
VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
[AMENDED]

Prepared for:
The Village of Chicago Ridge

November 3, 1997

Amended May 1, 2012

To Include
The Harlem Avenue Triangle Subarea Plan
As Appendix I

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1. INTRODUCTION

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION

The Village of Chicago Ridge is a mainly built-up community located on the southwest side of the Chicago metropolitan area. It is surrounded by the Village of Oak Lawn on the north and east and the Village of Worth on the south and west. Located along the Tri-State Tollway and the Metra Commuter Rail Line, it is a short trip from Chicago Ridge to downtown Chicago.

Chicago Ridge was founded in the early 1900s, and most of its growth occurred in the first years after the second World War. Like many communities of that era, it contains a number of independent businesses as well as a newer shopping mall and an industrial park. Its residential neighborhoods include both single family detached houses and multi-family dwelling units. The Village is dotted with neighborhood schools and parks, which provide open space and help to meet the community's recreation needs.

But Chicago Ridge is changing. In recent years, more people in Chicago Ridge have tended to live in multi-family dwelling units rather than in single family homes. Some small independent businesses have had to compete with businesses in the mall or industrial park. Its community facilities are aging. These changes bring concerns about the Village's ability to maintain its character.

NEED FOR A PLAN/PLANNING IN A BUILT-UP COMMUNITY

This comprehensive plan has been prepared in an effort to maintain the many good qualities of Chicago Ridge in the face of change. It looks at what the community is like today and what its residents want it to be like in the future, and then outlines recommended policies for making that happen.

Most of the planning issues in Chicago Ridge are related to land use - what happens to residences, businesses, or community facilities. The question of how many apartments a community should have compared to single family homes is a land use issue. The question of how to maintain viable local businesses as well as a thriving mall and industrial park also are land use issues. And the appropriate number and location of community facilities is a land use issue. Because land use issues are so important in Chicago Ridge, most of this plan's policy recommendations are located within the land use plan.

In a less developed community with a lot of vacant land, land use issues arise quickly, and land use plans are quickly implemented. But Chicago Ridge is already a fully-developed community, with little vacant land available. Therefore, the Chicago Ridge plan will be implemented more slowly, through the redevelopment of existing parcels. But when redevelopment happens in a built-up community like Chicago Ridge, it tends to have a major impact on the community precisely because that new development will have a more direct impact on neighborhoods and residents. That's why it is important to implement the plan now, so that when redevelopment does occur, it occurs in the manner that the Village desires.

By preparing a comprehensive plan and using its guidelines in land use decisions, the Village conveys the message of what it wants to be, and can better stand up to challenges that go against that vision.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

A comprehensive plan can be envisioned as a community's answer to three questions:

- 1) What is our community like today?
- 2) What do we want to change or stay the same? and
- 3) How are we going to do these things?

In this plan, the question "What is our community like today?" was answered by studying the community's existing conditions. The existing land use pattern, including transportation and community facilities, was studied through the field reconnaissance, Village Zoning Map, aerial photographs, and a business inventory. The study of environmental conditions also made use of the area Flood Insurance Rate Map and subsequent revisions. Finally, the U.S. Census was consulted with regard to community demographics and housing characteristics.

The question, "What do we want to change or stay the same?" was answered through public participation in the planning process. The public participation technique used in this plan was the focus group method. Focus group sessions took place with the Village Board, Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, representatives of the business community, and a Blue Ribbon Committee of community residents. Within each session, focus group participants discussed the major changes in the community and what made the Village special. The opinions of the focus groups were formulated into a set of goals and objectives that form the basis for the plan's policy recommendations.

Finally, the question of "How are we going to do these things?" was answered through the policy recommendations of the land use plan and subarea plans and through the implementation recommendations. These are addressed in the last sections of the plan.

CONTENTS OF THE PLAN

The organization of this plan document reflects the planning process. Chapter 2 summarizes the existing conditions research. Chapter 3 consists of the goals and objectives formulated from the public participation. Chapter 4 contains the Land Use Plan, most of the plan's policy recommendations with regard to Residential, Commercial, and Industrial land uses and Community Facilities. Chapter 5 contains the Subarea Plans, recommendations for two key areas of the community: the 111th Street Corridor and a proposed Town Center area near the commuter station. Finally, Chapter 6 consists of recommendations for plan implementation.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A community's comprehensive plan, though a blueprint for the future, must be based upon the community's past and present. With this in mind, comprehensive plans include a study of existing conditions.

A study of existing conditions is useful for several reasons. First, a community cannot reinvent itself from scratch; its goals for the future must reflect existing realities. For example, a community that is entirely residential cannot expect to create a thriving commercial district without a lot of changes. Second, a study of existing conditions often reveals a set of opportunities and constraints to consider in the plan. Opportunities are community assets worth exploring, expanding, and/or promoting, such as high quality public services. Constraints are obstacles to the community's planning efforts, such as a limited tax base. Finally, the existing conditions study reveals trends in the community which may be expected to continue and which must be considered in preparing the plan. These could include projected population increases that must be met with increased services, or a shift in the age of the population which could shift service needs from schools to senior centers.

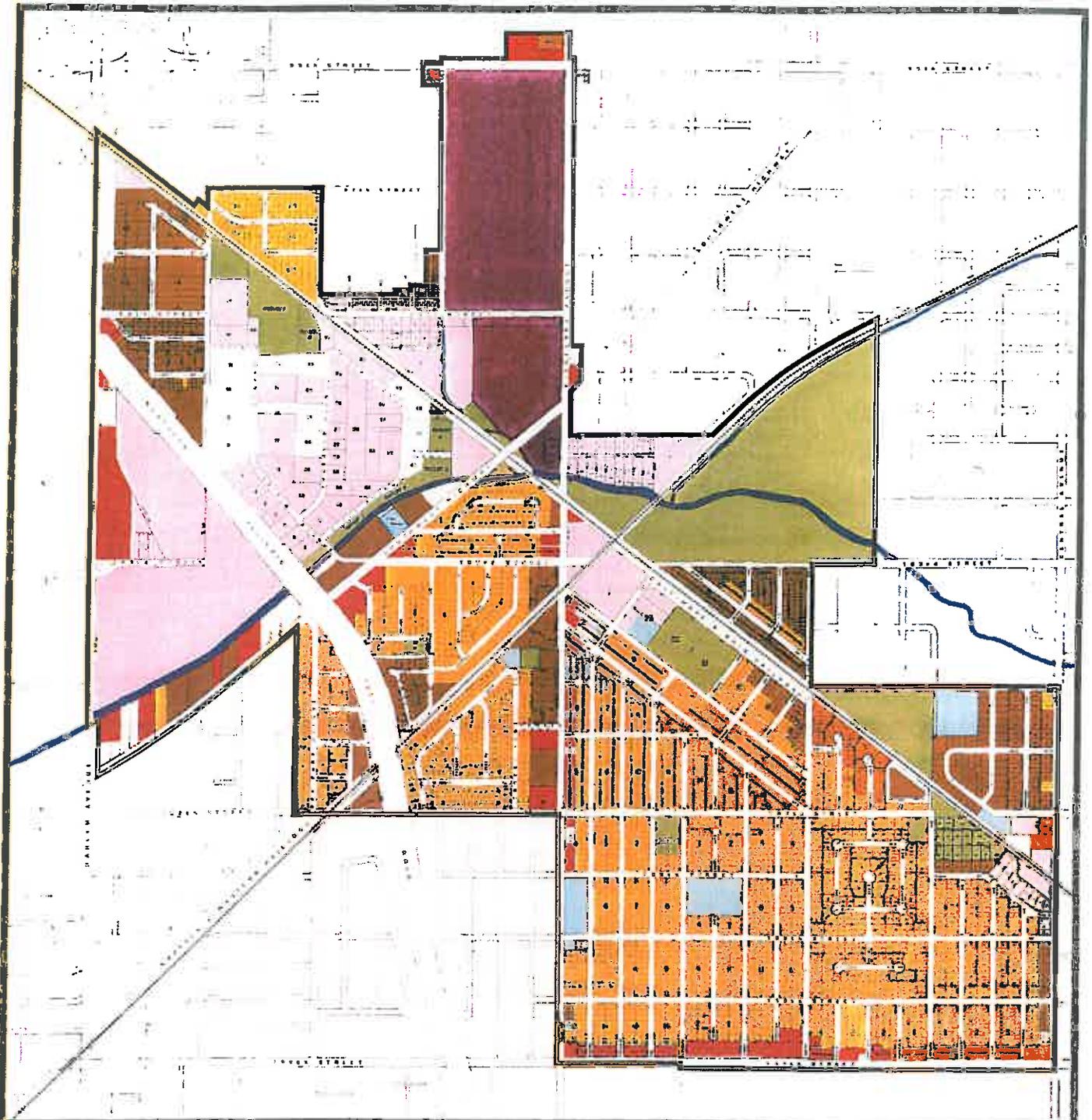
The existing conditions which were studied in Chicago Ridge and which are summarized in this chapter include land use and zoning, transportation, community facilities, environmental features, and demographics.

LAND USE AND ZONING

The predominant feature of the land use pattern in Chicago Ridge is that it is almost entirely developed. This is significant because almost any new development must occur as redevelopment of existing lots and buildings.

Figure 1 shows the existing distribution of land uses in Chicago Ridge.

- **Single Family Residential.** The predominant land use in Chicago Ridge in terms of land area is single family residential. Most of this is located in the southern part of the Village, but there are also single family neighborhoods to the east and west.
- **Multi-Family Residential.** Existing multi-family residential uses tends to be located between single family residential areas and nearby secondary arterials, railroads, or commercial areas. These tend to be appropriate locations for such uses. Multi-family residences generate more traffic than single family residences, so it is useful for them to be located on or near major roadways. They can also serve as a buffer between the low-intensity single family uses and higher intensity commercial uses.
- **Commercial.** Commercial land uses comprise a large portion of the Village, with the largest concentration being the Chicago Ridge Mall on Ridgeland Avenue in the northernmost part of the Village. Smaller scale commercial uses criss-cross the Village along its arterial and collector roadways: Southwest Highway; Harlem, Ridgeland, and Central Avenues; and 111th Street.
- **Industrial.** The second largest use of land after single family residential is industrial, mainly due to the Park at Chicago Ridge located in the northwest portion of the Village. This is also where the largest concentration of undeveloped land in the Village is located. Smaller industrial uses also exist on Ridgeland and Central Avenues.
- **Community Facilities.** A significant amount of land in Chicago Ridge is developed as Community Facilities: parks, schools, and municipal uses. These are scattered throughout the Village, with the greatest concentration located near the Village's geographic center off Ridgeland Avenue just south of the Metra railway tracks.
- **Zoning.** The mapped zoning districts in Chicago Ridge generally correspond their respective land uses. This means, for example, that where the Village Zoning Ordinance and map designate residential use for a particular site, the development found there is residential. This suggests that the Chicago Ridge zoning ordinance and map reflect changes in local development trends and Village policy regarding land use. As future amendments to the ordinance or map are considered, this plan will provide direction as to the Village's policy toward those land use decisions.



**EXISTING LAND USE
VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE**

LEGEND

-  SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  TOWNHOUSES
-  MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  LOCAL COMMERCIAL
-  REGIONAL COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  PARKS / RECREATION / OPEN SPACE
-  COMMUNITY FACILITIES
-  VACANT



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TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a significant factor in Chicago Ridge: in the Village's 2.3 square miles there are 1.5 linear miles of Metra tracks and 1.2 linear miles of the Tri-State Tollway. This has both positive and negative effects. While there are many major transportation routes available in Chicago Ridge, they divide up the Village and make it difficult to get around. Transportation issues in Chicago Ridge are shown in Figure 2.

Railways

Two railway tracks intersect in the middle of Chicago Ridge, dividing the Village into four wedges: north, south, east, and west. The two railroad tracks cause many transportation related problems. Due to the limited number of crossings that are in Chicago Ridge, traffic is re-routed to these main thoroughfares which increases congestion and limits access from one side of the community to the other.

The Metra tracks run from the southwest to the northeast, leading to Chicago's Union Station. A Metra Station is located on the west side of Ridgeland Avenue just south of where it crosses the tracks, in the center of town. Another Metra station is located just outside of the Village, in the Village of Worth. Some Chicago Ridge residents may actually find this station more convenient to use. According to the 1990 census, a total of 279 Chicago Ridge residents said they rode Metra to work every day.

The Baltimore & Ohio railway runs from the southeast to the northwest through the Village. This is a freight railroad, and adjoins the Chicago Ridge Industrial Park.

