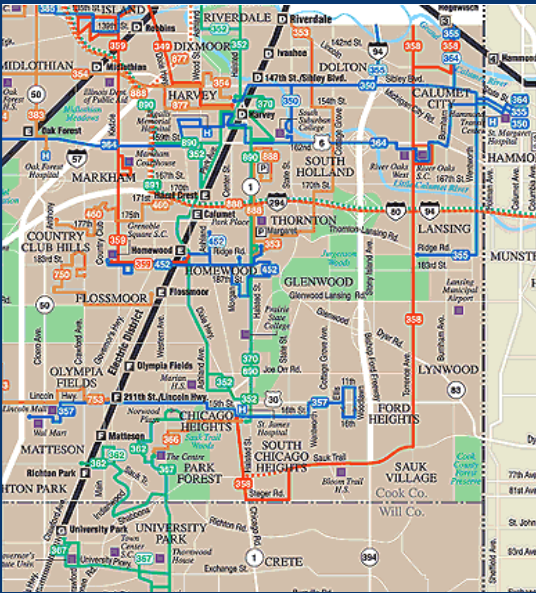


SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUTER RAIL CORRIDOR

LAND USE AND LOCAL FINANCING STUDY



EDITORIALS

**Southeast Line pushes
away from platform**

APRIL 2005

FINAL REPORT



Wilbur Smith Associates

The al Chalabi Group, Ltd.

Schlickman & Associates

Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.

Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon

April 20, 2005

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RE: South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use & Local Financing Study

Dear Mr. Gebhardt:

We are pleased to submit the **Final Report** for this important study. The report was prepared in accordance with our Professional Services Agreement with the Village of South Holland on behalf of SSMMA and the many other affected communities of the South Suburbs.

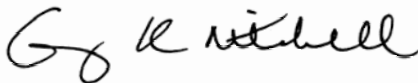
This report documents the results of work accomplished during the study process between our five-firm consultant team, SSMMA staff, officials and staff of the potential station communities and other South Suburban municipalities, the Calumet Corridor Planning Council, the Council-appointed Technical Subcommittee, and various others who attended public meetings in June and December 2004, responded to surveys and questionnaires, and otherwise provided their input and valuable insights. Beyond raising awareness of the SouthEast Service potential, we believe this project has accomplished its two primary objectives: (1) to educate local officials and communities about the essential land use and local financing components of a successful "New Start" funding application to the Federal Transit Administration, and (2) to help the participating communities get a "head start" on this New Start process by exploring strategic actions they will need to take involving transit-supportive development and redevelopment opportunities and local financing of station area improvements.

On behalf of our consultant team—which included The al Chalabi Group (socio-economics), Schlickman & Associates (finance), Nancy Seeger Associates (public/stakeholder involvement), and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon (legal)—it has been a pleasure working with all involved. The interest and support demonstrated by elected officials at all levels, key support staff, regional agency representatives, and area residents and business owners has been impressive and a sure foundation for the eventual success of this endeavor to bring additional commuter rail service to the South Suburbs. As RTA Executive Director Paula Thibeault noted as the keynote speaker at our December public meeting, the cooperative, corridor-wide approaches discussed and refined through this study are a model for the region.

We sincerely appreciated the opportunity to lend our professional expertise to this process. We look forward to future opportunities to be of service to the communities of the South Suburbs. Best wishes toward successful implementation of the SouthEast Service.

Sincerely,

WILBUR SMITH ASSOCIATES



Gary Mitchell, AICP

Director of Urban Planning Services (Project Manager)



Acknowledgements

Federal and State Officials

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. Rick Bryant State Senator Debbie Halvorson State Rep George Scully, Jr.	Second Congressional District Aide to Congressman Jackson Chairperson, Southland Legislative Caucus Vice-Chairman, Southland Legislative Caucus
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Acknowledgements

Mark Stricker

Roger Peckham

David Hanks

Dick Dieterich

Dave Owen

Paul Peterson

Lou Bednarek

Lou Sherman

Roger Mumford

Conrad Kiebles

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Max Salmon

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Executive Summary

The prospect that “transit-supportive” development will emerge at key locations in a proposed new transit corridor is essential in the highly-competitive pursuit of federal funding support for “New Start” projects. Equally important is a viable local finance strategy to successfully leverage and secure federal backing.

Through the sponsorship of the Village of South Holland and South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association (SSMMA), this advance study was conducted to explore key land use and financial planning considerations related to a potential new commuter rail connection between Chicago’s downtown “Loop” district and various communities southeast of the City. Metra, the region’s commuter rail agency, has identified the SouthEast Service (SES) as one of its top priorities for implementation.

Study Highlights

A primary goal of the Land Use and Local Financing Study was to ensure that area residents, businesses and organizations would have a “say” in how their communities could support and plan for commuter rail. This included discussion about station locations, development potential in the area around stations, and generation of required local matching funds for station design and construction. Itemized below are key findings and accomplishments by study component.

Corridor Profile

- ◆ Pointed out the continued dependence of most South Suburban residents on employment opportunities elsewhere in the region.
- ◆ Highlighted the already high rate of commuter rail ridership in the South Suburbs.
- ◆ Emphasized reverse commuting potential to the South Suburbs given the area’s improving economic development prospects.

Corridor Planning Standards

- ◆ Linked proposed planning standards for the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor to principles previously adopted through the Calumet Corridor Economic Development Plan.
- ◆ Provided a series of 14 planning standards relevant to potential commuter rail service implementation in the corridor.
- ◆ Suggested potential indicators to track as a way to make standards attainment measurable.



Executive Summary

Land Use

- ◆ Emphasized Transit-Oriented Redevlopment scenarios (“TOR” versus “TOD”) given existing conditions in most station communities, as well as constraints to significant change near certain station sites.
- ◆ Prepared a series of station area development concepts for the nine potential SES station locations.
- ◆ Highlighted the benefits of greater flexibility of development regulations in station vicinities, and recommended ways to incorporate transit-supportive provisions into local development codes that currently follow a typical suburban model.

Local Finance

- ◆ Confirmed interest in a cooperative, corridor-wide local finance approach among involved communities (to ensure at least a basic station in all cases).
- ◆ Recommended that the South Suburbs tap into existing regional funding sources first (e.g., STP-Surface Transportation Program funds, CMAQ-Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds).
- ◆ As expected, verified that use of municipal general revenue will be a last resort.
- ◆ Advised local communities to maintain their coordination through SSMMA over the next year to help Metra develop a realistic financing plan, with necessary local participation, for federal consideration.

Public and Stakeholder Involvement

- ◆ Achieved the major educational objectives of the project, particularly through Technical Sub-Committee meetings attended by municipal officials and staff.
- ◆ Succeeded in attracting broader media coverage for both this project and potential SES implementation through publicity efforts for the public information meetings held in June and December 2004.
- ◆ Also reached a wider South Suburban audience through project “UpDate” inserts in SSMMA’s quarterly newsletter.



Background

During the mid-19th century many communities around Chicago were settled along, and because of, the railroads. In the past 50 years, these railroads have been replaced by interstate highways as the primary mode of travel in the Chicago region. Increasing traffic congestion and travel distances later reduced the attractiveness of those communities without Metra passenger rail service as another commuting option. This has resulted in certain communities around Chicago being severely disadvantaged from a transportation perspective. One such area is the southeastern region of metropolitan Chicago, along what is now the Union Pacific/CSX freight rail line. The communities in this region have banded together and, with aid from the *Chicago Southland Tomorrow Corridor Initiative*, are focused on improving their transportation, housing, employment and retail opportunities. To accomplish this they have initiated a set of comprehensive planning and joint economic development efforts.

One of their primary efforts is adding the SouthEast Service (SES) Metra passenger rail to the existing UP/CSX freight rail line. Metra operates a “spoke” system of commuter rail routes that funnel into downtown Chicago. The SES project would add a spoke east of the heavily-used Electric District Line, Metra’s current easternmost commuter rail line in Illinois, and west of the South Shore line in Indiana.

Specifically, the new passenger line would terminate at the LaSalle Street station and share the Rock Island line until the Gresham Station in Chicago. From there it would separate and continue south approximately 33 miles through Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, and Crete before ending near Balmoral Park raceway in Will County. The CATS regional travel model predicts that this line could generate approximately 21,400 daily riders by the year 2020.

Project History

This Land Use and Local Financing Study for the South Suburban Corridor has been approached from two different, but complementary, perspectives. In 1998, Metra initiated the feasibility study that examined the physical and operational issues that would be involved in adding passenger service to this heavily utilized rail line. This initial study determined that there are no fatal flaws to the service, established that four of the 50 different options are physically feasible, and recommended further study. In 2000, a more detailed study reduced the potential alignments to two, and in early 2003 the final proposed alignment was selected. A Line Capacity Analysis was next conducted to simulate freight/passenger rail traffic timing and determine potential conflicts. The Alternatives Analysis needed for Federal funding was then initiated by Metra as this Land Use and Local Financing Study was concluding.



Introduction

Concurrently with Metra's studies, the 2001 *Chicago Southland Tomorrow Corridor Initiative* was begun. This multi-phase, intergovernmental, public-private partnership among 70 municipalities, three counties, seven corridor planning councils, and several other local and regional agencies focused on harnessing the economic potential of the region south and southwest of Chicago in a way that preserves the natural, cultural and historic characteristics that make the area special. It also created a database and framework intergovernmental agreement that outlined a regional marketing strategy and will facilitate implementation of projects. A second, but essential, outcome of this study was furthering the collaboration between and among critical players throughout the region, especially as it relates to securing investment in the region. Tertiary to this was marketing challenged properties, packaging financial incentives, clarifying organizational roles, and working to diminish inaccurate perceptions of the region. This study also provided the base for three specific corridor studies, including the Calumet Corridor.

The *Calumet Corridor Economic Development and Planning Study*, completed in June 2002, focused on unifying the marketing and economic development strategy for the 15 municipalities along I-94/IL 394 and the SES Metra line. This study achieved municipality consent on principles that will guide future growth and development decisions, identified key sites that will act as catalysts for further development, and outlined useful planning and development tools to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. The Calumet Corridor Study served as the foundation of this, the South Suburban Land Use and Local Financing Study.

Summary of Plans & Studies

The Metra feasibility studies have determined that the physical improvements needed to implement passenger rail service include: new stations (approximately 9), a new rail flyover at the Dolton Junction, development of a double track yard bypass of Yard Center at Dolton, triple tracking with universal crossovers along much of the route, construction of an overnight train storage yard near Balmoral Park, and an upgrade of the Rock Island 47th Street maintenance facility to handle the additional passenger trains.

In order to secure as much of the projected \$524 million project cost as possible from Federal sources, this project must stand out in comparison with numerous other projects nationwide that will also be seeking Federal Transit Administration (FTA) "New Starts" funds. In order to do this it is essential that all levels of local and regional plans prioritize and speak with unanimity about it.

- ◆ The Metra SouthEast Service (SES) project was in the CATS *Destination 2020* Regional Transportation Plan and is in the current *Shared Path 2030* Regional Transportation Plan (page 183).
- ◆ The Chicago Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) identified the SES as part of the Strategic Regional Transit system.



Introduction

- ◆ The Metra SouthEast Service project is included in the Will County 2020 Transportation Framework Plan.
- ◆ Metra and Pace, provider of suburban bus transit service in northeastern Illinois, included the SES in their Future Agenda for Suburban Transportation (or FAST) Plan.
- ◆ Metra has included the SouthEast Service line as one of its four priority projects.
- ◆ The Eastern Will County Regional Council (EWCRC) includes the SES in the transportation portion of its Long-Range Plan.
- ◆ The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association is the primary sponsor of this land use and local financing study. SES implementation is one of SSMMA's highest priorities.
- ◆ The Kankakee Urbanized Area Transportation Plan also mentions the SES.
- ◆ All 12 municipalities that the SES line passes through are highly supportive of the project, as are the vast majority of the adjoining municipalities.

Project Purpose and Elements

The purpose of this study is to develop a land use plan that will guide development of the SES corridor with or without implementation of passenger rail service. The study complements and supports Metra's work by providing communities with information needed to select the locally preferred alternative. It also quantified the potential commitments regarding local financing contributions, as well as highlighting the need to adapt more transit-supportive development patterns in station vicinities. Specifically, it produced plans and analysis that support the case for implementation of the service. The project was conducted in five tasks:

- ◆ **Public Outreach** – The intent of the public outreach activities was to form a constituency of persons who would take ownership in the study recommendations and continue lending their support to the timely and successful implementation of the recommendations.
- ◆ **Corridor Profile and Planning Standards** – The Corridor Profile provides a common base of information regarding socioeconomic characteristics and travel patterns within the area. The Corridor Planning Standards serve as a framework for discussing policy issues in four key areas: Mobility, Connectivity, Efficiency and Safety, as well as Land Use and Development and Local Financing (of Major Transit Investments). They reflect local values and are consistent with previously developed standards for the area (Calumet Corridor Implementation Plan).



Introduction

- ◆ **Existing and Future Land Use** – The current pattern and relative intensity of existing land use was assessed across the corridor and near the nine proposed station locations. A suite of coherent transit-supportive land use plans and policies was recommended to the affected municipalities, along with specific action steps for achieving the desired community-level and station area development scenarios. This includes interim pre-implementation strategies that are worthwhile even without rail service.
- ◆ **Local Financing** – This task produced an inventory of existing and prospective revenue sources that can potentially support construction and implementation of commuter rail service. This includes gauging the potential capacity and relative implementability and acceptability of such sources to arrive at a final recommended strategy for providing the local funding match for available Federal funds.
- ◆ **Final Report** – The assembling of the six chapters into this single document was the outcome of the final task.

Project Benefits

Coordinating regional transportation planning and land use development policies is an oncoming practice because it manages both the supply side (transportation) and demand side (land use) of the congestion equation. It also has important pricing and market-oriented advantages in an increasingly competitive world. Some of the specific potential land use and transportation benefits are as follows:

- ◆ When commuter rail service is implemented it will improve mobility and enhance travel choices for the transportation-disadvantaged residents and workers in the region.
- ◆ Metra service will provide new commuting opportunities for thousands of other riders along the corridor. This will allow them better access to jobs in Chicago and elsewhere along the corridor. It will also attract new businesses and residential developers eager to take advantage of access to a Metra rail line.
- ◆ The project will provide an additional mode choice and could divert some trips from congested arterials and highways onto a more efficient mode of travel, especially for those commuting to and from downtown Chicago.
- ◆ This project will facilitate continued inter-jurisdictional cooperation and public-private coalitions. Collaboration among local governments, the development industry, labor, public interest, and environmental organizations leads to better long-term development and travel conditions and eventually higher quality of life.



Introduction

- ◆ This project will balance economic development within the participating communities, making them more competitive in relation to surrounding, less amalgamated areas.
- ◆ This project will promote utilization of existing transportation and utility infrastructure. This minimizes infrastructure cost to taxpayers and is more efficient than developing new infrastructure.
- ◆ This study will result in land use policies that involve the higher densities desirable near transit facilities. This clustering and increased density of new housing, along with mixing land uses, will change the jobs/housing balance and reduce the need for trips.
- ◆ Adoption of these policies by less “filled-in” communities may result in more efficient land use patterns and preservation of existing open space.



An extensive compilation and examination of key indicator data for the South Suburbs and the potential SouthEast Service (SES) corridor was completed for this study by The al Chalabi Group (ACG). This effort included review and analysis of recent—as well as long-term—socio-economic, transportation and travel factors and their change in the South Suburban Rail Corridor. This analysis was specifically aimed at:

- ◆ Identifying and substantiating the need for the proposed SouthEast Service (SES) commuter rail.
- ◆ Identifying corridor-wide and municipal potential for rail usage.
- ◆ Identifying existing, proposed or forecasted factors that would contribute to or enhance rail usage.
- ◆ Providing data to assist team members to identify local development potential (socio-economic factors).
- ◆ Providing data to assist team members to substantiate the corridor’s ability to provide significant local financial commitment.

For purposes of this Corridor Profile, ACG considered a much broader area, encompassing 34 South Suburban communities, than the remainder of this Land Use and Local Financing Study. Trends were also assessed within the framework of change in the 13-county Chicago Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA). Some study partners predicted that subsequent Metra studies will yield more conservative ridership projections as they will likely assume a less extensive SES marketshed and a smaller likelihood of commuters switching to SES from other nearby service lines, particularly the existing Metra Electric District line (based on experience elsewhere in the region).

Below is a summary of findings resulting from the Corridor Profile effort. The full extent of the ACG report, including all text, data tables, maps and associated appendices, is provided in a separate, supplemental volume to this Land Use and Local Financing study report.

Summary of Findings

1. The communities of the South Suburbs recognize the very substantial need for public transportation, primarily commuter rail. The study’s most critical issue is to demonstrate the need to provide access to jobs for the residents of the SouthEast Service (SES) commuter rail. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, that most accessible employment concentration is in the Chicago Central Area.



2. The current rail ridership of the 34 corridor communities is 5.95 percent, a rate that is considerably higher than that for the 13-county CMSA. The existing Metra Electric has the second-highest ridership (at 41,085 weekday boardings in 2002) of Metra's lines.
3. However, communities a considerable distance from the Metra Electric (to its east and south) also contribute sizable ridership. Existing rail ridership for the eight municipalities for which stations are proposed is 4.88 percent; and they contribute 2,402 daily riders, per the U.S. Census.
4. Preliminary data from the 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP3) indicate that the City of Chicago is the work destination of 14,965, or 30.6 percent, of the residents of the eight SES station municipalities. Of these workers, 2,895 or 19.3 percent, traveled by rail; and nearly all—2,800—were destined to the Chicago Central Area.
5. The CTPP3 data also shows that total trips (all modes) to the Chicago Central Area by the above-cited residents are 9,250. The larger 34-community SES corridor has 25,500 total work trips to the Central Area; with 11,300 (44.3 percent) by rail. This would seem to indicate that a more-proximate rail line could increase ridership for the eight SES station municipalities to a similar level. This would more than double existing ridership.
6. Furthermore, mapping of the above-cited data shows a substantial rail ridership to the Chicago Central Area from those municipalities east of the SES rail line. While the CTPP3 data does not permit analysis across state borders, it is reasonable to assume that this Indiana area would also contribute riders.
7. The 34 communities of the SES corridor are a microcosm of the region, with a similar mixture of high- and low-income households. They differ, however, in their access to jobs and their local household/job ratios. Much of the industry that once served the South Suburbs and made three of their communities (Flossmoor, Olympia Fields, Homewood) among the CMSA's ten wealthiest (in 1960) has contracted or relocated. The result is a sub-area of the Chicago CMSA that is far more dependent on the job concentrations of the Chicago Central Area—and of public transit to access it—than most of the region.



8. The SES communities exhibit a high rail ridership and dependence on Central Area jobs irrespective of whether they are high, low, or average income. Some of the highest and lowest income areas have a high rail ridership. For the lower incomes, this is due to a large number of households with either no access to a private car or with access to only one. For the latter, this makes it difficult to sustain multiple jobs per household.
9. For a large part of the 1970s and 1980s, the major population growth of the region was located in the North, Northwest and West. During the 1990s, this growth shifted to the Southwest and South. According to the U.S. Census, Will County, over the past decade, was one of the nation's major growth areas; and it continues to be. However, while the south has seen remarkable residential development, there is still a lag of commensurate employment growth. Regional agency (NIPC) forecasts of population and employment (to 2030) show that, while employment will grow, population growth will greatly outstrip it. Consequently, the SES corridor communities will continue to be dependent on jobs in the employment concentration of the Chicago Central Area. And the proposed SES commuter rail—as well as the Metra Electric—would be the beneficiaries of this considerably-increased trip-to-work traffic.
10. Aware of the job/household imbalance, the communities of the SES Corridor have made non-residential development a priority concern. They have been extremely supportive of the proposed South Suburban Airport, which is expected to produce the most significant concentration of jobs in the South side of the region. In fact, within the forecast period (2000-2030), the South Suburban Airport could be a major focus of reverse commuters for the SES line, as well as for the Metra Electric and its extension.
11. Development of prominent projects, such as the airport and a South Suburban Casino, has the potential for creating substantial ridership. As these projects develop, communities with stations on the SES line will benefit from the direct, indirect and induced jobs of these efforts. Rail station development can increase the attractiveness of these communities and assist them in competing for the induced growth of these projects and their economic benefits.
12. There is widespread local support both for new transit lines (SES) and enhanced service (Metra Electric) to connect the communities of the SES corridor with both the Chicago Central Area and the future developments surrounding the South Suburban Airport. This was evident in recent public meetings that assembled the area's leaders to discuss land use, planning and infrastructure issues and policies for the South Suburban Airport.



13. Eventually, with all the Metra rail improvements in place, as well as an enhanced system connectivity, the South Suburbs will have improved access both to the Central Area and, through it, to the additional job concentrations of the West, Northwest and North. Currently, approximately 5,000 workers from the eight SES station municipalities travel to work in these job centers beyond the CBD, most of which are well-served by existing Metra lines.



Corridor Planning Standards

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to document a set of Corridor Planning Standards that emerged through the study process. Standards were considered and refined for the following priority topics:

- ◆ Mobility,
- ◆ Connectivity,
- ◆ Efficiency,
- ◆ Safety,
- ◆ Land Use and Development, and
- ◆ Local Financing (of Major Transit Investments).

What are Corridor Planning Standards?

Many planning processes begin with an initial phase in which basic principles are articulated and agreed upon. The intent is, from the very start, to lay the groundwork for consensus by identifying “big picture” themes—or planning “standards”—from which more detailed objectives and strategies may flow. While such standards are often qualitative in nature, it is sometimes necessary to attach quantitative measures to achieve a more sophisticated level of evaluation.

This study followed the same model by focusing on development of Corridor Planning Standards as an essential early step. The south suburbs had the advantage of very recently undertaking a corridor-level planning initiative for the Calumet Corridor. Rather than starting from scratch, for purposes of this study, it was considered prudent to build upon the Calumet Corridor experience and the inter-governmental “good will” achieved through that process.

Why are Corridor Planning Standards Needed?

In addition to providing a focus for initial stakeholder involvement efforts, Corridor Planning Standards establish a framework for exploring and evaluating action alternatives and possible improvements—in this case, related to potential commuter rail implementation and associated land development impacts and local financing requirements. Such standards are also vital at the formal decision-making and priority-setting stage to demonstrate an open and rational process for weighing alternative courses of action.

Decisions with far-reaching physical and fiscal implications must be taken not only with “efficiency” and “cost-effectiveness” in mind, but also in keeping with expressed local values and needs and consistent with other area plans and policies. The resulting standards also support necessary screening of alternatives as must be



Corridor Planning Standards

done to comply with federal requirements. However, a meaningful and productive visioning and standard-setting process for corridor communities and stakeholders should be considered just as important an outcome as satisfying state and federal oversight agencies.

Regional Priority and Benefits

In preparing for Congressional reauthorization of six-year, omnibus federal transportation legislation, Metra published its long-range outlook and priorities in a document entitled, *Metra Proposed TEA-21 Reauthorization Initiatives: Creating New Service Opportunities Now and For the Future*. Among its four top priorities, Metra included new SouthEast Service (SES) to serve Chicago's south suburbs. Metra identified the following key benefits of successful funding and implementation of all its priority projects:

- ◆ Increased reliability, capacity and speed;
- ◆ Improved operational efficiency and maintenance;
- ◆ Economic growth/jobs;
- ◆ Enhanced safety; and
- ◆ Cleaner environment.

According to Metra's *Reauthorization Initiatives* document, as a result of previous projects completed with TEA-21 funding:

... the Metra commuter rail system has emerged as an essential component of the region's total transportation network and as a vital alternative to the private automobile. The expanding Metra system has played a key role in reducing traffic congestion and has provided critical environmental benefits by reducing auto emissions and improving air quality. There is also little question that the availability of a safe, reliable, and dependable commuter rail system is an integral part of a diverse and expanding urban area and of critical importance to sustaining a robust regional economy.

This statement from Metra succinctly captures many of the transportation, economic, environmental, and community-shaping benefits in which the south suburbs wish to share, as promptly as possible, through commuter rail implementation. More specifically for the proposed SouthEast Service, Metra anticipates in its *Reauthorization Initiatives* document that:



Corridor Planning Standards

The new service will provide new commuting opportunities for thousands of riders along the corridor. This will allow for better access to existing jobs in Chicago and along the corridor, as well as attract new businesses eager to take advantage of access to a Metra rail line. In addition, the new service will provide environmental benefits and ease congestion on the area's crowded roads.

Existing Relevant Standards

As part of the Calumet Corridor Economic Development Plan Study, Principles of Agreement were established to guide ongoing strategic planning for the area. A key goal of this effort was “to set a complementary development framework for this corridor.” The Calumet Corridor Plan was actually the last of three major corridor studies in the South Suburban Corridor study program. As such, principles prepared for the other corridors were modified to suit the Calumet Corridor. This was done through workshop sessions of staff and then affirmed by the political leadership on the Calumet Corridor Planning Council.

This process resulted in a set of 12 initial Principles of Agreement—six related to Physical Elements, three for Marketing and Economic Development Elements, and three additional for Organizational and Intergovernmental Elements. In reviewing these principles for this study, it was determined that seven of the 12 principles were particularly relevant to SouthEast Service planning:

Physical Elements

- Principle 1:* Coordinate each community's land use and development programs in a manner that supports the overall development concept for the Calumet Corridor and advocates the application of smart growth concepts.
- Principle 3:* Encourage system design and right of way reservations that will promote various modes of travel, including auto and truck, transit, walking and bicycling within the corridor.
- Principle 4:* Identify high demand corridors and priority connections that should be developed or improved to provide needed connections or capacity to serve the corridor area.

Marketing and Economic Development Elements

- Principle 7:* Recognize the different economic, market, and investment climates along the Calumet Corridor.
- Principle 8:* Seek ways to realize reasonable economic equilibrium along the Calumet Corridor.



Corridor Planning Standards

Principle 9: Create a Corridor Image that enhances the appeal of projects proposed in the Calumet Corridor.

Organizational and Intergovernmental Elements

Principle 12: The Calumet Corridor Council and its successor organization(s) will advise and coordinate the marketing and economic development of the Calumet Corridor area.

With regard to the Physical Elements, SouthEast Service implementation will clearly benefit area mobility and have the potential to influence community development patterns, particularly in close proximity to rail transit stations. All three principles under the Marketing and Economic Development Elements apply, especially to the extent that new commuter rail service will enhance economic and redevelopment potential and elevate the area's progressive image and attractiveness. Finally, as suggested by Principle 12 under Organizational and Intergovernmental Elements, the Calumet Corridor Planning Council remains the policy oversight body for this study in anticipation and in promotion of the SouthEast Service.

In a subsequent phase of the Calumet Corridor Economic Development Plan Study, three new Principles of Agreement were added under the category of Strategy Plan Elements. Two of these added principles were also deemed relevant to this study:

Strategy Plan Elements

Principle 13: Development approaches must differ by category.

Principle 15: Catalyst development enhances the regional image.

With regard to the development categories cited in Principle 13, the Strategy Plan discussion specifically highlights "Transit Oriented Sites" as an important type of developable asset within the corridor:

With a new commuter line under development, there are residential and commercial development opportunities that capitalize on transit use. Additionally, because of the region's strong road network and coming South Suburban Airport, there are parcels ideally suited for inter-modal access. Each proposed Metra station location and the property adjacent to the airport site are examples of transit oriented sites.



Corridor Planning Standards

Interestingly, every other development category described can legitimately be considered an opportunity that commuter rail implementation could in some way enhance:

- ◆ Small site context (e.g., infill parcels);
- ◆ Large site context (e.g., suburban edges sites, such as the potential station area across Dixie Highway from Balmoral Park Race Track);
- ◆ Community identity/image sites (e.g., sites through which a “sense of place” can be established in suburban communities);
- ◆ Attraction sites (e.g., sites that could draw significant visitation from outside the area);
- ◆ Residential leading to retail sites (e.g., the possibility of more mixed-use development in the south suburbs, as well as increased residential density in certain areas, both of which would enhance the retail market); and
- ◆ Industrial/office sites (e.g., potential large-scale, job-creating investments, for which commuter rail access would clearly be a plus).

Signature development possibilities in all of these categories, and particularly under “Transit Oriented Sites,” offer the potential for Catalyst Developments that in turn spark more widespread development interest, as suggested in Principle 15.

Stakeholder Input and Feedback

For the first Public Information Meeting held during this study (on June 10, 2004, at Glenwood Village Hall), a questionnaire was distributed to attendees so they could contribute to the process of refining initial concepts and themes into locally acceptable planning standards. It was emphasized that public agencies will be challenged to manage the changes that potential commuter rail implementation likely will bring in order to yield desired results for area communities.

The questionnaire highlighted 14 preliminary statements about important transportation and land development issues affecting the corridor, the south suburbs, and the region in coming decades. The statements were organized under the six priority standards topics identified for this study. Additionally, preparation of this questionnaire provided an opportunity to clarify, in plain language, what each of these topics implies:

- ◆ **Mobility.** Mobility is the freedom to travel from place to place using many forms of transportation, including automobile, bus, train, bicycle, airplane, boat, or foot.
- ◆ **Connectivity.** Connectivity is being able to reach specific destinations within the Chicago region.



Corridor Planning Standards

- ◆ **Efficiency.** An efficient transportation system is reliable, convenient, and easy to use.
- ◆ **Safety.** Safety concerns the provision of safe and secure commuter rail service for riders and the general public.
- ◆ **Land Use and Development.** Land use and development concerns how the land will be used in the corridor from the standpoint of arrangement, density, appearance, and other physical characteristics. These qualities are related to the proposed commuter rail service in terms of attracting riders and ensuring compatible development near stations. They also affect quality of life. They could be uniform for the corridor as well as reflect unique conditions in individual communities.
- ◆ **Local Financing (of Major Transit Investments).** Financing is how the commuter rail line and associated transit stations will be paid for.

While the number of completed surveys was in no way adequate to represent a scientific sampling of public opinion across the corridor, the responses received were found to be generally consistent with the thinking and insights expressed at policy and technical meetings during the study. The proposed Corridor Planning Standards in the next section were clarified based on this official and citizen feedback.

The survey responses yielded additional information through several other questions that were included on the questionnaire:

- ◆ When asked if they would ride the SouthEast Service if it was built, all respondents said “Yes.” In addition to individuals who live in communities that are projected to have SES stations, other respondents were from Burnham and Sauk Village.
- ◆ When asked to identify a few particularly important locations to which enhanced access would be important, the following places were cited:
 - Chicago Loop
 - Chicago Heights
 - South Chicago Heights
 - Glenwood
 - South Holland
 - Dolton
 - Neighborhoods
 - Shopping districts
 - Parks



Corridor Planning Standards

- ◆ When presented with the options of accessing commuter rail stations by bus, automobile, park and ride, drop-off (“kiss and ride”), walking, or bicycle, the most often cited option was walking, followed closely by all the automobile-related options. Access by bus and/or bicycle were least often selected.
- ◆ When asked to suggest other potential issues and/or concerns that should be addressed in ongoing planning for the commuter rail corridor, the following items were mentioned:
 - Traffic flow
 - Parking space
 - Attractive locations for new business, which will bring in more business and more tax revenue

Proposed SouthEast Service Corridor Planning Standards

The following series of statements are proposed for use as consensus Corridor Planning Standards as technical and strategic planning for SouthEast Service implementation continues:

Mobility

1. More options should be provided for traveling around the Chicago region beyond private automobiles and local buses.

Connectivity

2. SouthEast corridor communities should be better linked to the Chicagoland region, which would create increased opportunities for jobs, shopping, entertainment, culture and education.
3. In order to make commuter rail service most useful, local shuttles and similar transportation options should connect rail stations with major employment areas and other activity centers.

Efficiency

4. Rail service should be frequent and reliable to provide a competitive alternative to automobile commuting.
5. Adequate evening and weekend service should be provided versus service just during peak A.M. and P.M. commuting times. (As noted by Metra, a start-up line generally involves only peak-hour service. Evening and weekend service would be provided at a later date based on ridership demands.)
6. Rail stations and trains should be easy to use from the standpoint of accessibility, easy-to-read signs, comfortable seats, etc.



Corridor Planning Standards

Safety

7. The safety of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers should be emphasized at or near all at-grade rail crossings.
8. Public agencies should allocate spending on appropriate capital improvements, such as overpasses to separate rail and automobile traffic (as funding permits, as grade separations are rarely provided on either existing or new start-up lines).
9. All rail stations should be well lighted and should provide security measures (e.g., emergency phones, security officers, etc.).

Land Use and Development

10. More intensive commercial development should be promoted near rail stations so local communities can reap economic and tax base benefits.
11. A greater variety of housing styles should be allowed and encouraged near rail transit stations while maintaining the existing character of residential neighborhoods elsewhere in the community.
12. Station-area development should be coordinated with local community and downtown plans.

Local Financing (of Major Transportation Investments)

13. Each community in the corridor should make a fair funding contribution to the project to insure that a high-quality rail station with amenities will be provided.
14. Local communities should explore innovative financing options to avoid increasing basic taxes, such as property and sales taxes.



Corridor Planning Standards

Potential Indicators

While some planning standards are measurable in and of themselves, other standards remain qualitative statements. For this reason, a next step is to consider potential indicators that may be used as proxies for applying the standards in actual evaluations and to quantify standards attainment.

In **Table 3.1** the 14 proposed Planning Standards are revisited to consider how measureable they are on their own. Possible indicators are suggested for those that are not easily translated into quantifiable terms.

TABLE 3.1:
Quantifying Corridor Planning Standards
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study

Category	Planning Standard	Potential Indicators
Mobility	1. More options should be provided for traveling around the Chicago region beyond private automobiles and local buses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SES ridership (projected, actual) ✓ Potential new or restructured Pace routes to coordinate with SES
Connectivity	2. SouthEast corridor communities should be better linked to the Chicagoland region, which would create increased opportunities for jobs, shopping, entertainment, culture and education.	✓ Number of transit stops (rail, bus) in the Chicago region a transit patron from the south suburbs can access upon entering the system (directly and through transfers)—before and after SES implementation
	3. In order to make commuter rail service most useful, local shuttles and similar transportation options should connect rail stations with major employment areas and other activity centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of local shuttle services implemented ✓ Shuttle ridership



Corridor Planning Standards

TABLE 3.1 (continued):
Quantifying Corridor Planning Standards
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

Category	Planning Standard	Potential Indicators
Efficiency	4. Rail service should be frequent and reliable to provide a competitive alternative to automobile commuting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of daily/weekly boarding opportunities per SES station ✓ On-time service statistics ✓ Breakdown/suspended service statistics
	5. Adequate evening and weekend service should be provided versus service just during peak A.M. and P.M. commuting times. (Only peak-hour service is generally provided on a start-up line, until ridership demand warrants expanded service.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of boarding opportunities per SES station during non-peak hours ✓ SES ridership during non-peak hours, weekends
	6. Rail stations and trains should be easy to use from the standpoint of accessibility, easy-to-read signs, comfortable seats, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rider satisfaction surveys ✓ Number/type complaints ✓ Accessibility indices
Safety	7. The safety of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers should be emphasized at or near all at-grade rail crossings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Accident statistics ✓ Ped/bike volume data ✓ Traffic count data and accident rate relative to volume and train frequency
	8. Public agencies should allocate spending on appropriate capital improvements, such as overpasses to separate rail and automobile traffic (as funding permits, as grade separations are rarely provided on either existing or new start-up lines).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number (and dollar value) of safety-related capital improvements ✓ Accident rates before and after specific improvements
	9. All rail stations should be well lighted and should provide security measures (e.g., emergency phones, security officers, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rider satisfaction surveys ✓ Crime incident statistics (and police calls to transit stations) ✓ Number/hours of security personnel ✓ Number of emergency phones and utilization statistics



Corridor Planning Standards

TABLE 3.1 (continued):
Quantifying Corridor Planning Standards
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study

Category	Planning Standard	Potential Indicators
Land Use and Development	10. More intensive commercial development should be promoted near rail stations so local communities can reap economic and tax base benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Floor-area ratio (F.A.R.) of station-area development ✓ Maximum building height ✓ Taxable value of station-area development (overall, per square foot) ✓ Number of commercial establishments (and measures of business mix) ✓ Retail sales per square foot ✓ Increased parking demand
	11. A greater variety of housing styles should be allowed and encouraged near rail transit stations while maintaining the existing character of residential neighborhoods elsewhere in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of units by dwelling unit type (single-family, duplex, apartment, condo, townhome, live-work unit, etc.)
	12. Station-area development should be coordinated with local community and downtown plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of plans adopted and/or updated that address station-area development scenarios
Local Financing	13. Each community in the corridor should make a fair funding contribution to the project to insure that a high-quality rail station with amenities will be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of communities contributing (participation rate) ✓ Dollar value of contributions ✓ Contribution relative to population and/or employment share ✓ Value of non-financial contributions
	14. Local communities should explore innovative financing options to avoid increasing basic taxes, such as property and sales taxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dollar value of revenue generated through “non-traditional” sources ✓ Dollar value of external funding and/or in-kind contributions attracted (public, private)



The prospect that “transit-supportive” development will emerge at key locations in a proposed new transit corridor is essential in the highly-competitive pursuit of federal funding support for “New Start” projects. This chapter delves into this land use imperative while Chapter 5 focuses on the equally important need for a viable local financing strategy to secure federal participation. More specifically, this chapter:

- ◆ considers the existing development pattern in the South Suburbs;
- ◆ outlines the fundamental elements of transit-supportive development;
- ◆ looks to examples from other commuter rail corridors around the Chicago region; and,
- ◆ provides guidance on what local communities committed to implementation of Metra’s proposed SouthEast Service (SES) can do to encourage more transit-supportive development outcomes along the commuter rail corridor and particularly near potential station locations.

