by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) (the former Chicago Area Transportation Study [CATS] combined with the former Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission [NIPC]), and used for projects that can benefit regional air quality and reduce auto emissions. Eligible projects include transit improvements, commuter parking, traffic flow improvements and bicycle/pedestrian projects. These projects are federally funded at 80 percent of project costs.

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