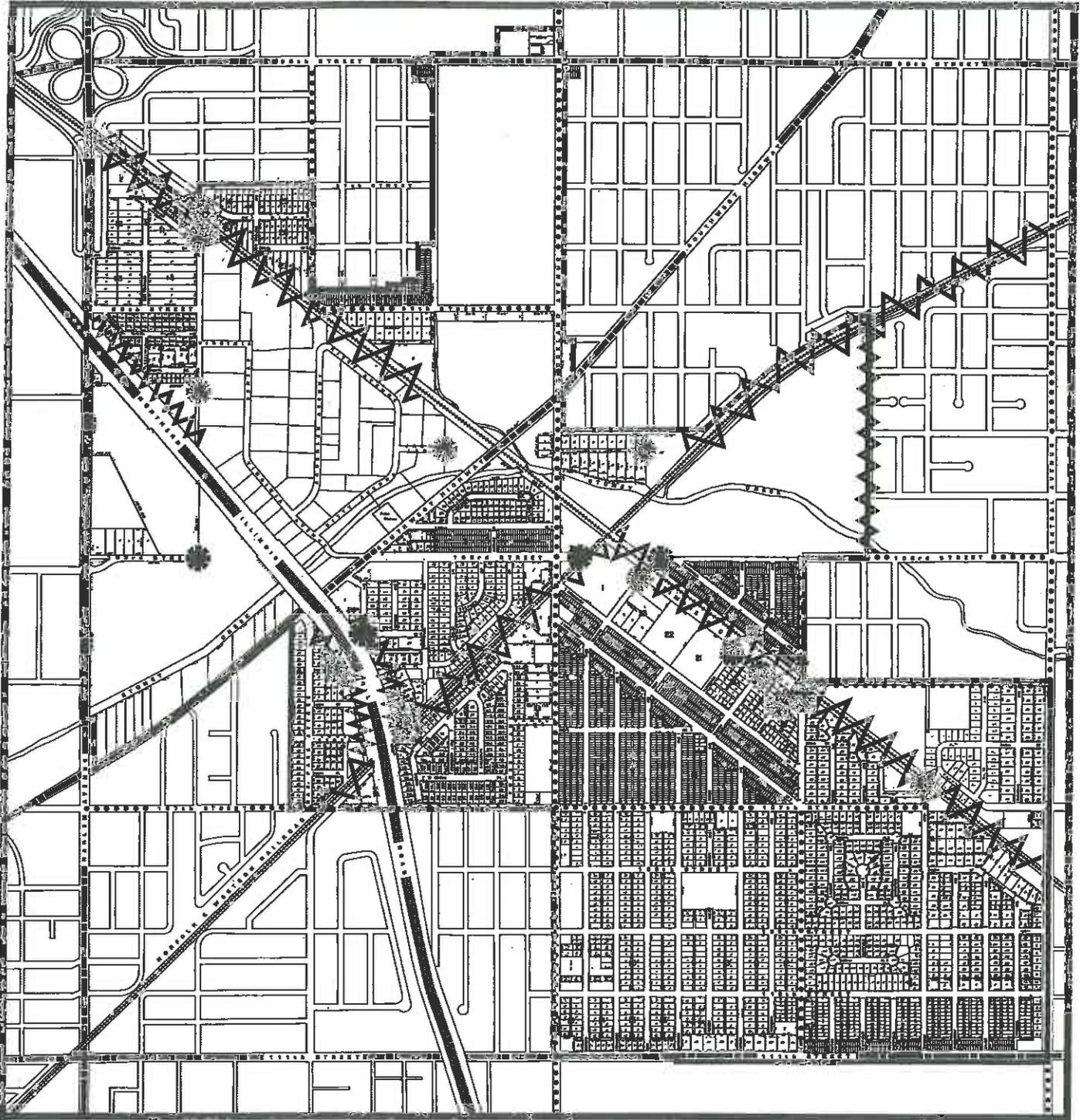
Roadways

Roadways in Chicago Ridge, and in any community, can be divided into four classifications. *Highways* carry large volumes of traffic between Chicago Ridge and other parts of the region. The Tri-State Tollway is classified a highway. *Arterials* carry traffic across and beyond the Village. Secondary Arterials in Chicago Ridge include 95th Street, 111th Street, Southwest Highway, and Harlem Avenue. *Collectors* provide circulation between arterials and local roads. Ridgeland and Central are the two main collectors in Chicago Ridge. Parts of Oak Park and Austin Avenues and 99th, 103rd, 105th, and 107th Streets also serve as collectors. Finally, *local* streets provide access to individual properties: they comprise the remainder of roadways in the Village. While we know a lot about the roadways in Chicago Ridge, we are limited in what we can do to them by their jurisdiction: who actually owns and controls the road. Four major roads in Chicago Ridge - 95th Street, 111th Street, Harlem Avenue and Southwest Highway - are owned and controlled by the State of Illinois (IDOT). This means the Village of Chicago Ridge cannot make improvements to those roads. Likewise, Cook County owns and controls Ridgeland Avenue and Central Avenue, so improvements to those roads would require working with the County. The Village of Chicago Ridge owns and controls all other roads in the Village.

On the other hand, if either the State or County is planning its own roadway improvements, this creates an opportunity for the Village to work with them to create a mutually acceptable project. The State, for example is currently constructing improvements to 111th Street.

Dead Ends and Traffic Boundaries

Because it is not feasible to allow railroad crossings at every street, many roads in Chicago Ridge dead-end where they meet the railway. This creates traffic boundaries that keep people from traversing one side of town to another. The only routes that go through the Village from north to south are Central, Ridgeland, and Harlem; the only routes that go through from east to west are 95th Street and 111th Street, at the extreme north and south borders of the Village.



ROADWAY JURISDICTIONS

STATE OF ILLINOIS:

- 95th Street
- 111th Street
- Harlem Avenue
- Southwest Highway

COOK COUNTY:

- Ridgeland Avenue
- Central Avenue

VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE:

- All other roads

LEGEND

- DEAD ENDS**
- TRAFFIC BOUNDARIES**
- ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS**
- HIGHWAY:**
Carries large volumes of traffic between Chicago Ridge and other communities.
- REGIONAL ARTERIAL:**
Carries traffic across the Village.
- COLLECTOR:**
Provides circulation between regional arterials and local roads.
- LOCAL:**
Provides access to individual properties.

**TRANSPORTATION ISSUES
VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE**



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This creates several planning issues. First, it literally divides up the Village and forces drivers to “jog” or zig zag to their destinations. Not only is this inconvenient to residents, but also to businesses. Some won’t even locate where the traffic patterns are complex or hazardous. Second, the traffic boundaries in Chicago Ridge force cars to the few available through-routes, which increases traffic along them. Creating congestion is bad for residents and businesses alike. Finally, the traffic boundaries in Chicago Ridge serve to divide up the community in a more figurative sense. Neighborhoods are isolated from one another, so their residents may not feel part of the same community. This is exacerbated by the multiple school and safety districts that serve Chicago Ridge, which are probably also based on the community’s traffic boundaries.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

There are two primary environmental features in Chicago Ridge: floodplains and woodlands. Both are both related to Stoney Creek, which runs roughly east-west through the Village. These are shown in Figure 3. Open space, a related feature, is shown in the form of parks and a prairie preserve on the Community Facilities map, Figure 4.

Floodplains are designated by FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in the Federal Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM maps). In Chicago Ridge there are two floodplain classifications: 100-year and 500-year. The 100-year floodplain represents areas that have a one percent change of flooding every year. This is, however, an estimate, and floods have been known to occur more frequently than the designations suggest. While it is generally recommended that floodplain land not be developed, many of Chicago Ridge’s floodplain lands already are developed.

Woodlands are located within the floodplain along the banks of Stoney Creek. These have the potential to provide a scenic benefit to the community, particularly where Ridgeland crosses the creek, but are currently in poor condition due to litter.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are uses that provide a public service to community residents, such as parks or schools. These are shown in Figure 4.

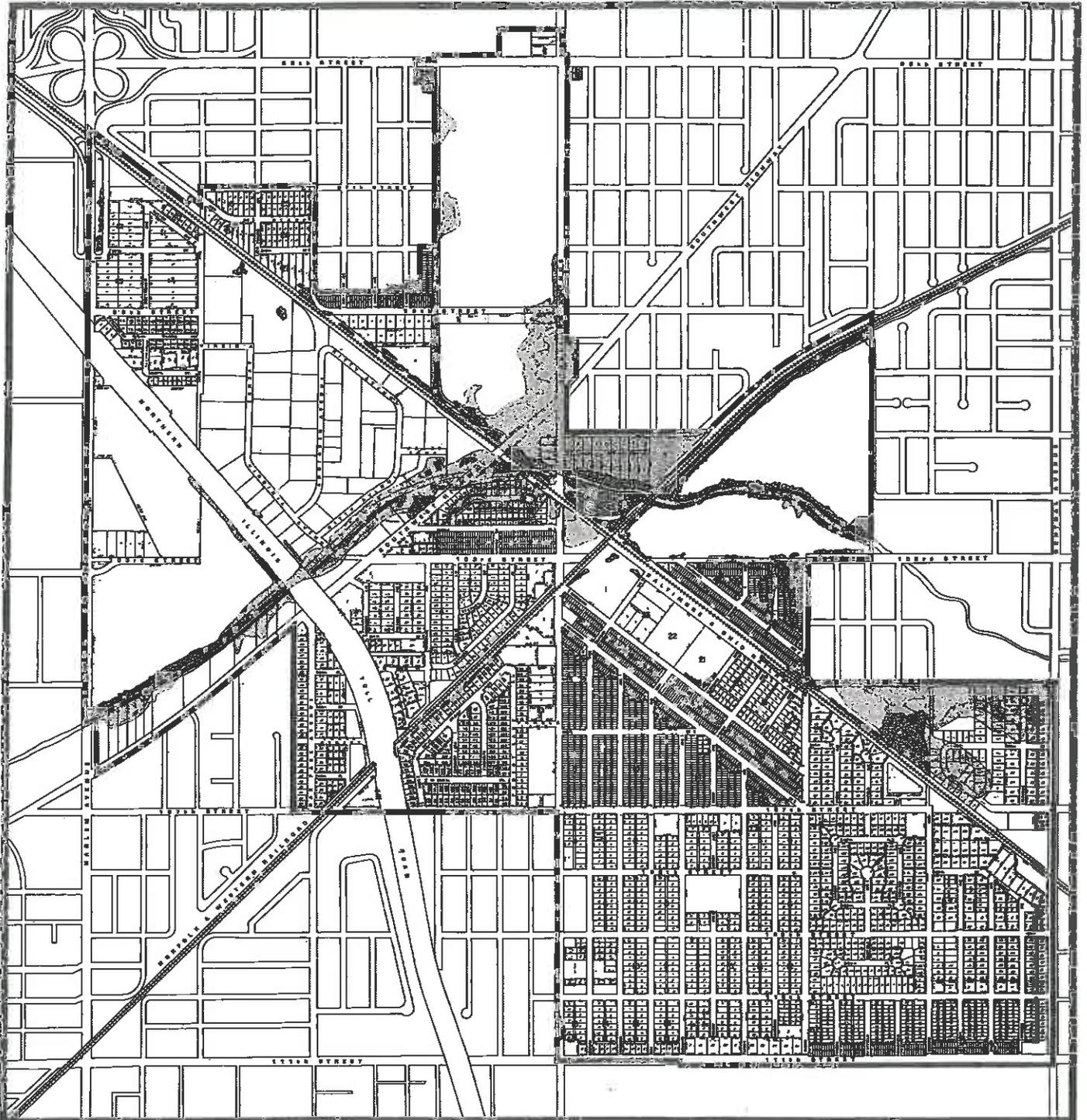
There are two types of community facilities: community-oriented and neighborhood-oriented. Community-oriented facilities are used by the entire community, and would include the Village Hall, library, and post office. In Chicago Ridge, many of these community-oriented uses are located near the geographic center of the community: the library and municipal annex, Freedom Park (the Village’s largest) and Freedom Activity Center, and the Metra Station. This is advantageous because they are equally accessible to all residents. The Village Hall is located in a nearby residential neighborhood.

Neighborhood-oriented facilities are those which are used primarily by individual neighborhoods, such as parks or elementary schools. Many of these uses are found in the neighborhoods of Chicago Ridge. This is beneficial because neighborhood residents can walk to the facilities.

The Chicago Ridge Prairie Nature Preserve, located in the eastern part of the Village on 105th Street, is a unique public facility. The preserve cannot be walked on because that would disturb the fragile ecosystem. But it does provide an educational opportunity to observe and learn about Illinois’ native prairie, particularly for the adjacent Ridge Lawn School. The Prairie Nature Preserve is also of interest simply as another large open space.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic picture of Chicago Ridge is predominately one of a stable middle-class community. It is characterized by slow growth, an aging population and an average income (by regional standards). But a significantly different aspect of Chicago Ridge, demographically, is its high proportions of multi-family dwelling units and renter-occupied dwelling units. While these tend to support the population’s age and income levels, they can also create a destabilizing effect on the community. This will be discussed further in the housing section of the chapter.



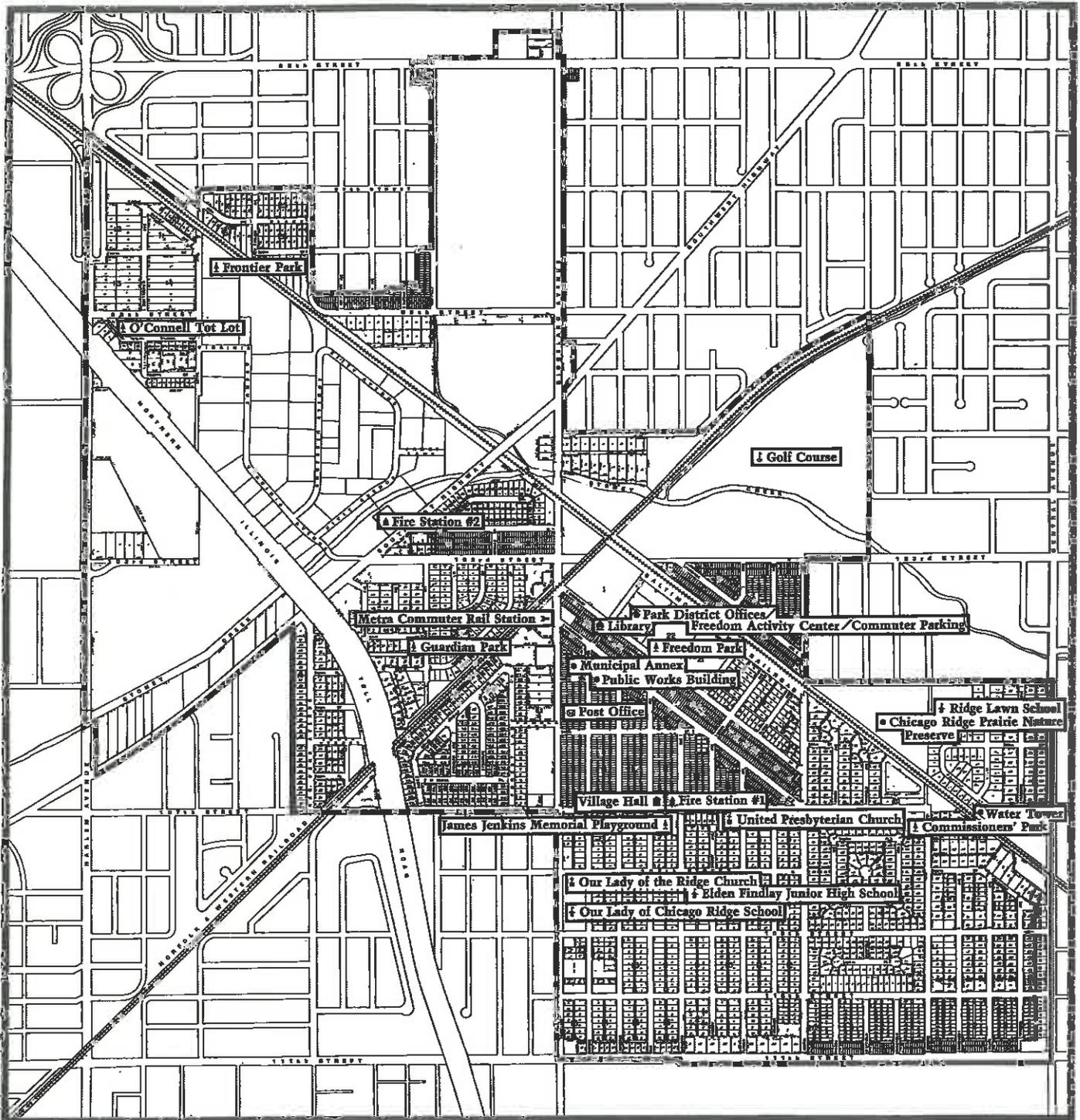
LEGEND

-  FLOODPLAIN - 100 YEAR
-  FLOODPLAIN - 500 YEAR
-  TREE GROUPINGS

**ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES
VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE**



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COMMUNITY FACILITIES
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Population

Table 1 illustrates population and population growth in Chicago Ridge. The population of Chicago Ridge is generally steady, growing only one percent from 1980 to 1990 (the last period for which data are available). This is understandable considering that the land area in the Village is about 100 percent developed. In the past, particularly from 1950 to 1960, Chicago Ridge grew at a much greater rate. This is typical of suburbs like Chicago Ridge during that period.