Planning Context

Chicago’s South Suburbs are clearly experiencing three key trends affecting many other established suburban areas across the nation:

1. The need for **more vigorous economic development** to generate quality jobs for area residents and to sustain a cycle of new investment and revitalization as the transition from previous core industries continues.
2. The need for **significant transportation improvements** to address increasing congestion and limited travel options in a relatively low-density suburban setting.
3. The need for **more effective land use planning** to establish a “sense of place” and focus for development in a largely suburban area while satisfying other traditional planning aims: coordinating new development with infrastructure and services, encouraging desired redevelopment in older areas, providing more diverse housing options, and ensuring adequate parks and other community amenities that are fundamental factors in quality of life.

Just as obvious is that the proposed SES commuter rail corridor is highly diverse, ranging from areas that are still largely rural in nature—but emerging rapidly as new bedroom communities with increasing retail and industrial opportunities—to other areas that have experienced an extended period of decline and need new energy to overcome vacancy, underemployment and lack of investment.



The land use concepts explored for the I-94/IL 394 corridor through the *Calumet Corridor Economic Development Plan* focus on opportunities to direct new development to particular areas to accommodate “business centers/parks,” “industrial predominance,” “commercial corridors,” and “regional shopping destinations.” Areas intended primarily for residential use and associated amenities (e.g., golf courses, forest preserve) are also identified. The Calumet Corridor reports also note that a potential new Metra commuter rail line in the corridor will stimulate “residential and commercial development opportunities that capitalize on transit use.” Such “transit-oriented development” (TOD) is the focus of this current study, both in terms of encouraging such development in appropriate areas near transit stations while also preserving the established character of area communities in the face of such potentially dramatic change.

Lessons from the Region

As an initial step for the Land Use component of this study, selected other Metra stations around the Chicago region were visited to observe station area conditions and present this information at advisory committee and public meetings during the study. The series of photos below highlight station features that were noted for potential application in the SES corridor.



The Hollywood station on Metra's Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) line illustrates that single-family homes can still be located in close proximity to a commuter rail station. Also near the Hollywood station are two-story apartments and small-scale corner stores with residential space above.



Mid-rise housing, in the 5-6 story range, has emerged near both the Brookfield and La Grange stations on Metra's BNSF line.



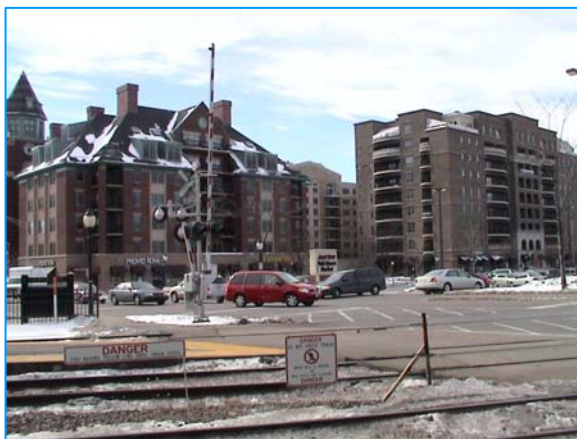
At both Brookfield, on Metra's BNSF line, and Tinley Park, on Metra's Rock Island District line, the station location is within easy walking distance of the traditional downtown, but the tracks and commuter parking can be a barrier to walkability.



In La Grange, commuter rail helps to sustain small local businesses while also attracting larger chain retail stores to locate as close to the station as possible.



At Elmhurst, on Metra's Union Pacific-West line, downtown parking provides for both commuter needs and nearby businesses. South of the station area (as on the north side), commuter and retail demand has justified a parking structure.



Development near the Arlington Heights station on Metra's Union Pacific/Northwest line has clearly evolved to a much more advanced level of transit-oriented design. A new condo development over ground-level retail in Tinley Park (seen from the rear parking area) is likely more in line with what might be expected to occur near most rail stations in the SES corridor.



Bicycles at the Elmhurst station—even amid single-digit temperatures in mid February—show the importance of providing for “inter-modal” connections (e.g., bike to train, train to bus, etc.). A Pace bus stop immediately adjacent to the Tinley Park station shows good coordination of rail and bus service. Public art and other amenities at Tinley Park also illustrate how a rail station can be a centerpiece of a vibrant downtown.

Existing Corridor Conditions

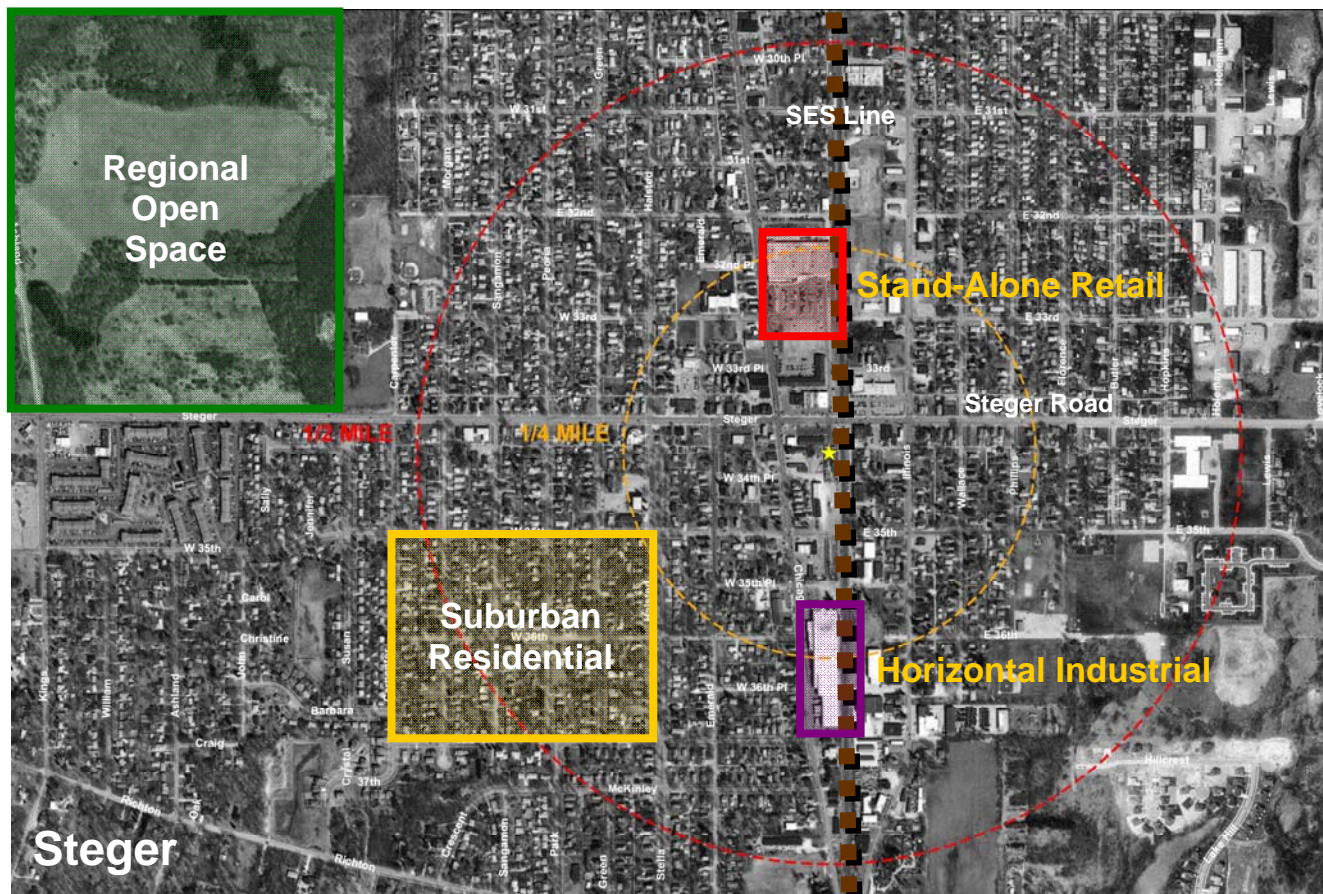
While some communities in the South Suburbs have traditional downtowns or older commercial corridors that developed in a more compact fashion, much of the area exhibits a typical low-density suburban pattern:

- ◆ Areas of predominately single-family housing development, where automobile trips are necessary to reach most routine destinations including work, school, shopping, etc.
- ◆ A suburban model for commercial development in which most establishments not located in large-scale shopping centers are built as a stand-alone structure surrounded by surface parking.
- ◆ Business and industrial parks, where buildings are designed on more of a horizontal versus vertical plane, with associated surface parking and truck/rail loading areas, given land availability and suburban zoning and development standards.
- ◆ Extensive areas of forest preserve and undevelopable open space, which are a physical asset for the area and region but also can contribute to a more spread-out development and travel pattern.

Highlighted in **Figure 4.1**, on an aerial photograph of the potential SES station area in the Village of Steger, are on-the-ground examples of the land use characteristics described above.



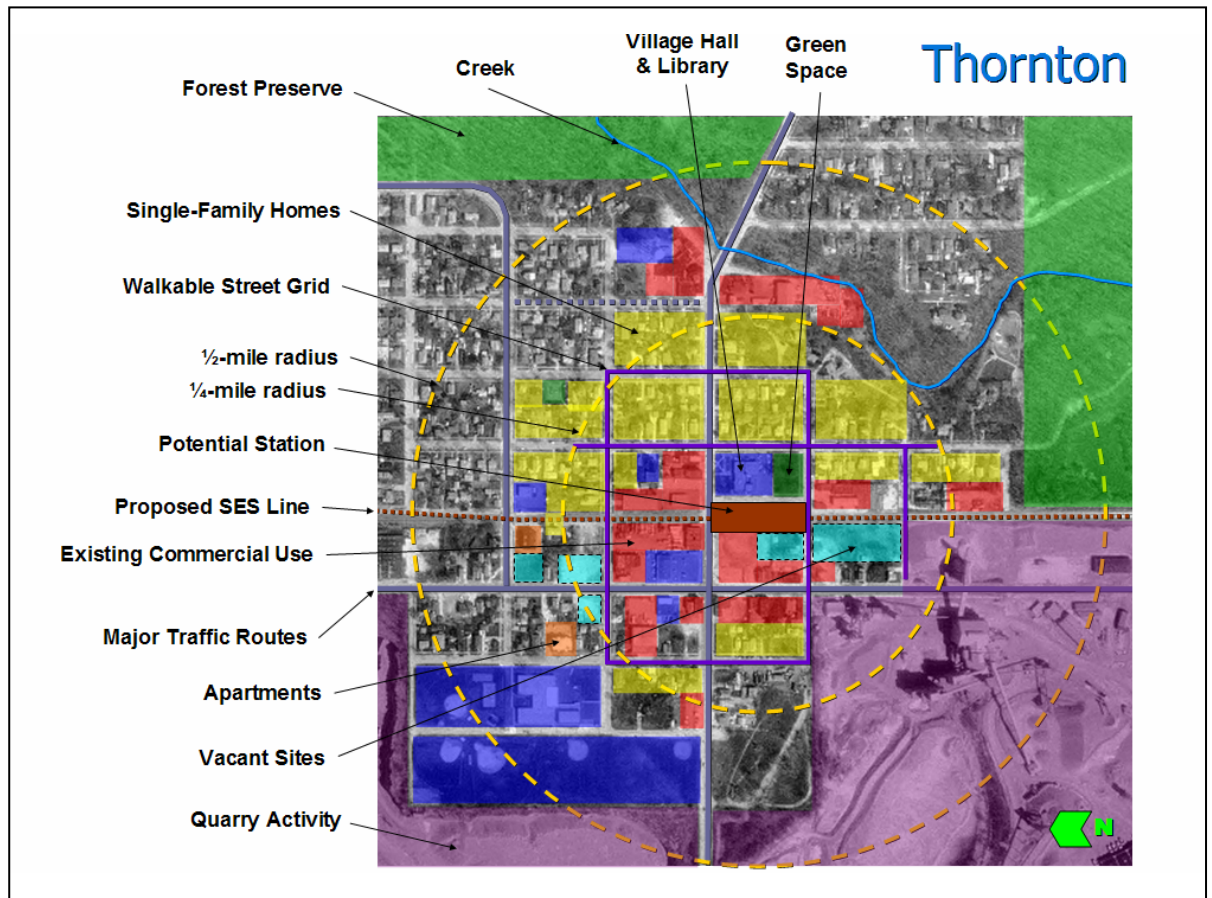
FIGURE 4.1:
Typical Suburban Development Features in the South Suburbs
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study





During the study, the Village of Thornton was also used as an example of the station area assessment that must be conducted prior to considering transit-supportive development (TSD) possibilities. As illustrated in **Figure 4.2**, central Thornton has certain constraints (quarry activity, forest preserve, creek, established single-family residential blocks, etc.) but also many positives that make the area well suited for station area development (walkable street and block pattern, existing mix of centrally-located businesses and public facilities, vacant sites near the rail line).

FIGURE 4.2:
Village of Thornton Station Area Assessment
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study





Planning Themes

Through this study, the following priority themes were identified as the recommended focus of ongoing land use planning efforts for South Suburban station areas:

- ◆ Increased density and mixing of land uses around stations.
- ◆ Greater pedestrian versus automobile orientation.
- ◆ Careful provision of parking.
- ◆ Connectivity of alternative means of travel.
- ◆ Support for major activity centers.
- ◆ Attraction of more of the regional labor force to area employers.
- ◆ Balance between passenger and freight rail needs.
- ◆ Suitable local policies and regulations.

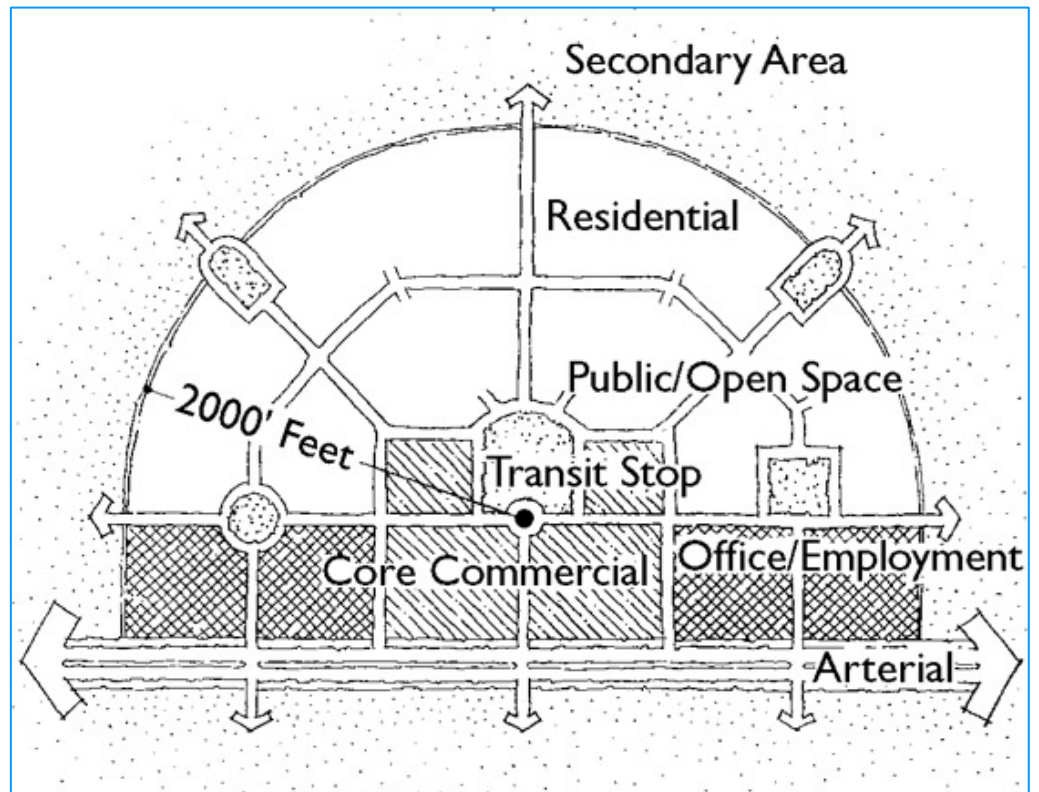
The Corridor Planning Standards in Chapter 3 of this report also include three standards that address Land Use and Development issues:

10. More intensive commercial development should be promoted near rail stations so local communities can reap economic and tax base benefits.
11. A greater variety of housing styles should be allowed and encouraged near rail transit stations while maintaining the existing character of residential neighborhoods elsewhere in the community.
12. Station area development should be coordinated with local community and downtown plans.

Peter Calthorpe's classic diagram of a transit-supportive station environment, displayed in **Figure 4.3**, highlights the following key elements that should be incorporated into South Suburban station area plans to the extent feasible:



FIGURE 4.3:
Transit-Oriented Development Diagram
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study



SOURCE: *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream.*
Peter Calthorpe. Princeton Architectural Press (1993).

- ◆ Particular **focus on a 1/4- to 1/2-mile planning area** where pedestrian activity and real estate interest is highest.
- ◆ Intentional **mixing of compatible land uses**, including public facilities, to form the nucleus of a true activity center.
- ◆ A **core commercial area** immediately adjacent to the station, where foot traffic will be highest.
- ◆ Offices and other **sources of employment** close by.
- ◆ A predominance of **residential use** within the 1/4- to 1/2-mile walking radius, in close proximity to shopping and employment opportunities and transit access.



- ◆ Careful integration of **public/open spaces** (e.g., neighborhood and pocket parks, plazas, other amenities) into the overall station area design.
- ◆ **Wise placement and design of parking areas** to accommodate vehicle parking needs without allowing parking lots and structures to dominate the scene.
- ◆ Location of the entire TOD area near a major arterial to ensure **multi-modal access and interconnectivity**.
- ◆ Good connections between the station area's **street, sidewalk and bike lane/trail network** and the surrounding area.
- ◆ **Effective urban design** to ensure a safe, human-scale setting; pedestrian (and bicycle) friendliness; and, enhanced identity and a pleasant, appealing environment through high-quality streetscape touches and amenities.



The highly walkable street and block pattern of a grid-style downtown area is easy to contrast with a typical suburban pattern in which land uses are largely separated and geared toward automobile access and parking.

The groundbreaking Nugent Square development that is currently under construction in the Village of Glenwood's future station area is a positive sign for the South Suburbs as it is occurring well in advance of commuter rail implementation. The project involves a four-story, mixed-use development that will include retail businesses at street level with 24 condominium units on the top three floors. The building design and surrounding streetscape are clearly in keeping with TOD principles. In fact, the approach is reminiscent of successful developments in other areas of the country, including the example below from the Orenco/NW 231st Avenue Station vicinity in Portland, Oregon (TriMet light rail system).



Rendering courtesy of
Bruti Associates, Ltd.
and ARTE 3, Ltd.



TOD near the
Orenco Station
in Portland, Oregon

The following checklist for evaluating and planning for Transit-Supportive Development was presented at a meeting of the Technical Sub-Committee for this study. This extensive list highlights the range of items that must be considered when trying to promote and achieve more transit-focused development. This does not imply that every one of these items must be incorporated into a station area plan to ensure success. However, the interaction between certain of these items can emerge as a critical component of a functional and attractive TSD outcome, such as traffic circulation and parking provision within a busy pedestrian area.

Physical Setting

- ◆ Streets network and blocks
- ◆ Block size/length
- ◆ Parcel pattern/property ownership (ease of land assembly)
- ◆ Existing development (historic sites/structures, potential displacement)



- ◆ Vacant land/buildings (opportunity sites, redevelopment/re-use potential)
- ◆ Environmental constraints (natural features, brownfields)
- ◆ Utility infrastructure availability/capacity
- ◆ Space for rail station “footprint” and functional layout

Traffic Access and Circulation

- ◆ Traffic volume/street function
- ◆ Circulation pattern (access routes, origins/destinations, turning movements)
- ◆ Key intersections/signalization

Pedestrian Friendliness

- ◆ Street cross sections
- ◆ Sidewalk continuity
- ◆ Sidewalk width
- ◆ Crosswalks
- ◆ Direct/convenient walking routes
- ◆ Traffic calming measures

Multi-Modal Transportation Connections

- ◆ Bicycle lanes/trails
- ◆ Bus stops/pull-outs
- ◆ Public parking (park-and-ride, in support of retail)
- ◆ On-street parking (and regulation/enforcement of parking turnover)
- ◆ Parking structures

Land Use

- ◆ Residential types/variety
- ◆ Commercial mix (retail, office)
- ◆ Mixed use (residential above street-level retail and/or office)
- ◆ Desired business types
- ◆ “Anchor” uses, key destinations (e.g., major employers, institutional uses)



- ◆ Joint public/private development of rail station
- ◆ Public facilities/services
- ◆ Municipal-owned land to lure development or place public facilities/amenities
- ◆ Parks/plazas
- ◆ Interim uses (e.g., surface parking)

Development Character

- ◆ Development density (units/square feet per acre, number of residents/employees)
- ◆ Building scale (height, bulk, floor area ratio)
- ◆ Building placement (setback, location of parking)
- ◆ Public spaces (amenities, streetscape, landscaping)
- ◆ “Activity center” potential (key retail/mixed-use streets, public facility clusters)
- ◆ Time-Activity pattern of land use mix (daytime, evening, weekend)

Station Area Concepts

A core task for the Land Use phase of the study involved the development of conceptual station area plans for the nine potential station locations identified through earlier studies of the SES corridor. The consultant team prepared preliminary versions of these concepts, which were then refined through meetings with the individual corridor communities as well as through public meeting and Technical Sub-Committee feedback.

It is important to note that, within the scope and available budget of this study, the station area ideas presented within this chapter remain conceptual in nature, with details to be worked out through more in-depth study and ongoing local and Metra planning. In particular, no rigorous market analysis was involved. The details of station building design and site layout also were not addressed at this stage—only the potential station “footprint” to be accommodated in each community.

The individual station area concepts are presented in **Figures 4.4** through **4.12**. Below are specific features and considerations for each of the nine potential SES station areas:



Dolton (Figure 4.4)

- ◆ Taking advantage of the existing municipal parking in the station vicinity, and supplementing it with new parking directly adjacent to the potential station site.
- ◆ Encouraging new retail development near the station along Main Street/E. 142nd Street.
- ◆ Promoting redevelopment opportunities in Dolton's traditional downtown area to the east along Chicago Road.
- ◆ Recognizing the extent of established single-family residential development within the ¼-mile radius of the station site, as well as an existing school nearby.
- ◆ Acknowledging, based on Metra guidance, that the Dolton station would need to be located just east of the freight rail mainline along a proposed bypass track. The station would also be elevated on an embankment or structure to be compatible with the elevation of the proposed Dolton Junction flyover. This flyover is expected to begin ascending south of the Little Calumet River Bridge (near 135th Street), reach its full height over the Dolton Junction, and then descend back to ground level before the 147th Street underpass.

South Holland (Figure 4.5)

- ◆ Creating a signature shopping street and mixed-use setting along 161st Place between the new Metra station and South Holland's traditional downtown on South Park Avenue.
- ◆ Promoting opportunities to develop higher-density residential types in the station area, and particularly as a redevelopment option for sites along South Park Avenue, to support area retail establishments, to make the station area more of a "24/7" activity center than if it was purely retail and office, and as a way to increase housing variety within the Village.
- ◆ Transitioning development types and intensities north of 161st Place to protect the existing residential neighborhood to the north.
- ◆ Extending Wausau Avenue northward from 162nd Street to improve vehicular access and circulation in the station area (and recognizing the need for more in-depth study of traffic circulation needs, particularly to provide other options between the station and South Park Avenue to the north of 161st Place).
- ◆ Establishing convenient linkage between commuter rail and Pace bus service by setting aside an easily accessible transfer point along 162nd Street.



- ◆ Exploring potential shuttle bus service and potentially constructing a dedicated bicycle route linking the station with South Suburban College to the west.
- ◆ Acknowledging, based on Metra guidance, that the South Holland station would need to be located on a proposed new bypass track to the east of the freight rail mainline and also east of the existing angled freight tracks that diverge from the mainline north of 162nd Street. This station location is necessary to prevent the commuter rail platform and station activities from interfering with freight rail through traffic. This also precludes the concept of a potential platform configuration that would extend across the rail overpass of 162nd Street. This idea was raised during the study as a way to open up additional station access and parking options (including potential re-use of the Village’s existing public works yard to the south of 162nd Street). However, while it is not feasible to construct part of the platform on the overpass, an accessory pedestrian bridge incorporated into the overpass would serve this same purpose.

Thornton (Figure 4.6)

- ◆ Acknowledging the difficulty of station siting—and platform configuration options—in Thornton given the need to avoid disrupting major east-west roadways in the area (primarily Margaret and Eleanor streets, but also Juliette Street near the Village Hall and fire station given the potential station arrangement shown in the current station area concept).
- ◆ Promoting redevelopment opportunities associated with older structures along William Street and Margaret Street, and focusing prime development attention on the two blocks between Eleanor and Margaret streets on the east side of William Street.
- ◆ Recognizing the various constraints to significant transition of the station area (e.g., nearby blocks of established single-family residential housing, extensive quarry activity and forest preserve, existing businesses, small properties and potential development/redevelopment sites).
- ◆ Recognizing that location of commuter parking toward the southern portion of the station area could lead to concerns about dust from quarry activities. This same concern would also impact development attractiveness there, particularly for residential development.

Glenwood (Figure 4.7)

- ◆ Exploring possibilities for complementary residential development on the large undeveloped site just east of the potential station site along Center Street.



- ◆ Considering a linear park immediately east of the potential residential development cited above to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access to the station and to provide a buffer for the existing single-family neighborhood to the east (and also exploring a potential pedestrian underpass of the rail line in the vicinity of Center Street).
- ◆ Promoting additional redevelopment opportunities in the vicinity of Nugent Square and Glenwood Village Hall on the west side of the rail line.
- ◆ Providing for commuter parking needs while not sacrificing the convenient parking along Young Street that is essential to small local establishments.

Chicago Heights (Figure 4.8)

- ◆ Closely aligning SES station area planning with downtown redevelopment and overall economic development efforts in Chicago Heights.
- ◆ Encouraging a new retail node at the intersection of Halsted Street and Independence Way, with supporting residential development in close proximity.
- ◆ Exploring a possible direct shuttle bus link between the SES station and the St. James medical complex, as well as nearby public facilities (library, recreation center), near Lincoln Highway/14th Street and Chicago Road. A potential shuttle connection along Vincennes Avenue would also pass the Pace Bus Center at 16th Street.
- ◆ Taking advantage of existing public parking opportunities within the station area while exploring the potential conversion of certain parking sites for new complementary investment and development.
- ◆ Recognizing the industrial nature of lands to the south of the potential station site and other potential barriers to development interest in this portion of the station area.
- ◆ Acknowledging that a station may also be necessary just to the south, at the intersection of the north-south Union Pacific/CSX rail line and the east-west EJ&E line, should the STAR Line project eventually offer “outer circumferential” commuter rail service within the region. In this concept a pedestrian link is shown between the potential SES and STAR line stations.

South Chicago Heights (Figure 4.9)

- ◆ Recognizing the less obvious nature of development and redevelopment opportunities near the potential station site given the pattern of historical land use in the vicinity (e.g., former landfill site, industrial activities, large auto salvage operation, etc.).



- ◆ Highlighting some degree of retail opportunity near the station at the intersection of Sauk Trail and East End Avenue.
- ◆ Exploring redevelopment potential in the area south and southeast of the Sauk Trail/East End intersection, where larger building sites may be available and feasible.
- ◆ Recognizing that the linear parking layout shown between the rail line and East End Avenue would require careful study, design and potential mitigation as this area is currently an important drainage way (and some portions to the north may also involve property associated with existing freight rail activities).

Steger (Figure 4.10)

- ◆ Taking advantage of the existing municipal parking at the nearby K-Mart site, either as dedicated commuter parking or as a potential development site that could still incorporate public parking in its design.
- ◆ Promoting redevelopment potential for older commercial sites along Steger Road/34th Street.
- ◆ Recognizing the constraints on development to the east of the rail line where the Village maintains a large and essential storm drainage detention site, but exploring opportunities near 33rd Street and 33rd Place.
- ◆ Recognizing the extent of established single-family residential development and existing businesses within the 1/4-mile radius of the station site.

Crete (Figure 4.11)

- ◆ Building upon the commuter rail station concept that was part of the Village's last Comprehensive Plan update while acknowledging the desire for a Metra station situated closer to downtown Crete, which would require more in-depth study given the space limitations and other constraints in the vicinity of Exchange Street.
- ◆ Providing new access points from Main Street/Dixie Highway to the potential commuter parking lot shown in the concept plan, including situating the southern access drive to align with a potential new access drive to the Crete Public Library that would support traffic signal installation. This would also help to reduce the traffic impact on Linden and 5th Streets.
- ◆ Closely aligning SES station area planning with the Village's ongoing downtown and comprehensive planning efforts as well as development prospects for the Village's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District No. 1 on the east side of Main Street/Dixie Highway. The potential development



focus at this location would contrast with the typical highway “strip” development pattern that has emerged farther north.

- ◆ Accommodating direct pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the Metra station and downtown Crete by supplementing Crete Park with additional green space acquisition in the station area.

Crete-Balmoral (Figure 4.12)

- ◆ Taking advantage of the only “clean slate” station area scenario among the nine potential SES stations by exploring the potential mix of uses and development quality that could be accomplished through a master-planned approach to a large, unified development site.
- ◆ Devoting significant land to commuter parking in recognition of the likely role of this SES terminus station in drawing ridership from Indiana and growth areas to the south and west.
- ◆ Exploring land use opportunities and design approaches that would make the emerging station area a complementary destination and “gateway” to Balmoral Park Racetrack across Dixie Highway. As depicted in the station area concept, a “Main Street” theme was discussed to provide an obvious, strong physical connection between the station Balmoral Park entry. This could include a shuttle service between the Metra station and race track, particularly on weekends and race nights (and there is interest by some in an extended rail spur or some other way to bring passengers more directly to Balmoral as was the case historically).
- ◆ Potentially accommodating both neo-traditional and more typical suburban development styles on this large site, including a pattern reminiscent of the Metra station area in Flossmoor, where a public library, local businesses and services (including restaurants), and residential blocks are all within easy walking distance of the station.
- ◆ Providing adequate space at the end-of-line Crete-Balmoral station location for an overnight Metra storage yard for SES trains. As is Metra practice, the yard facility would be situated in a linear fashion alongside the mainline tracks. Then, by locating the commuter rail station off the mainline (on the primary track leading into the yard area), Metra trains would be able to dwell at the station between outbound and inbound trips without interfering with mainline freight operations.



FIGURE 4.4:
Village of Dolton Station Area Concept
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study





FIGURE 4.5:
Village of South Holland Station Area Concept
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study

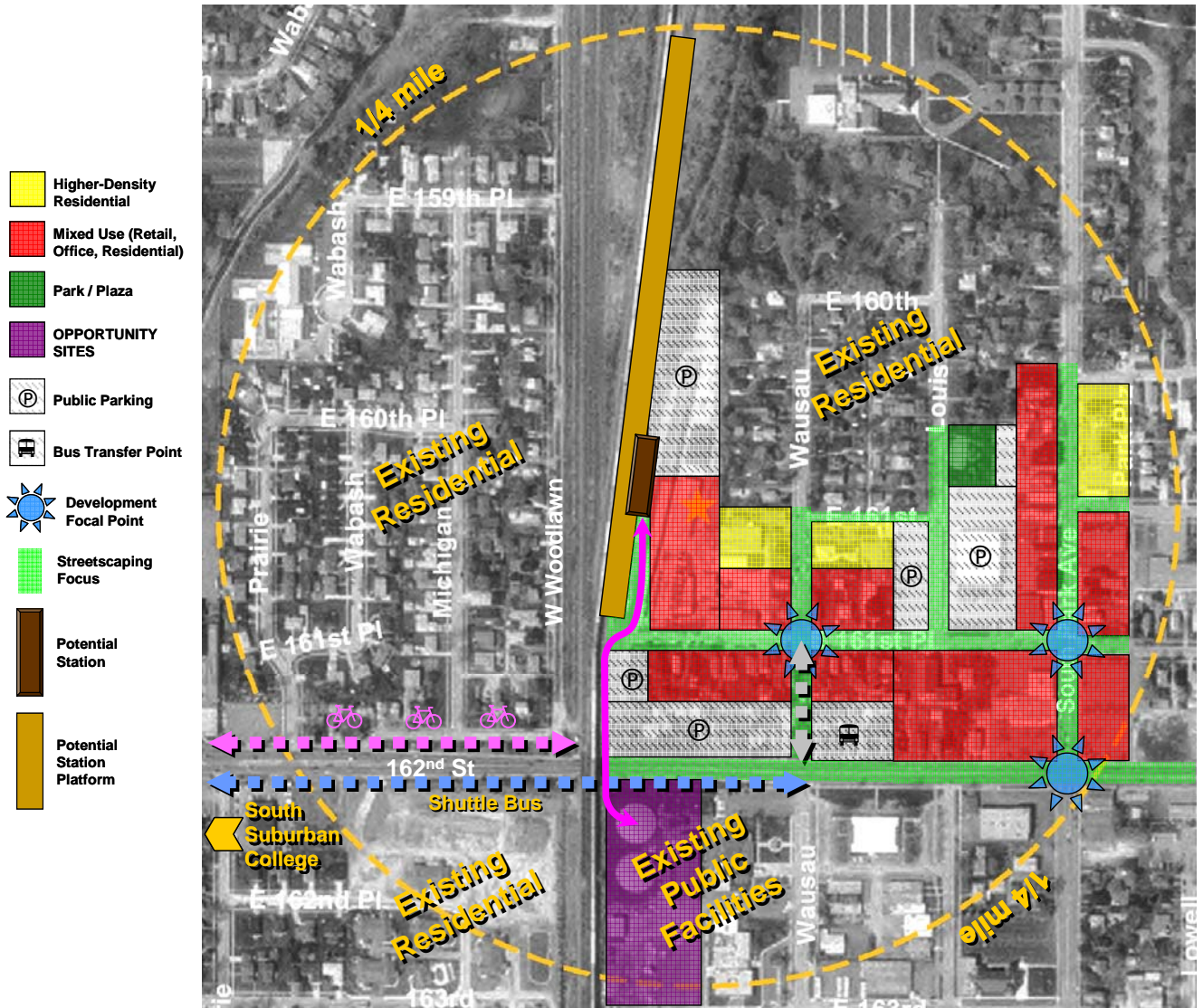




FIGURE 4.6:
 Village of Thornton Station Area Concept
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study

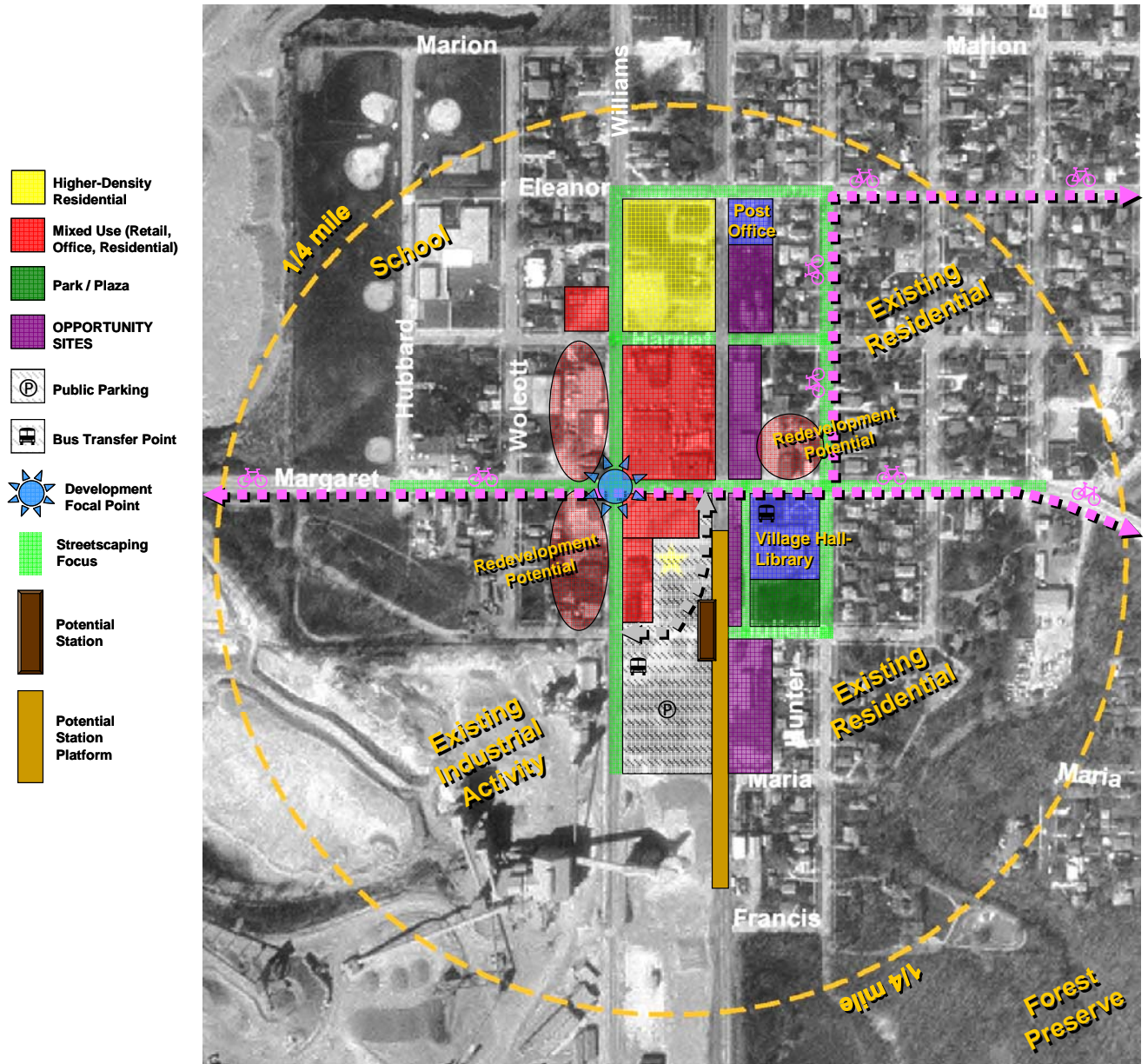




FIGURE 4.7:
 Village of Glenwood Station Area Concept
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study