Table 1. Population Growth - Chicago Ridge, 1940-1990

	Population	Percent Change
1990	13,643	1%
1980	13,473	47%
1970	9,187	60%
1960	5,748	547%
1950	888	136%
1940	376	n/a

Age

The median age of a Chicago Ridge resident is 30 years old, compared to 40 in Oak Lawn and 33 in the Village of Worth and in Cook County. The percentage of the population in each age group is very well distributed, as can be seen in Table 2. However, as in most places, the population of Chicago Ridge is aging. In 1980 the median age was 26, and in 1970 it was only 22. As its population continues to age, the Village should consider the public service needs of older residents, such as locating recreational facilities in neighborhoods, adding sidewalks to those areas which have none, providing more affordable housing opportunities, and encouraging home maintenance.

Table 2. Percentage of Residents in Each Age Group - Chicago Ridge, 1990

	Percent of Population
Under 5 years	8%
5-17 years	15%
18-24 years	13%
25-44 years	37%
45-64 years	16%
65-79 years	8%
80 years and over	3%

NOTE: Figures may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Income

The median income for Chicago Ridge and nearby communities is shown in Table 3. The median income in Chicago Ridge in 1990 was \$32,790. This was slightly less than in Oak Lawn or Worth but about the same as Cook County as a whole.

Table 3. Median Income - Chicago Ridge and Comparable Places, 1990

	Median Income
Chicago Ridge	\$32,790
Oak Lawn	\$38,665
Worth	\$35,658
Cook County	\$32,673

Race

The population of Chicago Ridge in 1990 was 98 percent white. This was about the same as Oak Lawn (2 percent) and Worth (1 percent), but below the Cook County rate of 37 percent.

Housing

The most significant aspect of Chicago Ridge, demographically, is its high proportions of multi-family dwelling units and renter-occupied dwelling units. These are two different aspects of housing that can be described as *structure* and *ownership*.

Structure

To describe housing structure it is useful to define a few terms.

- *Single family detached* dwelling units are surrounded on all sides of their lot by open area.
- *Single family attached* dwelling units are those which are joined to another single family unit on one or both sides by party walls. They have their own entrance to the exterior of the structure. Two units joined like this are a *duplex*; more than two are *townhouses*.
- *Two family* dwellings are those which contain two dwelling units, attached either horizontally (*duplexes*) or vertically (*two-flats*).
- *Multi-family dwellings* are those that contain two or more dwelling units, where each unit is provided with an entrance to a common hallway that leads to the outdoors.

Table 4 shows the distribution of dwelling units per structure in Chicago Ridge. Only 34 percent of the Village's housing stock is in single family detached dwellings. Single family attached makes up only two percent and two family dwellings only one percent. The remaining 61 percent are multi-family dwelling units.

This is a marked contrast to the two adjacent communities: Oak Lawn, where 66% of the housing stock is single family detached, and Worth, where 53% is single family detached.

Table 4. Dwelling Units per Structure - Chicago Ridge, 1990

	Number	Percent
1, detached	1,982	34%
1, attached	105	2%
2	66	1%
3 or 4	175	3%
5 to 9	1,116	20%
10 to 19	1,445	26%
20 to 49	645	12%
50 or more	0	0%
Total	5,499	

NOTE: Figures may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Ownership

To describe housing ownership it is also useful to define a few terms.

- An *apartment* is a multi-family dwelling unit that is rented by the resident.
- A *townhome or condominium* is a multi-family dwelling unit that is owned by the resident.

- Any housing structure, including single family detached dwelling units, can be either owned or rented by the resident.

Table 5 describes home ownership in the Village of Chicago Ridge compared to Oak Lawn and Worth. In Chicago Ridge a greater number of units are renter occupied than owner occupied (52 percent versus 48 percent). This is not true in either Oak Lawn or Worth.

Table 5. Tenure of Occupied Dwelling Units - Chicago Ridge, Oak Lawn, and Worth; 1990

	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Chicago Ridge	2,552	48%	2,782	52%
Oak Lawn	17,583	82%	3,876	18%
Worth	2,933	67%	1,460	33%

Table 6 considers whether the Chicago Ridge owner-occupied units are single family detached dwellings or condominiums, and whether the renter-occupied units are single family detached dwellings or apartments.

Table 6 shows, 72 percent of Chicago Ridge's owner-occupied dwelling units are single family detached. Only three percent are single family attached (i.e., townhouses), and only one percent are two family dwellings. But 23 percent are multi-family dwellings (i.e., condominiums). This suggests that while most owner-occupied units in the Village are single-family, there is also a significant number of condominiums.

Table 6. Tenure of Occupied Dwelling Units by Number of Units in Structure - Chicago Ridge, 1990

	Single family detached	Single family attached	Two family	Multi-family	Other*
Owner-occupied	72%	3%	1%	23%	1%
Renter-occupied	2%	0%	1%	97%	1%

*"Other" generally refers to manufactured homes and group housing.

NOTE: Figures may not equal 100% due to rounding.

According to the census, of Chicago Ridge's renter-occupied dwelling units, only two percent are single-family detached dwellings and only one percent are two family dwellings. No townhomes are rented. The remaining 97 percent are apartments. This indicates a tendency for multi-family dwellings to be rented.

Overall, this analysis suggests that while there may be a market for condominiums, most multi-family dwellings constructed are renter-occupied.

Vacancy and Market

The issue of a "market" for owner-occupied versus renter-occupied dwelling units was also considered by looking at the census analysis of vacancy rates. According to the 1990 census, the last periods for which such data are available, there seems to be a strong market for both owner- and renter-occupied housing in Chicago Ridge. Only three percent of Chicago Ridge's total dwelling units were vacant during the census (the last period for which data was available). Of dwelling units that were for sale, 93 percent sold in less than six months. This was compared to 87 percent in Oak Lawn and 83 percent in Worth. Of dwelling units in Chicago Ridge that were for rent during the same period, 99 percent rented in less than six months; 75 percent in less than two months. In Oak Lawn, only 54 percent rented in less than two months and in Worth only 40 percent rented in less than two months.

This suggests a strong market in Chicago Ridge for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied dwellings.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A comprehensive plan should provide a clear and supportable explanation of the community's desired future. This is accomplished primarily through the use of goals and objectives.

A *goal* is an ideal condition. It may never be achieved, primarily because it is not expressed in measurable terms, but it describes the community's vision for the future. An *objective* defines the actions that are necessary to move toward a goal. Objectives are measurable. Together, goals and objectives provide a framework for the policy recommendations described in the plan.

The goals and objectives expressed in this plan come from the study of existing conditions and from the concerns expressed by community residents in the public participation process.

Because the goals and objectives reflect the general consensus of the community, they should be reviewed by decision-making bodies and officials when evaluating development applications or when considering new programs or policy changes. In this way, their decision will incorporate the community will. But as the community changes, some of the goals and objectives will change too. For this reason, they should be evaluated periodically, perhaps every year, to make certain that they still represent existing conditions and the public sentiment.

LAND USE

Goal:

A balance of land uses that provides for appropriate housing, economic sustainability, and a high quality-of-life.

Objectives:

- Balance the amount of single family and multi-family residential development and of owner-occupied and renter-occupied residential development.
- Maintain several viable business areas to serve both regional and community needs.
- Preserve the industrial park for future industrial use and demand.
- Create a focal point for the community.
- Locate land uses appropriately with regard to surrounding uses and available transportation facilities.

HOUSING

Goal

A balance of dwelling types and tenure that supports community stability.

Objectives:

- Preserve single family neighborhoods.
- Identify appropriate locations for owner-occupied multi-family (condominium) development.
- Limit renter-occupied multi-family (apartment) development.
- Identify and meet the housing needs of seniors and young families in the community.
- Identify and implement ways to promote home ownership.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goals:

A number of distinctive and well-defined commercial areas including successful small businesses.
A tax base which is an economic resource for the future.

Objectives:

- Define key commercial areas to preserve and enhance.
- Identify appropriate and inappropriate land uses for each commercial area.
- Enhance the appearance of commercial areas.
- Maintain The Park at Chicago Ridge and Chicago Ridge Mall as economic development resources.
- Use public funds to stimulate economic development projects which meet Village objectives.
- Encourage cooperation between businesses and the Village in order to better meet Village objectives.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES**Goal:**

Community facilities that support a stable community.

Objectives:

- Build off of the opportunities created by existing community facilities like the Metra station.
- Create a focal point for the community, building on community facilities.

TRANSPORTATION**Goal:**

An efficient transportation system that serves the needs of residents and businesses.

Objectives:

- Work with the State and County in their local road improvement projects.
- Enhance the Chicago Ridge Metra station.
- Provide for more Metra parking.
- Increase number of safe railroad crossings when cost effective.

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE**Goal:**

A pleasant appearance for all public spaces throughout the community.

Objectives:

- Consider implementing landscaping and sign requirements for new developments.
- Work with property owners to enhance the appearance of commercial corridors.
- Promote building maintenance by property owners.
- Encourage litter-prevention, adopt-a-road programs, or community clean-up days.

4. LAND USE PLAN

A land use plan is a description of the kinds of homes, businesses, and public facilities that should be permitted in a community and how they should be arranged. A community's land use plan describes its vision for the future. Development and redevelopment in the community should comply with the land use plan. In this way, the land use plan can be used to support the community's vision.

Many factors go into formulating the land use plan. The existing land use pattern, for example, is an important factor, since it shows the locations of existing homes and businesses. Other existing conditions, such as transportation facilities, are also a factor. It is important for businesses to be located near major roadways, for example, since they generate a lot of traffic and since they need visibility to market their products. A third factor in determining the shape of the land use plan is the community goals and objectives. Through the goals and objectives, a community notes the importance of its character and how that character is reflected in its development pattern. The community may want a great deal of separation between homes and businesses or it may be accustomed to a mixture of land uses. By combining the factors of existing land use, other existing conditions, and goals and objectives, a land use plan is formulated.

The land use plan includes both a land use map and a list of land use policies. The policies help the community to attain the land use pattern shown in the map, and also provide guidance on land use issues. This is a particularly important part of the Chicago Ridge Comprehensive Plan, because many of the most significant issues in Chicago Ridge, such as the proportion of single family homes and apartments, are related to land use.

The following chapter on the Chicago Ridge Land Use Plan is organized by type of land use. First, a small section describes the overall pattern of the land use map. Then, separate sections are devoted to Residential, Commercial, and Industrial land uses and Community Facilities. Each of these sections includes a discussion of Findings and Issues, and a list of Policy Recommendations. The Findings and Issues describe why particular policies were recommended. The Policy Recommendations reflect the land use plan, the part which stands for the community's vision and its road map for getting there.

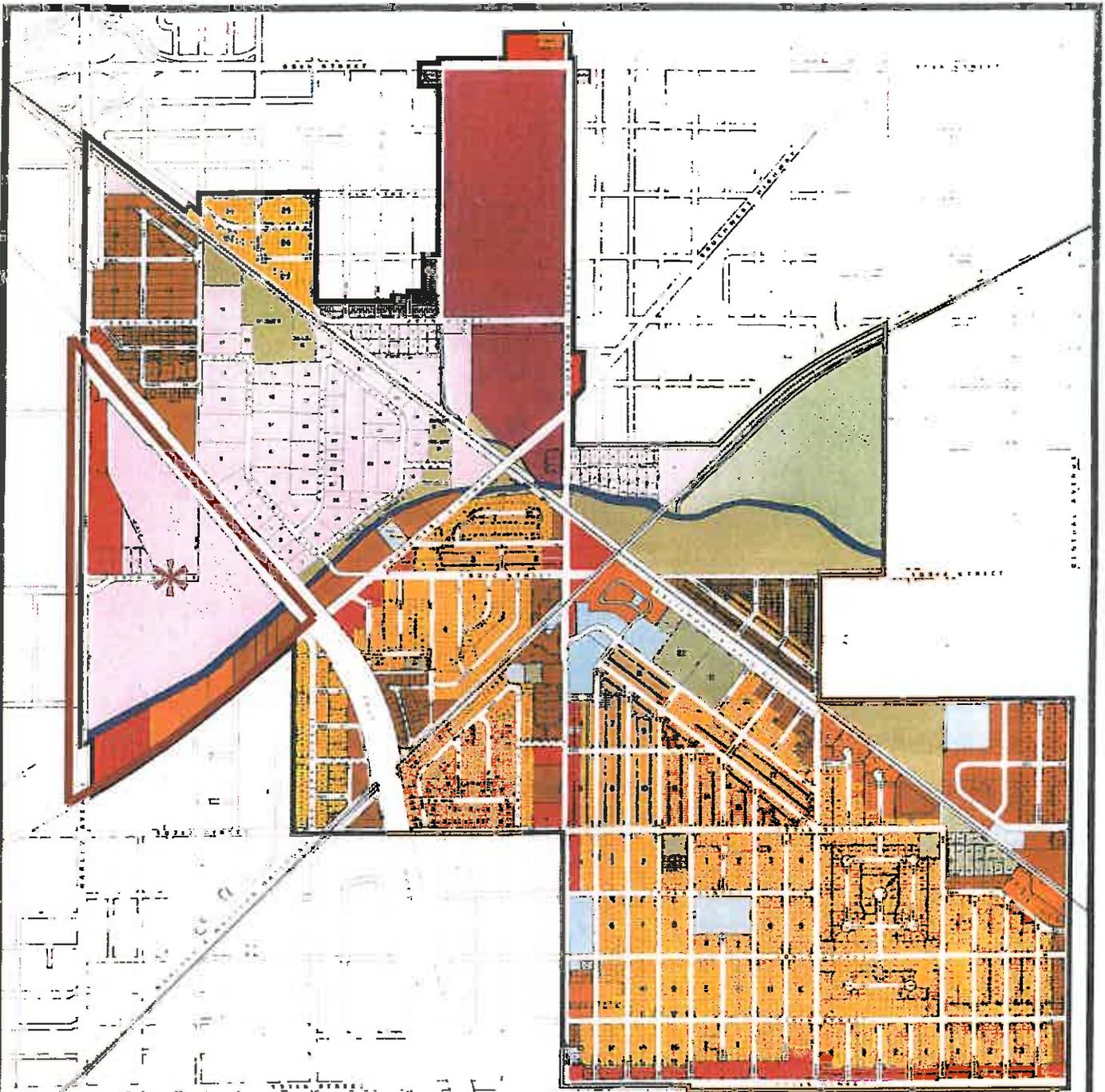
THE LAND USE MAP

The Chicago Ridge Land Use Plan is shown in Figure 5. With the exception of the Harlem Triangle area, which reflects the policies of the Harlem Avenue Triangle Subarea Plan as contained in Appendix I, this plan generally reflects the land use pattern described under "Existing Conditions." This is because so much of the Village already is developed. Therefore, as has been happening, much of the development in Chicago Ridge will occur through redevelopment. Whether new development or redevelopment, the land use map shows the desired land uses throughout the Village. The reasons for these land use designations are described in the in the Sections that follow.

It should be noted that in some cases the land use plan indicates redevelopment of existing industrial or heavy commercial sites to other uses. Such redevelopment is assumed to be a long range planning opportunity that may not arise for five or ten years. It is not the intent of this plan for any of these businesses to leave the community. To the contrary, they are considered valuable neighbors in the Village. At such time as it is appropriate for these sites to be redeveloped, the Village expects to work closely with the business owners to encourage them to relocate into the Village's industrial park.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Residential land uses are a significant part of the Chicago Ridge Land Use Plan. Not only are they the Village's primary land use in terms of land area, but one of the most significant community issues is the proportion of single family homes to multi-family apartments. As is described below under "Findings and Issues," there is a greater number of multi-family than single family dwellings in Chicago Ridge, and most of those are renter-occupied. This brings concerns of instability to the community. The "Policy Recommendations" advise that new renter-occupied dwellings be limited and that the Village work to encourage and maintain home ownership.



* See Chicago Ridge Comprehensive Plan, Appendix I: Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan, amended May 1, 2012 for revised land use map and text recommendations for the bounded area.



LEGEND

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- TOWNHOUSES
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- REGIONAL COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PARKS / RECREATION / OPEN SPACE
- COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**LAND USE PLAN
VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE**



CAMIROS

Findings and Issues

- ***There is a greater number of multi-family than single family dwellings.***
- ***More of the multi-family dwellings are renter-occupied than owner-occupied.***

It is the extreme proportion of renter-occupied multiple-family dwellings found in Chicago Ridge that causes concern. Rental occupants can come and go easily. They don't pay taxes directly, so they don't necessarily feel vested in the community. Also, when so much of the residential development in the community is of multi-family or renter-occupied dwellings, it reduces the land available for single family and owner-occupied dwellings. This limits the housing market in Chicago Ridge. While this may account for the low vacancy rates described in the "Existing Conditions," in the long run it could turn residents elsewhere.

The Village has worked to increase and reinforce its proportion of owner-occupied housing. In response, developers petitioning for development approvals have presented their multi-family projects as condominiums. The Village has found, however, that these condominium projects often end up as rentals. This negates the Village's efforts to preserve its residential nature and single family character.

As a result of this, the Village has taken the step of creating a new zoning district specifically for condominiums. Because condominiums are a multi-family dwelling type, they tend to be an affordable housing choice that would seem to fit the market. Their biggest advantage, however, is that they are owner-occupied, and thus lend the stability that the Village desires.

Recommendations

- ***Work to balance off the renter/owner and single family/multi-family ratios.*** This is a policy that the Village is already working to implement. In the case of Chicago Ridge, its importance cannot be overstated. In fact, all of the following residential policies are related to attaining this balance.
- ***Identify opportunities for condominium dwellings.*** The Village's new "R-4 Multi-family - Condominium" zoning district is a step forward in encouraging condominium development as opposed to rented multi-family dwellings. It is important, however, that condominiums be located in appropriate locations. The following standards should be considered when reviewing applications for condominium development.

Condominiums should be located:

- ***along secondary arterial and collector roadways.*** The amount of traffic generated by multi-family development, including condominiums, is greater than that generated by single family development. When multi-family development is located along an arterial or collector roadway, its residents can get in and out of the development more easily, and traffic flows more smoothly. However, land along *primary* arterials such as Harlem Avenue should be reserved for commercial and industrial development. Thus, condominiums are better suited along secondary arterials like Southwest Highway and 111th Street and collectors such as Ridgeland Avenue.
- ***near shopping opportunities and community facilities.*** The density of people in multi-family buildings, including condominiums, is a good market for retail and personal service uses. When located closely enough, residents can even walk there, reducing traffic. Also, condominiums are a popular for empty nesters because of their low maintenance; this also means condominiums should be located near the businesses and community facilities that elders use, such as groceries, doctor's offices, parks, or the library.
- ***in between single family development and apartments or businesses.*** Condominiums provide a buffer between the low-density of single family detached dwellings and the higher-intensity apartments or businesses. However, condominiums should not necessarily be located in places that can't attract single-family development. A condominium is a long-term investment, and condominium buyers have many of the same standards as buyers of single-family dwellings.

- **Identify opportunities for townhome dwellings.** While condominiums are an owner-occupied dwelling type, they may be smaller and more constricting than single-family dwellings. This could prohibit ownership by families with children or those empty-nesters wanting more space. Since the Village wants to retain its family atmosphere, it needs to include family-friendly housing. This means providing single family detached and attached (townhome) dwellings.

Townhouses can provide the room that a family needs and still be an affordable housing type. They should be encouraged in Chicago Ridge in the appropriate locations. The following standards should apply to all new townhome development.

Townhomes should be located:

- as infill in single-family neighborhoods,
- in between single-family detached and multi-family dwellings, and/or
- along secondary arterials or collectors, if in the form of larger developments; along local streets, for smaller developments (about six or fewer).

Given these criteria, some appropriate locations for townhome development would be along or just off of Ridgeland Avenue and Central Avenue.

Qualities to be desired in a townhome development are:

- separate entrances for each dwelling unit;
- sufficient outdoor space for children's play, and/or
- community open space;
- architectural style consistent with single-family detached dwellings, and/or
- architectural style consistent with the neighborhood in which it is located; and
- garages, carports, and/or storage units wherever possible.

All of these qualities help preserve the residential character of the community and will attract potential townhome owners.

- **Provide assistance to Village homeowners, particularly seniors, for home maintenance.** As described in the "Existing Conditions" section, single-family detached homes have already been reduced to a minority of Chicago Ridge's housing stock. Therefore, it is important that the existing single family detached housing stock be maintained in good condition. If it is allowed to deteriorate, it may become a candidate for redevelopment. If it is redeveloped, local market forces would seem to suggest it be redeveloped as multi-family. The Village should periodically assess the need to provide assistance for home maintenance, particularly for seniors for whom it can be especially difficult.
- **Identify ways to keep young owners in the community.** Keeping young families in the community is an important component of Village stability, but several forces make it difficult. As mentioned previously, there is simply a lack of owner-occupied housing stock available in Chicago Ridge. Young families may have a hard time coming up with the down payment for a home. Other factors may also influence a young family's decision of whether to buy a home in Chicago Ridge. The first step the Village should take to keep its young families is simply to increase the owner-occupied housing stock available. But the Village may also want to consider providing some form of home-buying assistance or information. If so, the Village should work with local realtors to survey potential homebuyers about their community preferences for valuable information on how to attract them.

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

There is a wide variety of commercial land uses in Chicago Ridge, from the Chicago Ridge Mall to independent local businesses. As the following "Findings and Issues" describes, a challenge for Chicago Ridge is to preserve the mall as a strong economic resource while enhancing the business environment for smaller commercial uses. The

“Policy Recommendations” suggest that the Village recognize the unique contributions of all businesses, whether they serve community or neighborhood needs, and enhance the vitality of commercial areas with a set of physical design improvements.

Findings and Issues

- **Railroad crossings and traffic hinder commercial potential in the Village.** As mentioned in the “Existing Conditions” section, the transportation network in Chicago Ridge is full of dead-ends, and it's difficult to get from one side of town to another. This detracts from the commercial potential within the Village.
- **Chicago Ridge Mall is a strong retail center, and consumes much of the market for retail uses in the Village.** Chicago Ridge Mall is well-located, in contrast to other commercial areas. Over 200 businesses are found in the mall and the surrounding area. This provides significant tax revenue for the community. This fact has two conflicting implications: 1) the mall detracts from other commercial areas, but 2) it is a significant community asset in terms of tax base and shopping for residents.
- **111th Street, Ridgeland Avenue, and Southwest Highway are secondary arterials.** This means that they are less prominent than primary arterials such as Harlem Avenue. Their status is reflected in a lower commercial potential. However, they are good locations for neighborhood-oriented businesses and for higher-density residential condominiums.
- **The community and its residents would benefit from a grocery store in the Village.** Currently there is no grocery store in the Village. The nearest is at 87th and Ridgeland, north of town. Major chains such as Jewel and Dominick's have not been interested in locating in the community, in part because of its limited transportation network. Therefore, to get a grocery store, the Village may need to look to smaller local businesses and/or provide incentives.
- **Little or no formal organization exists for the business community (commercial or industrial).** There has been a joint Chicago Ridge/Worth Chamber of Commerce, but it has been relatively inactive. The lack of an active business organization prohibits mobilization of the business community to undertake marketing campaigns or physical improvements.
- **Enhancements to commercial corridors will require Village action and support of the property owners.** The commercial market in Chicago Ridge would be enhanced by physical improvements to its commercial corridors. However, such improvements require a unified approach, not just individual efforts. Also, many of the smaller businesses can't afford to undertake expensive improvements. This may be part of what leads to deferred maintenance among such businesses.

Recommendations

- **Key commercial areas should be identified and protected.** Different types of businesses are appropriate in different types of locations. The Village should identify its key commercial areas and the most desirable land uses for each area, and use its zoning tools to control adverse land uses. The following is a guide for the types of uses that may be most appropriate in each area.
- **Chicago Ridge Mall Area:** Community and regional retail and services, such as department stores and sit-down restaurants.
- **Primary Arterials (especially Harlem Avenue):** Large scale commercial uses, such as discount stores, that market to an entire community and adjacent communities, and which people like to have convenient to their homes.
- **Secondary Arterials (Ridgeland Avenue, 111th Street, and Southwest Highway):** Neighborhood-oriented uses, such as drugstores, dry cleaners, and take-out restaurants.

- ***The Village should prepare for the eventual redevelopment of sites by putting in place new zoning requirements for landscaping and signs.*** While many businesses can't afford to make a lot of physical changes at once, the time will come when every business either has to make some improvements or is completely redeveloped. By putting in place new zoning standards for landscaping and signs, the Village would be preparing for that time, and commercial sites would be improved incrementally.
- ***The Village should play an active role in enhancing community appearance, especially along commercial corridors.*** While enhanced zoning would allow for improvements over time, the Village may want to make some changes right away. The physical appearance of commercial corridors, for example, can be a factor in attracting and maintaining businesses and their customers. The Village could make infrastructure improvements on its own, use techniques like facade rebates to work with area businesses, or implement new tax increment financing districts to provide capital. It could also work with adjacent jurisdictions like Oak Lawn and Worth and/or form public private partnerships for community improvement.
- ***Consider forming an Economic Development Commission.*** An EDC could serve as the collective voice of the business community and the liaison between the business community and the Village. It would be particularly beneficial for small businesses who may feel they don't have much power to make individual changes. An EDC could advise the Village Board on the use of public funds for commercial and industrial improvement projects. It could also help to market Village businesses. The EDC would be made up of volunteers from the business community who would meet on a regular basis.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Most industrial land uses in Chicago Ridge are located in the Park at Chicago Ridge. The industrial park is a significant economic resource for the Village, and still has a few vacant parcels. But, as the "Findings and Issues" below explain, the park does require marketing. The "Policy Recommendations" suggest that an Economic Development Commission be utilized to market the park and otherwise look out for its best interests.

Findings and Issues

- ***The industrial park had a poor beginning with no stewardship.*** The Park at Chicago Ridge has had a number of vacancies over the years. This can be attributed to a lack of stewardship: there was no one looking after the best interests of the park.
- ***Evergreen Bank has shown the value of regular attention and marketing of the industrial park.*** In contrast to earlier efforts, Evergreen Bank has become a steward for the Park at Chicago Ridge, and more development is happening there now. This shows the value of regular attention and marketing.