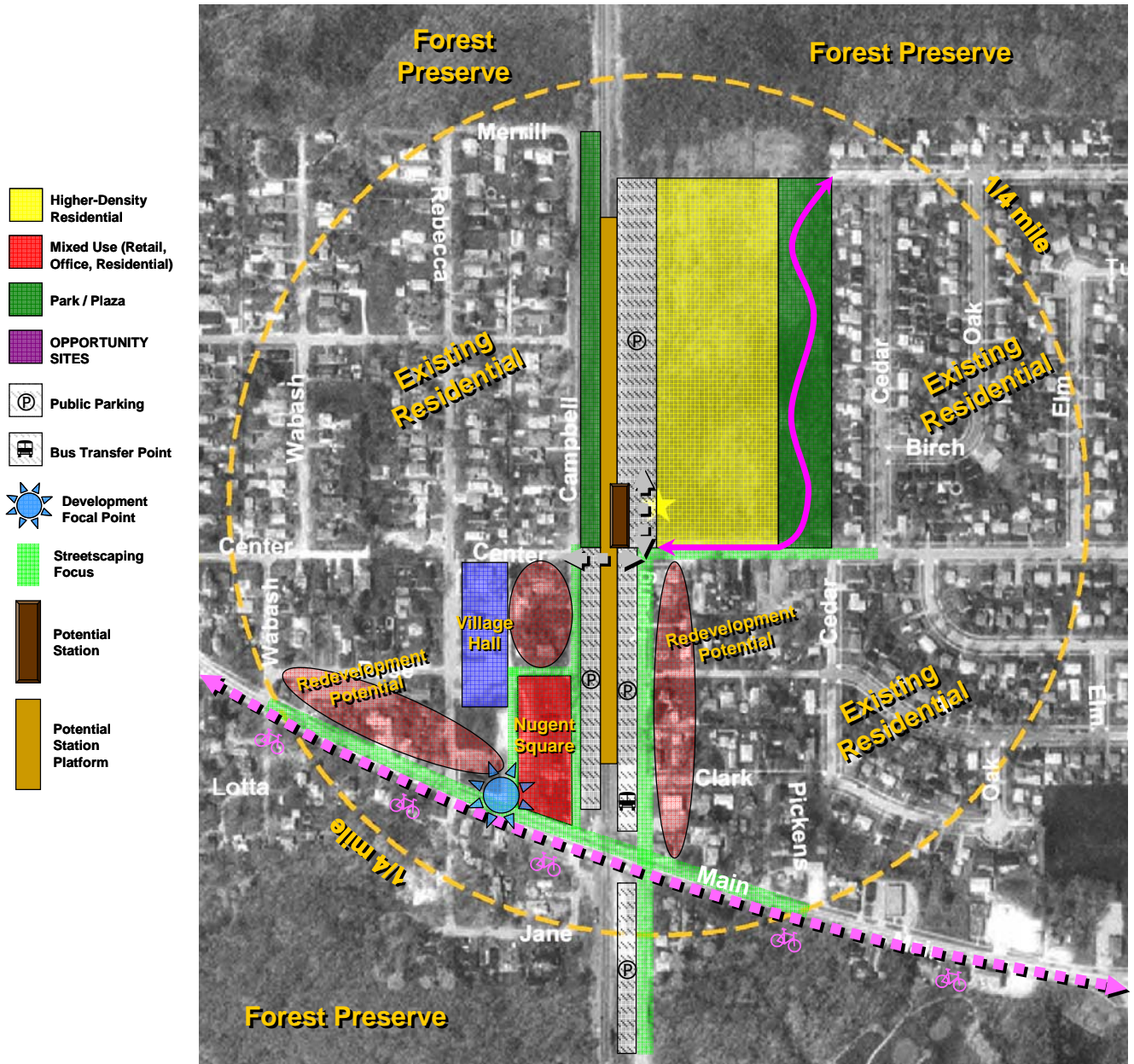




FIGURE 4.8:
City of Chicago Heights Station Area Concept
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

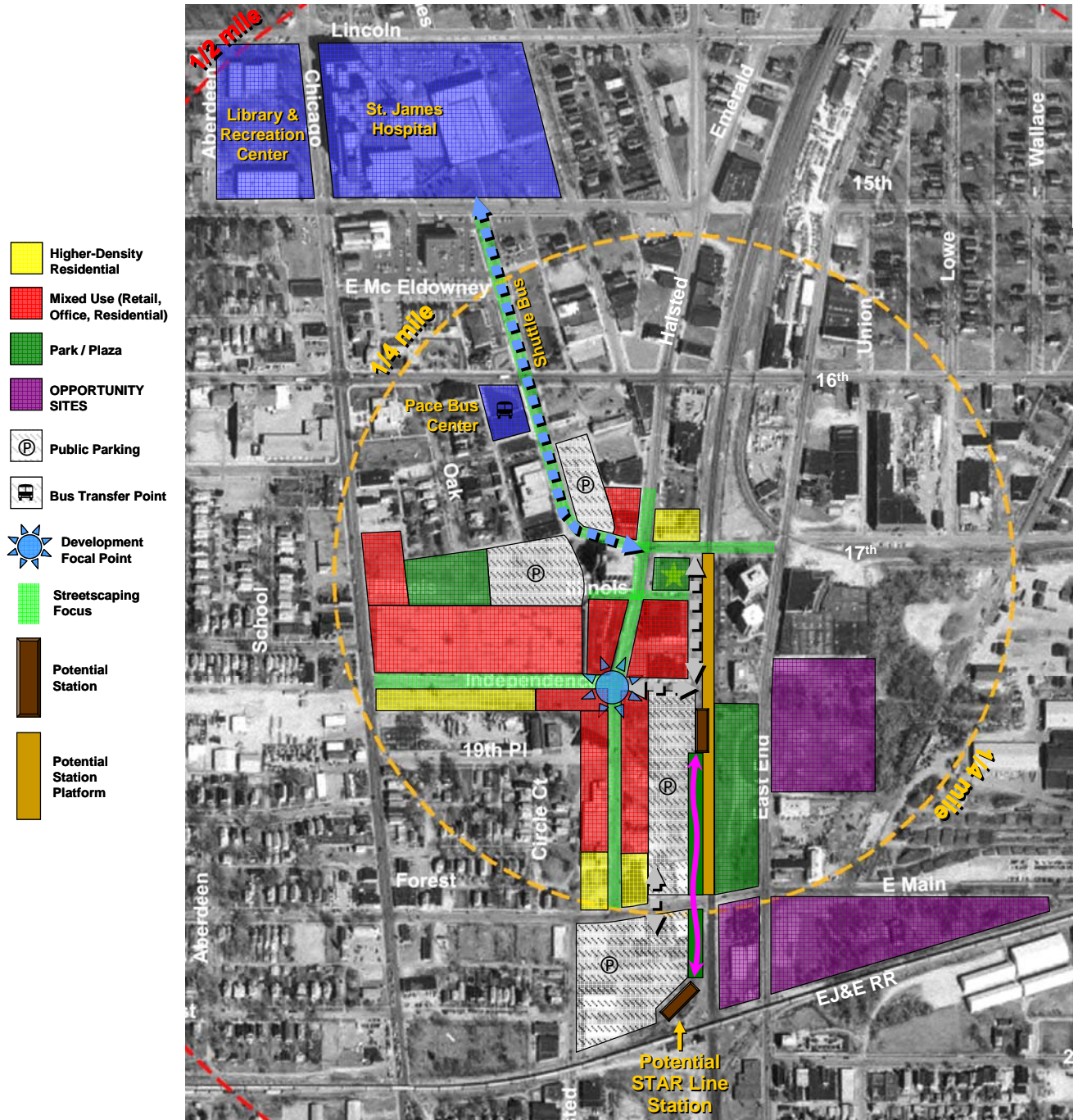




FIGURE 4.9:
Village of South Chicago Heights Station Area Concept
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

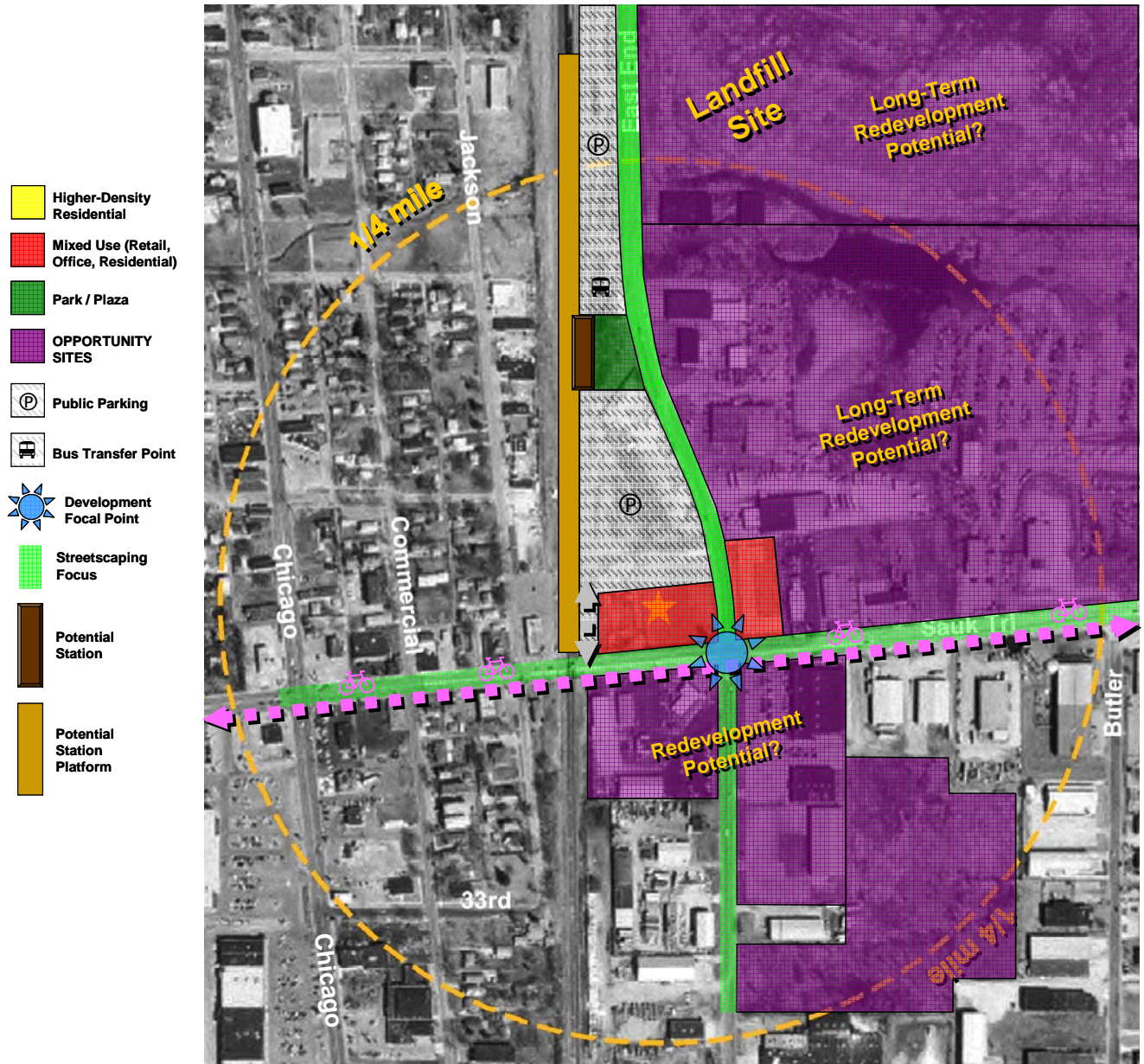




FIGURE 4.10:
Village of Steger Station Area Concept
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

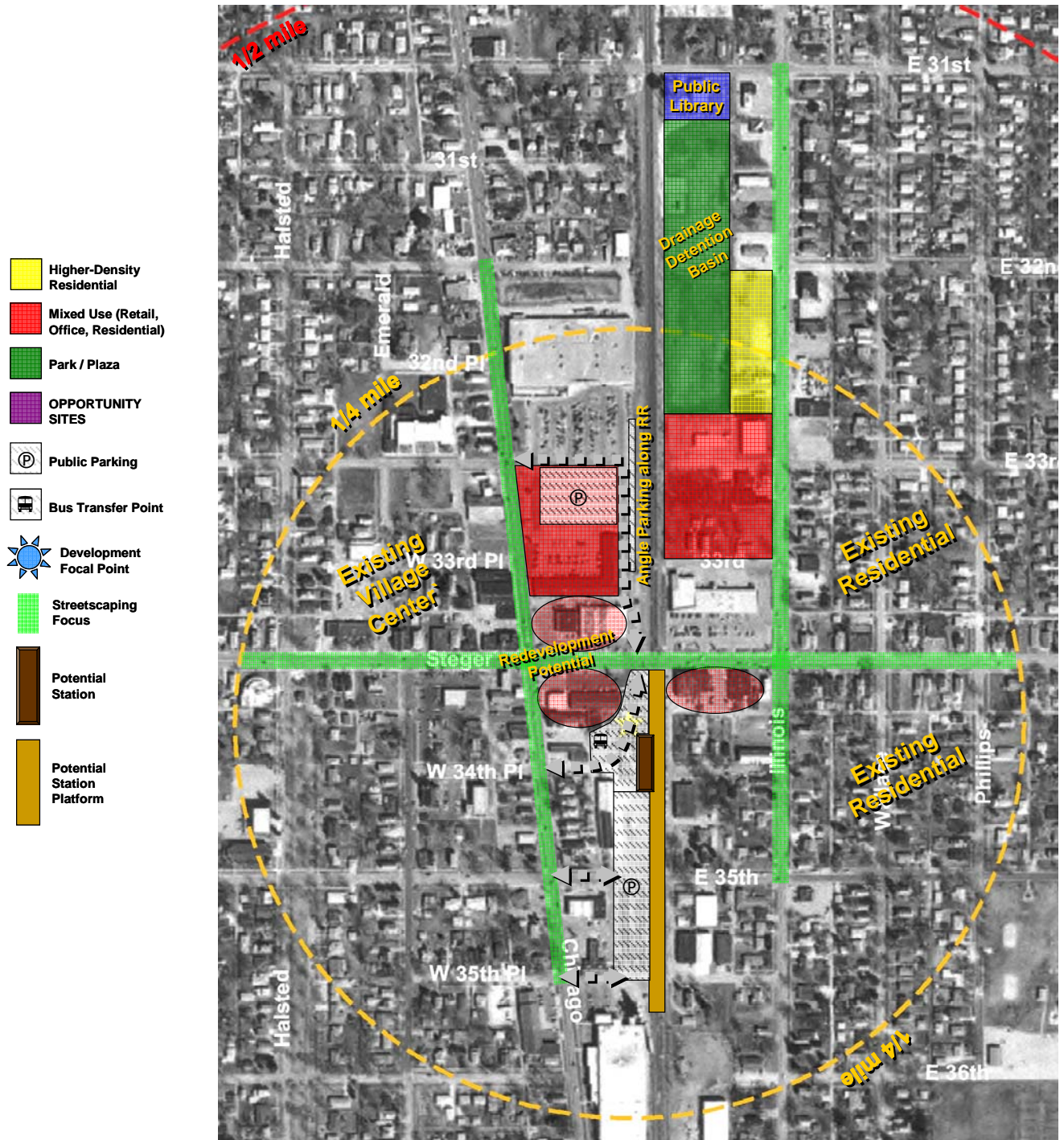




FIGURE 4.11:
Village of Crete Station Area Concept
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

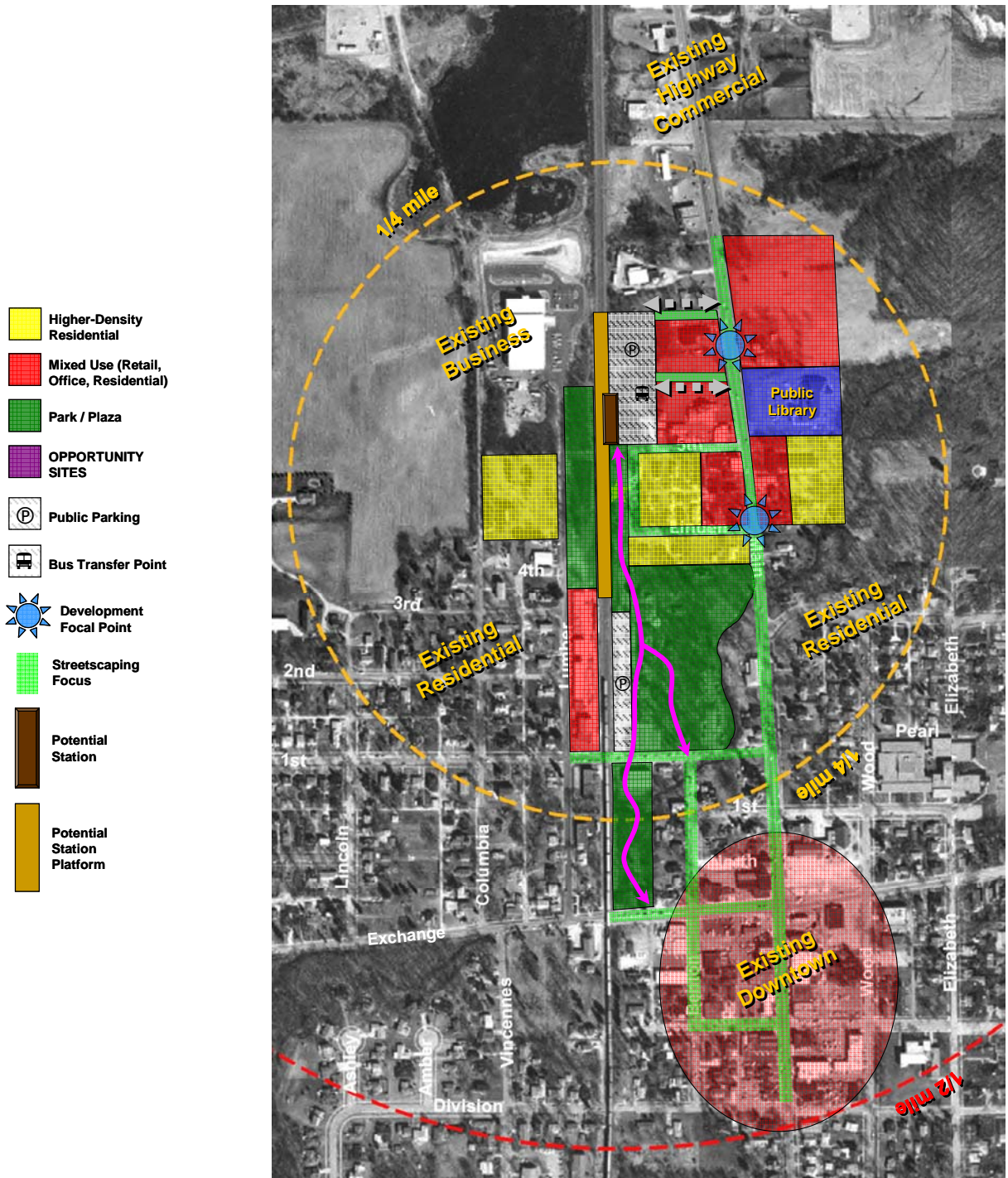
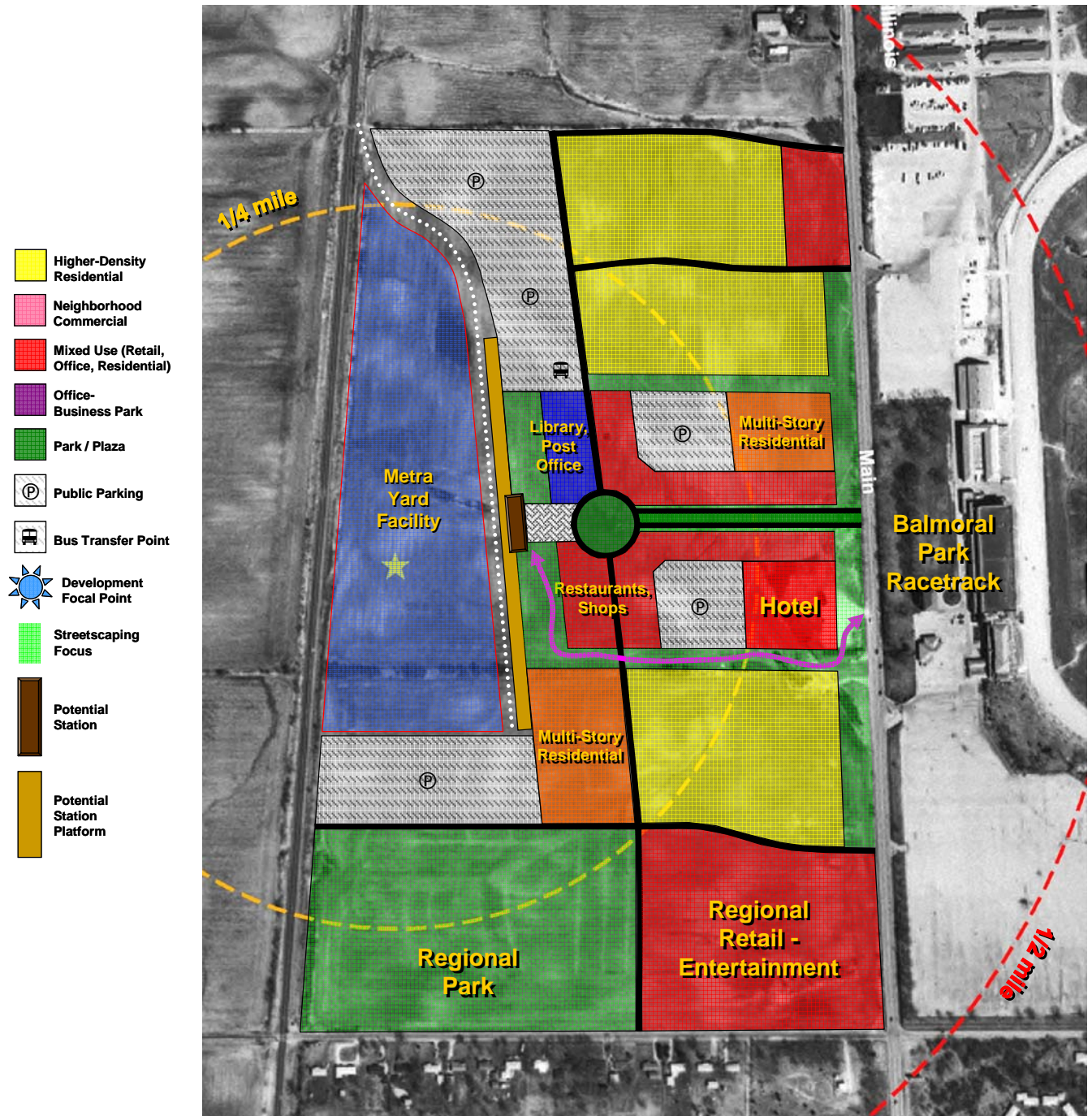




FIGURE 4.12:
Crete-Balmoral Station Area Concept
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study





TSD Opportunities

The findings in Chapter 2, Corridor Profile, confirm some very telling aspects of the South Suburbs that bode well for more transit-supportive development over time:

- ◆ Among the 34 communities in the South Suburban Corridor, the current rail ridership rate (5.95 percent) is already considerably above that for the entire 13-county Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA).
- ◆ The Metra Electric line, which is the closest existing line to the proposed SouthEast Service corridor, already has the second-highest ridership (41,085 weekday boardings in 2002) of all Metra’s commuter rail lines.
- ◆ South Suburban communities will continue to be dependent upon the greater numbers of jobs available in the Chicago Central Area and other employment concentrations to the north and west.

Growth and employment projections underscore the fact that many South Suburban residents will continue to travel relatively long distances to reach their existing jobs or to access other desired employment opportunities. Therefore, the prospect of convenient access to reliable, high-capacity transit should become an increasingly important factor in residential and business location decisions.

Most of the potential commuter rail stations in the South Suburban Corridor would be situated in older, established areas versus at “greenfield” sites. As a result, it is appropriate to think and talk in terms of a “Transit-Oriented Redevelopment,” or “TOR,” scenario versus more common “TOD” parlance. However, it should also be noted that redevelopment situations can involve various potential obstacles, including resistance from current property owners and residents/tenants and actual physical constraints (older undersized parcels, “brownfield” sites requiring environmental mitigation, etc.)

TSD Constraints

A review of several existing local zoning codes within the SES corridor confirmed another common constraint to more transit-supportive development, which is typical suburban zoning practices themselves. Below, as well as in **Table 4.1**, are sample findings from review of the existing South Holland, Glenwood, Steger and South Chicago Heights zoning codes.

The public policy statements under which the Village of Steger zoning regulations were adopted have a typical suburban focus—and fairly standard language, emphasizing limitations on intensity of use and undue concentration of structures (emphasis in italics added below):



- ◆ Encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the village;
- ◆ Regulate and *limit* the height and bulk of structures hereafter to be erected;
- ◆ Regulate the intensity of land use;
- ◆ Classify, regulate and *restrict* the location of trades and the location of structures designed for business, industrial, residential and other specified uses;
- ◆ Prohibit structures or uses incompatible with the character of such districts.

On the other hand, the Village of Steger zoning code is more explicit than others in suggesting some degree of flexibility in site or building design as would be beneficial for development in station areas. However, this flexibility can only be authorized through special procedures such as a variation authorized by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), a Special Use Variation acted upon by both the ZBA and Village Board, or the Planned Development (PD) process. The South Holland zoning code also includes Planned Development provisions, but this can be a time-consuming process for accommodating development types that should be desired near commuter rail stations.

As was noted by one village official, area municipalities value the Planned Development process as a way to carefully scrutinize proposed developments that depart from the norm for the particular community. The caution offered by the consultant team was that PD procedures should not be overused and themselves become the norm for developments that are trying to fit the transit-supportive mold. Instead, local zoning regulations should include standard provisions to accommodate station area and downtown development while not disrupting the more suburban-style zoning that is desired for the balance of the community.



**TABLE 4.1:
Potential Adjustments to Local Development Regulations**
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study







Permitted Uses	Mixed Use	Residential Variety
		
<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage uses that are appropriate for a pedestrian-focused station area. - Rule out “land-intensive” uses that will detract from a TSD scenario. 	<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow mixing of residential, retail, office, and public uses near stations. - Encourage upper-floor residential or office use above street-level retail. 	<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage various types and densities of residential use. - Allow mixing of different residential types near stations.
<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>Only one commercial zoning district is established, which is not sufficiently refined for TSD purposes and permits “land-intensive” uses such as: auto sales (open sales lots, auto service stations, contractors/ construction shops, drive-in restaurants, nurseries/greenhouses, research/testing labs, and wholesale.</p> <p>(Village of South Chicago Heights, Section 9.2 B-1 General Business District)</p>	<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>No dwelling units are permitted in either of Glenwood’s commercial districts, B1 or B2. In South Chicago Heights, no new residential is allowed in the sole commercial district, B-1 (although existing residential uses may continue). Even under Glenwood’s Planned Development (PD) provisions, before any B1 uses can be incorporated, the applicant must have “unified property ownership” of at least 40 acres, and then only 1/10 of the site can be devoted to non-residential use.</p>	<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>Under the South Holland zoning code, the only type of residential housing provided for Village-wide is detached single-family units. Besides not suiting TSD needs, this zoning restriction eliminates the potential for “life-cycle” housing opportunities to meet the needs of various types of households and age groups at different stages in life—particularly at times when they may be more likely to use mass transit.</p>
<p>Good Example:</p> <p>A good range of permitted uses is established through a B1 commercial district that is “...intended for application in the prime business centers and planned shopping centers characterized mainly by non-automotive oriented retail stores and shops.”</p> <p>(Village of Glenwood, Article VII Business Districts, Section 7.01 Preamble)</p>	<p>Good Example:</p> <p>Unfortunately, most local ordinances do not appear to offer a simple path to mixed-use development. The distinctive Nugent Square mixed-use development that is currently under construction near the potential SES station site in the Village of Glenwood had to go through a Planned Development (PD) review and approval process in 2003 before upper residential floors could be built over first-floor commercial use.</p>	<p>Good Example:</p> <p>In South Chicago Heights, the R-3 General Residential district allows single-family detached dwellings, two-family dwellings, multiple-family rowhouses, townhouses, and apartments. The Steger zoning code also has an R-3 General Residence District in which two-family dwellings, multi-family dwellings and apartments, and one-family row dwellings (up to six attached units) are all permitted.</p>



TABLE 4.1 (continued):
Potential Adjustments to Local Development Regulations
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

Density	Minimum Yards/Setbacks	Building Bulk
		
<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow greater density of development (dwellings per acre, square feet per acre) near stations given the limited amount of real estate within the 1/4-1/2 mile prime walking area. 	<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow zero setback of all development types where appropriate. - Consider using <i>maximum</i> setbacks to pull buildings to the street (and keep parking in rear). 	<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow downtown-style urban development where appropriate, with buildings close to the street, taller than elsewhere, and with no or minimal space between adjacent structures.
<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>The Village of Glenwood zoning code provides a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.5 for residential uses (total building floor space that is no more than 1.5 times the amount of site acreage). This limitation, combined with minimum lot sizes, building height restrictions, minimum building setbacks, and maximum lot coverage (or minimum “open space”) requirements constrains development densities.</p>	<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>The South Holland Local Business (LB) zoning district provides for many of the types of uses that would be welcome near a rail station (e.g., banks, dry cleaners, delis, bakeries, hair salons, drug stores, hardware stores, clothing stores, flower shops, etc.). However, a minimum 15-foot front yard is required in LB, which detracts from a downtown, storefront atmosphere. Similarly, Glenwood allows multiple-family dwellings through its R4 district, but a 30-foot minimum front yard is required.</p>	<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>As noted under Residential Variety, the Steger zoning code permits a range of dwelling types through the R-3 General Residence District. However, not more than 50 percent of a lot may be covered by buildings and structures. In South Chicago Heights, a minimum 5-foot side yard is required when a B-3 commercial use is adjacent to a residentially-zoned lot (plus fence and screening required in between). This would require some separation between adjacent buildings in a residential/non-residential mixed setting versus a true downtown feel.</p>
<p>Good Example:</p> <p>The South Chicago Heights zoning code, through an R-3 General Residential District, has a good approach to the minimum lot area required per dwelling unit as this requirement is tied to the size of the dwelling unit (number of bedrooms).</p>	<p>Good Example:</p> <p>The Village of Glenwood zoning code has no front yard requirement in the B1 and B2 commercial districts. Likewise, South Chicago Heights has no front yard requirement in its B-1 General Business district.</p>	<p>Good Example:</p> <p>Under the Village of Glenwood zoning code, no side yard is required where business structures are contiguous.</p>



**TABLE 4.1 (continued):
Potential Adjustments to Local Development Regulations**
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

Maximum Building Height	Joint/Shared Parking	Regulatory Incentives
		
<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow development to include taller structures where local firefighting capabilities are adequate and where the privacy of nearby single-family homes will not be impinged. 	<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow separate developments to share off-street parking where appropriate. - Minimize surface parking to maximize development potential near stations. 	<p>TSD Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use local regulations not only to limit development types and intensities but to achieve desired development outcomes through flexibility and targeted incentives (“carrot & stick”).
<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>Besides allowing only single-family detached dwellings, the Village of South Holland also has a two-story height limitation on residential structures. The Village of South Chicago Heights has typical suburban standards in not allowing commercial structures in its B-1 district to exceed 35 feet and residential structures—even in its R-3 district—to exceed 2-½ stories or 35 feet.</p>	<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>The Village of Glenwood zoning code provides for “collective provision” of off-street parking (i.e., common lot), but this still requires that the separate parking requirements for each involved use be satisfied. Actual sharing of the required spaces requires approval from the Village’s Zoning Board of Appeals.</p>	<p>Sample Concern in Current Zoning:</p> <p>The zoning codes reviewed did not appear to outline many explicit incentives. A typical zoning incentive provides a “density bonus” when a new development includes a specified percentage of “affordable” units, which can help address possible gentrification effects in a redevelopment scenario. Another example is to greatly reduce landscaping requirements for the off-street parking area if this parking is placed behind the structure.</p>
<p>Good Example:</p> <p>The Village of Glenwood allows a maximum 60-foot building height in its R4 residential district. Glenwood also has no specified maximum height in its B1 or B2 commercial districts, but a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.5 places some limitations on potential height on smaller sites.</p>	<p>Good Example:</p> <p>The Village of South Chicago Heights zoning code has the preferred language for true sharing of required parking: “... where peak parking requirements occur at distinctly different times of the day or at different times of the week as determined by the building inspector, joint parking facilities may be shared by two of more uses.”</p> <p>(Village of South Chicago Heights, Section 7.2 Off-Street Parking and Loading, Subsection 4 Multiple Uses)</p>	<p>Good Example:</p> <p>The Village of Glenwood provides for a density “premium” when required off-street parking in its R4 district is placed in a multi-level garage or in an enclosed garage under the residential structure. For zoning calculation purposes, the square footage of the lot is increased by half the floor area of the parking facility, thereby increasing the permitted number of dwellings and the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR).</p>



Implementation Considerations

As part of the Local Financing task of this study, a survey was conducted of the municipalities identified as likely passenger rail stops along the SES corridor. The survey included several questions related to the land use aspects of station area development. Key findings of the survey, which was completed by five of the eight targeted communities, included:

- ◆ Most of the responding communities believe their current land use policies allow for appropriate transit-supportive development near rail stations. However, they all expressed some willingness to consider potential zoning code changes that could result in a more transit-conducive environment. Some identified areas for change could include maximum building heights, restrictions on development density and intensity, and the allowance of multi-family and/or mixed-use development in what are otherwise suburban communities zoned primarily for single-family detached housing.
- ◆ Several responding communities have already begun acquiring property in their station areas to set the stage for transit-supportive development activity. In most cases the acquired parcels currently contain other uses, implying a redevelopment scenario. Most respondents also expressed interest in purchasing additional property as it becomes available.



Nearly all of the responding communities already have Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts—and those that do not would like to establish one. Among those that do, the proposed station site falls in or adjacent to one of their existing TIF districts. A potential “Station Area” zoning district or zoning overlay

could be closely coordinated with TIF district boundaries so that both the land use and financing aspects of desired economic development near rail stations can be managed.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The following images illustrate station area development outcomes that South Suburban communities should try to emulate, where and when appropriate.



Attached single-family housing (left) helps to increase development density near transit stations while maintaining a homeownership environment. A variety of street-level activity, including retail storefronts and eating establishments, helps to make a station area an inviting destination and place to live and work.



Opportunities to mix ground-level retail with upper-floor office space or residential units (left) should be afforded through flexible zoning regulations and developer recruitment efforts. Well-designed public spaces and civic amenities are an essential “finishing touch” for an appealing and memorable station area experience.

Achieving the desired development mix and “critical mass” near rail stations will certainly require complementary public investment in infrastructure and amenities, but local governments will also need to consider:

- ◆ Adjusting local zoning codes to make transit-supportive development the rule in station areas rather than an exception to the rule that must be approved through special review and permitting procedures (e.g., Planned Development process, variances, etc.). As part of this process, each locality must determine its “comfort level” in potentially establishing new regulatory



thresholds near stations for maximum building heights; building bulk, separation and setbacks; development density and intensity; and so on.

- ◆ Establishing a special zoning overlay district over the municipality's existing base zoning map to encompass the prime development/redevelopment area around proposed stations, where higher development densities, greater mixing of uses, or other desired elements would be permitted by right and encouraged. This overlay district could easily be drawn to coincide with established Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district boundaries for the same approximate target area. The overlay approach would be an effective way to enact the types of regulatory flexibility described in Table 4.1 without disrupting existing, community-wide zoning practices.
- ◆ Adopting design standards or guidelines for station areas to ensure that the style and appearance of new development and redevelopment is in keeping with local tastes and preferences and/or established architectural approaches in the vicinity (in the case of the Crete-Balmoral station area, this could include capturing the same design themes and touches evident in the Balmoral Park structures and grounds).
- ◆ Emulating the cooperative, corridor-wide spirit developed through the Local Financing component of this study by supporting the drafting of "model" transit-supportive zoning provisions that all corridor communities could consider for adoption. This would help to avoid proliferation of wide-ranging and possibly conflicting requirements between communities that could be a distraction in ongoing South Suburban economic development efforts.
- ◆ Pursuing early land assembly efforts, through methodical, strategic property purchases, to gain maximum local control of the station area development situation; to prevent interim, piecemeal development that is not in keeping with the longer-term vision for the area; to package larger sites as a development enticement and to encourage a master-planned approach to new projects; to reserve key sites for commuter and public parking in support of nearby development; and, to set the stage for potential public-private "joint development" projects that could include financing, design, construction, maintenance and creative multi-purpose use of the actual station building.
- ◆ Preparing to offer some form of transition or relocation assistance (or possibly short-term tax relief) to property owners and/or business establishments that will be displaced or otherwise impacted by the new station area development scenario, which often comes in the form of rising property values and real estate demand.