Recommendations

- ***Maintain the industrial park as an economic resources for the Village.*** The industrial park is the only vacant industrial land available in the Village. In general, it should be preserved for the location of future industrial land uses in the Village. Some parcels of the industrial park were recently rezoned for residential use. However, this was only after careful consideration by the Village and in recognition of the Village's need for owner-occupied housing. It also reflects the locational criteria of placing multiple-family housing on Southwest Highway.
- ***Increase awareness and visibility of the industrial park.*** The industrial park would benefit from more aggressive marketing. Industrial brokers are one potential way to market the park. Directional signs and promotional materials would also help increase visibility.
- ***Consider the use of an Economic Development Commission.*** As recommended under "Commercial Land Uses," an EDC could become the voice of business in Chicago Ridge and act as a liaison between the Village Board and the business community. With regard to industrial land uses, an EDC could help with business expansion in the industrial park in the short term and business retention after existing sites are sold.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Chicago Ridge has the benefit of many community facilities like the Metra station, library, and park sites. But, as described under the "Findings and Issues" below, the community still suffers from division between its neighborhoods and deteriorating infrastructure. The "Policy Recommendations" suggest that the positive aspects of Chicago's Ridge's community facilities be expanded and that infrastructure continues to be improved to create a town center which would link community facilities, create a focus and identity for the community and will help bring the community together.

Findings and Issues

- **Many residential neighborhoods feel isolated from the community as a whole.** The physical divisions caused by railroads and arterials create small pockets of residential neighborhoods. There is no central place, like a traditional downtown, with which they all can identify. This isolation is exacerbated by the fact that some Chicago Ridge residents may get their services from Oak Lawn (through a mutual services agreement) and that the community is served by three grade school and two high school districts.
- **The Village's infrastructure has been improved.** Recent improvements in community infrastructure included the widening and resurfacing of 111th Street, Ridgeland and Central Avenues and other streets; installation of streetlights, curbs, and stop signs; and park improvements. These have helped the appearance and quality-of-life in the community.
- **The Metra commuter rail station is an asset, but requires additional parking.** Metra allows Chicago Ridge residents to be in downtown Chicago in about 45 minutes. The Chicago Ridge Metra station is well-situated near the center of the community. However, there is not much parking nearby. More people might use Metra or frequent nearby businesses if additional parking were available.
- **The existing library would benefit from expansion.** The existing library is well-located in the center of the community, near Metra and Freedom Park. But it is small and doesn't have much parking.

Recommendations

- **Improve communication among community residents.** People can be made to feel more part of the community if communication is improved. This could be accomplished through a community-wide newsletter and/or through better communication among the various community services and facilities. For example, the school systems could be kept better informed of Village activities if informed of upcoming meeting agendas, and vice-versa.
- **Identify opportunities to expand on park and recreation opportunities.** The family-oriented nature of the community requires the availability of more youth activities. The Village could look for opportunities to expand on recreation facilities, perhaps with a park or trail along the wooded floodplain near Stoney Creek, or on redeveloped parcels in the neighborhoods.
- **Continue the improvement of community infrastructure.** Chicago Ridge residents have and will continue to benefit from infrastructure improvements. There are several places where this can occur in the short term throughout the community. The "Subarea Plans" address this and show possible solutions which can be applied throughout the community.
- **Consider a community clean-up program as a part of infrastructure improvements.** Much of the infrastructure around Chicago Ridge would benefit from just a little clean-up. An "Adopt-a-Road" program or "Community Clean-up Day" would bring together community organizations for the betterment of community appearance.

- ***Create a town center as a focal point for the community.*** A town center could support many of Chicago Ridge community facility objectives. It would provide a focal point for the community and could incorporate increased Metra parking and an expanded library. See "Subarea Plans."

5. SUBAREA PLANS

While a comprehensive plan serves mainly to provide an overall vision for a community, the inclusion of subarea plans allows the community to focus on certain areas where improvements could make a significant difference. Though some recommendations are specific to a particular subarea, other solutions often can be applied to other community subareas. Two such areas in Chicago Ridge are the 111th Street Corridor and a proposed Town Center.

THE 111TH STREET CORRIDOR

The 111th Street Corridor is important to Chicago Ridge for several reasons. First, it is the Village's southern border, and the entrance to the community for those arriving from the south. Second, it is one of the few "through-streets" that go from one side of town to the other, so it is well-traveled. Third, it is the home of several small businesses that may need some extra help competing with the mall development. Although significant improvements are underway along 111th Street, the corridor can serve as a prototype for other corridors in community where similar issues have arisen.

Issues

There were several problems with 111th Street, most of which were related to physical design. These issues can be described as continuity, identity, and aesthetics. Continuity consists of whether a corridor is consistent in its features and appearance from one end of town to the other. Identity addresses the degree to which a corridor is seen by the community as a distinctive place. Aesthetics refers to the style and quality of the buildings, signs, landscaping, and infrastructure along a corridor. All three of these issues are important in enhancing the 111th Street Corridor and other corridors.

- *The 111th Street Corridor lacks continuity.*
 - *Businesses along the street vary considerably in architectural style and lot setback* (the distance that they sit back from the road). Instead of appearing as a unified shopping area, they seem to compete with one another for attention.
 - *Sidewalks were not consistent in location or condition.* One could not walk or ride a bike the distance of 111th Street currently because there are gaps or "jogs" in the sidewalk and because some parts are in poor condition.
 - *Parking is inadequate in places to serve the intended establishments.* Some businesses along the corridor seem to have enough parking, yet others are crowded.
- *The 111th Street Corridor lacks identity.*
 - *111th Street is not seen as a destination point for shoppers.* People don't decide to go shop on 111th Street like they decide to go to the mall.
 - *The street is automobile-oriented.* The street seems to be designed more for cars than people. Cars go by quickly, so the streets don't include a lot of architectural detail. But while 111th Street will remain automobile oriented, it also needs to become more attractive to pedestrians if it is to have a positive identity.
- *The 111th Street Corridor lacks aesthetic value.*
 - *There is little landscaping along the corridor.* People are attracted to well-landscaped shopping environments, but the 111th Street Corridor doesn't have much landscaping.
 - *Many of the individual structures are aging, and facade improvements would enhance the appearance of the corridor.* People tend to like to shop in areas that are new and attractive.

Recommendations

The conditions found in the 111th Street Corridor are straightforward, but not easy to solve, though, some improvements are currently underway. There is a basic two-step approach which could be applied to other areas in the community: 1) examples for improvements, and 2) ways for those improvements to happen.

Examples for Improvements

Figure 6 illustrates the improvement examples and a prototype design for the corridor. Components of the prototype are described below.

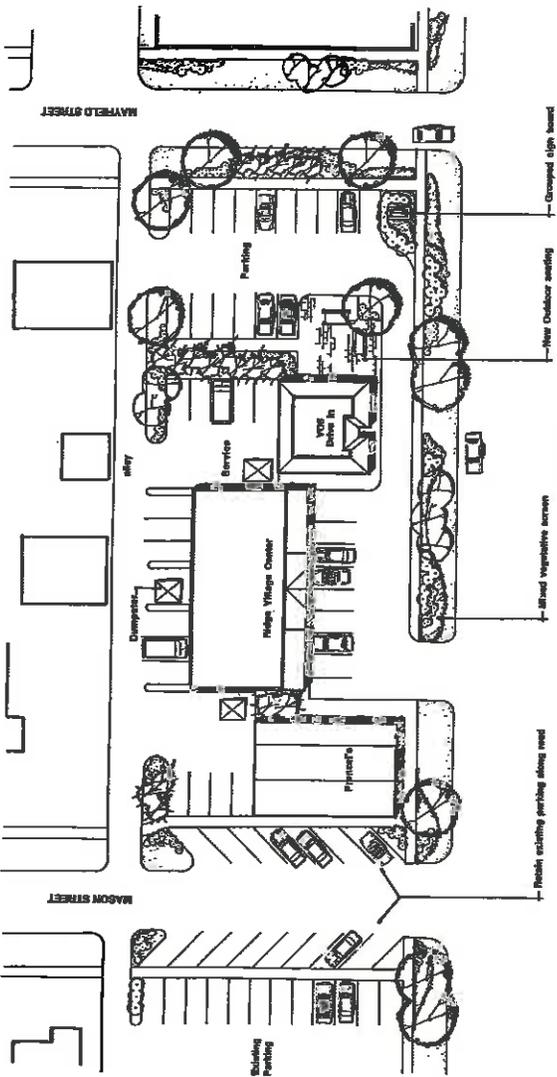
- *The 111th Street Subarea Plan Strengthens Continuity.*
 - Common elements are repeated along the length of the street. For example, the same varieties of streets, shrubs, and flowers are used throughout the corridor. Signs are designed in a similar style to one another. Buildings use the same siding materials, light fixtures, etc.
 - Sidewalks, currently under construction, are made to connect along the entire corridor.
- *The 111th Street Subarea Plan Strengthens Identity.*
 - Uses within each block are made to appear as a single development, instead of individual buildings. The uses in each block share a common parking lot and a common “grouped” sign.
 - Facades are improved.
- *The 111th Street Subarea Plan Strengthens Aesthetic Value.*
 - Trees, shrubs, and flowers are planted along the corridor.
 - Where landscaping is not feasible, pavers or colored asphalt should be used along the corridor.
 - Shrubs are planted along parking lots as a screen to improve their appearance.
 - Common “grouped” signs are used to eliminate the clutter of many individual signs.
 - Decorative features are added along the corridor, such as banners, streetlights, etc.

Making it Happen

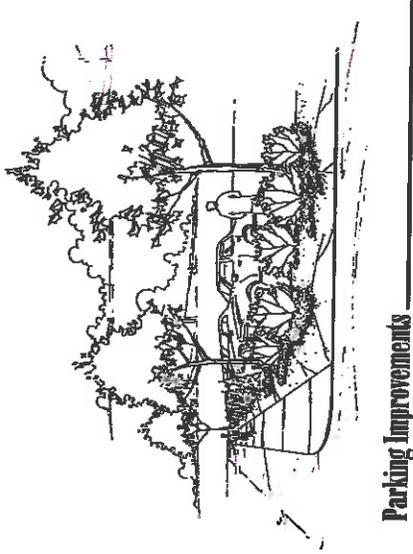
Implementation of the Subarea Plan will require the cooperation and teamwork of the Village, the state, local businesses and the development community. The following are some recommendations for how these groups can work together to implement the subarea plan.

- *Establish an Economic Development Commission to act as a steward for the project.* As described under both the Commercial and Industrial components of the Land Use Plan, there are many benefits to having an EDC. One of these is that it can represent the business community and serve as a liaison to the Village. As such, the EDC would be an excellent group to promote the 111th Street Corridor Subarea Plan.
- *Find appropriate funding for the project.* The businesses cannot undertake this project alone, nor can the Village. But the Village can work to find appropriate funding mechanisms that equitably distribute the cost of the project. These might include a tax increment finance district (TIF) or tax abatements. Such tools could be used in conjunction with a private sector developer to redevelop portions of the corridor.
- *Coordinate with the state’s planned road improvements.* Many of the recommendations of this subarea plan can be more easily accomplished while the state is making its planned road improvements to 111th Street. For example, sidewalks can be more easily installed when the roads are already closed for construction. If the state is planning to install streetlights, the Village could work to upgrade those lights to a decorative style rather than the IDOT standard streetlight. This level of cooperation will require prompt action on the part of the Village.

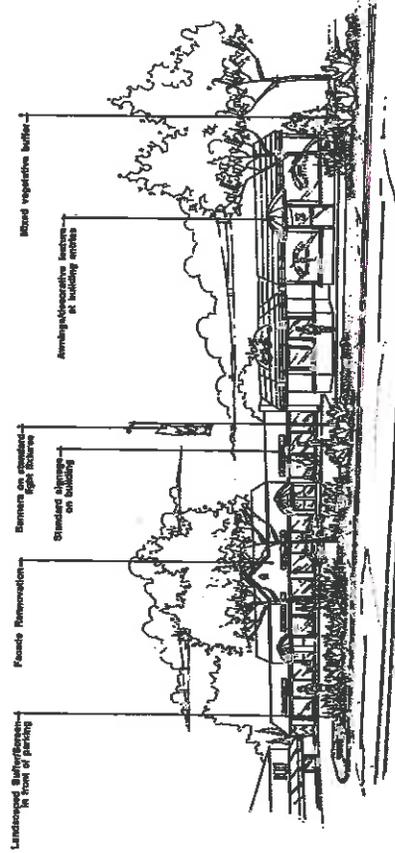
Prototypical Streetscape Improvements 111th Street Corridor Plan - Village of Chicago Ridge



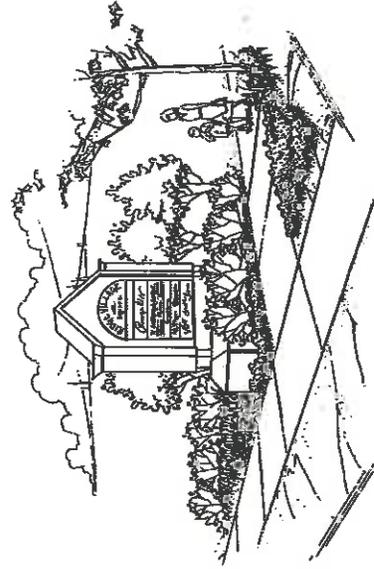
Prototypical Plan



Parking Improvements



Facade Renovations



Grouped Signage

THE CHICAGO RIDGE TOWN CENTER

The Chicago Ridge Town Center is a proposed redevelopment project that would provide the opportunity to meet several of Chicago Ridge's planning needs. Located at the geographic center of the Village, it would create a focus for the community and link it with a common identity. This would alleviate some of the problems of neighborhood isolation described in the "Community Facilities" portion of the land use plan, and would also help promote the Village's business marketing objectives. The Town Center would include new townhome development, additional commuter parking, an expanded library, and a renewed focus on area park and recreation uses. Finally, it would provide the opportunity for infrastructural and aesthetic improvements in a highly visible location.

The proposed layout of the Chicago Ridge Town Center is shown in Figure 7. Essentially, it links together Freedom Park and Activity Center, the Metra commuter rail station, and several nearby municipal uses such as the library into a single unified campus. Birmingham and Washington Avenues are realigned to provide a safer intersection with Ridgeland.

The Town Center seeks to combine several uses that support one another:

- townhomes;
- new civic buildings, including a new Village Hall/Police Station and a new Community/Senior Center; and
- the addition of a performance pavilion in the park.

Commuter-oriented retail uses such as a convenience store and a coffee house would be located in new buildings directly across from the Metra station. The proposed layout shows a plaza which users would pass through on their way to and from the station. This is accentuated by an enhanced crosswalk at Ridgeland and Birmingham.