Introduction

Large transit capital investment projects in Illinois, like the proposed Metra SouthEast Service (SES) Corridor, compete for limited funding at the state and federal levels. Thus, it is necessary for local project advocates to consider local sources of funding that can be dedicated to both the cost of the project's construction and future operation and maintenance. A commitment of local financial support not only helps to cover budget gaps, but also makes a stronger case for state and federal funding commitments. In a competition for limited funding, state and federal grant managers and legislators are more likely to be inclined to assist projects that have a local financial commitment than those that do not. This chapter will explain the local financing challenge, provide a menu of options for addressing the challenge, provide the results of a municipal survey on the matter, and make conclusions and recommendations.

Project Budget and Funding Strategy

Metra is the project sponsor for the development of the SouthEast Service. It will be Metra's responsibility to develop the scope of the project, create an achievable financial plan, and meet all federal and state requirements to accomplish its implementation. The SES communities should view Metra as their leader and partner in making the service a reality.

In 2002, Metra estimated that the SES capital budget for construction would be approximately \$524.3 million, as detailed in **Table 5.1**.

The environment for funding rail transit projects of this magnitude is very competitive nationally and within the State of Illinois. At the end of 2003, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reported 64 active projects seeking federal funding and, based on preliminary transit program reauthorization legislation, approximately 140 projects in planning stages. In Illinois alone, there are currently six active projects utilizing federal and state funding, 29 proposed future projects in the Chicago region, and at least three proposed downstate projects. The funding for these projects is very limited. Sponsors, such as Metra, need to consider all possible funding sources at the federal, state, and local levels to advance their projects.

At the federal level, the FTA's New Start Program is specifically dedicated to funding new transit rail or other new fixed guide way systems or extensions. Metra is seeking from Congress an SES project authorization to be eligible for federal New Start Program appropriations in the future.

Once a project is authorized by Congress, the sponsor can seek an allocation of federal New Start funding. To do so, the project sponsor must seek an



appropriation earmark from the congressional appropriations committees. Sponsorship by a member(s) of the state congressional delegation is necessary. In addition, due to the great demand for earmarks, the appropriation committees consider whether a project is recommended for funding by the FTA. FTA bases its recommendation on how well the project scores on the New Start Program criteria and its readiness to proceed. The key New Start criteria are finance, land use, and cost effectiveness.

TABLE 5.1:
SouthEast Service Preliminary Capital Cost
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

Capital Improvement	Estimated Cost (2002 dollars)
Track Work	\$46,875,000
Bridges and Structures	146,100,000
Grade Crossings	31,770,000
Signals and Interlocking	57,000,000
Stations, Coach Yards, Midday Facility	47,300,000
Rolling Stock	57,100,000
Engineering, Design, Management, and Contingency	138,198,900
TOTAL	\$524,343,900

SOURCE: Metra

The finance criterion requires a project to have a stable and dependable state and local financial plan for matching the requested New Start funding. In recent years, the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee has required that the New Start project share not exceed 60 percent of the total capital cost. Nationally projects have averaged a 50 percent New Start share.

The land use criterion requires that a project give evidence that it is complemented by dense land use conditions and/or local commitments to implement transit-supportive land use plans.



The cost effectiveness rating is determined by project cost, projected ridership, and travel time-saving to new and existing riders. To achieve a good score, a project needs to maximize ridership and travel time-savings and minimize cost.

Each project's FTA evaluation and rating is compared to all other projects requesting New Start funding. Projects that rank the highest and are deemed ready to proceed will receive FTA's recommendation for funding. Without that recommendation, a project's congressional sponsorship will have greater difficulty in making the case for an appropriation earmark.

State funding for New Start projects typically comes from the state transit bond program. That program is funded by general revenues, as are all other state transit grants. The State's general revenues are seriously deficient. Furthermore, the multi-year funding of the state transit bond program, as well as the highway bond program, enacted in the Illinois FIRST legislation in 1999, is near completion. A new multi-year highway and transit initiative must be considered eventually. However, the serious ongoing difficulties of the state budget and the need for new transportation revenues to back a new bond program, possibly from a gas tax increase, may delay such action for a few years. When such an initiative is proposed, there will be many Illinois rail transit expansion projects, some similar to and some larger than SES, seeking a share of the new state transit program.

Given the competition for both federal New Start and state transit funds, it is prudent to assume that the project will require some local source of capital assistance and eventually operating assistance when service is initiated. Even under the most optimistic overall funding scenario, local funding is likely to be necessary. In any case, a strong local funding commitment for both capital and operating costs could help to move the project up in priority vis-à-vis other projects. Both Congress and the Illinois General Assembly—and federal and state grant makers—will be more receptive to pledging funds to a project that has such a local commitment.

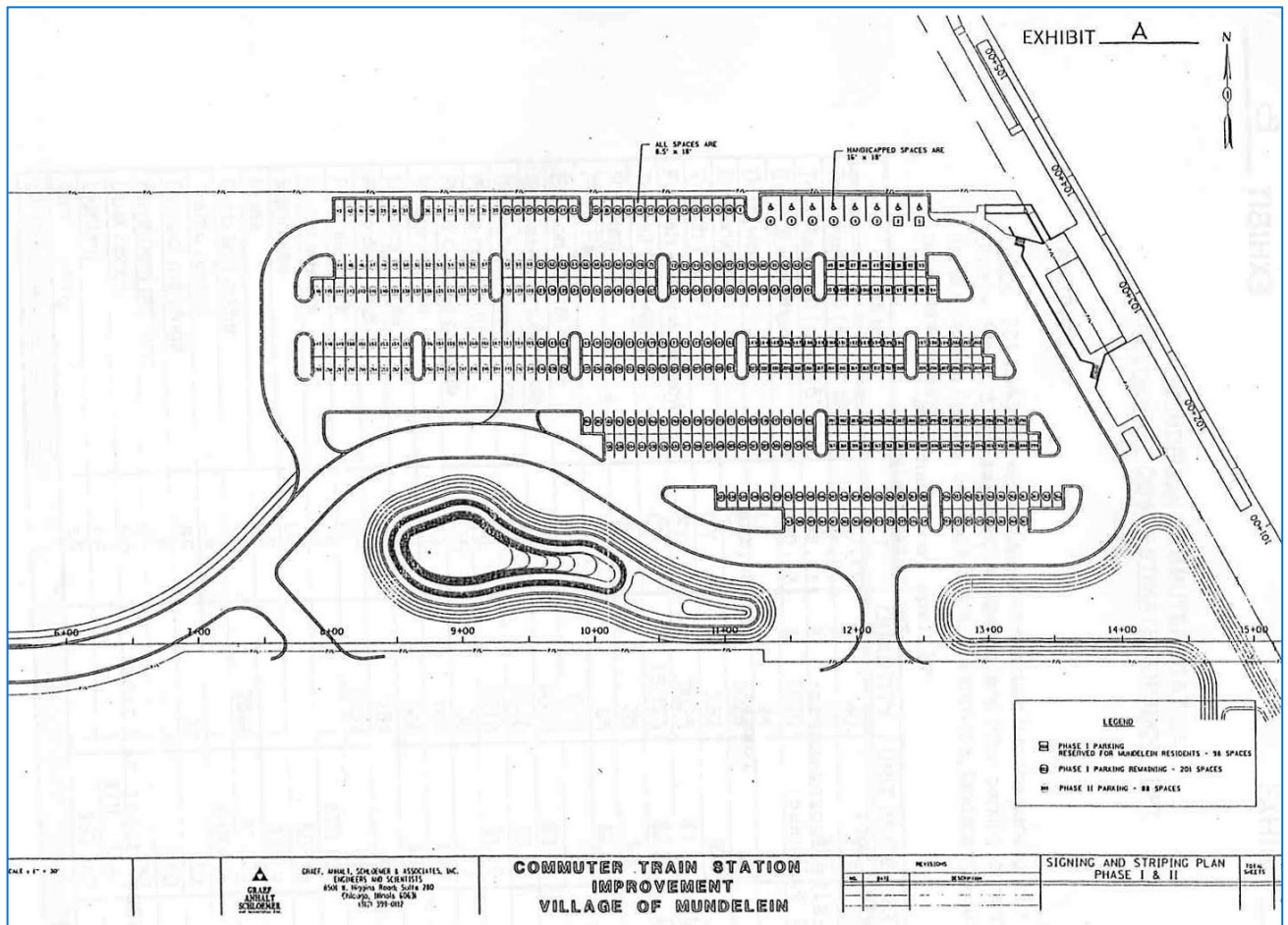
Local funding for capital projects typically comes through the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the sponsoring service board, in this case Metra. RTA has very limited discretionary funding to commit to expansion projects. A current shortfall in operating assistance and an over \$1 billion backlog of capital maintenance projects requires RTA to apportion carefully its discretionary dollars to give priority to preserving existing service. Metra, while it is committed to the SES project, has very limited funding as well and must in the future advocate for new sources of construction funding from the state and federal governments. There is also a great demand on Metra to expand its service in numerous corridors within the region and to neighboring regions. In recognition of this situation, communities that desire an extension of service are required by Metra to make a contribution to a project's construction and operation.



Local Responsibility for Station Area Costs

Essentially, Metra requires communities with planned Metra stations to pay for most of the station area costs. A station area includes everything supporting the use of the station other than the platform and right-of-way improvements. An example of a station area is depicted by the Mundelein schematic in **Figure 5.1**.

FIGURE 5.1:
Village of Mundelein Station Area Example
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study





Specifically, municipalities must finance the following station area elements:

- ◆ Station house
- ◆ Parking area or facility
- ◆ Access infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, bike paths)
- ◆ Landscaping
- ◆ Property acquisition
- ◆ Parking fee collection system
- ◆ Signage
- ◆ Drainage
- ◆ Parking lighting
- ◆ Operation and maintenance

Metra retains the responsibility to pay for the following station area elements:

- ◆ Platform
- ◆ Platform lighting
- ◆ Right-of-way pedestrian crosswalks
- ◆ Some right-of-way protection
- ◆ Grade crossing gates, if related to the project

The municipal financial commitment is memorialized in a station area development agreement, usually between Metra and each community with a planned station site. The agreement provides a detailed scope of responsibilities for each community. Metra will work closely with each community to identify and provide support to obtain sources of funding to fulfill their commitment.

Station Examples

The station area costs could range between basic (\$1.5-2 million), mid-level (\$2.0-3.5 million) and high-end (\$3.5-\$5 million or more). Exact station area costs for each community cannot be determined until there is an estimate of the ridership demand for each station, as conducted in the next phase of the process, namely “Alternatives Analysis.” That will determine the minimum size of the parking and station house elements necessary to serve the expected demand. However, for the purposes of estimating the local financial commitment, it is reasonable to assume that station area costs for each community will be in the mid-level range. Examples of the three levels of stations are shown in **Figure 5.2**.



FIGURE 5.2:
Station Examples
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study



BASIC STATION: Prairie Crossing



MID-LEVEL STATION: Mundelein



FIGURE 5.2 (continued):
Station Examples
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study



HIGH-END STATION: Tinley Park



Station Area Funding Options



Throughout Metra's service area, communities have dipped into numerous funding sources to finance the construction of new or reconstruction of old stations.

A. Municipal General Revenue

Many Chicago area communities have actually utilized their municipal general revenue resources to provide at least part of the funding for their station. The following is a list of municipal funding sources:

- ◆ Property tax
- ◆ Sales tax
- ◆ Utility tax
- ◆ Cigarette tax
- ◆ Motor fuel tax
- ◆ Hotel/motel tax
- ◆ Food and beverage tax
- ◆ Auto rental tax
- ◆ Real estate transfer tax
- ◆ Licenses and permits
- ◆ Fines and penalties
- ◆ Intergovernmental revenue
- ◆ Revenue from services
- ◆ Investment earnings and revenue from debt

There are precedents around the nation for the use of any of these sources of funding by a municipality to subsidize transit construction and operations.

B. Parking Revenue

Municipalities, which have paid for the station area parking, control the fees imposed on users of the parking and the revenue generated thereby. While parking revenue generally will not be a sufficient revenue stream to finance the station area capital costs, it can be a reasonably reliable source to assist in paying for the station's operation costs.



C. Station Concession Fees

Similar to the station parking situation, municipalities that have paid for the construction of the station house or depot will control the arrangements therein for concessions, such as a coffee shop. Future concession fees are unlikely to be sufficient to finance station construction but can be an important source of revenue for operating expenses.

D. Public Contributions

A minor, though in some cases not an insignificant, source of funding for station construction are campaigns to generate public contributions (e.g., citizens, businesses or organizations buy a sidewalk brick paver for \$300).

E. Joint Development

There are numerous instances in which private developers have joined with municipalities to pay for stations where both the developers and municipalities have realized benefits. A notable example is the new Willow Springs station where a developer paid for the total relocation of the station to a site adjacent to his residential development project. **Appendix 5A** at the end of this chapter provides a partial list of Chicago area developers who are interested in placing their developments in, next to, or near new Metra stations.

F. Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) districts can be used to finance station areas under the right circumstances. For example, Palatine used its downtown TIF district to finance the construction of a parking deck, which in part serves its new Metra station. TIFs are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

G. Federal STP Funds

Federal Highway Administration Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are in part suballocated directly to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The MPO for the Chicago region is the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS). CATS allocates STP funds between the City of Chicago and the suburbs. Each suburban CATS Council of Mayors receives an allocation based on its population. Though STP funds come from a federal highway program, they can be used for transit projects, such as the SouthEast Service. For example, Lake County municipalities used STP funds to construct stations and parking for the North Central service. The northwest suburbs have made a similar commitment to use STP funds for the STAR Line stations in their communities.

H. CMAQ Funds

Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds are allocated to each metropolitan region not meeting National Air Quality Standards. Chicago is one such region. Most



transit projects are eligible for CMAQ funding. CATS manages the distribution of CMAQ funds through a competitive process involving an evaluation of a project's clean air benefits. Metra will assist communities in making the case for CMAQ funding. CMAQ was an important source of funding for stations on the North Central Line.

I. Any other Federal or State Funds not Budgeted by Metra

In addition to STP and CMAQ funds, any other federal or state funds not budgeted by Metra for its capital needs may be used to fund the municipal station area responsibility. Examples of other funding sources include the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Operation Green Light Program, a small program that funds transit projects that reduce urban congestion, and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). To the extent it is able; Metra will assist communities in tapping such funding sources for the project.

Chicago Region Station Area Financing Strategies

Presented in **Table 5.2** are examples of how municipalities within the region have used the various sources of funding to meet their station area obligations.

Northwest Council of Mayors Model

The approach used by the Northwest Council of Mayors (NCM) to fund their planned STAR Line stations may provide a good model for the SES communities to follow. The NCM determined that “the Metra STAR Line is the best alternative for improving mobility throughout the region,” thus meriting their dedication of STP funds to the project. (The Northwest Council of Mayors resolution making the STP commitment is included in **Appendix 5B** at the end of this chapter.) They will also be seeking CMAQ funds for the project. NCM assumed that their station area costs would be about five percent of the total capital construction for the entire project. Thus, applying the Northwest Corridor approach to the SES situation could result in the following scenario:

- ◆ \$26 million for Station Area Costs (five percent of the total SES capital budget)
- ◆ 9 Stations: \$2.9 million per station
- ◆ STP Funds: \$0.75 million per station
- ◆ CMAQ Funds: \$0.75 million per station
- ◆ Remainder: \$1.4 million per station
- ◆ Other Options: Operation Green Light (IDOT), TIF Financing, Joint Development, Parking and Concession Fees, etc.



TABLE 5.2:
Examples of Local Financing Strategies
 South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
 Land Use and Local Financing Study

Station Area	Funding Source	Funding Amount (approximate)
Buffalo Grove	General Obligation Bonds	\$1,770,000
	Operation Green Light (State of Illinois)	\$181,000
	Metra Reimbursement Agreement (Crossing Upgrade)	\$18,000
	Pace Reimbursement	\$17,000
	Other Sources	\$163,000
	Total	\$2,149,000
Mundelein	CMAQ	\$414,000
	Operation Green Light (State of Illinois)	\$300,000
	Municipal Transportation Fund	\$1,600,000
	Municipal General Fund	\$46,000
	Total	\$2,360,000
Rosemont	Station	Not Available
	Metra Grant for Basic Station	NA
	Possible TIF Financing for Enhanced Amenities	NA
	Parking	NA
	Financing Through General Fund	NA
	Parking Fees Expected to Reimburse General Fund	NA
Tinley Park	Metra Grant	\$2,000,000+
	Operation Green Light (State of Illinois)	\$1,900,000
	Village of Tinley Park General Funds	
	Station Cost	\$600,000
	Land Acquisition and Relocation of Business	\$500,000
Total	\$5,000,000+	
Willow Springs	Replacement Station	Not Available
	Master Developer will pay for Station	NA
	Amenities	NA
	Metra - for Station Amenities (landscaping)	\$70,000
	Access	NA
TIF financing for Street Access Infrastructure	NA	
STAR Line	STP funds	\$5-8 million
	CMAQ funds	\$1,000,000
	To Be Determined	\$8-12 million



Tax Increment Financing

TIF is a powerful economic development tool in Illinois, offering a means of funding station area costs. Under the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1, *et seq.* (TIF Act), a community may create a TIF district. The assessed value for the property in that district is calculated prior to the development. For the next 23 years, taxing districts in the community will receive real estate taxes from those properties based upon the pre-development assessed value. The increased tax revenues generated by the development of the property are placed in a segregated fund for use by the municipality to pay for certain costs to redevelop the property. The municipality pays these development costs either “up front,” by issuing bonds secured by the increment to raise a sum of money, or through a “pay as you go” structure, by paying costs when sufficient increment accumulates to do so.

Under the TIF Act, TIF may be used for sites that qualify as a “blighted area,” “conservation area,” “industrial park conservation area,” or a combination of those areas. Factors in making this determination include dilapidation, obsolescence, deterioration, deleterious land use or layout, and lack of community planning. A site must be at least 1.5 acres in size to be TIF-eligible. The municipality also must determine that the area would not be developed without the establishment of a TIF district.

The TIF Act lists numerous development costs for which TIF funds can be used. Just as one example, TIF money could be used to buy and prepare land for a station, build a parking lot to serve the station, and, possibly, to build a depot. Following is a list of potentially relevant transit station development costs for which TIF financing is allowed.

1. Studies, plans, marketing, professional fees.
2. Site assembly, including land acquisition, clearing and grading; building demolition; site improvements serving as an environmental barrier (e.g. parking lots); and site preparation.
3. Building renovation.
4. Construction of public works (and in very limited circumstances, new public buildings including, arguably, depots).
5. Job training and retraining.
6. Payment in lieu of taxes.
7. Financing costs.
8. Capital costs incurred by taxing districts.
9. Certain of the developer’s interest costs.



Multi-Jurisdictional Local Funding Mechanisms

Under state law, intergovernmental agreements, special service areas, and mass transit districts offer options for funding station area costs in a cooperative manner.

Intergovernmental Agreements

Authorized by Section 10 of Article VII of the Illinois Constitution, and by the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, 5 ILCS 220/1, *et seq.*, intergovernmental agreements are essentially contracts between or among municipalities, school districts, counties, states, individuals, associations, and/or corporations. Under the Illinois Constitution, these public bodies may contract to “obtain or share services and to exercise, combine, or transfer any power or function” provided it is not prohibited by law. To accomplish intergovernmental purposes, parties to the contract may share revenues, funding costs, services, and powers to issue debt.

The ability to cooperate in this way offers a means for communities along the rail corridor to cooperate in planning, financing, and building stations and other rail corridor infrastructure. Thus, pooling efforts and resources to create new stations, communities can achieve together what would be difficult to accomplish individually.

Special Service Areas

The Special Service Area Tax Law, 35 ILCS 200/27-5, *et seq.*, allows municipalities or counties to create special service areas for the provision of special services within prescribed boundaries. A municipality can create such an area within its own borders, or, pursuant to an intergovernmental agreement, can work cooperatively with other municipalities or a county or counties to create a larger special service area. The law is quite broad, defining “special services” as all services pertaining to a county’s or municipality’s government and affairs.

The authorities of the municipality or county forming the special service area are charged with its governance, and have the power to impose sales, property or other taxes to pay for the services in the special service area. Additionally, the authorities can issue bonds to raise money for projects within the area; the bonds are to be backed by the full faith and credit of the area and by a property tax, in addition to any other taxes that are imposed. A potential constraint, however, is that 51 percent of the voters within the special service area can prevent its creation, or the levying of taxes or the issuing of bonds for the special service area, if they file objection petitions.

Because “special services” are defined quite broadly, communities along the proposed rail corridor could create one or more special service areas to provide funds for station area costs.



Mass Transit Districts

Under the Illinois Mass Transit Act, 70 ILCS 3610/1, *et seq.*, municipalities or counties may form mass transit districts to acquire and operate mass transit systems. Specifically, such districts are empowered to acquire property, transport passengers on scheduled routes, contract with any legal or natural person for any and all purposes of the district, and establish, alter, and discontinue transportation routes. They may also sue and be sued, make and execute loans, invest funds, apply for and use grants, and borrow money from the federal government or any other public or private source. Finally, they may levy property taxes within the district, at a rate of up to 0.25 percent of the assessed value of property, if voters by referendum approve the levy.

There currently exists a mass transit district in the south suburbs: the South Suburban Mass Transit District (District) was organized in 1969 and includes 14 communities. It currently leases 135 electric train-cars to Metra. When that lease terminates at the end of 2004, those cars will become the property of Metra.

The District operates the University Park parking facility, and manages the parking facility and bus turnaround at the 211th Street Metra Station. It also owns the track structure, signals, and related equipment between the Richton Park station and the University Park station. It owns the University Park train station, parking facility, and electrical sub-station.

There are more communities in the District than in the proposed rail corridor, but the District offers an example of how corridor communities could, through intergovernmental cooperation, form a mass transit district as a means of organizing and funding station area and other costs of the corridor.

Financing Input from Corridor Communities

Meeting of Community Representatives

Preliminary information and findings compiled for this study were presented to a meeting of SES communities on May 26, 2004. Representatives from the villages of South Holland, Thornton, South Chicago Heights, Steger, and Crete were present. The discussion revealed the following points:

- ◆ There is precedent for using CMAQ and STP funds in the south suburbs for transit projects.
- ◆ Many of the villages own property that can be contributed to the project for the location of SES stations.



- ◆ There is interest in pursuing private entity contributions to the station area costs. An example cited is Balmoral Park Race Track, which may be interested in making a donation.
- ◆ Similarly positive comment was made regarding joint development initiatives.
- ◆ None of the village representatives felt the use of local property tax or sales tax is a viable option.
- ◆ TIF financing should be considered.
- ◆ There is a long lead-time before actual construction begins on the project. Communities should start to reserve funds now, incrementally each year, to pay for their SES station development.
- ◆ One idea presented is to build a parking lot first that could generate revenue to build the station later. A related approach is to rent off-peak parking space for use by private development. It was cautioned that parking lots usually do not produce sufficient revenues for station construction or expansions. Instead, in the municipal station arrangements with Metra, parking fees are used to defray municipal costs associated with station and parking operations.
- ◆ Another suggestion was to put a surcharge on Metra tickets, presumably to retire the debt for the station construction. However, Metra staff advised this would not be a good idea for initiating a new service, especially since SES would be competing to some extent with an established nearby line (Metra Electric) that provides more service than a start-up line and at a lower fare if SES were to have a surcharge.
- ◆ One strategy is to start with the most basic station, e.g., a trailer depot, and then gradually improve after the line opens for service. In one case on the Milwaukee North Line, a developer subsequently paid for an upgraded station. Communities should be aware, however, that Metra will require the station and parking to be built in order to accommodate initial ridership as well as future ridership growth for a number of years into the future, possibly as far as 2030, the planning horizon for the region's long range transportation plan.
- ◆ There was tentative consensus that a corridor wide approach to assist all communities with their station area costs should be considered. Efficiencies in design and construction should be investigated through this approach to keep station area costs down. One idea was to have the corridor guarantee each community sufficient local funding for a basic size station to meet its projected ridership demand. Then each community



could decide whether to spend additional resources it may have to expand the scope to include other desirable amenities.

- ◆ There also seemed to be consensus on the use of STP and CMAQ funds. The SSMMA Transportation Committee should consider setting aside some STP funds in the future for this purpose. Furthermore, communities should plan to submit their stations for CMAQ funding.

Survey of Corridor Communities

To determine local government attitudes regarding municipal financing responsibility and options, a SouthEast Commuter Rail Service Local Financing Survey was issued to each of the nine local communities identified as likely passenger rail station stops along the proposed SES corridor. Of these locations, five valid survey responses were submitted. The following paragraphs summarize the survey responses, categorized by the survey's primary themes:

Corridor-Wide Coordination

From each of the respondents, there is a general attitude that corridor-wide finance coordination would be a desirable and effective way to provide base funding for transit station installation. Under this structure, a base funding source would provide an equal level of funding to ensure that each community has at least a basic transit facility. In addition to the base funding, each community could add local funding to enhance the station and provide additional amenities or a specific local character.

Additionally, each respondent supports the use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for the SouthEast Service corridor. The CMAQ funding is available on a competitive basis to those projects that contribute to the attainment of national ambient air quality standards in nationally designated non-attainment areas, which includes the Chicago region. STP funds are made available through the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) to each of the region's Councils of Mayors.

Local Funding Ability and Methods

In addition to Metra, CMAQ and STP funding contributions, each of the local municipalities will likely be responsible for financing some portion of the transit facility in its community. When asked about their willingness to dedicate some local funding to the construction of a station, two of the five respondents stated they would be unwilling to do so. One municipality cited current budget constraints, which they do not foresee overcoming in the next 8-10 years in order to make funds available for a train station.

However, three of the five respondents stated that they would be willing to allocate local funding for such an effort. In each of these cases, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue was identified as the most likely source of available funds. In some



cases, other funding sources, including property tax, motor fuel tax, and developer funds were identified.

Local Land Use Policies and Issues

In order to maximize the effectiveness of transit operations and the peripheral benefits to each of the communities along the SouthEast Service corridor, existing land use and zoning regulations may have to be amended to allow transit-oriented development types and densities in areas around the proposed train stations. While most of the respondents feel that their current land use policies allow for appropriate development, they all express some willingness to address potential changes that could result in a more transit-conducive environment. Depending on the particular municipality, some identified changes may involve building height and density restrictions, floor area ratio allowances, and the establishment of multi-family or mixed use land use designations for the station areas in what are otherwise predominantly single family communities.

Current Transit-Related Station Area Planning

Many municipalities in the SES corridor have already undertaken efforts to plan for the installation of commuter rail service. As mentioned above, one way this is done is through land use and zoning policy. However, some communities have gone as far as acquiring available properties near the proposed station sites. According to the survey, three of the five respondents have already procured such properties. In most cases, the acquired parcels currently contain other uses, implying a redevelopment effort may be required to make them more transit-conducive.

In addition to the properties already purchased, most of the respondents stated that they would be interested in purchasing additional station area parcels if they were to become available.

Use of TIF Districts

The use of TIF districts is a common way for municipalities to energize development prospects in a specific area. In this case, a TIF district may generate funding for the development of peripheral transit amenities, new developments, or the transit station itself. Four of the five survey respondents indicated that they currently use TIF legislation in their communities. Additionally, in each of these cases, the proposed station site falls in or adjacent to one of their existing TIF districts. As a result, these communities feel that TIF funding may help in the development of their transit stations and/or surrounding amenities. The single community that currently does not have any station area TIF districts expresses an interest in establishing one.

Attitudes Toward Public/Private Development Partnerships

The implementation of commuter rail service in this corridor will likely benefit surrounding communities as well as those in which the stations are located. In that respect, some consideration may be given to an even broader cooperative approach



in which additional funding could come from other area municipalities through intergovernmental agreements, or from private sources through public/private development arrangements. The majority of the survey respondents expressed an interest in establishing intergovernmental agreements so that surrounding communities may participate in the cost of transit amenities from which they may reap some benefit. Additionally, some have identified opportunities to collaborate with private developers in providing additional amenities within the station itself or in areas of the community that have additional development value as a result of nearby transit service.

Summary of Survey Results

In summary, this survey documented the attitudes of a sample of the corridor's communities that are proposed to have SES stations. Generally, these attitudes suggest:

- ◆ A corridor-wide planning effort to pool local funds and procure additional state and regional funds;
- ◆ A unified effort to amend local policies to allow for appropriate transit-supportive development;
- ◆ An interest in working with other local communities to maximize the benefit of future commuter rail service; and
- ◆ Establishment of a corridor-wide identity that complements the local environments within which the SouthEast Service commuter rail may operate.

Alternatives Analysis and the Local Financial Commitment

A formal financial commitment to Metra from each municipality should be made before the end of the Alternatives Analysis (AA) phase of the project. Metra is managing the AA process. During AA, information is developed on the benefits, costs, and impacts of alternative transportation investments to address the transit need. Funding sources will be examined to create a financial plan for the overall project construction and service operation. The process will end when local and regional decision makers select the locally preferred alternative. Metra will then submit an application to the FTA for approval to enter into the preliminary engineering phase of project development. This application will include detailed information on the project justification and the local financial commitment or plan. In evaluating the financial plan, FTA will want to at least find that there is a reasonable prospect that all necessary funding will be secured. To help Metra achieve such a finding, the municipal commitment needs to be as definite as possible, though the actual local funds need not be all in hand by that point.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Metra requires that each municipality with a SouthEast Service (SES) station designation be responsible for the station area capital and operating costs, which are not a major part of the total project cost. However, the local commitment to assume that responsibility is important to advancing the project. Through discussions with SES municipal representatives and the municipal survey documented in this chapter, the project team has determined that there is strong support for the project and a general willingness to accept the station area cost responsibility.

In order to provide Metra the best financial commitment at the end of the AA phase, and given current financial constraints, SES municipalities should consider the following actions:

- ◆ Develop and implement a corridor funding pool through which each municipality will be guaranteed a minimum level of funding to build and maintain a station in its community. This will require the identification of funding sources for the pool and procedures by which the funds will be allocated. To achieve this, SES corridor municipalities should consider the use of an intergovernmental agreement.
- ◆ Through the CATS South Suburban Council, examine future local road needs relative to federal STP funding. The Council should then determine how much, if any, of these funds can be transferred to the SES project to finance all or part of the station area construction responsibility. Note that this transfer would not occur until the project is very near construction. The STP could be the primary source of funding for the corridor pool.
- ◆ Work with CATS to estimate the availability of CMAQ funding for each station. Some stations will be more competitive in achieving a CMAQ grant. If there is a corridor pool, address whether non-CMAQ grant stations will receive more pool funds than other CMAQ funded stations. As with STP funds, the CMAQ grants are not necessary until just prior to the start of station construction.
- ◆ Assess the willingness of municipalities to use and the ability of existing or new TIF districts to provide financial support for a station area project.
- ◆ Investigate the degree of interest and possibility that station area construction and operating costs might be funded entirely or in part by existing commercial interests adjacent to station area locations or by developers of future commercial activity in the area.
- ◆ Assess the prospect of future station parking and station concession revenue paying for station area operating costs.



- ◆ For communities that might consider using municipal general revenues to pay for their station commitment, keep in mind it will be four or five or more years before the start of station construction. There is time to annually reserve a small portion of those funds and avoid a larger one-time “hit” on municipal budgets.
- ◆ Consider other sources of funding which are not budgeted by Metra, such as the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Operation Green Light Program.
- ◆ Monitor possible state action on a new highway and transit funding initiative as a successor to the Illinois FIRST program. If such action is possible, actively work with local legislators to ensure that Metra receives the necessary funding to complete the project.
- ◆ If there is a significant gap in funding throughout the corridor to cover the station area costs, examine the Special Service Area and Mass Transit District options, knowing that they may involve corridor-wide taxes.



APPENDIX 5A

TABLE 5.3:
Developers Who Will Build or
Have Built Near Existing Metra Stations
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

Developer	Station Areas	Types of Development
Lincolnway Builders	- Matteson	- Townhomes
Legacy Development Group	- Matteson	- Single-family homes - Townhomes
Gammonley Group	- Oak Lawn - LaGrange Road - Clarendon Hills - Downers Grove, Main St. - Glen Ellyn - Roselle	- Multi-use (retail/office/condos) - Condos - Townhomes
Mid-America/ Asset Management	- Oak Lawn - LaGrange Road - Park Ridge	- Multi-use (retail/condos) - Retail
R.A. Faganel Builders & Ryland Homes	- Willow Springs	- Multi-use (retail/office/condos) - Townhomes
Norwood Builders	- LaGrange Road - Lombard - Des Plaines - Mount Prospect	- Multi-use (retail/loft condos) - Condos
Morningside Group	- Downers Grove, Main St. - Elmhurst	- Townhomes - Condos
Rosol Construction	- Downers Grove, Main St.	- Rowhomes
Wiseman-Hughes Enterprises	- Route 59	- Mixed-use (commercial/apts.)
Clark Realty Builders	- Route 59	- Apartments
Joseph Freed and Associates LLC	- Wheaton - Des Plaines - Palatine - Glenview	- Multi-use (retail/office/condos) - Multi-use (retail/office) - Townhomes
Stoneridge Developer and Gateway Centre Enterprises, Ltd.	- West Chicago	- Multi-use (retail/office/condos/lofts)
Sho-Deen, Inc.	- Geneva	- Multi-use (retail/office) - Single-family homes



**TABLE 5.3 (continued):
Developers Who Will Build or
Have Built Near Existing Metra Stations**
South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor
Land Use and Local Financing Study

Developer	Station Areas	Types of Development
New England Builders	- Bartlett	- Multi-use (retail/office/condos/lofts)
Edward R. James Homes	- Bartlett - Deerfield	- Townhomes - Rowhomes - Villas - Condos
Par Development	- National Street	- Rowhomes - Condos
R. Franczak & Associates	- Des Plaines	- Condos
Hummel Construction	- Palatine	- Multi-use (retail/office/condos) - Multi-use (retail/office) - Rowhomes - Condos
Toll Brothers	- Palatine	- Rowhomes
Wellington Partners	- Palatine	- Condos
InterCapital Partners	- Palatine	- Townhomes
Elliott Homes	- Morton Grove	- Multi-use (assisted-living/ townhomes/villas/condos)
Forrest Properties	- Glen/North Glenview	- Multi-use (retail/office)
Cambridge Homes	- Glen/North Glenview	- Townhomes - Single-family homes
Neumann Homes	- Grayslake	- Multi-use (commercial/ rowhomes/detached townhomes)
Residential Homes of America	- Grayslake	- Rowhomes
Focus Development	- Evanston, Davis Street	- Multi-use (retail/condos)
Optima	- Evanston, Davis Street	- Multi-use (retail/condos)
Roszak/ADC	- Evanston, Davis Street	- Townhomes - Condos
Andev, Inc. of Northbrook	- Highland Park	- Multi-use (retail/condos)



APPENDIX 5B

**NORTHWEST COUNCIL OF MAYORS
RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION PLEDGING
NORTHWEST COUNCIL STP FUNDING
TOWARDS STATION DEVELOPMENT COSTS
FOR THE METRA STAR LINE**

WHEREAS, the Northwest Council of Mayors is a voluntary organization representing municipalities chartered with the State of Illinois and the Counties of Cook, Lake, and DuPage; and

WHEREAS, Article VII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the State of Illinois and Chapter 127, paragraphs 741 through 748, of the Illinois Revised Statutes, authorize and encourage intergovernmental associations and cooperation; and

WHEREAS, the public officials of the Northwest Council of Mayors represent nineteen local governmental bodies; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Northwest Council of Mayors have been working on efforts to introduce new high capacity transit services within the Council area to improve mobility for workers and residents throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, these efforts, which have been focused along the Northwest Transit Corridor and the Outer Circumferential/EJ&E corridor, have been integrated into the Metra STAR Line; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Northwest Transit Corridor Municipal Task Force, after carefully considering proposals for new transit alternatives from CTA, Pace and Metra, have identified the Metra STAR Line as the locally preferred alternative; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Authority has formally endorsed the decision of the Northwest Transit Corridor Municipal Task Force; and



WHEREAS, at least half of the funding for the STAR Line is expected to come through the Federal Transit Administration with the remaining funding coming from state, regional, and local sources; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Northwest Transit Corridor Municipal Task Force have identified the need to contribute to the local portion of the project financial plan and has initially identified \$5 million per station location as a target amount; and

WHEREAS, other locally programmed federal funding sources, such as STP and CMAQ, can count towards the local portion of the project financial plan; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Council of Mayors has previously agreed that the Council's STP funding would be used for station area development costs; and

WHEREAS, as many as ten potential station locations have been identified within the Northwest Council jurisdiction, including Elmhurst Road, Busse Road, Arlington Heights Road, Golf Road (in Rolling Meadows), Meacham Road, Roselle Road, Barrington Road, Prairie Stone, Golf Road (in Hoffman Estates), and Spaulding Road.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwest Council of Mayors fully supports the decision of the Northwest Transit Corridor Municipal Task Force and the Regional Transportation Authority that the Metra STAR Line is the best alternative for improving mobility throughout the region; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northwest Council of Mayors is committed to the successful implementation of the Metra STAR Line; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northwest Council of Mayors pledges \$1 million in future STP funding towards the development costs of each STAR Line station located within the Northwest Council of Mayors jurisdiction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northwest Council of Mayors will initially program \$10 million for Metra STAR Line into fiscal years 2010 and 2011 until the specific time when the funding is needed for the station development costs, at which point the programming of this funding commitment shall take priority over other projects in the Northwest Council's existing program and funding will be transferred into the fiscal years it is needed; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution will be forwarded to Metra and the Regional Transportation Authority.

Passed this 12th day of November, 2003

Approved this 12th day of November, 2003

Arlene J. Mulder
Co-Chair, Northwest Council of Mayors and
Mayor, Village of Arlington Heights

ATTEST:

Lawrence E. Bury
Liaison, Northwest Council of Mayors



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

This chapter summarizes and documents the results of the public involvement process employed for the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study. In addition to describing the results of this process, the chapter also demonstrates the study team's commitment to a practical and productive communications program.

The public involvement program officially started in March 2004 with the completion of *A Plan for Public and Stakeholder Involvement*. The plan identified, described, and scheduled all public involvement activities anticipated for the study. It was written to ensure a well-planned and coordinated strategy for engaging corridor officials, residents and stakeholders in the study process. In addition, it was intended to encourage plentiful and meaningful input and involvement of public officials and citizens by outlining a variety of opportunities for both inviting and disseminating information relevant to the study.

The Appendix to this chapter contains documentation of these activities, including meeting notes, publications, and newspaper articles.

Approach Used for Public Involvement

For the purpose of this study, public and stakeholder involvement was defined as an educational process, an outreach to local communities to guide them in making practical decisions about land use and financing options for the proposed SouthEast Service (SES). Whereas the project team recognized that research and recommendations would provide a strong basis for guiding future actions, they also understood that only wide-ranging public and stakeholder input would ensure that the study results reflected local values, needs and priorities relative to the implementation of the SES.

A Plan for Public and Stakeholder Involvement provided detailed logistics for an effective outreach program, including the purpose, approach, roles and responsibilities, and other specifics for each planned activity. It also addressed how these activities would be documented for the public record and future use of communities.

The plan primarily focused on engaging three specific groups of people: the Calumet Corridor Planning Council, the Council-appointed Technical Sub-Committee for the project, and various groups of individuals who received the study information. This process, and the associated activities, offered interested persons and groups various opportunities to provide input to the study as well as receive information, interim updates and final results, as listed below:

- ◆ Calumet Corridor Planning Council (CCPC) meetings
- ◆ Technical Sub-Committee ((TSC) meetings
- ◆ Public information meetings



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

- ◆ Inserts in the South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association (SSMMA) newsletter
- ◆ Meeting with officials and staff of corridor municipalities on Local Financing
- ◆ Municipal survey on Local Financing
- ◆ Meetings with officials and staff of individual corridor communities on station area Land Use concepts

These activities were based on two primary strategies: (1) providing accurate, clear and time-sensitive project information; and, (2) sponsoring meetings for official public discussion. The results of these activities, all of which were successfully completed, are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Focus of Outreach Efforts

The public and stakeholder participants included:

- ◆ Federal and state legislators
- ◆ Public officials
- ◆ Technical Sub-Committee
- ◆ Commission members
- ◆ Business and industry leaders
- ◆ Neighborhood and civic organizations
- ◆ Institutional representatives (colleges, hospitals, etc)
- ◆ Major landowners and developers
- ◆ Citizens
- ◆ Special interest /advocacy groups
- ◆ Other community leaders
- ◆ Regional transportation providers
- ◆ Media

The key regional agency participants included:

- ◆ Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), responsible for the Regional Transportation Plan
- ◆ Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), responsible for comprehensive planning in northeastern Illinois



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

- ◆ Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), responsible for allocating funding from federal and state sources
- ◆ Metra, responsible for commuter rail service in northeastern Illinois
- ◆ Pace, responsible for suburban bus transit service in northeastern Illinois
- ◆ Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), responsible for providing financial oversight for public transportation in the region and helping to coordinate various transit services

This public outreach approach was developed to educate all corridor citizens and stakeholders. However, some individuals and groups, such as public officials and members of their staff, were requested to participate in selected activities, such as the Technical Sub-Committee (TSC) meetings and/or the special meeting on Local Finance for community officials and representatives held on May 26, 2004.

In addition, the business community, a priority group comprised of owners and operators of businesses and related organizations, was encouraged to give their input into the economic prospects, land use and transportation planning initiatives, and prospective local financing strategies related to SES implementation.

Involvement Activities Undertaken

The activities described herein present the implementation details of the public involvement program. Results are described for the six major project activities, which were:

- ◆ Public information meetings (2 meetings)
- ◆ Calumet Corridor Planning Council meetings (2 meetings)
- ◆ Technical Sub-Committee meetings (4 meetings)
- ◆ Local meetings with community representatives (1 for Local Financing and a series of individual community meetings for Land Use)
- ◆ Newsletters (3 newsletters)
- ◆ Media coverage (ongoing and relative to 2 public meetings)

Public Information Meetings

Two public information meetings were held to provide information to all interested citizens and to create opportunities for face-to-face dialogue between citizens and the consultant team. These meetings were also designed to enhance public awareness and understanding of the project and the potential SouthEast Service and its implications for local communities in the South Suburbs.



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

Public Meeting #1

Meeting #1 was held on June 10, 2004, to present specific information about the study, including study background, initial planning information, socio-economic data, and background for future study results.

- ◆ **VIP Letter (May 19, 2004).** Prior to the public meeting and the mail distribution of the SSMMA quarterly newsletter (with study newsletter insert), a personal letter of invitation to the public meeting was sent to approximately 35 public officials.
- ◆ **Media Release (May 25 and June 2, 2004).** Prior to the public meeting, a media release describing the highlights of the upcoming event was sent to approximately 25 media outlets, including newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Following the distribution of the media releases, Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd., made personal telephone calls to specific journalists to encourage them to attend the meeting.

The public meeting was held at Glenwood Village Hall, starting at 4:00 PM. It was an open house format with a formal presentation phase between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM. The meeting agenda was structured as follows:

Welcome:	Jean Maggio – Mayor, Village of Glenwood
Introduction:	Jack Swan – Mayor, Village of Thornton and President, Calumet Corridor Planning Council
Keynote Address:	State Senator Debbie Halvorson – Chairperson, Southland Legislative Caucus
Additional Remarks:	State Rep George Scully, Jr. – Vice-Chairman, Southland Legislative Caucus
SouthEast Service:	Phil Pagano – Executive Director, Metra
Study Overview:	Gary Mitchell – Project Manager, Wilbur Smith Associates
Discussion:	Corridor Mobility, Socio-Economic, Planning/Funding Issues

Those registered in attendance included 56 individuals, including public officials, citizens, and members of the media. Members of the media in attendance and who published articles were:

- ◆ Stan Ziemba (*Chicago Tribune* – South)
- ◆ Mike O’Neal (*The Star*)
- ◆ Pedro Castro (*Daily Southtown*)



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

Other media coverage included published meeting announcements:

- ◆ Jon Hilkevitch, *Chicago Tribune* (column, June 7)
- ◆ *The Peotone Vedette* (article, June 9)
- ◆ Guy Tridgell, *Daily Southtown* (column, June 4)
- ◆ *The Star* (editorial, June 24)

Representatives from SSMMA and the consultant team provided assistance to the public during the meeting as they viewed project displays, asked questions, and provided comments. Meeting exhibits included maps, diagrams, and photographs describing the following processes: Land Use and Corridor Planning; Socio-Economic Characteristics; and, Funding Options for Local Communities. Meeting attendees received four handouts: UPDATE (study newsletter #1), agenda, questionnaire, and comment form. Public officials received a separate folder with color copies of the handouts and four project maps. Attendees were encouraged to submit comments and to answer the questionnaire, which contained 14 statements about important transportation and land development issues affecting the rail corridor, the South Suburbs, and the region. The completed documents are included in the appendix to this chapter.

Public Meeting #2

Meeting #2 was held on December 1, 2004, to present and obtain feedback on the study results and recommendations.

- ◆ **VIP Letter (November 15, 2004).** Prior to the public meeting and the mail distribution of the SSMMA quarterly newsletter (with study newsletter insert), a personal letter of invitation to the public meeting was sent to approximately 35 public officials.
- ◆ **Media Release (November 22 and November 29, 2004).** Prior to the public meeting, a media release describing the highlights of the upcoming event was sent to approximately 25 media outlets, including newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Following the distribution of the media releases, Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd., again made personal telephone calls to specific journalists to encourage them to attend the meeting.

The public meeting was held at the South Holland Public Library, starting at 4:00 PM. It was an open house format with a formal presentation phase between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM. The meeting agenda was structured as follows:



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

Welcome:	Don De Graff – Mayor, Village of South Holland
Introduction:	Jack Swan – Mayor, Village of Thornton and President, Calumet Corridor Planning Council
Federal Legislative Support:	Rick Bryant, representing Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. – Second Congressional District
Keynote Address:	Paula Thibeault – Executive Director, RTA
SouthEast Service:	Phil Pagano – Executive Director, Metra
Study Overview:	Gary Mitchell – Project Manager, Wilbur Smith Associates
Discussion:	Station Area Plans, Local Financing Options

Those registered in attendance included 48 individuals, including public officials, citizens, and members of the media. Members of the media in attendance and who published articles were:

- ◆ David Mitchell (*The Illinois Times*)
- ◆ Carmen Greco, Jr. (*Chicago Tribune*)
- ◆ Mike O’Neal (*The Star and Daily Southtown*)

Other media coverage included published meeting announcements:

- ◆ Jennifer Golz (*Daily Southtown*)
- ◆ Mike O’Neal (column, January 5)

Representatives from SSMMA and the consultant team provided assistance to the public during the meeting as they viewed project displays, asked questions, and provided comments. Meeting exhibits included graphics describing station area concepts for the nine potential station locations along the SES line. The meeting atmosphere was animated and positive. The presenters expressed their support for the SouthEast Service and the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study. Paula Thibeault expressed the RTA’s support for the proposed SES and the study. She supported the concept of shared local resources for project finance and suggested this concept as a model for other similar projects. Rick Bryant, representing Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., communicated the Congressman’s strong commitment to the proposed SouthEast Service. Phil Pagano expressed Metra’s support for the proposed SES. He also referenced Metra’s Alternatives Analysis for the corridor, scheduled to start in January 2005. Gary Mitchell highlighted the study results, referring to the major components of the study: (1) Corridor Profile, (2) Corridor Planning Standards, (3) Land Use, and (4) Local Financing. He stressed the importance of a completed financial plan to



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

assure that SES would be competitive against other priority projects seeking funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the State of Illinois.

Calumet Corridor Planning Council (CCPC) Meetings

The two CCPC meetings were held to bring together the consultant team and the Council on policy-level matters and to assess the goals, priorities and concerns of local elected officials regarding the proposed SES and study results. Since the CCPC is a corridor-wide constituency that includes municipalities beyond the particular rail line, it is especially significant as a forum for discussion about the broader land use framework and potential cooperative financing strategies among area local governments. Members of the CCPC are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. South Holland | President Don De Graff
J. Wynsma, Alternate |
| 2. Steger | Roger Mumford
President Lou Sherman, Alternate |
| 3. Lynwood | President Russ Melby
Bob Dugan, Alternate |
| 4. Ford Heights | President Saul Beck
Veria Ely, Alternate |
| 5. Thornton | President Jack Swan
No alternate selected |
| 6. Beecher | Bob Barber
Gary Lagesse, Alternate |
| 7. Lansing | Grace Bazylewski
Dan Podgorski, Alternate |
| 8. Sauk Village | Trustee David Hanks
Dick Dieterich, Alternate |
| 9. Chicago Heights | Mayor Anthony DeLuca
Al Marconi, Alternate |
| 10. South Chicago Heights | President Dave Owen
Paul Peterson, Alternative |
| 11. Crete | President Michael Einhorn
Tom Durkin, Alternate |
| 12. Glenwood | President Jeanne Maggio
Joe Christofanelli, Alternate |



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

Other municipalities that have participated but have not passed the resolution for CCPC membership are:

Calumet City	Mayor Michelle Markiewicz Qualkinbush Jim Gigliotti, Director of Economic Development
Burnham	Rich Matuga, Municipal Counsel
Dolton	Bert Herzog, Director of Economic Development

Organizations that have participated but have not indicated *ex officio* membership are: Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra, Cook County Department of Planning, Will County Land Use Department, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC).

SSMMA sent a CCPC Project Initiation Letter on January 9, 2004, to Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, and Crete describing the study and introducing the Wilbur Smith Associates consultant team. This letter also contained a request for the following: comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, location of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, location of Enterprise Zones, any downtown or Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) plans, any transit or rail-related studies or reports, any new or potential developments near planned station areas, or any other information pertinent and beneficial to a comprehensive understanding of each community and to the overall success of the study.

CCPC Meeting #1

Consultant team members and SSMMA staff met with the CCPC soon after project initiation, on February 12, 2004, at South Holland Village Hall. This meeting provided an opportunity for CCPC members to meet the consultant team and receive a briefing on the project purpose and objectives, major tasks, schedule, public and stakeholder involvement priorities, and data and information needs. At this meeting the CCPC also appointed a Technical Sub-Committee to work with the consultant team throughout the study and provide representation for the corridor municipalities.

CCPC Meeting #2

As the final step in the study process, the consultant team and SSMMA staff returned to the CCPC on January 26, 2005, to discuss project results and next steps. This meeting provided an opportunity for CCPC members to review the study highlights, which included: Public Involvement, Corridor Profile, Corridor Planning Standards, Land Use, and Local Finance. The consultant team, CCPC,



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

and agency representatives engaged in a lively dialogue about the study results, Metra's pending Alternatives Analysis, and planning and communications ideas for the future.

Technical Sub-Committee (TSC) Meetings

The Technical Sub-Committee meetings brought together the TSC and consultant team to review and discuss the technical elements of the study. This helped to maintain a dialogue between the corridor municipalities and consultants. It also provided a format for assuring that the regional transportation agencies were fully informed about and involved in the study. The Technical Sub-Committee should also prove beneficially for ongoing coordination and input related to Metra's Alternatives Analysis process.

The consultant team met with the TSC at four strategic points during the study. These meetings enabled discussion and determinations on more detailed study considerations involving corridor socio-economics, land use and local financing. The consultant team presented technical data, preliminary findings and observations for review and feedback. The TSC meetings were timed to coincide with the progress of the technical work and ensured that there was an opportunity to discuss any local or agency concerns before scheduled public meetings and CCPC briefings.

The TSC membership was confirmed through a letter sent by SSMMA on February 18, 2004:

Crete	Tom Durkin
Steger	President Lou Sherman (Conrad Kiebles, alternate)
South Chicago Heights	Paul Peterson
Chicago Heights	Val Williams (Cleto Bonanotte, alternate)
Glenwood	Joe Christafanelli
Thornton	Max Salmon
South Holland	J. Wynsma
Dolton	(undetermined)
Will County Planning	Colin Duesing
SSMMA	Brian Gebhardt
Metra	Gary Foyle (Pat McAtee, alternate)
RTA	Michelle Ryan
Pace	Virgil Giles
NIPC	Ron Thomas

Regional "At Large" Representatives

Lansing	Grace Bazylewski
Sauk Village	Dave Hans (Dick Dietrich, alternate)



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

Ms. Ellen Shubart of the regional organization Campaign for Sensible Growth was also a regular attendee at the TSC meetings.

TSC Meeting #1

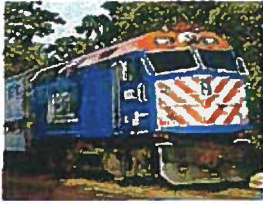
The first TSC meeting was held on March 9, 2004 (all TSC meetings were at the offices of the South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association in East Hazel Crest). The meeting agenda included introductions and discussion of the TSC role, project purpose and overview, plans for Public Meeting #1, examples of Metra stations and station areas in the region, and an orientation to transit-supportive development. Communities, agencies and consultants represented included Chicago Heights, Crete, Lansing, South Holland, Steger, Thornton, Metra, Pace, RTA, SSMMA, Campaign for Sensible Growth, Wilbur Smith Associates and Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.

Highlights of this meeting were a presentation by Wilbur Smith Associates personnel on station design/amenities and nearby development and redevelopment at five existing Metra stations in the region, as well as a second presentation on the characteristics of transit-supportive development. Example provisions from the current Village of Steger zoning ordinance were used to illustrate how development regulations in the area take a typical suburban approach of not allowing for higher densities and mixing of land uses as is often desirable around transit stations. Committee discussions touched on management of pedestrian traffic near stations; and parking issues, especially in downtown situations; and, potential station-area scenarios and existing regulations and incentives.

TSC Meeting #2

The second TSC meeting was held on June 2, 2004, just prior to Public Meeting #1 on June 10. The meeting agenda included discussion of the May 26th meeting with corridor communities on local financing, the upcoming public meeting, socio-economic findings from the draft Corridor Profile, and ongoing discussion of transit-supportive development. Communities, agencies and consultants represented included Chicago Heights, Crete, Lansing, South Chicago Heights, South Holland, Will County Planning Division, Metra, Pace, RTA, SSMMA, Campaign for Sensible Growth, Wilbur Smith Associates, The al Chalabi Group, and Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.

Highlights of this meeting were a presentation by The al Chalabi Group on their socio-economic assessment of the SES corridor and communities, and a presentation by Wilbur Smith Associates on transit-supportive development and successful examples in the Chicago region (e.g., Arlington Heights, Elmhurst). Existing land use conditions in the Village of Thornton were also explored at this meeting to illustrate constraints and opportunities near potential station locations. At the time Thornton was in the process of rewriting its zoning code, in part, to encourage revitalization of its village center, where the potential Metra SES station



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

would be located. WSA also reported on the activities of several corridor communities involving property acquisition and development near their proposed station areas.

TSC Meeting #3

The third TSC meeting was held on August 17, 2004. The meeting agenda included discussion of the June 10th public meeting results, local financing options and considerations, and ongoing discussion of land use and transit-supportive development. Communities, agencies and consultants represented included Chicago Heights, Crete, South Chicago Heights, South Holland, Steger, Thornton, Will County Planning Division, Metra, Pace, RTA, SSMMA, Campaign for Sensible Growth, Wilbur Smith Associates, Schlickman & Associates, Wildman Harrold, and Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.

Highlights of this meeting included a presentation by Schlickman & Associates (with support from legal consultant Wildman Harrold) on the details of local financing options and potential cooperative, corridor-wide funding strategies. A survey was also distributed, to be returned in September by the corridor communities, regarding SES station funding needs and the capabilities and priorities of each community. Committee discussion focused on the need for local communities to have a financial plan that demonstrates “solidarity” of approach. Schlickman & Associates also emphasized that land use plans, including consideration of local development ordinances, is as critical as financing plans for showing the commitment of corridor communities to successful SES implementation. Wilbur Smith Associates presented a thorough analysis on the requirements and opportunities for transit-supportive development and/or redevelopment. Using the Village of South Holland as an example, this presentation demonstrated the analytical process required to initiate and implement successful redevelopment of station areas and nearby land uses. Metra personnel stressed the importance of residential construction to station areas in local communities, stating that pre-sale of housing is often a successful strategy. It was also noted that new housing development near stations can be reasonably priced as demonstrated elsewhere.

TSC Meeting #4

The fourth and final TSC meeting was held on December 8, 2004, following Public Meeting #2, which was held on December 1. Discussions during the meeting touched on the following topics: Public Meeting #2, requirements for FTA project justification, land use and station area concepts, zoning ordinances, market analyses, negotiations with developers, potential relationships with corridor businesses, special districts, design standards and guidelines for communities, gentrification management, and the CREATE projects. With regard to local development regulations, Wilbur Smith Associates reviewed the “Top 10 Ways to Make Regulations TOD Friendly.” Communities, agencies and consultants



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

represented included: Chicago Heights, Crete, South Chicago Heights, South Holland, Steger, Thornton, Will County Planning Division, Metra, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Pace, RTA, SSMMA, Campaign for Sensible Growth, Wilbur Smith Associates, Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd., and Schlickman & Associates.

Local Meetings with Community Representatives

Preliminary information and findings compiled for the Local Financing component of the study were presented by Schlickman & Associates at a meeting of SES communities on May 26, 2004, at the SSMMA offices. Representatives from the villages of South Holland, Thornton, South Chicago Heights, Steger, and Crete were present along with various agency representatives. Further details on the results of this meeting and the later survey of corridor municipalities regarding local financing issues is provided in Chapter 5 of this report.

A series of meetings with officials and staff of the individual corridor communities was completed over the course of two weeks during November 2004 by Wilbur Smith Associates and SSMMA staff. The purpose of these sessions was to present and obtain feedback on the preliminary station area land use concepts prepared by WSA (as detailed in Chapter 4). Informal meetings were conducted in Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights and Steger.

Discussions regarding South Holland's station area were accomplished through a meeting on November 1, 2004, of the Village's Public Works Committee, which was attended by the Mayor and various trustees, Village staff, and other interested residents and local business owners. In Crete, the station area discussion was incorporated into a significant "town hall" style joint meeting of the Village Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Heritage Commission that was also attended by numerous residents and business owners (November 3, 2004, at the Crete Public Library). This special presentation opportunity and the very constructive roundtable discussion that followed enabled the commuter rail issue to be considered in the context of downtown enhancement, economic development, and Village-wide comprehensive planning in Crete. Finally, a meeting with representatives of Balmoral Park raceway on November 2, 2004, spurred discussion of development possibilities for the large, vacant property across Dixie Highway from Balmoral Park where the potential terminus station on the SES line would be located. This meeting was also attended by Village of Crete representatives.

Public Information Materials

Consistent distribution of public information was a key objective of the study. This was accomplished through the production of three project "fact sheet" updates that were inserted in the SSMMA quarterly newsletter and with the distribution of press releases to appropriate media outlets.



Public & Stakeholder Involvement

SSMMA Newsletter Inserts

Between January and November of 2004, Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd., produced three informative, full-color “fact sheet” inserts for the SSMMA newsletter. These publications were prepared to inform the public and area interests about the study background, progress and results. The newsletter inserts provided a one-way, outward method of communicating with a widespread public. However, through their content, design, and targeted distribution, they created interest and attracted other stakeholders in the corridor and region to the details and activities of the study. The newsletter inserts were also distributed to the media. Copies of the three *Update* inserts are included in the Appendix to this chapter.

Media Contact List and Press Releases

A list of appropriate local and regional media contacts was compiled for the study. Press releases to these individuals and media outlets were faxed and e-mailed, at key times, followed by personal telephone calls by Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.

Newspaper Coverage

During the one-year study process, local and regional newspapers published many articles that either referred to the study specifically, most of which were published before and after each of the public meetings, or were relevant to the study and the proposed SouthEast Service. Copies of all of these articles are included in the appendix to this chapter.

Public and Stakeholder Involvement Appendix

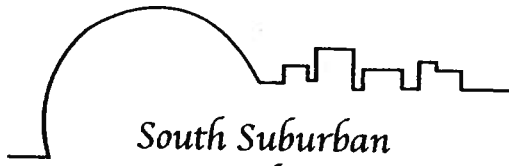
This Appendix includes a summary of the Public and stakeholder involvement activities conducted throughout the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor: Local Land Use and Financing Study. The Appendix includes the following:

Letter of Invitation for Participation	January 9, 2004
Calumet Corridor Planning Council Meeting Notices	
Meeting #1	February 12, 2004
Meeting #2	January 26, 2005
Public Involvement Plan	March 2004
Technical Sub-committee Meeting Summaries	
Meeting #1	March 9, 2004
Meeting #2	June 2, 2004
Meeting #3	August 17, 2004
Meeting #4	December 8, 2004
Public Meeting Summaries	
Public Meeting #1	June 10, 2004
Public Meeting #2	December 1, 2004
“UpDate” Newsletters	
Issue #1	Spring 2004
Issue #2	Summer 2004
Issue #3	Fall 2004

Letter of Invitation for Participation

MEMBER
MUNICIPALITIES

Burnham
Calumet City
Calumet Park
Chicago Heights
Country Club Hills
Crete
Dixmoor
Dolton
East Hazel Crest
Flossmoor
Ford Heights
Frankfort
Glenwood
Harvey
Hazel Crest
Homer Glen
Homewood
Lansing
Lynwood
Markham
Matteson
Midlothian
Mokena
Monee
New Lenox
Oak Forest
Olympia Fields
Orland Hills
Orland Park
Palos Heights
Park Forest
Phoenix
Posen
Richton Park
Riverdale
Robbins
Sauk Village
South Chicago Heights
South Holland
Steger
Thornton
Tinley Park
University Park



South Suburban
Mayors and Managers
Association.

*Cnt to Mayors
Village Managers*

«TITLE» «FIRST_NAME» «LAST_NAME»
«AFFILIATION»
«ADDRESS_1»
«ADDRESS_2»

January 9, 2004

**RE: South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local
Financing Study Information Request**

Dear «TITLE» «LAST_NAME»,

As you are probably aware, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association along with the Village of South Holland (administration) and the Calumet Corridor Planning Council (policy guidance) is pleased to be undertaking the *South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study*. Assisting us in this study will be the Consulting Team led by Wilbur Smith Associates. For this study, the Consultant Team will assist communities in developing corridor planning standards for this proposed transportation investment and will develop land use and local financing plans to support the proposed new commuter rail service.

This project will develop a local profile for the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor including quantifying existing and forecast land use conditions, developing transit-supportive land use plans and policies, and examining local financing mechanisms that will support determination of a locally-preferred alternative for the corridor. The land use component will include a study of existing and future land use conditions within the corridor that will impact implementation of transit service, and development of transit-supportive land use policies for adoption by local communities. The financing component will identify and assess revenue capacity and acceptance of local financing mechanisms that could be used to implement a locally-preferred alternative. Finally, the study will define and quantify planning standards for the corridor for mobility, connectivity, efficiency, safety and local preferences to support selection of a locally-preferred alternative.

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A systematic program of technical analyses, land use planning and financial assessments will be performed for the development of the study. To perform these analyses and assessments, a wide array of information is needed. Therefore, at this time we are requesting the following types of information from your community:

- Comprehensive Plans
- Zoning Ordinances
- Location of TIF Districts
- Location of Enterprise Zones
- Any Downtown or Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plans
- Any Transit or Rail-Related Studies or Reports
- Any new or potential developments near planned station areas
- Any other information you feel would be pertinent and beneficial to a comprehensive understanding of your community and to the overall success of this study

We cannot stress enough the importance of your continued support and participation will play in the overall success of this very important study. We look forward to working with you.

We would request that these materials be assembled as soon as possible and mailed to Brian Gebhardt at the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, or if so desired, we can arrange to pick them up at your offices.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (708) 206-1155.

Sincerely,

Brian Gebhardt
Director of Transportation

cc: Village of Dolton
Village of South Holland
Village of Thornton
Village of Glenwood
City of Chicago Heights
Village of South Chicago Heights
Village of Steger
Village of Crete

Calumet Corridor Planning Council Meeting Notices

Calumet Corridor Planning Council **Meeting Notice**

Thursday February 12, 2004
South Holland Village Hall – 7:00 p.m.
16226 Wausau Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473

The next Calumet Corridor Planning Council meeting will be held on February 12, 2004 at the South Holland Village Hall at 7:00pm. The main focus of this meeting will be the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study. The Consultant Team will be introduced and a project overview will be given. The Planning Council will also be asked to select a Technical Sub-Committee for this project. The Technical Sub-Committee will be comprised of local community and regional agency representatives for more detailed, non-policy study considerations.

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Introduction of Consultant Team
3. Project Overview
 - ❖ Schedule
 - ❖ Scope of Work
4. Selection of Technical Sub-Committee (*Discussion and Action*)
5. Next Steps
6. Other
7. Adjourn

Please call Brian Gebhardt at 708-206-1155 or email at brian@ssmma.org should you have any questions or comments. Thanks and see you on the 12th!

Subj: **Calumet Corridor Planning Council Meeting Notice**
 Date: 1/7/2005 11:48:05 AM Central Standard Time
 From: brian@ssmma.org
 To: adamprager@aol.com, plummerat242@aol.com, adeluca@chicagoheights.net,
lenskiw@rtachicago.org, blane@evmark.org, cduesing@wilcountylanduse.com,
ckiebles@comcast.net, tplanera@chicagoheights.net, dhanks@fellowes.com,
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dgatto@wilbursmith.com, gmitchell@wilbursmith.com, vitulo@wildmanharrold.com,
nseeger@aol.com, acgtran@aol.com

Calumet Corridor Planning Council Meeting Notice

Wednesday January 26, 2005

**South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association – 7:00
p.m.**

**1906 W. 174th Street
East Hazel Crest, IL 60473**

The next Calumet Corridor Planning Council meeting will be held on January 26, 2005 at South Suburban Mayors and Managers at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will focus on the recently completed **South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study**. The consultant team will review highlights of the study and the Council will be requested to approve the study report via a request from the study Technical Subcommittee. A status report on Metra's Alternatives Analysis will be given as well as an overview of possible next steps.

Agenda

1. Call To Order
2. Introductions
3. Study Highlights
 - Public Involvement
 - Corridor Profile
 - Planning Standards
 - Land Use
 - Local Finance
4. Approval of Report
5. Metra Alternatives Analysis
6. Next Steps

7. Other
8. Adjourn

Please call Brian Gebhardt at 708-922-4671 or email at brian@ssmma.org should you have any questions. Thank you and see you on the 26th!

Brian Gebhardt
Director of Transportation
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
1904 W. 174th Street
East Hazel Crest, IL 60429
Phone: 708-206-1155
Fax: 708-206-1133
Email: brian@ssmma.org
Website: www.ssmma.org

Public Involvement Plan

**SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUTER RAIL CORRIDOR
LAND USE AND LOCAL FINANCING STUDY**

A PLAN FOR PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

**SUBMITTED TO:
THE VILLAGE OF SOUTH HOLLAND**

**PREPARED BY:
NANCY SEEGER ASSOCIATES, LTD.
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS**

MARCH 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Study Overview**
- 3. Focus of Outreach Efforts**
- 4. Planned Activities**
- 5. Documentation**

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this *Plan for Public and Stakeholder Involvement* is to ensure a well-planned and coordinated strategy for engaging Corridor officials, residents and stakeholders during the Study process. The intent is to encourage plentiful and meaningful input and involvement by outlining a variety of opportunities for both inviting and disseminating information relevant to the Study.

This document builds upon and is consistent with the Public Outreach task in the consultant Scope of Services for the Study. It goes a step farther by providing more detailed logistics for an effective outreach program, including the purpose, approach, roles and responsibilities, and other specifics for each planned activity. Finally, it addresses how these activities will be documented for the public record and future use of the community.

Consultant research and recommendations provide one basis for guiding future action agendas. However, only wide-ranging public and stakeholder input will ensure that the Study results reflect local values, needs and priorities regarding Southeast Service implementation.

2. STUDY OVERVIEW

Metra and the South Suburbs have proposed new commuter service, referred to as the SouthEast Service, in the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor. The corridor is centered on the Union Pacific/CSX line from Crete in northeast Will County through southeast Cook County to downtown Chicago. The new service, which will span a 33-mile route, will add as many as nine new stations at, from north to south, Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete, and Balmoral Park. Its northern terminus will be the La Salle Station, located in downtown Chicago.

The *South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study*, scheduled for completion in December 2004, will develop a local profile for the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor, including quantifying existing and forecasted land use conditions, developing transit-supportive land use plans and policies, and examining local financing mechanisms that will support determination of a locally-preferred alternative for the corridor.

The *land use component* will include a study of existing and future land use conditions within the corridor that will impact implementation of transit service and development of transit-supportive land use policies for adoption by local communities. The *financing component* will identify and assess revenue capacity and acceptance of local financing mechanisms that could be used to implement a locally-preferred alternative. Finally, the Study will define and quantify planning standards for the corridor for mobility, connectivity, efficiency, safety and local preferences to support selection of a locally-preferred alternative.

3. FOCUS OF OUTREACH EFFORTS

The public and stakeholders who will be the focus of this involvement strategy include:

- Federal and state legislators
- Public officials
- Advisory board/commission members
- Business and industry leaders
- Neighborhood and civic organizations
- Institutional representatives (colleges, hospitals, etc)
- Major landowners and developers
- Citizens
- Special interest/advocacy groups
- Other community leaders
- Regional transportation providers
- Media

Although this program has been developed to educate all citizens in the corridor, some individuals and groups, such as public officials and members of their staff, will be requested to participate in selected activities. These individuals have particular knowledge about their communities that will be vital to the success of the Study. The business community, which includes owners and operators of businesses and related organizations, is another priority group to engage given their significance to economic development efforts, land use and transportation planning initiatives, and prospective local financing strategies.

Policy-level discussions and direction will be provided by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council (CCPC), an existing organization composed of local elected officials who engage in joint planning for the Corridor. To provide more in-depth input and guidance to the consultant team throughout the study, the CCPC will appoint a Technical Sub-Committee (TSC), which will include individuals who have technical knowledge about the Corridor and may represent a municipality or a transportation provider. The TSC will also provide an avenue for involving key regional agencies, including:

- Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), responsible for the Regional Transportation Plan;
- Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), responsible for comprehensive planning in northeastern Illinois;
- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), responsible for allocating funding from federal and state sources;
- Metra, responsible for commuter rail service in northeastern Illinois;
- Pace, responsible for suburban bus transit service in northeastern Illinois;
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), responsible for providing financial oversight for public transportation in the region and helping to coordinate various transit services;
- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), responsible for transit service in the City of Chicago, and with jurisdiction to provide service in the South Cook County suburbs.

In addition to targeting the above mentioned groups, the plan provides for distributing public information to citizens from the affected municipalities, the surrounding area, and other parts of the region. These citizens will also have the opportunity to offer their input at public meetings.

4. PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The *Plan for Public and Stakeholder Involvement* focuses on five major activities for publicizing the Study and offering interested persons and groups opportunities to provide input and receive information, interim updates, and final results:

- (1) Calumet Corridor Planning Council (CCPC) meetings
- (2) Technical Sub-Committee (TSC) meetings
- (3) Public Information Meetings
- (4) SSMMA Newsletter Inserts
- (5) Key Person Interviews

These activities encompass two primary strategies: (1) providing accurate, clear and time-sensitive project information, and (2) providing meetings and forums for official and public discussion. The specific activities are described in the remainder of this plan.

It is assumed that all CCPC and TSC meetings must be open, public meetings, although the TSC meetings in particular are primarily intended as workshop-style sessions between the consultant team and TSC members. SSMMA staff will handle meeting notices and agenda distribution and may desire to invite other key individuals besides those serving on the committees, depending on the particular agenda or other considerations. For the two Public Information meetings, the consultant team will prepare an advance press release, which will then be distributed by SSMMA staff using existing media contact lists for the study area. It will be the decision and responsibility of SSMMA staff to issue press releases prior to any committee meetings scheduled during this Study.

Finally, it will be important for the consultant team and SSMMA staff to coordinate public information and outreach activities with the ongoing Chicago Southland Tomorrow Corridor Initiative (CSTCI) to ensure a consistent message and avoid duplication of efforts.

▪ **Calumet Corridor Planning Council (CCPC) Meetings**

Purpose:

To bring together the consultant team and the CCPC on policy-level matters and to assess the goals, priorities and concerns of local elected officials regarding the proposed rail service and Study results. Since the CCPC is a corridor-wide constituency that includes municipalities beyond the rail line, it is especially significant as a forum for discussion about the broader land-use framework for the rail line, including land-use considerations or other concerns that may fall just outside the immediate study area.

Strategy:

The consultant team and the CCPC will meet at two strategic times during the Study. These meetings will be used to present and discuss primary findings from the study. In order to support the review of technical information, a Technical Sub-Committee (TSC) will be appointed. The TSC, which will include technical staff from the municipalities in the study area and representatives from Metra, RTA, CATS, NIPC, Pace, and IDOT, will interact with the consulting team about the details of the study tasks. The TSC will have an important role in gaining consensus from the participating public agencies and recommending a final study report to the CCPC.

The first CCPC meeting will occur on February 12 and focus on the following agenda: Introduction of the Consultant Team, Project Overview (Schedule, Scope of Work), Request for Identification of Key Stakeholders, Selection of Technical Sub-Committee. The second meeting, on November 4, is scheduled to precede the second Public Information Meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for November 17, 2004. The primary task for this second CCPC meeting will be to present and discuss the key findings and recommendations contained in the Draft Final Report and Executive Summary (both due 10/25/04, which is 10 days prior to the CCPC meeting). The timing of meetings and deliverables is aimed at ensuring that CCPC members are comfortable with the Draft Final Report highlights that will be shared with area residents, stakeholders and media on November 17.

Date: Meeting #1: February 12, 2004, 7:00 PM, South Holland Village Hall, 16226 Wausau Avenue.

Meeting #2: November 4, 2004, 7:00 PM, location to be determined.