Figure 7 also shows what the proposed Town Center would look like as viewed while driving south on Ridgeland.

Connections are an important part of the Chicago Ridge Town Center:

- 1) The Metra train station is connected to the commuter-oriented retail development.
- 2) There are pedestrian connections to and from Freedom Park and Activity Center.
- 3) There are stronger linkages, both pedestrian and vehicular, to Village Hall and other community facilities.
- 4) Trails link new and existing residential development to each other, to nearby community facilities, and to park and recreation uses.

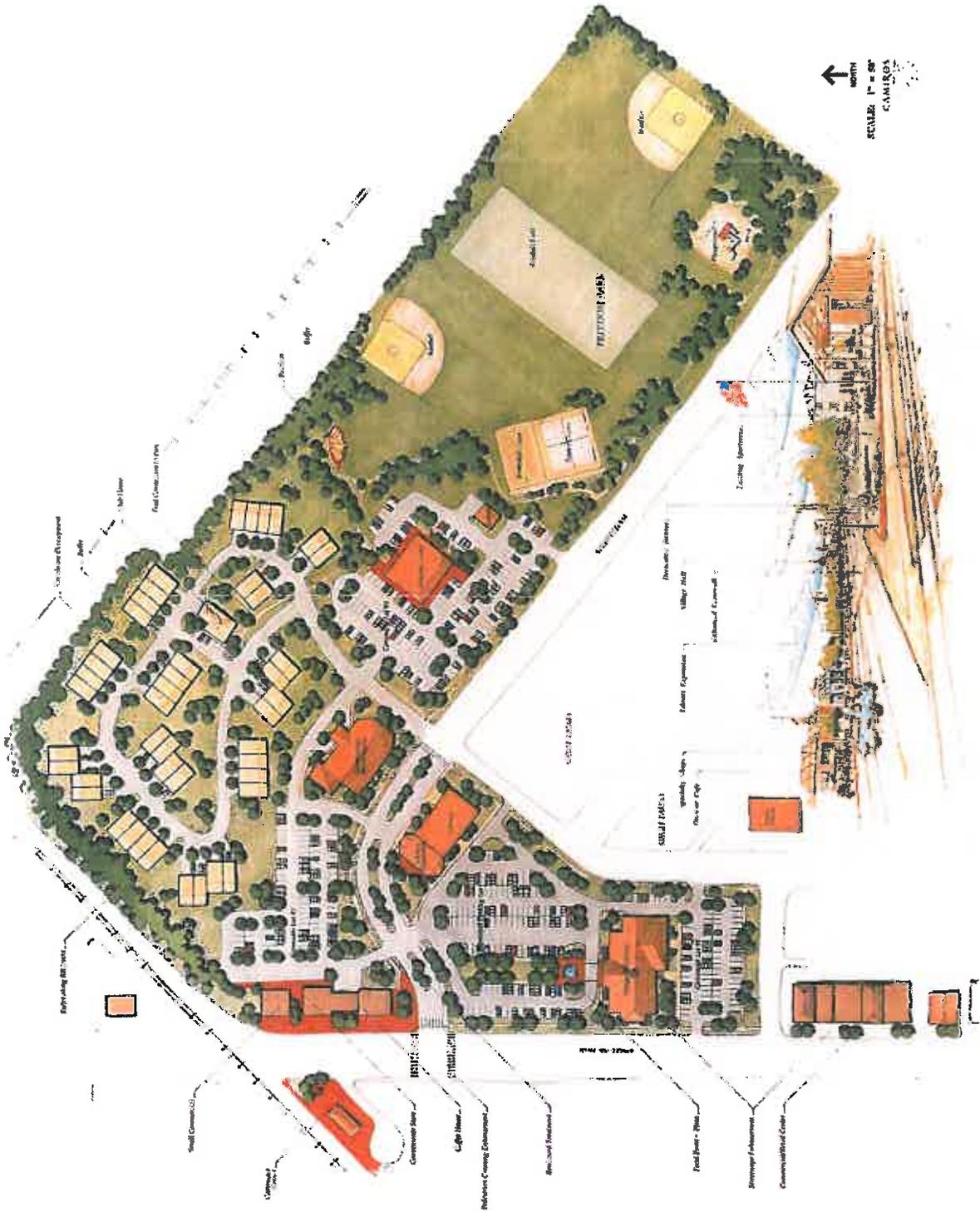
The Town Center development also provides the opportunity to make several infrastructural or aesthetic improvements, including:

- a landscaped boulevard on Birmingham Avenue,
- the addition of outdoor gathering spaces, such as the railway plaza and another one in front of the new Village Hall, and
- the addition of pedestrian-friendly elements like benches, streetlights, banners, and flowers.

Making it Happen

As with the 111th Street Subarea Plan, the Town Center Plan requires a great deal of cooperation among the Village, local businesses, and a private sector developer. It would be a complex undertaking, but the Village is well-situated to take the lead in the project. Some of the steps involved would be as follows:

- **Land Assembly.** The project would require assembling several parcels of land. Some of these are industrial, and the Village should assist their users in moving to new sites in the Chicago Ridge Industrial Park (this would be beneficial to the park as well). Users of other sites could also be relocated, either temporarily or permanently, to other sites in the Village. The final town center will include sites for residential and commercial uses, and community facilities.



CHICAGO RIDGE TOWN CENTER

- ***Siting of municipal uses.*** Once the appropriate parcels are assembled, the Village can lead the way in developing the town center by moving its town hall to the center. The new location would be more centrally located in the community, bring the appropriate focus to the town center, and reduce traffic in the residential neighborhood where town hall is currently located. The Village should also be instrumental in the siting of the town center's other community facilities, such as the library expansion, community/senior center, and commuter parking lots.
- ***Partnerships.*** In order to facilitate the completion of the town center, the Village should strive to form partnerships with private developers, businesses, and other groups. One instance in which this could be beneficial is the development of the townhomes on the town center site. While these will require the guidance of a private developer, the Village could help by providing infrastructure, for example. These types of partnerships could also be useful in the completion of the commercial uses, road realignment, and site landscaping.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

WORK PROGRAM

This work program outlines the policy recommendations found throughout the Land Use Plan and Subarea Plans. It serves as a unified list of all of the recommendations. It also shows that some policy recommendations benefit more than one planning area. For example, the creation of an Economic Development Commission was recommended to help both Commercial and Industrial development. The improvement of infrastructure is a part of helping commercial and industrial areas and community facilities, and is a substantial part of the 111th Street and Town Center Subarea Plans. While the Village will determine priorities based on annual capital improvements and public program actions, this chart demonstrates which projects would have the most widespread impacts.

Table 7. Summary Chart of Policy Recommendations

Policy Recommendations:	Land Use Plan				Subarea Plans	
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Community Facilities	111th Street	Town Center
Balance single family/multi-family and renter/owner ratios	X					X
Identify opportunities for condos	X					
Identify opportunities for townhomes	X					X
Provide home maintenance assistance	X					
Work to keep young people in the community.	X					X
Identify and protect key commercial areas		X	X		X	X
Prepare for redevelopment with new zoning regulations		X	X		X	
Improve the appearance of commercial corridors		X	X		X	
Create an Economic Development Commission		X	X			
Increase the visibility of the industrial park			X			
Improve infrastructure		X	X	X	X	X
Create a Town Center				X		X
Improve communication				X		
Expand parks and recreation				X		X
Create a community clean-up program				X		

ZONING ISSUES

The zoning ordinance is the Village's best tool for implementing its comprehensive plan. Through the zoning ordinance, the Village can control what types of uses are allowed in various locations, the size of those uses, and their appearance.

The Village of Chicago Ridge has already used its zoning control to create the "R-4 Multi-family - Condominium" zoning district. The Village now needs to apply that district to certain parcels where condominiums would be appropriate. Guidelines for locating condominiums are found in the Residential section of the Land Use Plan.

The Land Use Plan also recommends using the zoning ordinance to prepare for redevelopment of existing sites. Specifically, the zoning ordinance should be amended to include new sections on parking, signs, and landscaping. The new parking section would include new parking ratios, to better predict the amount of parking needed by each use, and would require parking lot landscaping to improve the appearance of commercial areas. The new landscaping section would describe standards for parking lot landscaping, such as the use of shrubs to screen the parking lot, and for additional landscaping such as buffers for businesses next to residences. The new sign section would require and/or set standards for combined or "grouped" signs to replace multiple individual signs. New uses established after the amended zoning ordinance would have to meet more stringent standards, but existing uses would only be effected if they undergo renovation or expansion.

RESISTING DEPARTURES FROM THE PLAN

Departures from the comprehensive plan often occur as a result of actions taken for short-term expediency. As economic times change, certain types of development become more marketable than others. The Village may receive petitions from developers requesting significant zoning changes, or from owners of already-approved projects requesting to modify a plan, based on short-term economic issues.

In such circumstances, care should be taken to carefully weigh any proposals that may change the Village's long-term development pattern and character.

Proposed changes that vary from the plan may be acceptable if they:

- 1) Promote the goals and objectives of the plan, and
- 2) Do not adversely affect the character of the area of the proposed change.

If any such changes are appropriate and allowed, the Village may find the need to reevaluate its comprehensive plan and consider whether to amend parts of the plan. Proposed amendments to the plan may be in order if:

- 1) There has been a change in the projections or assumptions (such as those regarding demographic trends or the availability of public facilities) upon which the plan is based.
- 2) The data upon which the plan is based are in error or need to be updated.
- 3) New issues or needs have presented themselves to the Village that are not adequately addressed in the comprehensive plan.

Finally, it is essential that the Village staff, Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Trustees use this plan as a working tool in reviewing development requests and in making short- and long-range decisions for the community. The plan depicts a vision for the future of Chicago, and Village actions affect that vision. The plan should be considered a tool for decision-making.

**VILLAGE OF CHICAGO RIDGE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**APPENDIX I
Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan**

**Prepared for
The Village of Chicago Ridge**

May 1, 2012

**Prepared by:
Camiros, Ltd.**

The Need for Comprehensive Plan Modifications

A comprehensive plan addresses long-range goals, objectives and recommendations for how a community should manage its land use, housing, transportation and community facilities. The current Chicago Ridge Comprehensive Plan, prepared in 1997, generally reflects a desired pattern of development which is presently in place. Yet, review of current land use in the Village shows that a key issue facing Chicago Ridge is the future of several of its industrial development areas.

Currently, the Village has a number of active and viable industrial areas widely scattered throughout the community that include an array of industrial, manufacturing and commercial activities. Despite some pockets of vacancy, a significant economic base and jobs are provided by the industrial development within the Park at Chicago Ridge. There are other industrial locations on 99th Street (west of the Chicago Ridge Mall), Ridgeland Avenue (near the railroad crossing) and Central Avenue (near Pleasant Boulevard). The Village should confirm the desire for continued industrial use within these other industrial locations through a review and discussion of the attributes of each. Any modifications should be reflected in an adjustment of the Comprehensive Plan for such areas.

One industrial area clearly in need of change is the Harlem Triangle, formed by Harlem Avenue, the Tri-State Tollway and Stoney Creek. This 90 acre area contains a number of vacant and underutilized properties where reuse potential should be assessed. Foremost among them is the former YRC Freight site, a 72 acre site, which was formerly used as a trucking terminal and is currently for sale. Current use patterns and development trends suggest that manufacturing and industrial businesses may no longer be desirable uses in the Harlem Triangle, and that a comprehensive plan amendment should be considered to incorporate a subarea plan for the redevelopment of that area. This subarea plan is discussed below.

Objectives of the Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan

The Village of Chicago Ridge Comprehensive Plan of 1997

The Village of Chicago Ridge Comprehensive Plan of 1997 answers three fundamental questions for the Village: What is the community like today? What do we want to change or maintain? How are we going to accomplish these objectives? The plan contains the following set of goals and objectives which guided the preparation of an adopted overall land use plan, subarea plans for the 111th Street Corridor and the Town Center, and recommendations for plan implementation. These goals and objectives speak to land use and economic development issues that continue to be important to the Village:

- Maintain viable business areas to serve both regional and community needs.
- Locate land uses with regard to surrounding uses and available transportation facilities.
- Preserve and enhance key commercial areas.
- Identify appropriate and inappropriate land uses for each commercial area.
- Maintain the Park at Chicago Ridge and Chicago Ridge Mall as economic development resources.

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan designates a variety of uses for the Harlem Triangle. The bulk of the area is designated for industrial use as it covered the then active YRC Freight trucking facility. A smaller area along Harlem Avenue is designated local commercial, and remains occupied by small scale retail and personal service uses. Land south of Stoney Creek is designated as mix of multi-family residential and office space. While the local commercial uses in this area continue to be viable, the YRC Freight site is currently vacant and does not seem to be a sustainable location for future industrial development.

Subarea Plan Objectives

The key objective of the proposed subarea plan is to enhance economic development within the Harlem Triangle by making the best use of its marginally used industrial land. This subarea plan acknowledges that land uses along Harlem Avenue have evolved in recent years. In the past, industrial uses were prevalent on Harlem Avenue throughout the southwest suburbs, but much of the corridor has transitioned to commercial, retail and personal service uses south of 71st Street. Therefore the Village seeks to redevelop the area to achieve the following objectives:

- Attract and encourage a mix of uses that will facilitate economic growth within the Village and appeal to a wide segment of the community.
- Create a coordinated mixed-use environment that responds to the changing economic landscape of Harlem Avenue and facilitates redevelopment of the subarea.
- Improve existing infrastructure in regard to transportation and stormwater management.
- Facilitate necessary environmental remediation to insure viable redevelopment opportunities.
- Expand the Village's tax base by attracting new businesses.

These objectives build upon current trends and regional plans. The *Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan* (URS Corporation, 2012) is a recently completed vision for the future development of Harlem Avenue from 63rd Street in Bedford Park to I-80 in Tinley Park. Overall, the plan unites the activities and character of the corridor by complementing the existing plans of the communities along Harlem Avenue. In addition to transportation improvements, the Plan seeks to support the on-going redevelopment of parcels along the corridor, from major opportunity sites to key commercial parcels. The Corridor Plan states that the potential uses and opportunities for the Harlem Triangle include a retail shopping center that would take advantage of traffic on Harlem Avenue, an outdoor commercial use such as a large auto mall, or a mixed-use concept. According to the Plan, the assets of the site include its size, visibility and location despite its drawbacks such as poor access from the Tri-State Tollway, potential environmental contamination and proximity to nearby commercial competition from the Chicago Ridge Mall.