Lead: Brian Gebhardt (SSMMA) and Gary Mitchell (WSA)

Primary sub-tasks and assignments:

- Distribute meeting notices: Brian Gebhardt
- Develop and distribute agenda: Brian Gebhardt
- Lead meeting: Ed Paesel
- Prepare brief meeting notes: Nancy Seeger

▪ **Technical Sub-Committee(TSC) Meetings**

Purpose:

To bring together the TSC and consultant team (plus Project Steering Committee members) to review the technical elements of the study. This will help to maintain a dialogue between municipalities, the PSC, and the consultant team. It will also provide a format for assuring that the regional and state agencies are fully informed and involved in the Study. The TSC will be especially important in the coordination that will be required between the Study and Metra's parallel SouthEast Service Alternatives Analysis Study.

Strategy:

The consultant team will meet with the TSC (plus PSC members) at four strategic times during the Study. These meetings will enable discussion and determinations on the more detailed study considerations. The consultant team will provide technical data, draft reports, etc. in a timely manner for review. The TSC meetings will be timed to respond to the progress of the technical work and to ensure that there is an opportunity to discuss any agency concerns before scheduled CCPC or other public meetings.

Meeting #1: March 9, 2004, 10:00 AM at SSMMA Offices

Meeting Objectives

- Orient TSC members to the Study purpose/objectives and consultant team.
- Establish common understanding of the key elements of transit-supportive development.
- Educate about example Metra stations and station-area development in other parts of the Chicago region.
- Begin-discussion (to be continued in Meeting #2) of the transit-supportiveness of existing and potential future development near the candidate station areas, particularly to highlight potential opportunities and constraints presented by physical conditions and existing development regulations.
- Discuss existing area planning principles/themes from recent planning efforts and obtain necessary TSC feedback to draft preliminary standards for Southeast Service implementation.
- Help consultant team to refine information/concepts (based on TSC feedback) for Public Information Meeting #1 on 06/10/04.

Scope and Schedule Linkages

- Task 1.2 (Conduct Public Involvement Plan Activities): Present initial version of Metra Station Area Presentation, and use other "TOD" examples to spur general discussion of transit-supportive development. Use TSC feedback to refine presentation for Public Information Meeting #1 on 06/10/04. The "pros/cons" of other existing Metra stations will also provide lessons and "benchmarks" for the station area plans to be developed under Task 3.

- Task 2.2.1 (Review Existing Corridor Planning Documents): Review existing area planning principles/themes with TSC and obtain initial feedback to assist consultant team in drafting preliminary corridor planning standards (draft Chapter 4 due 05/03/04).
- Task 3.1 (Evaluate the Transit-Supportiveness of Existing and Future Land Use) and Task Deliverable 1 (Preliminary Memorandum on Land Use): Set the stage for more focused discussion of each station area with individual jurisdictions over the next few months, and obtain initial feedback that will contribute to consultant team preparation of the preliminary Land Use memorandum (due 05/28/04) and eventual draft Land Use chapter (due 08/30/04).

Anticipated Agenda Items and Related Materials

1. Project Overview (scope, schedule, consultant team)
 - Overview PowerPoint slides (as presented at CCPC #1 on 02/12/04)
 - Draft Chapter 1: Introduction & Background
2. Discuss Transit-Supportive Development
 - Metra Station Area presentation (PowerPoint slides of five representative Metra stations elsewhere in the region, focusing especially on the surrounding land uses and associated economic benefits)
 - Other photos and graphic examples of TSD elements
3. Discuss Corridor Planning Standards
 - Copies of relevant Calumet Corridor and NIPC information
4. Discuss Plans for TSC Meeting #2

Meeting #2: June 2, 2004, 10:00 AM at SSMMA Offices

Meeting Objectives

- Seek TSC endorsement of the proposed content of draft Chapter 3-Corridor Profile and draft Chapter 4-Corridor Planning Standards, subject to any necessary revisions based on the TSC discussion.
- Continue discussion (from Meeting #1) of key corridor-level and station-area land use planning considerations, and engage the TSC in an exercise to illustrate these factors.
- Begin discussion of local financing options, seeking initial consent on those that should prove most viable for the area.
- Review plans for Public Information Meeting #1 on 06/10/04.

Scope and Schedule Linkages

- Task 2.1 (Corridor Profile): Obtain TSC feedback on the corridor and community conditions and trends highlighted in the draft Profile prior to the consultant team finalizing this interim chapter (draft Chapter 3 due 04/19/04, then final due 05/21/04).
- Task 2.2 (Corridor Planning Standards): Obtain TSC feedback on the proposed standards prior to the consultant team finalizing this interim chapter (draft Chapter 4 due 05/03/04, then final due 06/01/04).

- Task 3.0 (Preliminary Land Use Memorandum): Use the memorandum (due 05/28/04) to facilitate discussion of the key elements of the eventual draft Land Use chapter (draft Chapter 5 due 08/30/04). Also conduct an example corridor-level and station-area planning exercise with the TSC to illustrate the planning considerations to be incorporated in the Land Use chapter.
- Task 4.1 (Identify and Assess Local Revenue Sources and Financing Capacity) and Task 4.2 (Evaluate Applicability of Financing Options): Update and obtain feedback from the TSC on the inventory of potential revenue sources compiled through Task 4.1. Then invite TSC input on potential obstacles or opportunities that would make certain financing options more or less promising than others, including "institutional framework" factors.

Anticipated Agenda Items and Related Materials

1. Present and discuss draft Chapter 3-Corridor Profile
 - Draft Chapter 3-Corridor Profile
2. Present and discuss draft Chapter 4-Corridor Planning Standards
 - Draft Chapter 4-Corridor Planning Standards
3. Discuss Key Corridor-Level and Station-Area Planning Considerations
 - Preliminary Land Use Memorandum
 - Hand-outs related to corridor-level and station-area planning exercise
4. Discuss Local Financing Options
 - Hand-out with draft inventory of potential local revenue sources
5. Discuss Public Information Meeting #1
 - Planned agenda for Public Information Meeting #1
6. Discuss Plans for TSC Meeting #3

Meeting #3: August 17, 2004, 10:00 AM at SSMMA Offices

Meeting Objectives

- Discuss highlights of input received through Public Information Meeting #1.
- Seek TSC endorsement of the proposed content of draft Chapter 5-Land Use and draft Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy, subject to any necessary revisions based on the TSC discussion.
- Help consultant team to refine key Study findings and recommendations (based on TSC feedback) to be highlighted at Public Information Meeting #2 on 11/17/04.

Scope and Schedule Linkages

- Tasks 3.4 & 3.5 (Recommend Corridor-Wide and Local and Station-Area Planning and Implementation Strategies): Obtain TSC feedback on the corridor-level and station-area planning and implementation recommendations to be highlighted in the draft Land Use chapter prior to the consultant team finalizing this interim chapter (draft Chapter 5 due 08/30/04, then final due 10/04/04).

- Task 4.3 (Refine Corridor and Community-Specific Financing Strategies): Obtain TSC feedback on the emerging local financing strategy to be finalized in Chapter 6 (draft due 08/09/04, then final due 09/30/04) based on closer evaluation of those revenue sources that were carried forward past the initial Task 4.2 screening.
- Task 1.2 (Conduct Public Involvement Plan Activities): Use TSC feedback to refine how the key Study findings and recommendations will be presented at Public Information Meeting #2 on 11/17/04.

Anticipated Agenda Items and Related Materials

1. Review Public Information Meeting #1
 - Meeting Notes from Public Information Meeting #1
2. Present and discuss key elements of pending draft Chapter 5-Land Use
 - Hand-outs and/or PowerPoint presentation of key elements to be incorporated in draft Chapter 5-Land Use, including the station-area plans
3. Present and discuss draft Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy
 - Draft Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy
4. Discuss Public Information Meeting #2
 - Anticipated agenda for Public Information Meeting #2

Meeting #4: December 7, 2004, 10:00 AM at SSMMA Offices

Meeting Objectives

- Discuss highlights of input received through Public Information Meeting #2.
- Seek TSC endorsement of the proposed content of the overall Draft Final Report, subject to any necessary revisions based on the TSC discussion and public comments received.
- Review the specifics of the recommended Land Use and Local Financing implementation strategies.

Scope and Schedule Linkages

- Task 1.2 (Conduct Public Involvement Plan Activities) and Task 5.1 (Prepare Draft and Final Study Reports): Complete TSC process and obtain final committee and stakeholder feedback prior to preparing and printing the Final Study Report (due 12/31/04).
- Tasks 3.4 & 3.5 (Recommend Corridor-Wide and Local and Station-Area Planning and Implementation Strategies) and Task 4.3 (Refine Corridor and Community-Specific Financing Strategies): Provide final guidance on implementation priorities, methods, opportunities and challenges through final face-to-face discussion with TSC members.

Anticipated Agenda Items and Related Materials

1. Review Public Information Meeting #2
 - Meeting Notes from Public Information Meeting #2
2. Present and discuss the Draft Final Report
 - Draft Final Report
 - PowerPoint presentation highlighting key findings and recommendations

3. Discuss Key Implementation Considerations

- Draft Final Report (particularly Chapter 5-Land Use and Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy)
- PowerPoint presentation highlighting key implementation considerations

Lead: Brian Gebhardt (SSMMA) and Gary Mitchell (WSA)

Primary sub-tasks and assignments:

- Distribute meeting notices: Brian Gebhardt
- Develop and distribute agenda: Brian Gebhardt
- Lead meeting: Gary Mitchell
- Prepare brief meeting notes: Nancy Seeger

▪ Public Information Meetings

Purpose:

To provide information for all interested citizens via public meetings and to create an opportunity for face-to-face dialogue between citizens and the consultant team to answer questions and address concerns. These meetings are also designed to enhance public awareness and understanding of the project.

Given budget limitations, it will be essential to involve key groups and individuals in the Public Information Meetings and engage them during these meetings by highlighting and soliciting input on the potential benefits to and particular concerns/issues of various stakeholder groups and corridor interests.

Strategy:

Public information meetings will be held at two strategic times during the Study, tentatively in different municipalities. The meetings will be conducted in an "open house" format to provide a comfortable environment for citizens to ask questions and obtain information. Project information will be on display, including maps and graphics as well as a self-operating PowerPoint presentation. A one-page response sheet will be distributed to the public to solicit their comments and questions. This information will be used for the final recommendations and retained for the public record.

The first Public Meeting will be held in June (06/10/04) after initial technical work has been completed. The second meeting will be held toward the conclusion of the study (11/17/04) in order to present the draft study findings. A press release will be sent to the media in advance of each meeting.

Meeting #1: June 10, 2004, 5:30 PM at [to be announced]

Meeting Objectives

- Orient area residents and interests to the Study purpose/objectives and timeline/status.
- Explain the basics of transit-supportive development and provide examples from elsewhere in the Chicago region.
- Display and accept comments on the draft Corridor Profile highlights and findings.
- Solicit ideas and feedback on: (1) the preliminary Corridor Planning Standards, (2) desired objectives and features of the community planning strategies and station-area plans to be developed through the Study, and (3) potential local financing options to be identified and evaluated through the Study.
- Provide the opportunity for attendees to speak individually or in small groups with consultant team members, SSMMA staff, and other study participants.
- Provide an opportunity for Metra representatives (and/or consultants) to provide an update on the concurrent Southeast Service Alternatives Analysis.

Scope and Schedule Linkages

- Task 1.2 (Conduct Public Involvement Activities): Meet the objective of holding a first public information meeting after some technical work has been done (and discussed by the Technical Sub-Committee in March and June) but before major findings and decisions of the Study have been made (and received/finalized by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council in November).
- Task 2.0-4.0 (Corridor Profile, Corridor Planning Standards, Land Use, Local Financing): Obtain public and stakeholder input and feedback that will enable the consultant team to finalize draft report chapters already prepared by this point (draft Chapter 3-Corridor Profile, draft Chapter 4-Corridor Planning Standards) or soon to be drafted (Chapter 5-Land Use, Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy).

Anticipated Agenda Items and Related Materials

1. Greet Open House Attendees
 - Registration table for all guests to sign in and check which "interests" they feel they represent: corridor residents, commuters, area employers and employees, business owners, property owners and land developers, community organizations, local government, regional/state agencies, institutions, etc. (and also indicate whether they wish to receive future meeting notices and newsletter materials)
 - Agenda handout and response form to be provided to all attendees (place drop-off box near door for submitting completed response forms)
 - Point out information and materials on display at various "stations" and opportunities to ask questions of and provide input to consultant team members
2. Visit Topic Stations
 - Tables set up at four locations in room with display boards and summary handouts regarding the key Study elements (Corridor Profile, Corridor Planning Standards, Land Use, Local Financing)
 - Easel pads and markers at each station to enable consultant team members to record ideas, questions and comments received
 - Self-operating display (at location of main audience seating area) of PowerPoint presentation to be delivered formally at 7:00 PM (essentially a non-narrated preview of the formal presentation, particularly for those who cannot stay)
3. Formal Presentation (at 7:00 PM)
 - Opening remarks by one or more "VIPs" or key individuals associated with the study
 - PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the Study purpose/objectives, timeline/status, study area (corridor and potential stations), and the basics of transit-supportive development, including examples from elsewhere in the Chicago region, as well as highlighting potential benefits/issues for various stakeholder groups and specific items on which the consultant team needs input and feedback
 - Brief follow-up remarks by Metra representatives (and/or consultants) to provide an update on the concurrent Southeast Service Alternatives Analysis
4. Visit Topic Stations
 - Continue process under Agenda Item 2 until Public Meeting is adjourned

Meeting #2: November 17, 2004, 5:30 PM at [to be announced]

Meeting Objectives

- Remind attendees of the Study purpose/objectives and update on timeline/status.
- Display and accept comments on the highlights and findings of the Draft Final Report elements (Chapter 3-Corridor Profile, Chapter 4-Corridor Planning Standards, Chapter 5-Land Use, Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy).
- Provide the opportunity for attendees to speak individually or in small groups with consultant team members, SSMMA staff, and other study participants.
- Provide an opportunity for Metra representatives (and/or consultants) to provide an update on the concurrent Southeast Service Alternatives Analysis.

Scope and Schedule Linkages

- Task 1.2 (Conduct Public Involvement Activities): Meet the objective of holding a second public information meeting at the Draft Final Report stage (due 10/25/04) when most all of the anticipated Study findings and recommendations have been compiled (for CCPC Meeting #2 on 11/04/04) but are still open to final public and stakeholder review and comment (Final Report due 12/31/04).
- Tasks 3.4 & 3.5 (Recommend Corridor-Wide and Local and Station-Area Planning and Implementation Strategies) and Task 4.3 (Refine Corridor and Community-Specific Financing Strategies): Use this public forum to highlight the implementation opportunities and challenges that should be the next major-focus after Final Report publication.

Anticipated Agenda Items and Related Materials

1. Greet Open House Attendees
 - Registration table for all guests to sign in and check which "interests" they feel they represent: corridor residents, commuters, area employees, business owners, property owners, community organizations, local government, regional/state agencies, etc.
 - Agenda handout and response form to be provided to all attendees (place drop-off box near door for submitting completed response forms)
 - Point out information and materials on display at various "stations" and opportunities to ask questions of and provide input to consultant team members
2. Visit Topic Stations
 - Tables set up at four locations in room with display boards and draft final copies of key Study elements (Chapter 3-Corridor Profile, Chapter 4-Corridor Planning Standards, Chapter 5-Land Use, Chapter 6-Local Financing Strategy)
 - Easel pads and markers at each station to enable consultant team members to record questions and comments received
 - Self-operating display (at location of main audience seating area) of PowerPoint presentation to be delivered formally at 7:00 PM (essentially a non-narrated preview of the formal presentation, particularly for those who cannot stay)

3. Formal Presentation (at 7:00 PM)
 - Opening remarks by one or more "VIPs" or key individuals associated with the study
 - PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the Draft Final Report content and key findings and recommendations, particularly regarding implementation strategies and needs
 - Brief follow-up remarks by Metra representatives (and/or consultants) to provide an update on the concurrent Southeast Service Alternatives Analysis
4. Visit Topic Stations
 - Continue process under Agenda Item 2 until Public Meeting is adjourned

Lead: Brian Gebhardt (SSMMA) and Gary Mitchell (WSA)

Primary sub-tasks and assignments:

- Research and prepare mailing lists: Brian Gebhardt
- Write press releases: Nancy Seeger
- Distribute press releases: Brian Gebhardt
- Plan and execute meetings: Brian Gebhardt, Gary Mitchell
- Produce PowerPoint presentation: Gary Mitchell
- Produce response sheet: Nancy Seeger
- Prepare brief meeting notes: Nancy Seeger

▪ **Key Person Interviews**

Purpose:

To interview key stakeholders to solicit background information, observations and insights relevant to the Study elements. Given budget limitations, this will also be an important method for reaching out to key groups and individuals who might not otherwise become engaged in the Study process through traditional public meetings and/or committees.

Strategy:

Telephone and/or face-to-face interviews will occur on an as-needed basis as individual consultant team members conduct the background research necessary for their assigned tasks. The consultant team may also request PSC assistance to arrange joint meetings at convenient times with multiple members of a specific constituency, particularly to obtain input in a cost-efficient manner from municipal officials and business community representatives (e.g., for the Local Financing task). The consultant team will document completed interviews and meetings through its monthly progress reporting.

Date: Ongoing, as determined by the consultant team relative to key project milestones.

Lead: Gary Mitchell

Primary sub-tasks and assignments:

- Recommend interviewees: Ed Paesel, Brian Gebhardt, J. Wynsma, TSC
- Refine list of interviewees: Carla Berroyer, Gary Mitchell
- Distribute/manage list and coordinate interviews (to avoid multiple contacts to same interviewees): Gary Mitchell
- Conduct interviews: Individual consultant team members

▪ **Newsletter "Fact Sheet" Inserts**

Purpose:

To inform the (widespread) public about the Study background, progress and results. Printed materials such as this primarily provide a one-way, outward method of communicating. However, through their design, content and targeted distribution, they should also interest and potentially attract other stakeholders who would prefer opportunities to provide direct input and gain more in-depth information.

Strategy:

Produce three (3) two-page (2) fact sheets that will be inserted in the SSMMA newsletter as stand-alone documents. The fact sheets will contain information and necessary graphics about the study purpose and timeframe and findings and preliminary conclusions. In addition, the newsletters and inserts will be timed to provide advance notice of and spark interest in the two Public Information Meetings to be held during the Study. Finally, the second insert will focus, in part, on how Southeast Service, as well as associated land use and local financing strategies, could impact particular interests such as local municipalities, commuters, residents, area employers and employees, business owners, property owners and land developers, community organizations, regional/ state agencies, institutions, etc.

The consultant team will coordinate with SSMMA staff well in advance of each production cycle regarding the specific communication objectives and content of each insert. Considerations will include the Study status, upcoming milestones and events, and particular outreach "gaps" or priorities that need to be addressed.

Date: May, August, November

Lead: Nancy Seeger

Primary sub-tasks and assignments:

- Research and write fact sheets: Nancy Seeger
- Produce camera-ready fact sheets: Nancy Seeger
- Research and prepare mailing lists: Brian Gebhardt

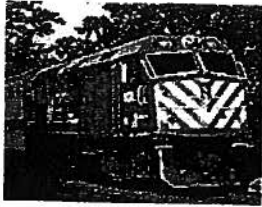
5. DOCUMENTATION

Throughout the Study, all public involvement activities will be documented to ensure that an accurate and clear record exists to support the Study recommendations. This documentation will also be used as part of the Appendix in the Final Report. In order to complete this documentation, members of the PSC and consultant team will forward any record of these activities directly to Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd. (NSA) or to Gary Mitchell at Wilbur Smith Associates. This can include meeting notes, reports, graphics, photographs, tapes, newspaper articles, website content, and CDs.

NSA will be responsible for maintaining the documentation file. Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd. is located at 804 Forest Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60202; email: Nseeger@aol.com; telephone: 847-869-4449; fax: 847-869-8284.

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Technical Sub-committee Meeting Summaries



Technical Sub-Committee #1

March 9, 2004, 10 AM
SSMMA Offices

Present:

Chicago Heights: Cleto Bonanotte, Val Williams
Crete: Tom Durkin
Lansing: Grace Bazylewski
South Holland: Joan Summit
Steger: Mayor Louis Sherman
Thornton: Max Salmon
Metra: Pat McAtee, Gary Foyle
Pace: Virgil Giles
RTA: Michelle Ryan, Bill Lenski
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association: Ed Paesel, Brian Gebhardt
Campaign For Sensible Growth: Ellen Shubart (guest)

Consultants:

Wilbur Smith Associates: Gary Mitchell, Craig Casper
Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.: Nancy Seeger

Technical Sub-Committee (TSC) Role

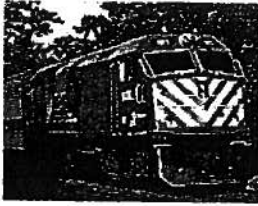
- ◆ Following the introductions, Gary Mitchell explained the advisory role of the TSC. The TSC will have first review of the Study recommendations (prior to public release), and the Calumet Corridor Planning Council will have final review (after public review and input).
- ◆ Future TSC meetings will be held on June 2, August 17, and December 7 at 10 AM at the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association.

Public Meeting #1

- ◆ The first public meeting is scheduled for June 10 from 4 PM to 8 PM. The meeting location is to be determined (possibly in Glenwood, and Joan Summit offered that South Holland could host Public Meeting #2 in November). The meeting will be an open house format with a formal presentation scheduled for 7 PM.

Project Purpose and Overview

- ◆ Gary Mitchell made a PowerPoint presentation: *Why The Study, Study Priorities, Key Considerations, Time Line, and Benefits*. There were no TSC questions following this initial presentation.



Technical Sub-Committee #1

Example Metra Stations and Station Areas

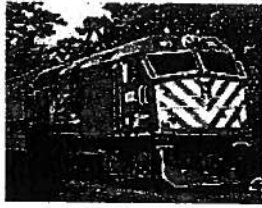
- ◆ Craig Casper made a slide presentation about station design/amenities and nearby development and redevelopment at five existing Metra stations: Brookfield (2), LaGrange, Elmhurst, and Arlington Heights. These and other station comparisons will be informative for the Corridor Planning Standards and Land Use tasks of the Study.
- ◆ Discussion followed about management of pedestrian traffic near stations and parking issues, especially in downtown situations.

Defining Transit-Supportive Development

- ◆ Gary Mitchell made a slide presentation on the characteristics of transit-supportive development. He provided numerous visual examples and provided observations about existing conditions in the study area corridor and communities.
- ◆ Gary also used the Steger Zoning Ordinance (recently acquired for this Study) as one example of a typical suburban ordinance that does not provide for the higher densities and mixing of land uses that is desirable around a transit station. This type of finding and resulting recommendations will be one important aspect of the Land Use task in this Study.
- ◆ Gary provided copies of a recent guest column from *Planning* magazine (American Planning Association) in which the author emphasized that development near transit stations ("Transit-Adjacent Development") is not necessarily transit-supportive development.
- ◆ Discussion followed about the potential station-area situations and existing regulations and incentives (e.g., Tax Increment Financing districts) in the nine affected communities. Joan Summit noted that South Holland has already acquired land near its potential station. Tom Durkin pointed out, based on his private sector development experience, that a rail station does not necessarily guarantee economic benefits in terms of related spending and visitation in a community if commuters are "park and riders" and go directly to and from their vehicles at the station.

The PowerPoint presentations used at this meeting were later forwarded to Brian Gebhardt on CD to distribute to those who requested copies.

Meeting Summary prepared by Nancy Seeger.



**June 2, 2004, 10 AM
SSMMA Offices**

Present:

Chicago Heights: Kevin Perkins
Crete: Tom Durkin
Lansing: Grace Bazylewski
South Chicago Heights: Lou Bednarek
South Holland: J. Wynsma
Will County Planning Division: Colin Dursing
Metra: Pat McAtee, Gary Foyle
Pace: Virgil Giles
RTA: Michelle Ryan, Bill Lenski
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association: Ed Paesel, Brian Gebhardt
Campaign For Sensible Growth: Ellen Shubart (guest)

Consultants:

Wilbur Smith Associates: Gary Mitchell
Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.: Nancy Seeger
ACG: The al-Chalabi Group, Ltd.: Margery al-Chalabi, Suhail al-Chalabi

Project Purpose and Overview

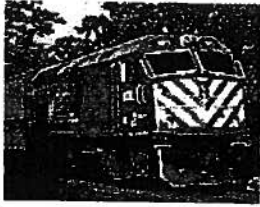
- ◆ Following introductions, Gary Mitchell reminded everyone of the four components of the Study: (1) Corridor Profile, (2) Corridor Planning Standards, (3) Land Use, and (4) Local Financing.

Local Financing Meeting

- ◆ Gary Mitchell reported on Steve Schlickman's presentation about Local Financing Options given at a meeting of village officials and representatives on May 26th.
- ◆ Discussion followed about potential inter-governmental cooperation for financing station areas.

Public Information Meeting No. 1

- ◆ Gary Mitchell updated everyone that the Public Meeting is scheduled for June 10th from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the Glenwood Village Hall. At 7:00 PM, State Senator Debbie Halvorson, State Representative George Scully, and Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano will offer remarks. Then Gary will give a formal presentation about the study. The remainder of the meeting will be "open house" format to display the results of work to date and to allow for informal conversation with the project team.



Technical Sub-Committee #2

Socio-Economic Findings for Corridor Profile

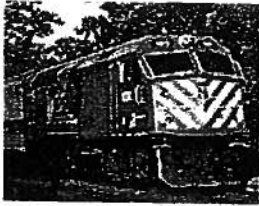
- ◆ Margery al-Chalabi presented highlights of The al-Chalabi Group's socio-economic findings about the SES corridor.
- ◆ J. Wynsma asked how the jobs data relates to the potential South Suburban airport.
- ◆ Gary Mitchell emphasized that these findings will be used as background information for the development of the Study's corridor planning standards and land use planning task.

Defining Transit-Supportive Development

- ◆ Gary Mitchell made a PowerPoint presentation about Transit-Supportive Development (TSD). He presented Arlington Heights and Elmhurst as examples of different types of successful TSD elsewhere in the Chicago region. He also reported about actions several SES communities are already taking relative to property acquisition and development near proposed station areas.
- ◆ Discussion followed, including mention of the Village of Thornton's current efforts to rewrite its zoning code, in part, to encourage revitalization of its village center, where the potential Metra SES station would be located.

The PowerPoint presentations used at this meeting were later forwarded to Brian Gebhardt on CD to distribute to those who requested copies.

Meeting Summary prepared by Nancy Seeger.



August 17, 2004, 10 AM
SSMMA Offices

Present:

Chicago Heights: Val Williams
Crete: Doug Kurzeja, Mike Smith
South Chicago Heights: Paul Peterson
South Holland: J. Wynsma
Steger: Conrad R. Kiebles
Thornton: Max Salmon
Will County Planning Division: Colin Duesing
Metra: Pat McAtee, Gary Foyle
Pace: Virgil Giles
RTA: Bill Lenski, Michael McCracken
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association: Ed Paesel, Brian Gebhardt
Campaign For Sensible Growth: Ellen Shubart (guest)

Consultants:

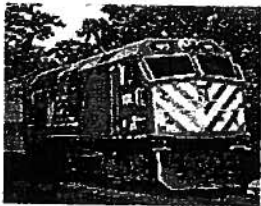
Wilbur Smith Associates: Gary Mitchell, Doug Hammel
Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.: Nancy Seeger
Schlickman & Associates: Steve Schlickman
Wildman Harrold Allen & Dixon: Louis Vitullo, Mark Huddle

Report on Public Information Meeting No. 1

- ◆ Nancy Seeger reported on the Calumet Corridor Planning Council public meeting held on June 10th in the Glenwood Village Hall. About 55 individuals attended the meeting, which included presentations by the following individuals: Jean Maggio, Mayor, Village of Glenwood; Jack Swan, Mayor, Village of Thornton and President of the Calumet Corridor Planning Council; State Senator Debbie Halvorsen and State Representative George Scully Jr.; Phil Pagano, Executive Director, Metra; and Gary Mitchell, Project Manager. The attendees also included journalists, public officials, the project consulting team, and citizens from various communities. Media coverage about the meeting, both preceding and after the event, included articles and editorials in six regional and local newspapers.

Local Financing

- ◆ Steve Schlickman reported on the meeting about local responsibility for station area costs that was held with municipal officials on May 26th. He and Lou Vitullo highlighted the following: primary funding sources (federal, state, and local); Home



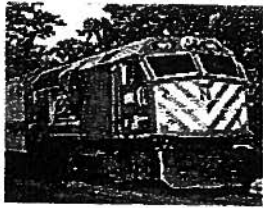
Meeting Highlights
Technical Sub-Committee #3

- Rule, Non-Home Rule, and TIFs; interagency agreements by local communities; STP funds; and the potential for private entities to share costs (e.g., Balmoral Race Track).
- ◆ Steve Schlickman distributed a survey covering funding needs and priorities of local communities. **Surveys are to be returned to Brian Gebhardt by September 9, 2004.**
 - ◆ Ed Paesel said that upon completion of Metra's SES Alternatives Analysis, which is anticipated to be 2 - 3 years from now, Metra will present a financial plan to the federal government. He emphasized the need for local communities to have a financial plan at that time and to be able to show "solidarity" of approach. Steve Schlickman added that land use plans, including consideration of local development ordinances, are as critical to showing the commitment of local communities as financing plans.

Land Use

- ◆ Gary Mitchell engaged the committee in a thorough analysis about the requirements and opportunities for transit-supportive development and/or redevelopment. Using the Village of South Holland as an example, he demonstrated the analytical process required to initiate and implement successful redevelopment of station areas and nearby land uses.
- ◆ Pat McAtee stressed the importance of residential construction to station areas in local communities, stating that pre-sale of housing is often a successful strategy. He also noted that new housing development near stations can be reasonably priced as demonstrated elsewhere.

Meeting Summary prepared by Nancy Seeger.



December 8, 2004, 10 AM
SSMMA Offices

Present:

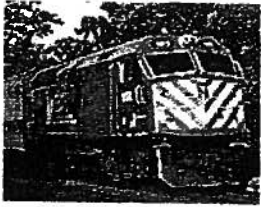
Chicago Heights: Kevin Perkins, Val Williams
Crete: Tom Durkin
South Chicago Heights: Paul Peterson
South Holland: J. Wynsma
Steger: Conrad Kiebles
Thornton: Jack Swan, Max Salmon
Will County Planning Division: Colin Duesing
Metra: Pat McAtee
Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission: Ron Thomas
Pace: Leondria Blackman
RTA: Michelle Ryan
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association: Ed Paesel, Brian Gebhardt
Campaign For Sensible Growth: Ellen Shubart (guest)

Consultants:

Wilbur Smith Associates: Gary Mitchell, Doug Hammel
Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.: Nancy Seeger
Schlickman & Associates: Steve Schlickman

Report on Public Information Meeting No. 2

- ◆ Following the introductions, Nancy Seeger gave a brief report on the agenda and discussions at Public Meeting #2, which was held on December 1 at the South Holland Public Library. The meeting was attended by approximately 60 individuals: public officials, stakeholders, community leaders, journalists, public agency directors, and private citizens.
- ◆ Ms. Seeger described the public meeting as animated and positive. The guest speakers expressed their support for the SouthEast Service (SES) and highlighted the findings and recommendations resulting from the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study. Rick Bryant, representing Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., communicated the Congressman's commitment to the proposed SES.
- ◆ The following newspaper articles were published related to the public meeting and SouthEast Service planning: *Daily Southtown* (12/1/04, 12/5/04, 12/8/04); *The Illinois Times* (12/2/04); *Chicago Tribune* (12/3/04); *The Star*, two articles (12/5/04).



Project Update

- ◆ Gary Mitchell reviewed the highlights of the four components of the study: (1) Corridor Profile, (2) Corridor Planning Standards, (3) Land Use, and (4) Local Financing. He noted that the final study results will be presented at a meeting of the Calumet Corridor Planning Council in January.

Local Financing

- ◆ Steve Schlickman presented a verbal report and handout on the SouthEast Service Local Finance draft findings and recommendations. Subjects covered included: Municipal Responsibility; Basic Funding Effort; High End Funding Effort; Station Area Cost; Local Funding Source Options; Municipal Funding Sources Check List; Municipal Finance Survey; and, Conclusions & Recommendations.

Land Use

- ◆ Gary Mitchell gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the "Top 10 Ways to Make Regulations TOD Friendly." He used examples from the existing zoning ordinances of several corridor communities to illustrate how local development regulations are already be transit-supportive or may need adjustments to avoid being a hindrance to desired development in station areas.

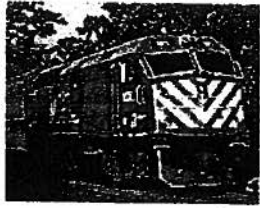
Discussion

Following the presentations by Gary Mitchell and Steve Schlickman, committee members engaged in a lengthy discussion about key issues of the study, as follows:

- ◆ When Metra's Alternatives Analysis is completed (scheduled to start in January 2005), Metra will be required to submit a sound financial plan to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This is required for consideration of FTA funding, which is usually distributed on a competitive basis nationally. The consultants advised the SES corridor communities of the need to have a sound financial plan in place by this time.
- ◆ The SES will require funding support from the State of Illinois, potentially through General Revenue funds. SES corridor communities should potentially plan for an initiative to Springfield in 2005.
- ◆ Establishing a firm commitment from a developer can take several years. SES corridor communities should start such negotiations as soon as possible.
- ◆ Along with the requirement for a financial plan, the FTA requires a project justification, which includes a set of sub-criteria, such as ridership estimates, land use plans, region-wide analyses of time saved, and congestion reduction.
- ◆ Other issues discussed included: land use concepts, station area plans, zoning ordinances, design guidelines/standards, market analyses, potential relationships with corridor businesses, special districts, potential gentrification as land use transitions, and the CREATE projects.

Meeting Summary prepared by Nancy Seeger.

Public Meeting Summaries



Public Information Meeting # 1

June 10, 2004, 4:00-8:00 PM

**Glenwood Village Hall
One Asselborn Way
Glenwood, Illinois**

Attendance:

A total of 56 individuals registered as attending the meeting. This group included members of the media and public officials (see attached Public Meeting Register). Representatives from South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (Ed Paesel and Brian Gebhardt) and the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study consulting team (Wilbur Smith Associates; Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd.; ACG: The al Chalabi Group; Schlickman & Associates; and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP) provided assistance to the public during the meeting.

Meeting Notice:

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) sent notification letters to 30 interested public officials (see attached sample notification letter and mailing list). Media advisories were faxed and emailed to multiple newspapers, television stations and radio stations. Subsequent telephone calls to each individual followed.

Media Coverage:

Members of the media in attendance and who also published articles were:

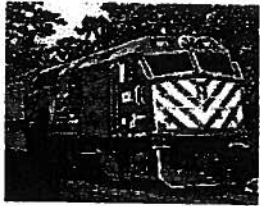
- ◆ Stan Ziemba (Chicago Tribune - South)
- ◆ Mike O'Neal (The Star)
- ◆ Pedro Castro (Daily Southtown)

Other media coverage included:

- ◆ Gordon McCoy (Illinois Rail Railgram)
- ◆ Published meeting announcements: Jon Hilkevitch, Chicago Tribune, (column) June 7, 2004; The Peotone Vedette (article) June 9, 2004; Guy Tridgell, Daily Southtown, (column) June 4, 2004.
- ◆ Editorial: The Star, June 24, 2004.

Meeting Registration and Handout Materials:

Each meeting attendee was asked to sign in at a registration desk to ensure all the names and addresses were recorded. Four handouts were made available for each attendee: UPDATE (South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study Newsletter Insert #1), Agenda, Questionnaire, and Comment Form. In addition, public officials and media representatives received a separate folder with color copies of the handouts and four maps prepared by ACG: The al Chalabi Group, Ltd. in association with Wilbur Smith Associates (Exhibits I, V, VI, XI).



Public Information Meeting # 1

Meeting Displays:

After attendees signed in, they were directed to a separate room to view the exhibits and meet with the representatives from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association and the Wilbur Smith Associates consulting team in an informal "open house" format. The exhibits included maps, diagrams, and photographs describing the following processes: (1) Land Use and Corridor Planning (Wilbur Smith Associates), Socio-Economic Characteristics (ACG: The al-Chalabi Group), and Funding Options for Local Communities (Schlickman & Associates).

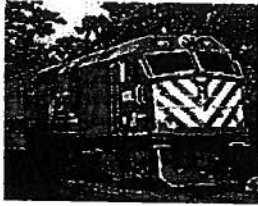
Formal Presentation:

A formal presentation phase began at 7:00 PM, with followup discussion and questions continuing through 8:00 PM. The agenda follows:

Welcome:	Jean Maggio, Mayor, Village of Glenwood
Introduction:	Jack Swan, Mayor, Village of Thornton and President, Calumet Corridor Planning Council
Keynote Address:	State Senator Debbie Halvorson, Chairperson, Southland Legislative Caucus
Additional Remarks:	State Representative George Scully, Jr., Vice-Chairman, Southland Legislative Caucus
SouthEast Service:	Phil Pagano, Executive Director, Metra
Study Overview:	Gary Mitchell, Project Manager, Wilbur Smith Associates
Discussion:	Corridor Mobility, Socio-Economic, Planning and Funding Issues

Highlights of Presentations and Discussion:

- ◆ State Senator Debbie Halvorson (D-Crete) pushed for a Metra line serving the southeast suburbs: "This is not only another commuter line to the city. This will be something that is going suburb to suburb." "We want a Metra line that goes into the area where people work." "We will never be satisfied with mediocrity."
- ◆ Brian Gebhardt, Director of Transportation, SSMMA: "We want people to begin thinking now about such things as where stations might be located, what they might look like, and how they will be funded."
- ◆ Margery al-Chalabi, President, ACG: The al-Chalabi Group: "There's no question the rail line is needed. Nearly 6 percent of commuters in the suburbs depend on commuter rail for getting to and from work compared to just 3.3 percent in the Chicago region."
- ◆ Nancy Seeger, President, Nancy Seeger Associates: "The study is answering some key questions about land use, local financing and economic development for the new SouthEast Service. Metra, in a concurrent effort, is studying potential ridership, engineering and design and constructions costs."



Public Information Meeting #1

- ◆ Gary Mitchell, Director of Urban Planning, Wilbur Smith Associates: "Communities will have to decide what kind of transit station they need, which could range from a relatively modest \$1million effort to more than \$5 million for a station similar to Tinley Park's station. They also must make decisions involving zoning and development density. Many transit-oriented developments involve multifamily residences and a mixture of residential and commercial, and the zoning codes of many suburban communities don't allow such developments, so changes may have to be made in the rules."
- ◆ According to Executive Director Phil Pagano, Metra has contracted with EarthTech to complete an alternatives analysis to study potential riders, engineering and design, and construction costs. This type study is a prerequisite for the project to become eligible for federal funding.
- ◆ Phil Pagano: "The SES could be up and running within eight years *if* federal funding to pay the largest portion of the project is included in the now pending transportation bill (in Congress)." "We are at the plate, but now we need to get to first base."
- ◆ Phil Pagano and State Senator Halvorson urged the eight communities on the proposed rail line to start planning for stations and other kinds of development.
- ◆ Steve Schlickman, President, Schlickman & Associates: "The cost of building stations and other development along the route would be the responsibility of towns served by the line."

Public Comments:

Attendees were encouraged to submit comments and to answer the Questionnaire, which contained 14 statements about important transportation and land development issues affecting the rail corridor, the southern suburbs, and the region. A handful of completed questionnaires were returned, which are part of the public involvement file for the study.

Meeting Summary prepared by Nancy Seeger.

U.S. 30 work stalled — like those fleeing I-80/94

DAILY SOUTH TOWN 6/14/04

A new, improved U.S. 30 was supposed to be the alternative this year to the mess that is becoming Interstate 80/94.

The makeover of the road through Ford Heights, Sauk Village and Lynwood was slated to be unveiled a year ago.

Instead of two narrow lanes in each direction, the revamped U.S. 30 was going to be wider, with a continuous middle turn lane from Sauk Trail to Illinois 394. New lights also were going to be installed at Torrence Avenue and Illinois 83.

The hope was the rebuilt U.S. 30 would be ready to start taking some of the drivers wanting to flee from the monster Interstate 80/94 widening starting this year.

It has not happened that way.

Repeat surprise encounters between construction crews and gas, electric and telephonic lines are making the job much harder. And longer.

"It has been a number of different utilities that keep popping up," an Illinois Department of Transportation spokesman said.

Chance meetings with a misplaced cable or two is not unusual with older roads. But the \$17.4 million U.S. 30 project might be setting a record.

The delays have pushed the completion date of the work from last fall until July or August.

Look for the U.S. 30 to remain a cone zone for the next couple of months -- at least.

One lane will be maintained in each direction with frequent weaving until the work is complete.

Or until the next gas line or telephone cable is not in the spot it was thought to be lurking.



GUY TRIDGELL

On the Move

Marriage of convenience

From the Why-Didn't-Anyone-Think-Of-That-Years-Ago Department: License plate renewal stickers are for sale at the customer service center in the tollway headquarters.

The agreement between the tollway and the secretary of state's office gives folks the chance to do their I-PASS business and Illinois vehicle registration paperwork in one place. Neither chore is fun, but both can be gotten out of the way in one stop.

The stickers will be sold Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority at Interstate 355 and Ogden Avenue in Downers Grove.

Etc.

■ The reconstruction of 63rd Street between Ashland Avenue and Morgan Street on the South Side started this week.

In addition to laying a new street surface, the project includes new sidewalks, curbs, gutters, lights and trees. Improved traffic signals will be added at Racine Avenue and Loomis Street.

The \$4 million project will be finished in the fall.

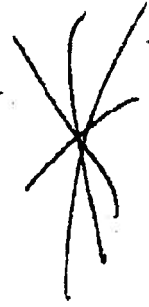
■ The new designated station serving the Hyde Park community on the Metra Electric Line switched this week from 59th Street to 55th-56th-57th Street. The change means all off-peak trains now will stop at the 55th-56th-57th Street Station. The ticket office will be making the move, too. Schedules reflecting the changes are available at the Randolph and VanBuren street stations.

■ The Chicago Transit Authority will be offering free trolley service on weekends and holidays in the Pilsen and Chinatown neighborhoods. The trolleys will be making stops at attractions in the South Loop and the West Side. More information is at www.transitchicago.com.

■ Pace will be giving away a year of free rides to 20 customers for five days starting June 22. The promotion coincides with the 20th anniversary of the suburban bus agency. The winners will be randomly selected while they are getting off buses in the suburbs.

■ Glenwood Village Hall will be the place for a Thursday open house about the proposed Metra SouthEast Service Line. The meeting will last from 4 to 8 p.m. The SouthEast Service Line, stretching from Chicago to Crete, is included in a federal transportation bill awaiting approval in Congress.

If you have any suggestions or comments for On the Move, transportation writer Guy Tridgell may be reached at gtridgell@dailysouthtown.com or (708) 633-5676.



WOMEN ONLY

WIFEIRO

CHICAGO LAND

MONDAY
JUNE 7, 2004

GETTING AROUND WITH JON HILKEMTICH

Women-only airline enters the market

As Hoeters Air attempts to offer sex appeal at 37,000 feet to a mainly male clientele of air travelers in the Chicago area, this week, an airline is set to cater to the other half of the population.

Velvet, which is based in Singapore, has just started flights to Hong Kong that are for women only.

Weight restrictions are checked baggage have been increased. Other "women-friendly perks" include hand massages during flights and beauticians' leading discussions about cosmetics and skin and hair care according to a report in the trade journal

Aviation Daily.

"The female population is one of the market segments we will be aggressively targeting," said a spokeswoman for the airline, which is based in Singapore. "We're looking to appeal to what we believe is a market that is underserved."

The Singaporean airline has left the service to women only flights, and arrange about 10 hours on Thursday afternoon before flights a week between Gary, Chicago and Montreal. At airports, the "Missile Beauty" S.C. Several Hoeters' staff will be on each flight to help the flight attendants

serve drinks and entertain passengers, mostly groups of men headed to golf vacations in the South Carolina coast.

Hoeters Air president and CEO, Jeffery A. Hoeters, said that the airline is looking to appeal to a market that is underserved. "We're looking to appeal to a market that is underserved."

Meeting on new Metra line

An open house will be held Thursday in Meigs, Ill., to add a new commuter rail line from Chicago to Will County to PEASESEE TRANSIT, PAGE 5

TRANSIT: Metra seeks

Comments on Proposed line

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago. Metra is seeking federal funding for the proposed Southeast Service Line, which would run along Union Pacific/CSX railroad tracks with stops at Debra, South Holland, Thornton, Glen

wood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights and Steger.

The purpose of the meeting, conducted by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council, is to allow the public to help shape the plan and to discuss questions about land use, local financing and economic development related to the proposed south suburban rail service.

The open house will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. in the Glenwood Village Hall, One Ashselhorn Way, Metra officials will make a formal presentation on the Southeast Service plan at 7 p.m.

I-PASS time savings touted
Long-haul truckers who use

The I-PASS electronic toll collection system are shaving time off their routes, according to a new study by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.

Truck drivers who use I-PASS are cutting round-trip travel times by up to 16 minutes on the Northport Tollway (Interstate Highway 90) and up to 20 minutes on the I-55 State Tollway (Interstate Highway 294), the study found.

The Midwest Truckers Association estimates that truckers save up to \$25 for every 15-minute reduction.

The tollway study also noted that truckers driving through I-PASS express lanes don't

need to accelerate and decelerate, which greatly reduces carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions.

Pace offers free rides

Pace, the suburban transit agency, turns 20 years old this year. It is celebrating the anniversary by awarding a year's worth of free transit to 20 passengers who will be picked at random as they step off Pace buses from June 27 to 28.

Column Getting Around at
Fullkettich@tribune.com or c/o The Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Read recent Getting Around columnists at www.chicagotribune.com/ga/getting-around.

Public Meeting Set On New Commuter Rail Line

PEOPLE VOICING OPINION

The Calumet Corridor Planning Council will hold a public meeting for a new commuter rail line in the South Suburbs on Thursday, June 10, at the Glenwood Village Hall, 1 Assleburn Way (just north of Main St. at Campbell). There will be an open house from 4-8 p.m., with the formal presentation at 7 p.m. State Sen. Debbie Halvorson (D-Crete) will be the keynote speaker.

At the meeting, the public will be able to help shape the plan for the SouthEast Service, the new commuter rail line proposed by the Southern Suburbs and Metra. In attendance will be State Representative George Scully Jr., Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano, and public officials from Dutton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete, the Balmoral Park area, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the RTA, Pace, and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers' Association.

Officials say, "After decades, residents of the Southern Suburbs may get a Metra line. A study that started in January to support the proposed rail line, which has been backed in Congress by Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr. and William O. Lipinski, answers key questions about land use, local financing, and economic development for new rail service.

"The first meeting where the 'South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study' will be discussed is today. A visual presen-

tation will be shown throughout the meeting, exhibits will be on display, and consultants will discuss the project and answer questions," they said.

The meeting site is accessible to disabled individuals. Anyone needing special assistance should call Brian Gebhardt at 708-206-1155.

METRO

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

FRIDAY JUNE 11, 2004

South suburbs, Metra mull what new line would bring

By Stanley Ziemia
Tribune staff reporter

South suburban residents, officials and transportation planners on Thursday began putting together specific plans for a Metra commuter rail line proposed for southeastern Cook County and eastern Will County.

Although the line, if built, likely wouldn't be up and running for another decade, the gathering gave officials and residents an opportunity to consider development projects along the planned route.

"We want people to begin thinking now about such things as where stations might be located, what they might look like and how they will be funded," said Brian Gebhardt, director of transportation for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, one of the organizations spearheading the project.

"It's important to consider these things in advance, because to be seriously considered for federal funding, we need to show the government that this line would be successful and

It's important to consider these things in advance, because to be seriously considered for federal funding, we need to show the government that this line would be successful.

—Brian Gebhardt, of South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association

that there would be significant ancillary development to support the line."

The meeting also helped planners get an idea of how people in the south suburbs would use the line, said Margery Al-Chalabi, a planning consultant to the rail project.

"There's no question the rail line is needed," she said. "Nearly 6 percent of commuters in the south suburbs depend on commuter rail for getting to and from work compared to just 2.3 percent in the rest of the Chicago region."

The proposed \$524 million Metra line—extending from Chicago's LaSalle Street station to Crete in eastern Will on existing CSX Transportation Co. and Union Pacific tracks—would include stops in Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete and Balmoral Park, just south of Crete. Although long touted by plan-

ners as necessary for more south suburban residents to access jobs in the region's fertile job markets, especially the Loop and the area around O'Hare International Airport, the proposed southeast commuter rail line languished near the bottom of Metra's priority list until last year. Then when political leaders protested the agency's apparent snub of the south suburbs in announcing plans for an outer-ring commuter rail line serving O'Hare that would stop in Joliet, Metra officials made it a priority.

Although Metra would construct the commuter line, the cost of building stations and other developments along its route would be the responsibility of towns served by the line, said Stephen Schlickman, a financial consultant to the mayors and managers group.

During the session held in Glenwood Village Hall and sponsored by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council, officials and residents had the opportunity to question and make suggestions to planners about the rail line and alternate transit modes.

The suggestions could be included in the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study begun by Metra this year with a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation and matching funds from the RTA. The study, a necessary step in obtaining federal funding, is to be completed in December.

To meet federal guidelines, Metra also hired a consultant to perform an alternate study to determine whether other types of transit, such as rapid transit or express bus service between the southeastern suburbs and the Loop, might be a better alternative.

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South suburbs, Metra mull what new line would bring

By **Stanley Ziemba**
Tribune staff reporter
Published June 11, 2004

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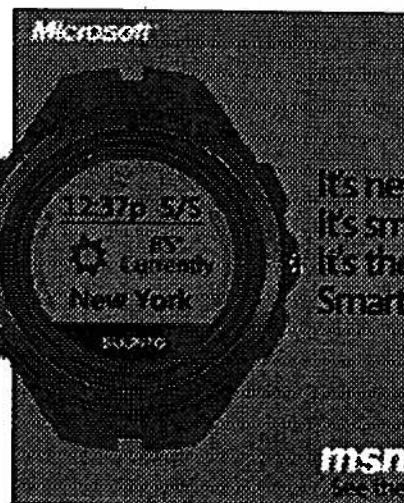
"It's important to consider these things in advance, because to be seriously considered for funding, we need to show the government that this line would be successful and that there would be significant ancillary development to support the line."

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"There's no question the rail line is needed," she said. "Nearly 6 percent of commuters in the south suburbs depend on commuter rail for getting to and from work compared to just 3.3 percent in the Chicago region."

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The suggestions could be included in the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use Financing Study begun by Metra this year with a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation matching funds from the RTA. The study, a necessary step in obtaining federal funding, is not completed in December.

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HERE TO THERE



MIKE O'NEAL
Star columnist

Metra train proposal is far off

The Sun 6/13/04

The first train from Crete to downtown Chicago probably is a decade or so away from departure, but enthusiasm seems high for Metra's proposed South East Line.

The route would originate near Balmoral Park Race Track just south of Crete and make its way through Crete, Steger, South Chicago Heights, Chicago Heights, Glenwood, Thornton, South Holland and Dolton to LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago.

The trains would utilize the jointly owned tracks of the Union Pacific and CSX railroads from the southern terminal to about 90th Street in Chicago, where they would then jog over a short stretch of Chicago Rail Link track to a junction with Metra's Rock Island District for the run downtown.

Local governmental officials and residents got a look at the initial plans for land use and local financing during a public hearing Thursday night at the Glenwood Village Hall.

The local communities will be responsible for building stations and parking lots and making plans for adjoining developments along the route.

Consultants were on hand to discuss the various ways the communities can finance their obligations to the project and to show how a transit station can stimulate commercial and residential development.

Communities will be able to choose the type of station they would like in their towns, everything from simple affairs that might cost around \$1 million up to grandiose structures, such as Tinley Park's Oak Park Avenue station, which cost about \$5 million.

After a contentious relationship with Metra, which kept putting the long-planned route on back-burner after back-burner, south suburban officials finally got the commuter rail authority to get the plan on track after a blow up last year over Metra's STAR line, a suburb to suburb route that will eventually encircle the Chicago area.

The initial plans for STAR Line put the south suburban part of the route on hold while promoting the section of the line from the northwest side of Joliet to O'Hare International Airport.

When south suburban officials complained about the STAR line plan — as well as other perceived Metra snubs of the area — U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., entered the battle and eventually wrestled the South East Line project back into active status.

The Southland Caucus, a group of area state legislators headed by state Sen. Debbie Halvorson, D-Crete, also put its muscle behind the project.

U.S. Rep. Bill Lipinski, D-Ill., a real power in transportation matters in the nation's capital, also climbed on board and money for the South East Line is included in a funding bill making its way through Congress.

That bill, called the T-3 Transportation Act, isn't expected to be approved until after the November elections.

So, while the project is finally on the move, getting those trains on track won't be as easy as it seems.

See O'NEAL, Page D4

The southern portion of the line, along the UP/CSX, is filled with freight trains, up to 60 per day, and the UP, which

maintains and dispatches the route for both railroads, has yet to give a green light to adding the weekday rush-hour commuter trains to its schedule.

Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano said the agency has engaged in some "very preliminary" talks with the railroad. Metra has a good working relationship with the freight railroads and has contracts with the UP to operate commuter trains on the former Chicago and North Western Railroad routes to the north, northwest and west. Still, UP's approval is not a sure thing.

A bypass around the busy — and congested — Yard Center complex in South Holland and Dolton is necessary to maintain any chance of the commuter trains running on time. Two Amtrak trains a day use the route between Thornton Junction and Union Station and getting them through the freight complex is a daily battle.

Similarly, an overpass over the Indiana Harbor Belt and CSX approaches to their big yards in Riverdale is needed to keep the commuter trains

from being blocked at the rail line junctions.

The Chicago Rail Link connection from the UP to the Rock Island is a one-track, low-speed freight track that runs through the middle of a residential neighborhood with many grade crossings. It will need a lot of improvements — and some careful finessing of the neighboring residents — to bring it up to Metra standards.

I'm not meaning to be pessimistic here. Nobody will enjoy seeing and riding those

South East Line trains more than I will, but it's not a simple or quick task.

Pagano estimates that it will take about eight years to complete the project after it receives federal approval.

Commuter rail projects seem to take forever to complete because they are expensive and complex. The South East Line will not be an exception.

Mike O'Neal may be reached at monal@starnewspapers.com or (708) 802-8095.

Southeast area prepares for rail line

The SouthEast Service line would connect downtown Chicago's LaSalle Street station with Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger and Crete. Initially, service would be limited to weekday rush hours, with a midday round-trip from downtown and back.

By Mike O'Neil, The Star
June 13, 2004

The eight communities along the proposed Metra SouthEast Service rail commuter line will have some big decisions to make in the next few months. They'll have to decide where to locate the stations and parking lots. They have to decide what kind of development they want to see in the neighborhoods surrounding the stations. And they'll have to decide how they will pay for everything.

See METRA, Page A4.

Funding for the service is contained in the federal T-3 transportation bill, which is now working its way through Congress. Approval,

Metra

Continued from Page A1

however, is not expected before the November elections, and there's no guarantee that the SouthEast Line will survive in the final version.

Once federal funding is in place, however, Metra executive director Philip Pagano said the line will be up and running within eight years.

The Calumet Corridor Planning Council, which consists of communities along the SouthEast line, the Bishop Ford Expressway and Illinois Route 394, and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association have secured the services of several consultants to move along the local phase of the project.

On Thursday, a preliminary presentation on that plan was unveiled during an open house/program at the Glenwood Village Hall.

The study, by Wilbur Smith Association in collaboration with the al Chalabi Group, Nancy Seeger Associates, Schlickman and Associates and Wildman, Harold, Allen and Dixon LLP, is expected to be completed by December. This study will focus on the urban planning and local financing aspects.

Metra, meanwhile, has hired EarthTech to do an alternative uses analysis to see if a commuter railroad is the best way to serve the transportation needs of the area. Pagano said the agency is in the process of hiring other consultants for other aspects of the planning process.

Following completion of the local study, the communities will have to decide what kind of train station they need, which could range from a relatively modest \$1 million effort to more than \$5 million for a station similar to Tinley Park's Oak Park Avenue station.

Gary Mitchell, director of urban planning services for Wilbur Smith Associates, said the communities also must make decisions involving zoning and development density.

Many transit-oriented developments involve multi-family residences and a mixture of residential and commercial, and the zoning laws of many suburban communi-

ties don't allow such developments, so changes may have to be made in the rules, Mitchell explained.

Ground has been broken in Glenwood, between the village hall and the railroad tracks, for Nugent Square, a mixed use development with retail establishments on the first floor and residences on the second and third floors. Mitchell cited this as an example of the type of development that could occur around a train station.

There are a number of alternatives for financing the stations, Mitchell said, including joint development with commercial forces, tax increment financing districts, state highway funds and federal congestion mitigation funds, among others.

In a keynote speech, state Sen. Debbie Halvorson, D-Crete, chairman of the Southland Legislative Caucus, reviewed the problems encountered in getting the project off the ground and thanked those who helped, including U.S. Reps. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Chicago, and Bill Lipinski, D-Chicago.

Noting that the rail project has spurred the communities along the line to speed up their development efforts, Halvorson said, "We will never be satisfied with mediocrity."

In his presentation, Pagano said Metra was looking into using self-propelled Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) coaches on the route, at least initially. The DMU's could be operated at less cost than a conventional train powered by a diesel locomotive, Pagano said, and would help in keeping the overall costs of the project more attractive to federal officials. Locomotive-hauled trains could be used in the future, if ridership exceeds expectations, he noted.

Pagano also said that Metra has had "very preliminary talks" with the Union Pacific Railroad, co-owner with CSX of the southern part of the route, about adding passenger service to the line.

The Metra executive said the commuter authority has good relationships with the freight railroads and expects the talks to be successful.

Mike O'Neil may be reached at mikeo@starnewspapers.com or (708) 490-4955.



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Updated Thursday and Sunday at 6 a.m.

Communities get ready for rail line

Sunday, June 13, 2004

By Mike O'Neal, The Star

The eight communities along the proposed Metra SouthEast Service rail commuter line will have some big decisions to make in the next few months.

They'll have to decide where to locate the stations and parking lots.

They have to decide what kind of development they want to see in the neighborhoods surrounding the stations.

And they'll have to decide how they will pay for everything.

The SouthEast Service line would connect downtown Chicago's LaSalle Street station with Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger and Crete. Initially, service would be limited to weekday rush hours, with a midday round-trip from downtown and back.

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Mike O'Neal may be reached at moneal@starnewspapers.com or (708) 802-8095.

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SOUTHEAST

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Officials make push for Metra line

Sunday, June 13, 2004

By Pedro Castro
Correspondent

State Sen. Debbie Halvorson (D-Crete) pushed for a Metra line serving the southeast suburbs during a public meeting held by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council.

"This is not only another commuter line to the city. This will be something that is going suburb to suburb.

"We want a Metra line that goes into the area where people work," she said Thursday at Glenwood Village Hall.

At the hearing, the council presented findings from the South Suburban Commuter Rail Study to Metra officials, mayors, businessmen and state officials.

The study began in January and will be completed in December.

The study is answering some key questions about land use, local financing and economic development for the new service. Metra, in a concurrent effort, is studying potential ridership, engineering and design and construction costs.

The estimated cost is \$524.3 million, officials said. Proposed financing would come from the Federal Transit Authority and traditional funding.

Nontraditional funding sources also will be explored, officials said.

The proposed Southeast Service Line would use freight tracks and would stretch south

to Balmoral park and north to the LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago.

Stations would be built in Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete and near Balmoral Park.

According to the study, the Southeast Service Line would benefit the Southland by providing easier access to jobs in Chicago.

By the year 2020, 4.4 million gallons of gas and 140,000 hours of travel time would be saved, according to the study. The rail also would create a needed economic boost.

The line also would open the avenue of reverse commuting; people living in the Chicago Metropolitan area traveling to the Southland to work.

The push for a new commuter line began 10 years ago. But it wasn't until now that the push is grabbing the attention of the Federal Transit Authority.

"This is something we have been working on for a long time," Halvorson said.

But the process still has a long way to go.

"We are at the plate," Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano said. "But now we need to get to first base."

The estimated completion of this project would take upward of eight to 10 years after federal approval, officials said.

A second public hearing is scheduled for Nov. 17 when the council will present its updated study results and recommendations.

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EDITORIALS

Downtown rehabs bring ire, growth

Two of the Southland's largest communities are engaged in redevelopment plans aimed at revitalizing their downtown areas.

Tinley Park's plan for the Oak Park Avenue business district has been gradually taking shape for several years. Oak Lawn's plan has been advancing in small steps to improve the look and productivity of the 95th Street business district west of 50th Avenue.

In both cases, a Metra commuter rail station is one of the centerpiece of the plan. Both communities have identified convenient mass transit as a key factor in attracting business development. Both recognize that their train stations offer an opportunity to plan residential as well as commercial developments, co-existing in a symbiotic relationship.

New residents, it is hoped, will patronize the new businesses, and the businesses and convenient transportation will attract residents to new housing.

Both plans have drawn some opposition, Oak Lawn's apparently more so than Tinley Park's. A public hearing in Oak Lawn last week drew a crowd of nearly 200 people, most of whom objected to an 84-unit condominium develop-

ment that would be part of the plan. Many also opposed a five-story parking garage, intended to serve Metra commuters and to provide convenient parking for the business district, which has suffered for decades from a lack of nearby parking.

In Tinley Park there appears to be less opposition, but some residents are fearful that a proposed movie house and parking garage will lead to traffic congestion that will significantly change the quality of life.

In both communities, there is an undertone of resistance to any kind of change in old, established commercial areas that longtime residents have been satisfied with. The loss of older, mom-and-pop businesses is regrettable and should be avoided wherever possible, of course.

Resistance to change — to "progress" — is natural and understandable, as is concern about congestion. But in our view, both redevelopment programs, in Tinley Park and in Oak Lawn, are well-devised and sensible plans to adapt to changes in the communities and invest in their future.

The alternative — essentially, to allow the business areas to age and decline — is unacceptable.

SOUTHEAST SUBURBS

Study showing need for Metra

DAILY SOUTHSTAR

By Pedro Castro June 13, 2004
Correspondent

State Sen. Debbie Halvorson (D-Crete) pushed for a Metra line serving the southeast suburbs during a public meeting held by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council.

"We want a Metra line that goes into the area where people work."

SEN. DEBBIE HALVORSON

"This is not only another commuter line to the city. This will be something that is going suburb to suburb."

"We want a Metra line that goes into the area where people work," she said Thursday at Glenwood Village Hall.

At the hearing, the council presented findings from the South Suburban Commuter Rail Study to Metra officials, mayors, businessmen and state officials.

The study began in January and will be completed in December.

The study is answering some key questions about land use, local financing and economic development for the new service. Metra, in a concurrent effort, is studying potential ridership, engineering, and design and construction costs.

The estimated cost is \$524.3 million, officials said. Proposed financing would come from the Federal Transit Authority and traditional funding.

See METRA, page B5

Metra

Continued from page B1

Nontraditional funding sources also will be explored, officials said.

The proposed Southeast Service Line would use freight tracks and would stretch south to Balmoral park and north to the LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago.

Stations would be built in Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete and near Balmoral Park.

According to the study, the Southeast Service Line would benefit the Southland by providing easier access to jobs in Chicago.

By the year 2020, 4.4 million gallons of gas and 140,000 hours of travel time would be saved, according to the study. The rail also would create a needed economic boost.

The line also would open the avenue of reverse commuting; people living in the Chicago Metropolitan area traveling to the Southland to work.

The push for a new commuter line began 10 years ago. But it wasn't until now that the push is grabbing the attention of

the Federal Transit Authority.

"This is something we have been working on for a long time," Halvorson said.

But the process still has a long way to go.

"We are at the plate," Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano said. "But now we need to get to first base."

The estimated completion of this project would take upward of eight to 10 years after federal approval, officials said.

A second public hearing is scheduled for Nov. 17 when the council will present its updated study results and recommendations.

Founded 1901 and published twice weekly

THE STAR

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editor

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 A Hullinger International publication

ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION

SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA

June 13, 2004
EDITORIALS

More to come, but big hurdle cleared

New, real impetus for building a third metropolitan airport near Peotone was provided by federal officials last week when the Federal Aviation Administration agreed with an Illinois future passenger use forecast.

The FAA announced approval of a projection that even if O'Hare International Airport is expanded as proposed, Chicago air capacity soon will be outstripped, the need for a new airport clear and certain.

The projection also takes into account the rapid and spectacular expansion of gates, flights and facilities at Midway Airport on Chicago's Southwest Side — an expansion project now officially finished — and increased activity at Gary Airport over the Indiana border.

The FAA's approval of the forecast is a major boost for development of Peotone in that it allows IDOT to proceed with putting together a master plan for the third airport. Land for the proposed one-runway starter airport has been largely acquired, and two planning and governmental consortiums have plowed ahead in recent months, putting other preliminary pieces in place.

IDOT Secretary Tim Martin said last week he intends to include representatives of both groups in a new planning alliance that will decide how the airport will be developed and operated.

That is easier said than done. As reported in The

Star in recent months, a south suburban consortium of municipalities led by U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Chicago, has embraced a largely privatized concept that already has identified two airport development firms willing to do the job. Meanwhile, Will County officials, led by the county board, County Executive Joe Mikan and U.S. Rep. Jerry Weller, R-Morris, are forging ahead with their own publicly financed plan for building and running the facility under a Will County airport authority.

We have urged the two groups to sit down and work together for common cause; hopefully, Martin can facilitate such a cooperative spirit.

We have urged the two groups to sit down and work together for common cause; hopefully, Martin can facilitate such a cooperative spirit. We believe that will be vital in the long run as the feds — who will ultimately have to sign off on any final plan — continue to talk in terms of "regional consensus."

There are other obstacles to building the airport — most notably gaining approval of an environmental impact statement — that lie ahead. But the FAA's approval of airspace and passenger projections was significant, a major hurdle backers of the airport have successfully cleared.



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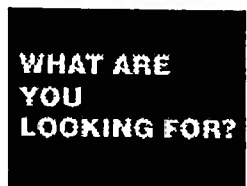
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Updated Thursday and Sunday at 6 a.m.

Communities get ready for rail line

Sunday, June 13, 2004

By Mike O'Neal, The Star

The eight communities along the proposed Metra SouthEast Service rail commuter line will have some big decisions to make in the next few months.

They'll have to decide where to locate the stations and parking lots.

They have to decide what kind of development they want to see in the neighborhoods surrounding the stations.

And they'll have to decide how they will pay for everything.

The SouthEast Service line would connect downtown Chicago's LaSalle Street station with Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger and Crete. Initially, service would be limited to weekday rush hours, with a midday round-trip from downtown and back.

Funding for the service is contained in the federal T-3 transportation bill, which is now working its way through Congress. Approval, however, is not expected before the November elections, and there's no guarantee that the SouthEast Line will survive in the final version.



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Once federal funding is in place, however, Metra executive director Philip Pagano said the line will be up and running within eight years.

The Calumet Corridor Planning Council, which consists of communities along the SouthEast line, the Bishop Ford Expressway and Illinois Route 394, and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association have secured the services of several consultants to move along the local phase of the project.

On Thursday, a preliminary presentation on that plan was unveiled during an open house/program at the Glenwood Village Hall.

The study, by Wilbur Smith Association in collaboration with the al Chalabi Group, Nancy Seeger Associates, Schlickman and Associations and Wildman, Harold, Allen and Dixon LLP, is expected to be completed by December. This study will focus on the urban planning and local financing aspects.

Metra, meanwhile, has hired EarthTech to do an alternative uses analysis to see if a commuter railroad is the best way to serve the transportation needs of the area. Pagano said the agency is in the process of hiring other consultants for other aspects of the planning process.

Following completion of the local study, the communities will have to decide what kind of train station they need, which could range from a relatively modest \$1 million effort to more than \$5 million for a station similar to Tinley Park's Oak Park Avenue station.

Gary Mitchell, director of urban planning services for Wilbur Smith Associates, said the communities also must make decisions involving zoning and development density.

Many transit-oriented developments involve multifamily residences and a mixture of residential and commercial, and the zoning laws of many suburban communities don't allow such developments, so changes may have to be made in the rules, Mitchell explained.

Ground has been broken in Glenwood, between the village hall and the railroad tracks, for Nugent Square, a mixed use development with retail establishments on the first floor and residences on the second and third floors. Mitchell cited this as an example of the type of development that could occur around a train station.

There are a number of alternatives for financing the stations, Mitchell said, including joint development with commercial forces, tax increment financing districts, state highway funds and federal congestion mitigation funds, among others.

In a keynote speech, state Sen. Debbie Halvorson, D-Crete, chairman of the Southland Legislative Caucus, reviewed the problems encountered in getting the project off the ground and thanked those who helped, including U.S. Reps. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Chicago, and Bill Lipinski, D-Chicago.

Noting that the rail project has spurred the communities along the line to speed up their development efforts, Halvorson said, "We will never be satisfied with mediocrity."

In his presentation, Pagano said Metra was looking into using self-propelled Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) coaches on the route, at least initially. The DMU's could be operated at less cost than a conventional train powered by a diesel locomotive, Pagano said, and would help in keeping the overall costs of the project more attractive to federal officials. Locomotive-hauled trains could be used in the future, if ridership exceeds expectations, he noted.

Pagano also said that Metra has had "very preliminary talks" with the Union Pacific Railroad, co-owner with CSX of the southern part of the route, about adding passenger service to the line.

The Metra executive said the commuter authority has good relationships with the freight railroads and expects the talks to be successful.

Mike O'Neal may be reached at moneal@starnewspapers.com or (708) 802-8095.

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A Hollinger International publication

ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION

SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA

June 24, 2004

EDITORIALS

Southeast Line pushes away from platform

We are encouraged to see signs of real progress in the planning for the long-delayed and long-awaited Metra Southeast Line.

It appears that the combined efforts of local community leaders, angry and neglected would-be riders, state and federal legislators and the media (including repeated editorializing in this newspaper) have finally moved the project off Square 1 and into a concerted planning stage.

Best of all, it appears Metra is finally committing to getting the service instated after years of resigning long-range plans for it to some dusty shelf in some dark agency closet.

According to a story in The Star by our transportation writer Mike O'Neal, the plan received an official boost the other day at an open house/Metra program meeting in Glenwood, at which Metra executive director Philip Pagano said the new line could be up and running within eight years.

Within eight years if — and this is the ever-present big “if” — federal funding to pay the largest portion of the freight is included in the omnibus transportation bill now making its cumbersome way through Congress. The funds are currently in the working version of the so-called “T-3” bill, but the negotiations on what projects will stay or be dropped from the bill are continuing. Because it's an election year, it is unlikely the final version will come together until after November when less heat and light is falling on our legislators.

But in the meantime, Pagano and state Sen. Debbie Halvorson, D-Crete, urged the eight communi-

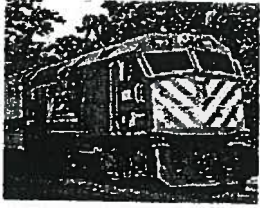
ties along the proposed line to get started on planning for stations and other kinds of development that will dot the Union Pacific corridor, along which the commuter trains will travel.

Halvorson, as chairman of the Southland Legislative Caucus, called for a speed-up in the local process and for communities to aim high in their deliberations.

To that end the communities (Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger and Crete), working in concert with the Calumet Corridor Planning Council and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, have retained consultants to move the project forward.

Individual town leaders will offer input and in the end determine the depot and facilities needs in their communities. The various entities will devise financing plans involving Metra, municipal, state and grant funding for stations along the line. The leaders are being urged to think not just in terms of depots but perhaps commercial-transit centers that include shops, stores, perhaps even some residences near the line.

It appears now some heavy lifting is required by U.S. Reps. Jesse Jackson Jr. and William Lipinski, Chicago Democrats, to keep the Southeast Line on the T-3 list. The project is an important factor in the overall economic development future of the southeast suburban area, and must be treated as such. Meanwhile, we urge local leaders to proceed with their plans, and as Halvorson urged, “never be satisfied with mediocrity.”



Public Information Meeting #2

December 1, 2004, 4:00-8:00 PM
South Holland Public Library
16250 Wausau Avenue
South Holland, Illinois

Attendance:

A total of 48 individuals registered as attending the meeting. The group included members of the media and public officials (see attached Public Meeting Register). Representatives from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (Ed Paesel and Brian Gebhardt) and the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study consulting team (Wilbur Smith Associates; Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd; ACG: The al Chalabi Group; Schlickman & Associates; and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP) provided assistance to the public during the meeting.

Meeting Notice:

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) sent notification letters to 30 interested public officials (see attached sample notification letter and mailing list). Media advisories were faxed and emailed to multiple newspapers, television stations and radio stations. Subsequent telephone calls to each individual followed.

Media Coverage:

Members of the media in attendance and who also published articles were:

- ◆ David Mitchell (The Illinois Times)
- ◆ Carmen Greco Jr. (Chicago Tribune)
- ◆ Mike O'Neal (The Star, Daily Southtown)

Other media coverage included:

- ◆ Jennifer Golz (Daily Southtown)
- ◆ Mike O'Neal (column 01/05/05)

Meeting Registration and Handout Materials:

Each meeting attendee was asked to sign in at a registration desk to ensure all the names and addresses were recorded. An agenda was made available for each attendee.

Meeting Displays:

After attendees signed in, they were directed to the exhibits where they had the option to meet with representatives from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association and the Wilbur Smith Associates consulting team in an informal "open house" format. The exhibits included graphics depicting station area development concepts for the nine potential commuter rail stations on the proposed SouthEast Service (SES) line; financing considerations and options for addressing the required local funding match for station development; and, socio-economic data and findings from the Corridor Profile prepared through the study.

Groundwork started for new Metra line

DAILY SOUTH TOWN 12/1/04

SouthEast Service Line on Southland wish list

By Jennifer Gatz
Special to the Daily Southtown

It may be a decade away, but Crete and other south suburbs are starting to plan for Metra's proposed SouthEast Service Line.

To aid the process, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association has retained consultants to help towns plan for land use along the commuter line and local financing options to spur development.

The proposed rail line would run from Chicago's LaSalle Street Station and end near Balmoral Park in Crete. Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights and Stager have been pegged as potential stops along the line.

The estimated \$500 million project has been added to Metra's wish list, which will face scrutiny as part of the next federal transportation authorization bill.

Brian Gebhardt, director of

transportation for the SSMMA, said Metra would be responsible for the rail, platforms and trains, but local towns would have to fund the stations, parking and any transportation improvements needed around the stations.