Current Conditions

Existing Land Use

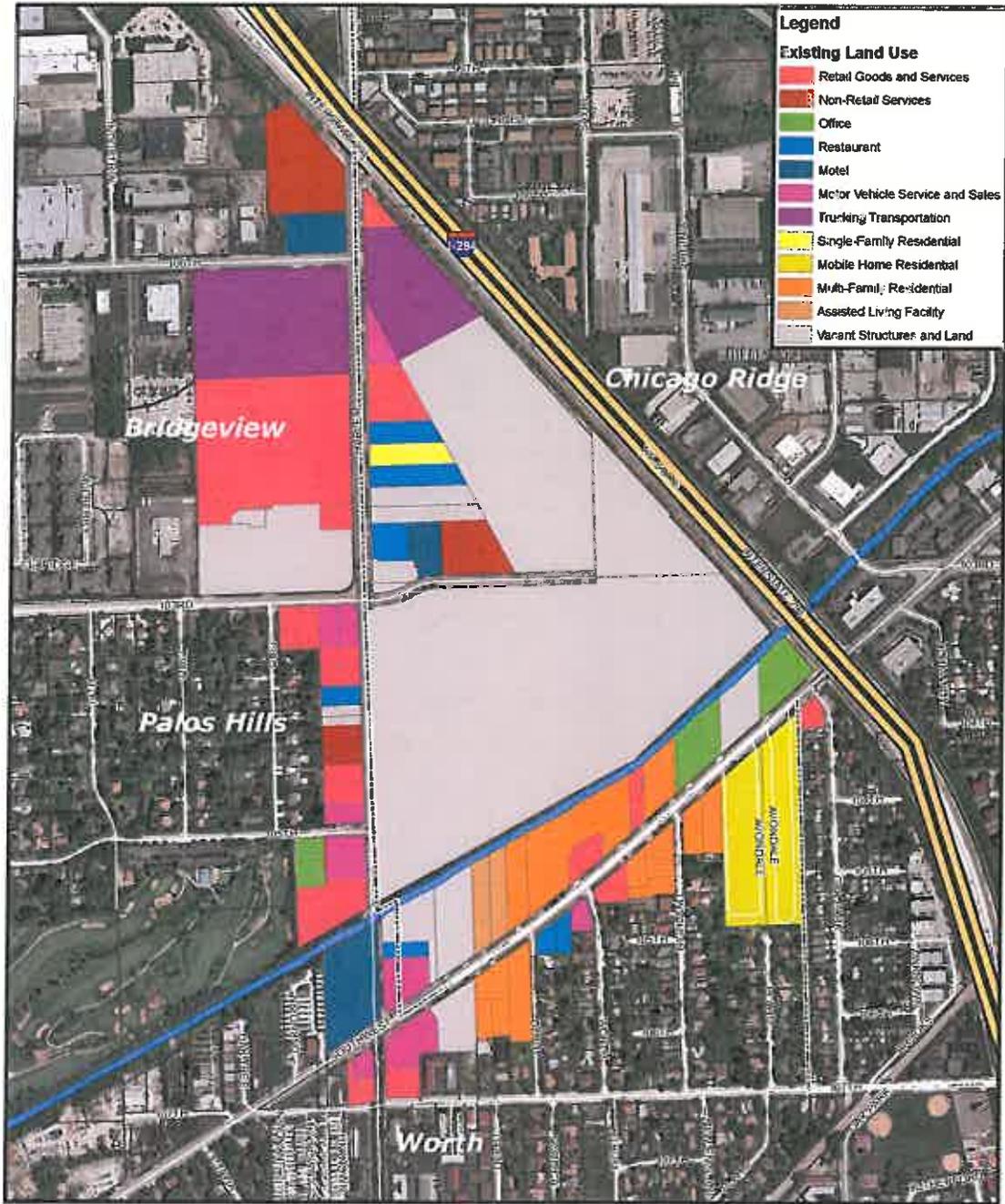
A survey of existing land use was performed to understand conditions within and adjacent to the Harlem Triangle. (See *Figure 1: Existing Land Use*) Overall, the area includes a wide range of land uses that include retail goods and services, offices, restaurants, motels, motor vehicle services, trucking facilities and a variety of residential property. The Harlem Triangle is dominated by the vacant YRC site, which makes up approximately 72 acres of the 90 acre area. Outside the YRC site, adjacent to Harlem Avenue, the land uses in the Harlem Triangle include a six acre trucking transportation facility, motor vehicle services, small retail goods and services locations as well as several eating and drinking establishments, vacant land and a single-family home. The land uses north of the 103rd Street entrance to the site include vacant commercial space, a motel and a self-storage facility.

In Bridgeview, on the west side of Harlem Avenue, land use in the area is dominated by a large Walmart, several vacant commercial buildings and a trucking and transportation facility. The land uses south of 103rd Street in Palos Hills include strip commercial centers with small scale retail and personal service uses, a kennel and two motor vehicle sales and service establishments. The land uses along Southwest Highway in Chicago Ridge and Worth include a mix of commercial, multi-family residential and office facilities. On the north side of Southwest Highway in Chicago Ridge, land uses include several large vacant commercial sites, an assisted living facility, several large apartment buildings, medical offices and two small strip commercial centers. The land uses adjacent to Southwest Highway in Worth include a motel, small scale commercial and motor vehicle service uses, a restaurant, several apartment buildings and a large trailer park.

Environmental Issues

In addition, to the land uses in and around the YRC Freight site, there are several site constraints that will have an impact on future development. (See *Figure 2: Site Constraints*) The site is bounded by two development barriers: the Tri-State Tollway to the north and Stoney Creek to the south. According to Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. the floodplain of Stoney Creek encroaches onto the southern boundary of the site ranging 50 to 140 feet north of the Creek's existing banks. Burke Engineering has also identified a 400 foot band of contaminated soil along the southern edge of the site adjacent to Stoney Creek. Since a thorough investigation of all contaminated soils has yet to be completed, it is possible that there are other contaminated areas on the site that are yet to be identified.

Figure 1: Existing Land Use



*Data Source: Cook County GIS; Camiros

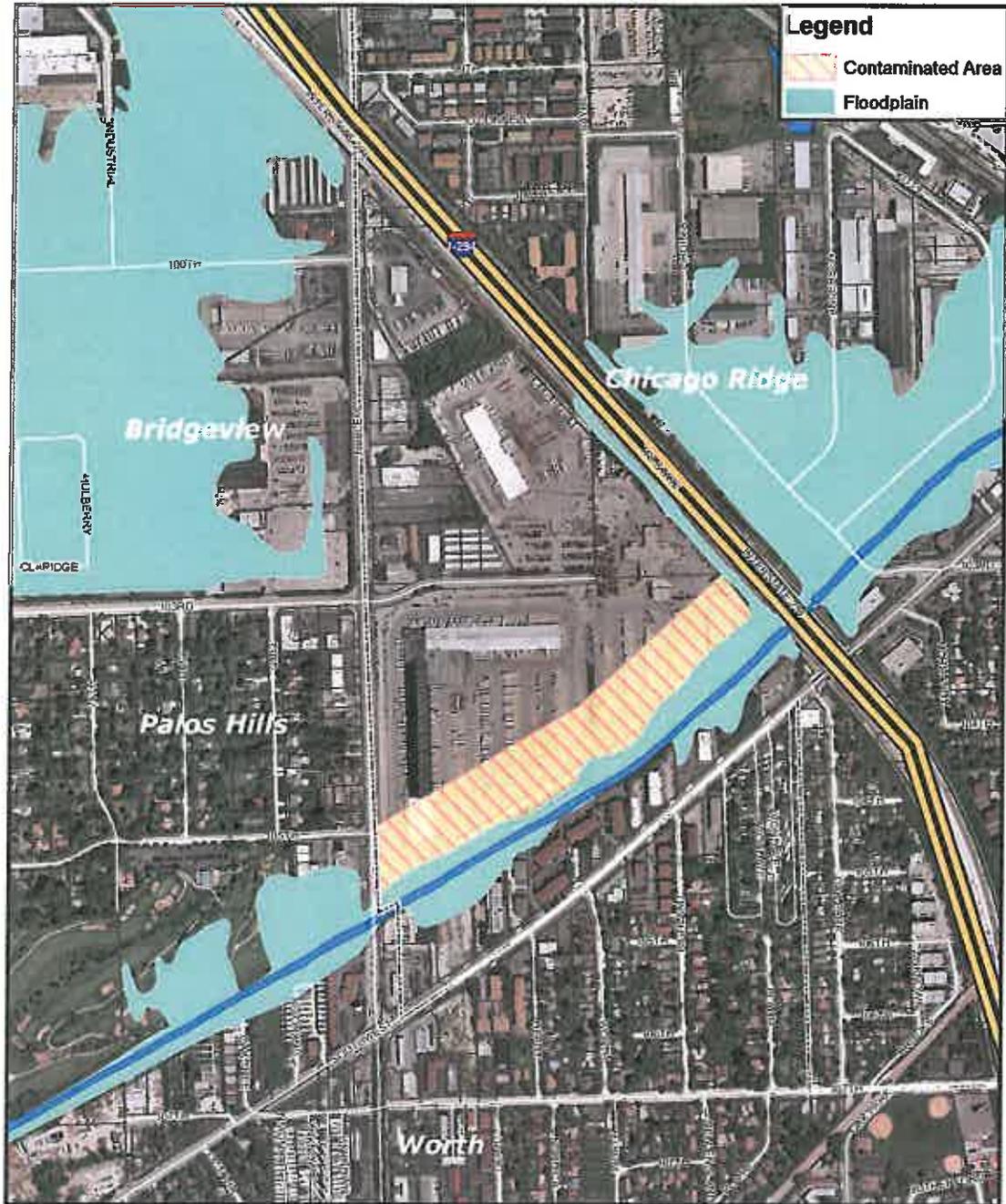
Existing Land Use

Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan
Village of Chicago Ridge, Illinois



CAMIROS

Figure 2: Site Constraints



*Data Source: Cook County GIS; Camiros

Site Constraints

Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan
Village of Chicago Ridge, Illinois

CAMIROS

Market Issues

Analysis of the area surrounding the Village of Chicago Ridge provides insight into the market potential of a variety of commercial uses, destination retail locations and activity centers that tend to respond to the broad use directions emerging from the *Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan*. Figures 3 through 7 show the location and related service areas for uses that might be accommodated on the site. These uses are of a type that would not compete directly with the mix of uses found at Chicago Ridge Mall, such as large warehouse clubs or supercenters, sporting equipment supercenters, outlet malls, and entertainment resort facilities. Some of the maps represent a customer shed for each type of use, which is a consistent unit of measurement of potential customers within a specific distance from the use. In each map the red contour represents the customer shed if the use was established in Chicago Ridge; the blue contour represents the customer shed for the existing uses. Other maps show the location of such uses in relation to Chicago Ridge as represented by a green box. *Table 1: Demographic Comparison of Chicago Ridge* provides a comparison of the population, households, average household income, median household income and gross spending potential of Chicago Ridge in relation to several targeted municipalities.

Table 1: Demographic Comparison of Chicago Ridge					
	Population	Households	Average Household Income	Median Household Income	Gross Spending Potential (in billions)
Chicago Ridge	250,100	94,512	\$ 65,625	\$ 57,187	\$ 4.860
Bolingbrook	90,732	33,621	\$ 79,517	\$ 70,755	\$ 1.983
Chicago	842,306	389,629	\$ 87,388	\$ 61,312	\$ 24.664
Cicero	746,303	111,442	\$ 49,286	\$ 41,029	\$ 11.539
Evergreen Park	340,381	121,597	\$ 57,813	\$ 50,084	\$ 5.734
Hodgkins	107,671	40,653	\$ 92,334	\$ 72,181	\$ 2.683
Joliet	104,548	38,137	\$ 54,054	\$ 47,651	\$ 1.721
Matteson	95,756	35,451	\$ 66,892	\$ 61,149	\$ 1.848
Melrose Park	577,656	199,680	\$ 63,371	\$ 52,400	\$ 10.022
Oak Brook	210,106	80,334	\$ 106,986	\$ 80,071	\$ 5.945
Orland Park	93,088	34,381	\$ 88,935	\$ 79,062	\$ 2.205
River Oaks	179,844	66,388	\$ 52,553	\$ 47,306	\$ 2.940
Tinley Park	114,566	44,320	\$ 76,979	\$ 68,474	\$ 2.554
Woodridge	137,467	53,516	\$ 89,201	\$ 72,152	\$ 3.441

Source: Scanus 2011 and Real Estate Planning Group

Figure 3: Costco Market Area

Costco, one of the nation's largest membership warehouse retailers, has locations in Orland Park, Bolingbrook, Oak Brook, Melrose Park and Chicago. If a Costco was established as part of the Harlem Triangle subarea plan, its customer shed would include more households than Costco locations in Orland Park, Bolingbrook and Oak Brook with a gross spending potential of approximately five billion dollars according to *Table 1*.