"We want to be prepared for when the line is implemented so that our communities have good designs for development around the stations and have financing plans in place to meet the local match that is required," Gebhardt said.

He said many towns near the state line "are using this as a real key to economic development."

Preliminary plans for the SouthEast Service Line have Crete getting two train stations — one downtown, north of Exchange Street, and a second, which would be the end of the commuter line, across Dixie Highway from Balmoral Park.

Crete administrator Tom Durkin has suggested that village officials consider annexing property near Balmoral Park into the village.

See METRA, back page

Metra

Continued from page B1

"It would allow us to have control over the property to build to our standards if a proposal were to come into Will County," Durkin said.

"This (commuter line) is still eight to 12 years down the road, but that's in a blink of an eye when you're talking about development," Trustee John Stoll said.

"There are Metra lines that go in all different directions from the Loop but not really one that goes directly south," said Clary Mitchell, director of planning for Wilbur Smith Associates, the consulting firm retained by SSMMA. "Crete really sees the potential for this train station as a way to revitalize downtown and encourage economic development."

Mitchell said Crete is looking at higher-density housing downtown near the train station, without compromising the characteristics of the community. He said a mixed-use that features retail space on the first floor and condominiums above will be key downtown.

"You just don't want to be a parking lot, but have retail and housing for people to be close to the train," Mitchell said.

He said the station by Balmoral Park would be different from all the other stops along the proposed SouthEast Service Line because the race track is a destination. Mitchell said mixed-use development as well as a business park have been discussed for the near the Balmoral Park depot.

A transportation, land use and financial study by Wilbur Smith Associates will conclude this year, and recommendations for each community affected by the SouthEast Service Line will be released next year.

Continued from A1

COMMUTER RAIL PLAN GAINS STEAM

The studies surrounding the rail plan began in the mid-1990s, Gebhardt said. They concluded last year.

"There's never really been money for it and... there wasn't really local support for it," he said.

That has changed.

Now, municipalities south of the city unanimously support the effort, realizing that transportation is such a stimulus for economic development and highway congestion into Chicago is a deterrent for business or residential relocation.

According to the plan, Metra would pay for rail lines, platforms and train cars. The municipalities would fund developments - roads, stations and parking, for instance - leading to the platforms.

South Holland officials view the benefits in such high regard that the village already has begun purchasing land near where the station would sit, Wynsma said. Businesses that would benefit from commuter traffic already are being drawn to the area simply because the plan is in the works.

"Our goal is not to make money," Wynsma said. "Our goal is the long-term success, the long-term vitality of the community."

The proposal calls for stations along the line in Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete and Balmoral Park.

Crete Village Administrator Michael Einhorn said he floated the idea to Metra years ago. Easy access to Chicago's business district would position the south suburbs as a prime attraction to white-collar workers, he said.

The train service also would provide the south suburbs with the same opportunities for growth that towns such as Orland Park or New Lenox have experienced as a result of commuter rail service, Einhorn said.



Stephen Schlickman, of Schlickman and Associates, shows South Holland Trustee Art Bennett, right, what expenses are involved with the proposed commuter rail line through the south suburbs.

Officials optimistic funding could be available for south suburban train service

THE TIMES 12/2/04

BY DAVID MITCHELL

dmitchell@nwitimes.com

219.852.4311

SOUTH HOLLAND | The maps detail the effects on local economies, populations and growth. They illustrate commuter rail lines heading southwest from Chicago or to the northwest into Wisconsin, with towns booming along the way.

But officials have questioned for years why south suburban Cook County has been left out of the mix, and suffered as a result.

"The phenomenal economic development is obvious," said J Wynsma, South Holland village administrator, regarding how the northwest suburbs have benefited from train service into

the city.

Persistence has begun to pay off. On Wednesday, The Calumet Corridor Planning Council detailed plans for the South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study. The 30-mile line heading due south from Chicago's LaSalle Street station could become a reality in the next decade.

According to Brian Gebhardt, director of transportation for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, planners are optimistic funding for engineering and right-of-way purchases could be earmarked in a federal transportation bill next year. By 2011, Gebhardt said, construction could begin.

See RAIL, A9

"The phenomenal economic development is obvious."

J Wynsma, South Holland village administrator

BEECHER

Population booming: new census

DAILY SOUTHTOWN 12/5/04

By Jennifer Golz
Special to the Daily Southtown

Thanks to what village administrators are calling a recycling process of sorts, Beecher has grown by 43 percent in five years — the first significant population increase in more than 20 years.

In a special census, the unofficial count has estimated the population to be 2,908. That's 875 more people than in the 2000 census.

In 2000, the village's population had grown by only one person since 1990 and nine people since 1980.

"What we're seeing now ... is retired couples that are moving to Florida or downsizing, and young couples are buying their homes. As a result, these homes are being recycled," said village administrator Bob Barber.

"Every town has this cycle; sometimes you're on the upswing and sometimes you're on the downswing — I guess this is our upswing," Barber said.

The special census counted residents who reside within the borders of Indiana Avenue on the south, Dixie Highway on the west, Eagle Lake Road on the north and the village limits on the east.

See POPULATION, page B7

Population

Continued from page B1

Mayor Paul Lohmann said the cost of the special census, \$55,000, will take the village about a year to pay back.

But, the village will receive about \$86,500 in additional revenue from state income taxes and motor fuel tax allocations because the allocations are based on population numbers.

Beecher's household size decreased, from 3.66 people in 2000 to 2.63 in 2004.

"We have additional town-home units that seem to have fewer residents per household, and we have an increase in single-parent households," Bar-

ber said.

"Evidently, we're not bringing in as many children as we had anticipated, but it says we are a growing community," Lohmann said.

He said that while the increase is good, it is not as high as village officials had initially anticipated.

However, with the approved developments in the village, coupled with the household size, he said the 2010 census is expected to near 5,000 people.

"This should not come as any surprise to anyone," Lohmann said. "The speed of the development has probably baffled a lot of people, but we knew this was coming; we just didn't know when."

Local planning about to wrap up

By Mike O'Neal, The Star

12/5/04

The local planning portion of the SouthEast commuter rail line development process is almost finished.

Starting in January, Metra will begin its portion of the project.

Area officials and residents received a briefing on the planning process Wednesday evening at the South Holland Public Library.

The proposed rail line would originate at LaSalle Street Station in Chicago and serve Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger and Crete, with a suburban terminal near Balmoral Race Track south of Crete.

In the South Suburbs, the commuter trains would utilize the tracks of the Union Pacific and CSX railroads. After a short connection at about 91st Street on a line now owned by the Chicago Rail Link, the trains would ride the Metra Rock Island District route to downtown Chicago.

On display Wednesday were maps showing the pro-

"And, of course, it doesn't hurt that the Speaker of the House (U.S. Rep. Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville) is from Illinois and a big supporter of public transportation."

Phil Pagano, Metra executive director

posed location of the suburban stations, along with development possibilities in the vicinity of the stations.

The Land Use and Local Financing Study is sponsored by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council, a subsidiary unit of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association.

Gary Mitchell, project manager for Wilbur Smith Associates, consultants for the study, said the local study will wrap up in January and a report will be issued by the Calumet Council.

Phil Pagano, executive director of Metra, said the rail agency has hired seven consultants to work on the project, which includes initial studies on alternative uses, ridership, finances and engineering.

"We hope to have a meeting with all of the consultants

just after the first of year and get them moving on this," Pagano said.

The SouthEast line is one of the projects eligible for funding under the current federal transportation bill.

The bill has yet to be passed by Congress, but Pagano was hopeful that a number of Chicago area projects will be part of the final package.

Pagano said Metra enjoyed the support of the Illinois Congressional delegation in its effort to obtain funding and noted that U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Chicago, was particularly interested in furthering the SouthEast project.

"And, of course, it doesn't hurt that the Speaker of the House (U.S. Rep. Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville) is from Illinois and a big supporter of public transportation," Pagano said.

Rick Bryant, district administrator for Jackson, said the rail line is second on the congressman's agenda, only the South Suburban Airport having a higher priority.

"The congressman is 110 percent behind this effort," Bryant said.

Paula Thibeault, executive director of the Regional Transportation Authority, also expressed support for the project.

Pagano said federal funds would probably pay 60 percent of the cost of construction, and that state and local sources would have to be found for the remaining share.

Under the best of circumstances, it will be 8 to 10 years before trains start rolling on the SouthEast corridor, Mitchell said, but local efforts to speed the process are already under way, with some communities purchasing land for stations and parking and implementing preparatory zoning and planning decisions.

Mike O'Neal may be reached at moneal@starnewspapers.com or (708) 802-8095.

Unique train cars could be rolled out for new service

By Mike O'Neal, The Star

12/6/04

Metra commuter rail system may use a form of equipment unique in the Chicago area on the proposed SouthEast Service line.

Speaking at a meeting Wednesday night in South Holland, Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano said the agency is investigating the use of self-propelled Diesel Multiple Unit coaches on the SouthEast Line.

Although relatively rare in the United States, DMU's are widely used in Europe

and Asia. None are in use in Illinois or surrounding states.

Photos of three types of DMUs were on display at the meeting — one built by an American company and two by European manufacturers.

The single-level cars would be powered by diesel engines located on each car and could be used singularly or in trains of multiple cars.

On most of its routes, Metra uses diesel locomotives to pull or push coaches.

The Metra Electric line uses electri-

cally-powered self-propelled cars or Electrical Multiple Units.

Pagano said Metra plans also to use the DMUs on its STAR Line circumferential route around the Chicago area.

"We are looking at ways to integrate the use of these cars on the SouthEast line with the eastern leg of the STAR Line," Pagano said.

Mike O'Neal may be reached at moneal@starnewspapers.com or (708) 802-8095.

SouthEast planning chugs on

Daily Southtown 12/8/04
Local work for new Metra
project nearly completed

By Mike O'Neal
Special to the Daily Southtown

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New rail car may be used on SE line. B6

On display Tuesday were maps showing the proposed location of the suburban stations, along with development possibilities in the vicinity of the stations.

The Land Use and Local Financing Study is sponsored by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council, a subsidiary unit of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association.

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See METRA, back page

Metra

Continued from page B1

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Paula Thibeault, executive director of the Regional Transportation Authority, also expressed support for the project.

Pagano said federal funds would probably pay 60 percent of the cost of construction, and that state and local sources would have to be found for the remaining share.

Under the best of circumstances, it will be eight to 10 years before trains start rolling on the SouthEast line, Mitchell said, but local efforts to speed the process are under way, with some communities purchasing land for stations and parking and implementing preparatory zoning and planning decisions.

Car may be tested on SE line

Metra may use a form of equipment unique in the Chicago area on the proposed SouthEast Service Line.

Metra executive director Phil Pagano said the agency is investigating the use of self-propelled "diesel multiple unit" coaches on the SouthEast line.

Although relatively rare in the United States, DMUs are widely used in Europe and Asia. None are in use in Illinois or surrounding states.

Photos of three types of DMUs were on display at the meeting — one built by an American company and two by European manufacturers.

The single-level cars would be powered by diesel engines located on each car and could be used singly or in trains of multiple cars.

On most of its routes, Metra uses diesel locomotives to pull or push coaches. The Metra Electric Line uses electrically powered self-propelled cars ("electrical multiple units").

Pagano said Metra also plans to use the DMUs on its STAR Line circumferential route around the Chicago area.

"We are looking at ways to integrate the use of these cars on the SouthEast line with the eastern leg of the STAR Line," Pagano said.

Trains

Continued from Page D1

HERE TO THERE



MIKE O'NEAL
Star columnist

THE YEAR 1995 Commuter trains are suddenly everywhere

Just about everybody, it seems, wants commuter rail service.

At one time, commuter rail was found only in the big cities along the East Coast and in Chicago.

In recent decades, cities across the country have been behind efforts to get suburban trains up and running.

Los Angeles, of all places, now has a very comprehensive commuter rail system called Metrolink. Its lines head north and south along the Pacific coast, east to San Bernardino and north through the mountains to Lancaster.

Just to the south, San Diego's Coaster runs north from that city to Oceanside where it meets Metrolink's line from Los Angeles).

Caltrain, which operates the long-established route between San Francisco and San Jose, recently completed a massive project to add several stretches of third and fourth tracks to allow express train service.

In a unique operation, rush-hour service is operated in both directions to serve the mid-point cities (San Jose actually has a larger population than San Francisco).

Dallas and Fort Worth are now connected by the Trinity Rail Express.

A fledgling commuter train service is under way in Seattle. A massive train network was recently approved by voters in Denver. Even Nashville, Tenn., and Charlotte, N.C., are developing rail service.

Here in the South Suburbs, Metra is working toward opening an expansion of its SouthWest Service to New Lenox and Manhattan, as well as a big increase in service along the existing route from Chicago Union Station to 179th Street in Orland Park.

The expanded service is expected to start by the end of this year. New warming houses have been built at the 153rd and 179th Street stations in Orland Park. A brand new station and parking lot opened last month in Palos Heights.

Orland Park is working on plans for a new station and transit-oriented development at 143rd Street.

Oak Lawn has started work on a new parking garage and station in its renovated downtown area. Palos Hills is working on an expanded parking lot and new station.

A second track has been installed between Palos Hills and 143rd Street and new signaling is in place.

So far, there's no sign of work at the new stations in New Lenox and Manhattan, but I suspect we'll see something starting in the spring.

To the east, slow but steady progress is being made on Metra's SouthEast Service Line, which will connect downtown Chicago with Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights and Crete with a southern terminal at Balmoral Race Track.

Local planning efforts for stations and parking facilities are well under way and start-up money is part of a federal transit package that Congress may get around to approving at some time.

The SouthEast Line won't be easy or cheap. Much of the route is along an extremely busy freight line shared by the Union Pacific and CSX railroads.

See TRAINS, Page D6

Additional trackage and bridges over freight routes will be needed.

The first train won't roll on the SouthEast Line for 10 years, but the resolve is there to build it.

Over in Indiana, the Northwest Indiana Commuter Transportation District has launched an ambitious effort to expand its South Shore Line commuter trains to Lowell and Valparaiso.

These trains would leave the existing South Shore route at the state line and head south through Hammond and Munster on an abandoned Monon Line route.

At the south end of Munster, the Lowell trains would head south on an active CSX line, while Valparaiso trains would head southeast on an active Canadian National route.

The south line would also serve Dyer, St. John and

Cedar Lake, while the southeast line would also serve Highland, Griffith and Merrillville.

The old Monon route through Munster has been abandoned for decades, although rail is still in place in many spots. Some NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) opposition to restoration of train service is to be expected.

NICTD's plan calls for the trains to use dual-power locomotives, running on electric power north of Munster and diesel on the CSX and CN lines. Although the project has a lot of support, it will require some additional funding, which probably will draw opposition. It's anybody's guess as to when this plan will see reality.

To the west, planning is under way for service along the former Rock Island Railroad tracks between Joliet and Ottawa. These trains would either be extensions of Metra's existing Rock Island District trains or connect with the Rock Island at Joliet. Again, there are a lot of obstacles to this project, particularly how it will be funded.

Officials in the Rockford area are pushing plans to extend Metra service to the state's second-largest city using a combination of Union Pacific and Canadian National trackage.

Wisconsin officials are working on plans to extend Metra service from Kenosha to Milwaukee along a Union Pacific line.

So, what's the appeal of commuter rail?

For one thing, it's relatively inexpensive, when compared to new heavy rail (CTA-like rapid transit) or light rail (modern streetcars) construction.

For the most part, the track is already in place. If existing freight usage is light, there's little problem in adding the commuter trains. Lines with heavy freight traffic require more expensive solutions.

It seems easier to attract riders to trains than it does to even the best bus service.

In any event, the trend is apparent. Tracks are back.

Mike O'Neal may be reached at moneal@starnewspapers.com or (708) 802-8095.

“UpDate” Newsletter

UpDate

SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUTER RAIL CORRIDOR

SPRING 2004/ ISSUE 1

PUBLIC MEETING for South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study

June 10, 2004

4:00pm–8:00 pm

Formal presentation
at 7:00 pm

Keynote by State Senator
Debbie Halvorson

Glenwood Village Hall
One Asselborn Way
Glenwood, Illinois

Bring your family,
neighbors, and friends
to discuss how the new
SouthEast Service pro-
posed by the southern
suburbs and Metra could
benefit all our communi-
ties. We welcome your
participation.

For more information,
contact Brian Gebhardt
at South Suburban
Mayors and Managers
Association
phone: 708-206-1155
email: brian@ssmma.org



South Suburban Commuter Rail Study Moves Forward

The *South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study* is now in high gear. The Study is answering key questions about land use, local financing and economic development for the new SouthEast Service (SES), the commuter rail line proposed by the southern suburbs and Metra.

The Study is a cooperative effort between the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, Village of South Holland, Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Regional Transportation Authority. It encompasses Dolton, Thornton, South Holland, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Glenwood, Steger, Crete, and the Balmoral Park area, all of which are candidates for transit station development. Various other nearby communities in the corridor would share in the economic benefits that new commuter rail service promises for the southern suburbs.

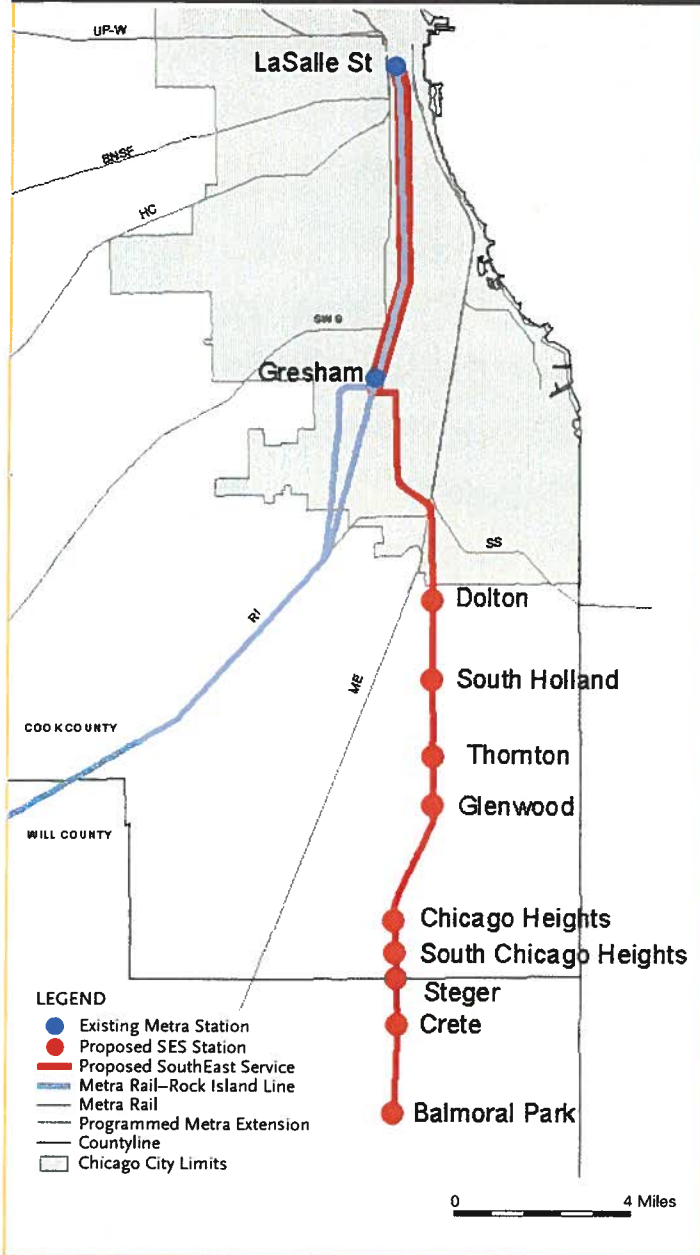
Scheduled for completion in December 2004, the one-year Study is being conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates with The al Chalabi Group, Ltd., Nancy Seeger Associates, Ltd., Schlickman & Associates, and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP. While this Study is focusing on the economic development and urban planning aspects of potential rail transit service, Metra, in a concurrent effort, is studying potential riders, engineering and design, and construction costs.

“The potential for the proposed SouthEast Service to improve economic development and the quality of life for our communities makes this a truly historic time for the southern suburbs. Now we have the support we need to push our commuter rail agenda forward.”

—MAYOR JACK SWAN, VILLAGE OF THORNTON

SOUTHEAST SERVICE ROUTE CORRIDOR

The Study area extends two miles on either side of the SES alignment (four miles wide). More specific "station area" planning will focus on the areas within a 1/2 mile radius of each of the nine potential commuter rail stations.



Map courtesy of Metra

Proposed Commuter Service Brings Benefits

The proposed SouthEast Service is expected to bring numerous benefits to the southern suburbs, which include:

For Commuters: Improved access to jobs in Chicago and other suburbs.

For Residents and Visitors: Easier access to schools, shopping and entertainment, and other regional attractions located in downtown Chicago and elsewhere in the region.

For the Southern Suburbs: Greater potential for "transit-supportive development," which is development that tends to cluster around transit stations and offers commuters an appealing mix of parking, nearby living options, convenient shopping, and other amenities.

For Area Municipalities: An enhanced tax base as land development along the new rail corridor increases property values and spurs more retail sales.

For the Business Community: Expanded business opportunities and access to a larger regional labor pool.

For Job Seekers: Access to a wider variety and more distant jobs and employers.

"I strongly encourage the residents of our Chicago Southland Region to come to the public meeting in support of our quest for the Southeast Metra Rail Line. This project is an essential ingredient to the success of our region."

—MAYOR DON DEGRA
VILLAGE OF SOUTH HOLLAND

Citizens Have Voice in Final Plan

A primary goal of the Study is to ensure that residents, businesses, organizations and others have a "say" in how their communities could support and plan for the SouthEast Service. This can include discussion about station locations, development in the area around stations, and issues of funding. The first public meeting on June 10th will be one such opportunity for dialogue between public officials, the business community and citizens. (A second public meeting focusing on the final Study results is scheduled for November 17, 2004.) When completed, the final plan will include specific recommendations for the following:

Land use and transportation planning standards based on principles previously developed by the Calumet Corridor Planning Council.

Opportunities for complementary commercial and residential development near potential transit station locations.

Guidelines for assisting communities with downtown development and redevelopment in the near term, even if the commuter rail service is delayed or not developed.

Alternative strategies for local governments to finance their share of commuter rail implementation that could involve traditional and nontraditional sources of funding.

"We have worked hard to bring the possibility for the SouthEast Service to life. Now we are closer to our goals than ever before and we welcome the efforts of public officials, business leaders, citizens, and Metra to bring commuter rail to our communities."

—MAYOR MICHAEL S. EINHORN, VILLAGE OF CRETE

UpDate

SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUTER RAIL CORRIDOR

SUMMER 2004/ ISSUE 2

Nugent Square is a four-story, mixed-use development currently under construction in the Village of Glenwood, adjacent to the proposed SES station. Developed by Bruti Associates, Ltd. and designed by ARTE 3 Ltd., it includes retail businesses at street level with 24 condominium units on the top three floors.

Rendering courtesy of Bruti Associates, Ltd and ARTE 3 Ltd.



“Metra's increasing support for the SouthEast Service, including the new engineering study, encourages the southern suburbs in their quest for commuter rail.”

—MAYOR LOU SHERMAN, VILLAGE OF STEGER

Study Shows Need For Transit

According to the *South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study*, there is a substantial need for public transportation, primarily commuter rail, to provide access to jobs for the 34 communities in the SouthEast Service (SES) corridor.

This and other related findings were presented by ACG: The al-Chalabi Group at the Calumet Corridor Planning Council's public meeting on June 10, held in Glenwood. Some of these findings were:

- Many corridor residents already use commuter rail, giving the Metra Electric line the second highest number of riders in Metra's system.
- As further indication of this strong transit-user market in the southern suburbs, trips to work by rail in the SES corridor are currently 5.95%, a rate almost twice as high as that of the 13-county metro area.
- For the eight SES municipalities in which stations are proposed, current rail ridership for trips to work is already high with a 4.88% average and 2,400 daily riders.
- The SES area has seen large population growth but little employment growth for several decades. Hence, the SES corridor remains far more dependent on the Chicago Central Area for jobs than the region as a whole.
- The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) forecasts to 2030 show major population growth in the corridor, but continued job/household imbalance there; consequently, trips to the Chicago Central Area will grow.
- Major projects, including the proposed South Suburban Airport and a possible casino, could provide reverse commuter destinations.

*The data sources include the 2000 U.S. Census and more recent estimates, Metra, and NIPC.

“Land acquisition and development activities on or near the proposed new commuter rail line are clear evidence of increasing public and private support for the SouthEast Service.”

—MAYOR JEANNE MAGGIO,
VILLAGE OF GLENWOOD

SOUTHEAST SERVICE ROUTE CORRIDOR

The Study area extends two miles on either side of the SES alignment (four miles wide). More specific "station area" planning will focus on the areas within a 1/2 mile radius of each of the nine potential commuter rail stations.

Southeast Service Communities Are Not Waiting Around

Although final financing, design and construction of the SES could be approximately eight years away, communities along the proposed rail line are making plans and taking action:

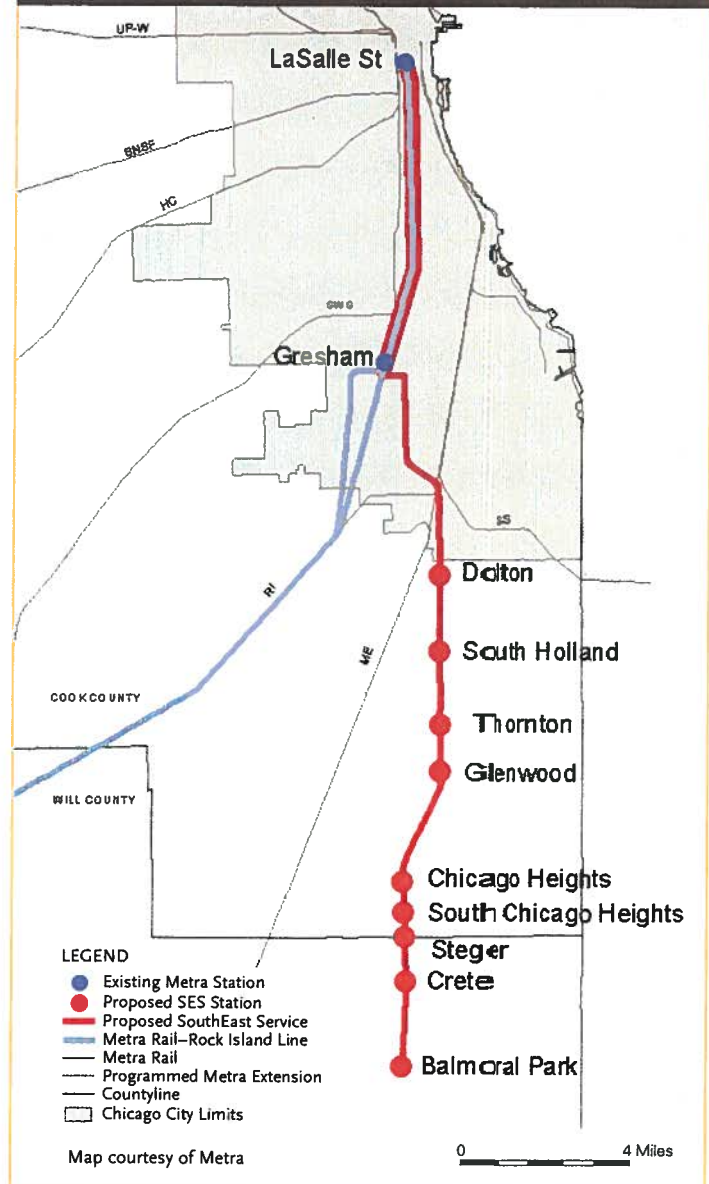
- The **Village of South Holland** is acquiring land in the vicinity of its planned station, north of 162nd Street. It is also planning to extend Wausau Avenue north from 162nd Street.
- The **Village of Glenwood** owns 17 acres east of the tracks, specifically designated for future station area development. Nugent Square, a new mixed-use development, is now under construction.
- The **Village of Thornton** is revising its zoning regulations to spur revitalization of the village center along Williams Street and near the proposed rail line.
- The **Village of Crete** is anticipating a Comprehensive Plan update as an opportunity to pursue transit station development and downtown enhancement.
- A potential SES terminus station across Dixie Highway from Balmoral Park Race Track has track officials and **Will County** planners weighing development potential of this site.
- Many communities have created Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. A valuable tool for promoting redevelopment and new investment, TIF districts can generate development-related revenue that could help communities pay their required local share of commuter rail implementation—namely, the design and construction of a local rail station in partnership with Metra.

Funding Options Are Highlighted

Metra estimates that capital costs for the proposed SouthEast Service are approximately \$523.3 million. Funding for the project can come from sources at the federal, state, regional and local levels. The principal federal assistance source is the New Start program, which funds new rail systems and extensions. It is expected that Metra will be seeking funding from the State of Illinois to match the federal New Start funding. Metra may also utilize resources provided to it from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) sales tax.

In order to assure local communities' commitment to the development of rail corridors, Metra requires municipalities to prepare a financial plan to pay for the station and related facilities, such as parking and lighting. As part of the Study, Schlickman & Associates has defined funding approaches that can minimize costs for municipalities, as follow:

- Seek RTA, State of Illinois, and the federal funding not budgeted by Metra for the SES or its other capital needs.
- Obtain federal funding through the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) program, which funds transportation projects that improve air quality, which the SES will clearly do. Another potential funding source could be the Surface Transportation Program (STP), another federal aid highway program.



- Reallocate some portion of other federal highway funding to the SES.
- Secure State of Illinois funding not already committed to Metra, such as Operation Green Light, which targets state funds to projects that reduce congestion in urban areas.
- Consider joint development arrangements whereby developers provide some or all of the station funding as part of a broader development plan for the station site.
- As a last resort, consider municipal revenue sources.

As the Study progresses, it will narrow the local financing options to those that are sufficient and most appropriate.

UpDate

SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUTER RAIL CORRIDOR

FALL 2004/ ISSUE 3

PUBLIC MEETING for South Suburban Commuter Rail Corridor Land Use and Local Financing Study

December 1, 2004
4:00 pm-8:00 pm

Formal presentation
at 7:00 pm

Keynotes

Jesse L. Jackson Jr.*
Congressman, Second
Congressional District

Paula Thibeault,
Executive Director, RTA

*schedule permitting

South Holland
Public Library
16250 Wausau Avenue
South Holland, Illinois

Bring your family, neighbors, and friends to discuss how the new SouthEast Service proposed by the southern suburbs and Metra could benefit all our communities. We welcome your participation.

For more information, contact Brian Gebhardt at South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association phone: 708-206-1155 email: brian@ssmma.org

Survey Results Indicate Strong Potential For Project Funding

The positive results of a recent survey about local financing options, conducted by Study consultant Schlickman & Associates, shows a growing spirit of cooperation among those SES municipalities identified for potential transit stations. The Study research suggests that there is a willingness and ability by SES communities to develop a financial plan for paying for their share of the project's capital costs related to the stations.

Leadership to obtain federal funding is provided by Metra. They work with the federal government and other agencies to secure much of the funding for the significant capital costs of starting a new line. In a separate effort, the municipalities along the corridor are expected to prepare a financial plan for rail stations and related costs, such as parking and lighting. Although this survey focused on *capital costs*, communities with new rail stations will also incur station *operating costs*, which have typically different funding sources. The sources for operating costs, such as lighting, heating, maintenance, and parking enforcement, will be discussed later in the project.

The primary purpose of the survey was to assess each community's financial capabilities and willingness to consider innovative funding mechanisms, which could include cooperative approaches between multiple jurisdictions. The survey also included several questions about the potential for shared public/private uses of station property and use of adjacent land for compatible, transit-supportive development.

A preliminary concept for the future Metra station area in the Village of South Holland suggests creating a "signature" shopping street and mixed-use setting along 161st Place between the new station and the traditional downtown on South Park Avenue; extending Wausau Avenue northward from 162nd Street to improve vehicular access and circulation; establishing convenient linkage between rail and Pace bus service along 162nd Street; and constructing a dedicated bicycle route between South Suburban College and the rail station. Similar concept plans are being refined for eight other potential Metra station areas along the SouthEast Service corridor.



"Metra is committed to making the SouthEast Rail Service a reality. This study, as well as Metra's Alternatives Analysis, is an important and necessary step to securing federal funding."

—PHIL PAGANO, METRA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

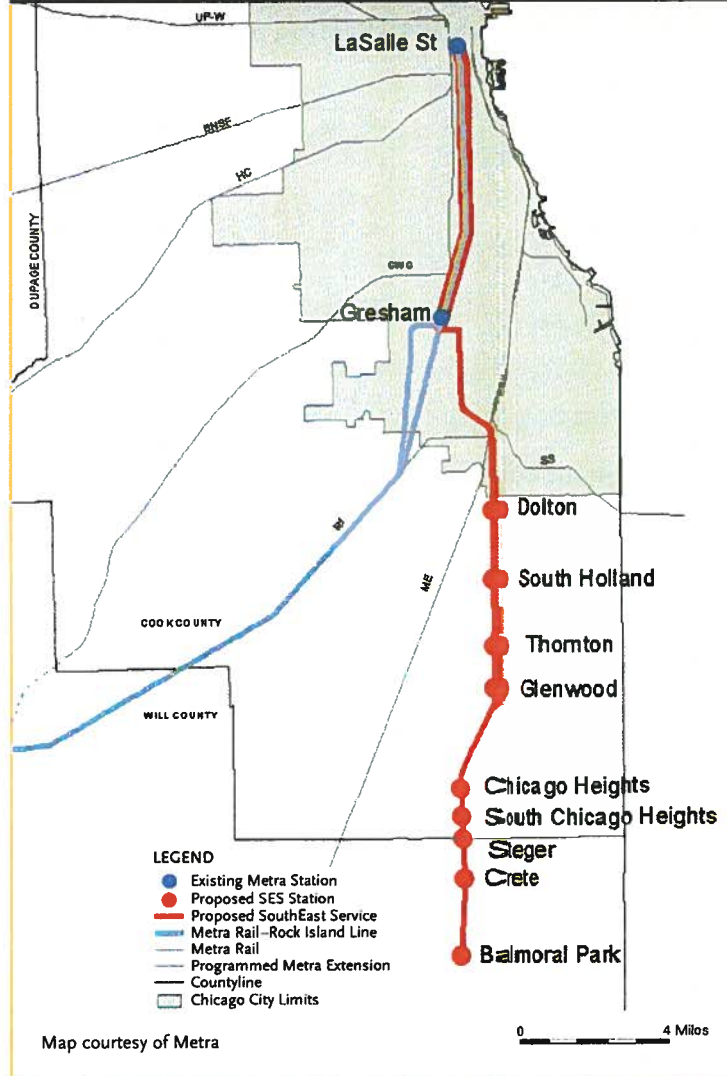
SOUTHEAST SERVICE ROUTE CORRIDOR

The Study area extends two miles on either side of the SES alignment (four miles wide). More specific "station area" planning will focus on the areas within a 1/2 mile radius of each of the nine potential commuter rail stations.

Communities Respond to Survey

Participating communities responded to the survey, which is summarized as follows:

- Communities generally agree that corridor-wide coordination of financing would be a desirable and effective way to provide base funding for constructing rail stations. This would ensure that each community would have at least a basic transit facility. Each municipality could then add further local funding, as possible, to enhance the station and provide additional amenities. Participating communities could both pool local funds and work together to procure additional state and regional funds.
- Communities support the use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to help meet the local cost share. CMAQ funding is available on a competitive basis to those projects that contribute to the attainment of national ambient air quality standards in designated non-attainment areas. STP funds are made available through the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) to each of the region's Councils of Mayors.
- Several communities do not expect to have the resources required for dedicating any of their municipal funds to station construction. Others foresee that some amount of local resources should be available. Revenue generated from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts was identified as the most likely source of available funds. Other potential funding sources cited included property tax, motor fuel tax, developer funds, and development impact funds.
- Most communities believe their current land use policies allow for appropriate transit-supportive development near rail stations. However, all expressed some willingness to consider potential zoning code changes that could result in a more transit-friendly environment. Areas for change could include maximum building heights, restrictions on development density and intensity, and the allowance of multi-family and/or mixed-use development in what are otherwise suburban communities zoned primarily for single-family detached housing.
- Several municipalities have already begun acquiring property in their station areas to set the stage for transit-supportive development activity. In most cases the acquired land is being used for other purposes, which suggests the need for new and different uses. Most respondents also expressed interest in purchasing additional property as it becomes available.
- Nearly all of the communities currently have, or would like to establish, a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. The revenue potentially generated by TIF districts, and the development that occurs within them, can provide tax revenues that help to pay for station area costs, such as new sidewalks, landscaping, bike racks, lighting, and better access to the station. Amongst municipalities with



TIF districts, the proposed station site is located in or adjacent to it, offering the economic development and revenue potential noted above.

- Most communities are interested in using intergovernmental agreements as a way to share resources to achieve the SES funding requirements. In addition, intergovernmental agreements may be broad enough to include other local governments that are not directly on the proposed commuter line but that would benefit from the new service. Some communities also anticipate opportunities to collaborate with private developers in the design and construction of a "joint use" or "shared" station. Nearby private developments can also provide complementary amenities given the economic value the station will add to the general area.

These survey results, along with information about federal, state, and regional funding resources, will be the basis for developing a recommended financial plan during the next phase of the process, Alternatives Analysis.