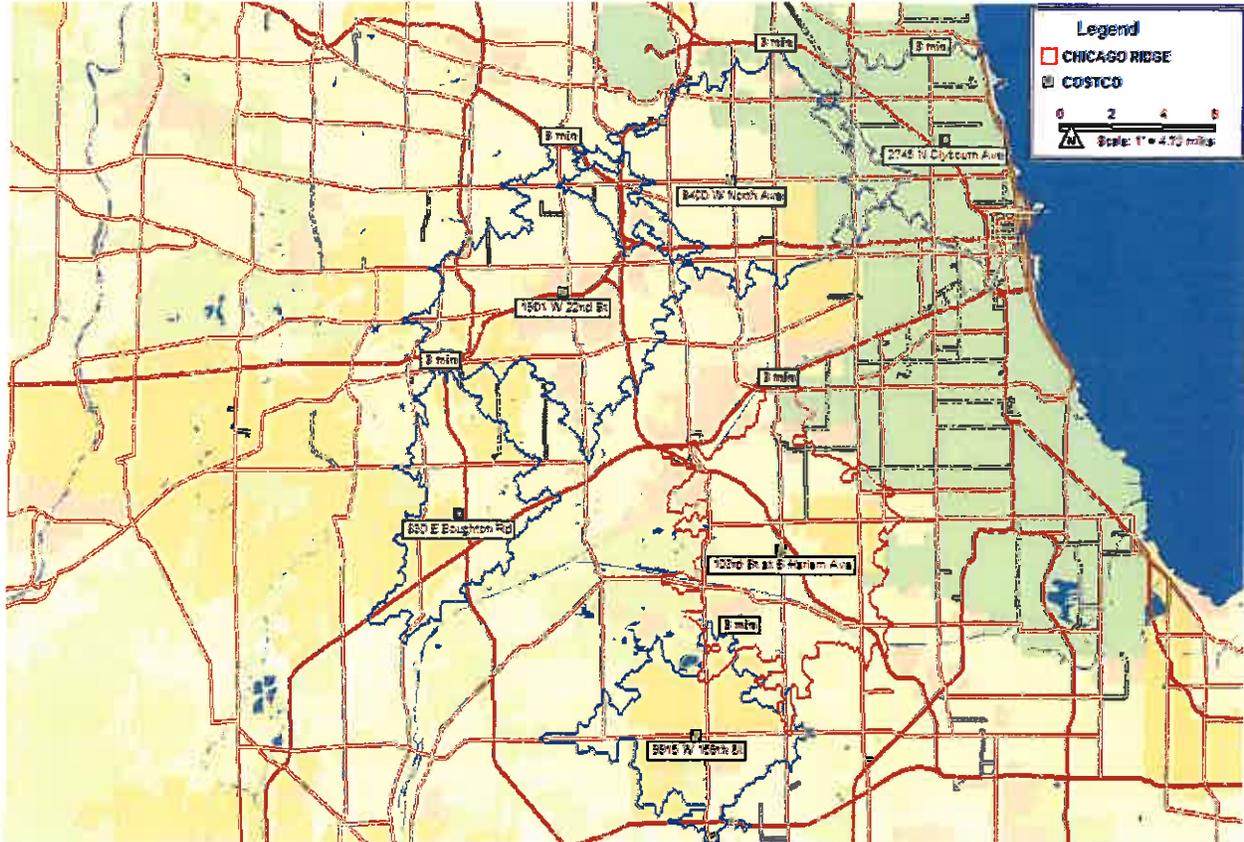


Figure 4: Sam's Club Market Area

Sam's Club, another large membership warehouse retailer, has locations in and around the south and west suburbs, from Calumet City to Joliet to Cicero. Considering the proximity of the Tinley Park and Evergreen Park Sam's Clubs, a new location in Chicago Ridge would provide some competition for existing stores. However considering that the Sam's Club locations in Cicero and Hodgkins are only nine miles apart, a new location in Chicago Ridge should not be ruled out.

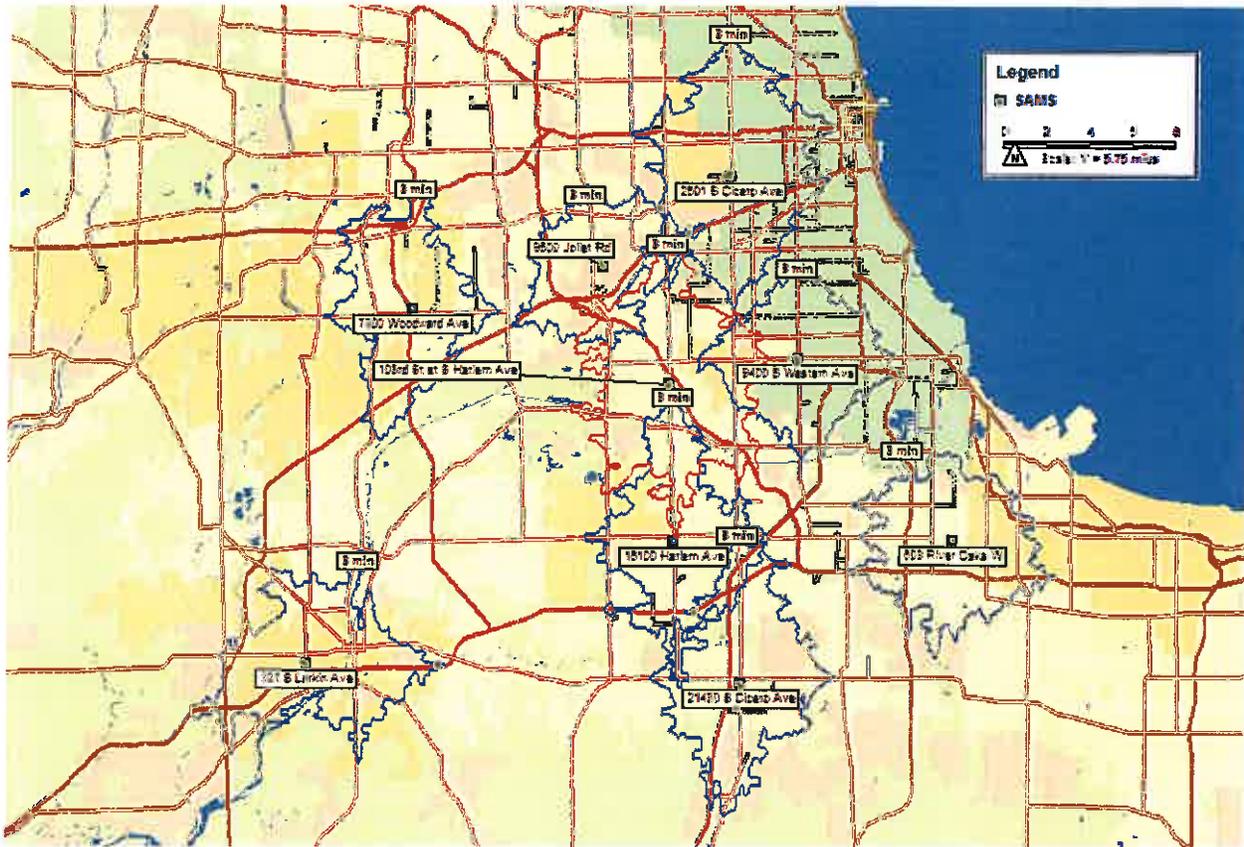


Figure 5: Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops Market Area

Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops are specialty retailers in outdoor recreation merchandise, including hunting, fishing and camping equipment. Cabela's has locations in suburban Hoffman Estates and Bolingbrook, and Hammond, Indiana (represented by green circles below). Bass Pro Shops has locations in north suburban Gurnee and Portage, Indiana (represented by green squares below.) As shown below, both of these retailers tend to locate their stores adjacent to interstate highways that are in close proximity to fishing, hunting and recreation areas. This type of use warrants further examination to test the feasibility of the use within the Harlem Triangle.

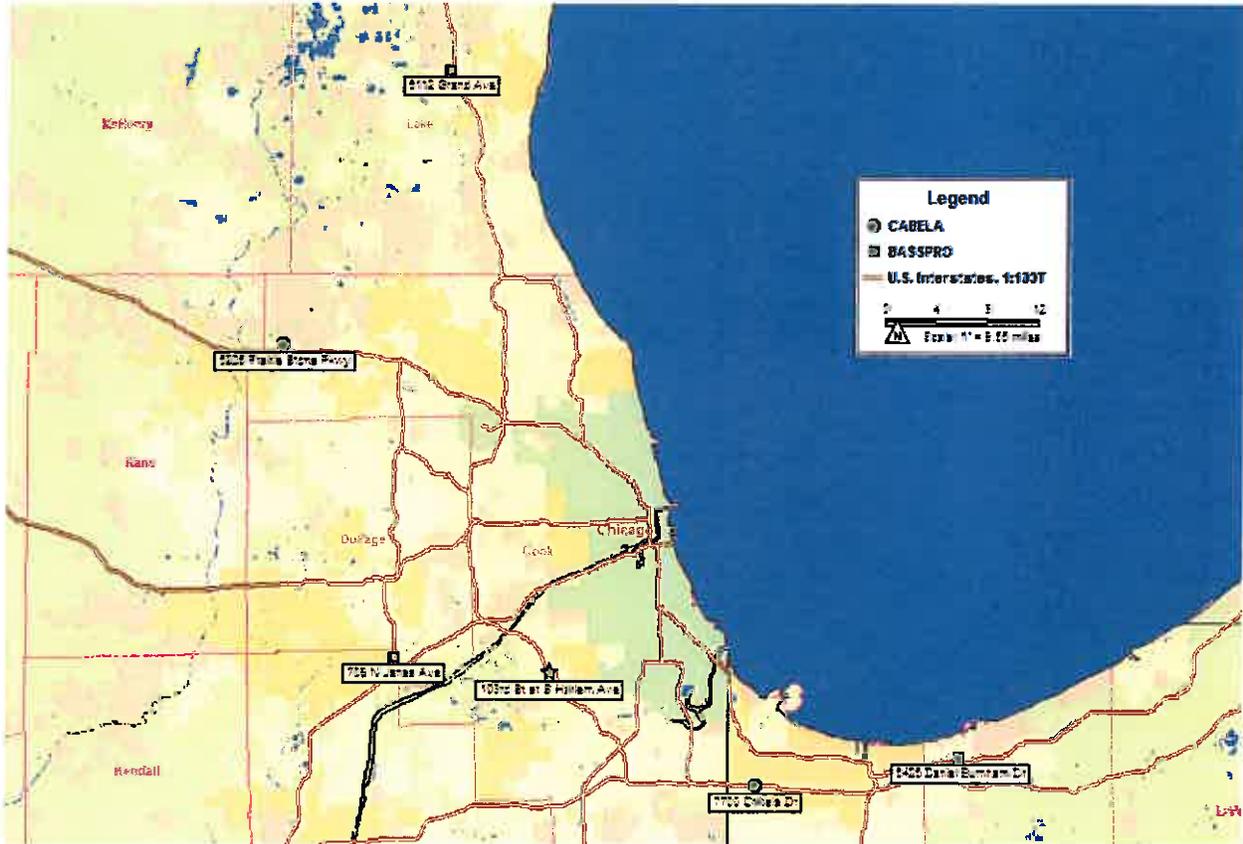


Figure 6: Outlet Centers

The greater Chicago Ridge area has five major outlet centers: Chicago Premium Outlets in Aurora, Huntley Outlet Center in Huntley, Gurnee Mills in Gurnee, Lighthouse Place in Michigan City, Indiana, and Pleasant Prairie in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Like Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops, outlet centers tend to be located on sites with access to major expressways. Given the demographics of the region, further examination of this use within the Harlem Triangle may be warranted.

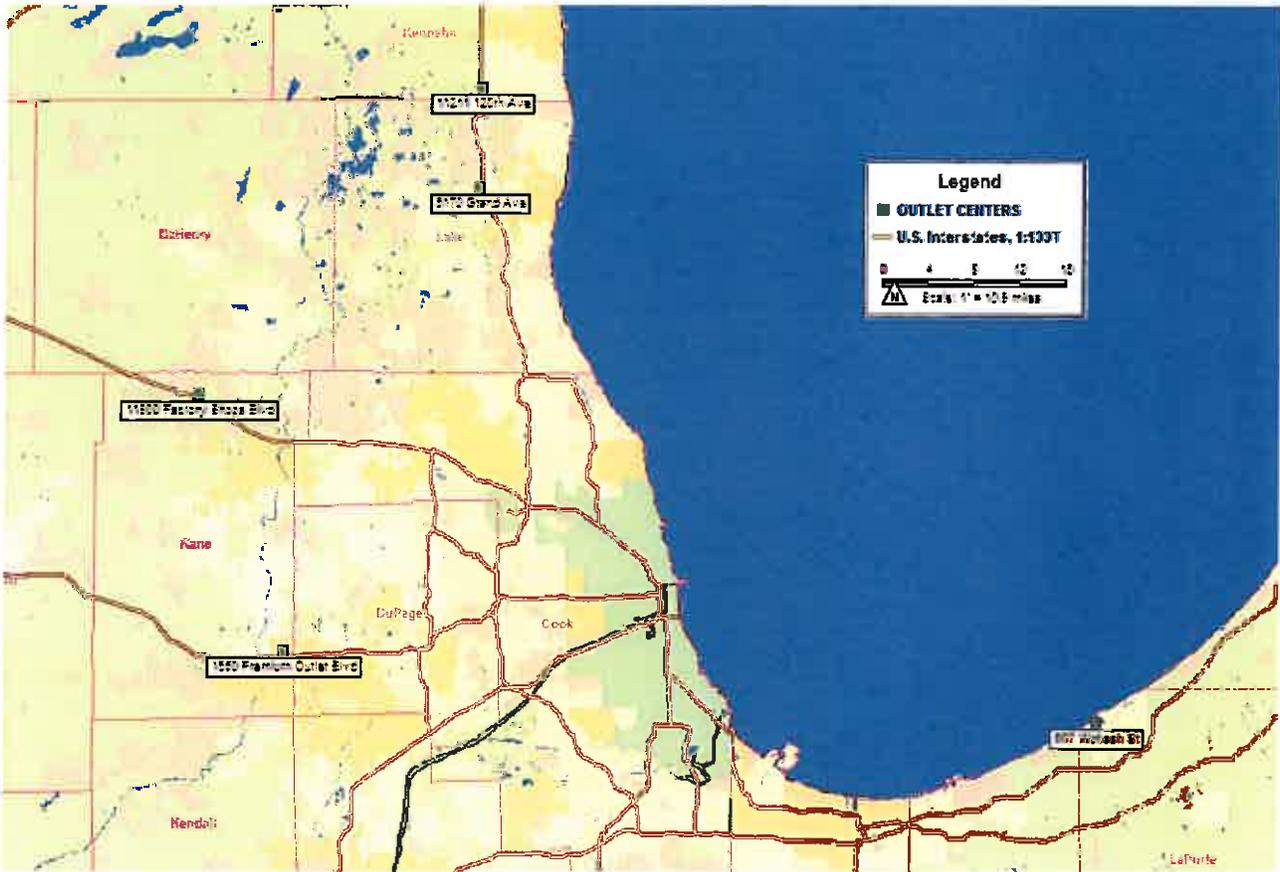
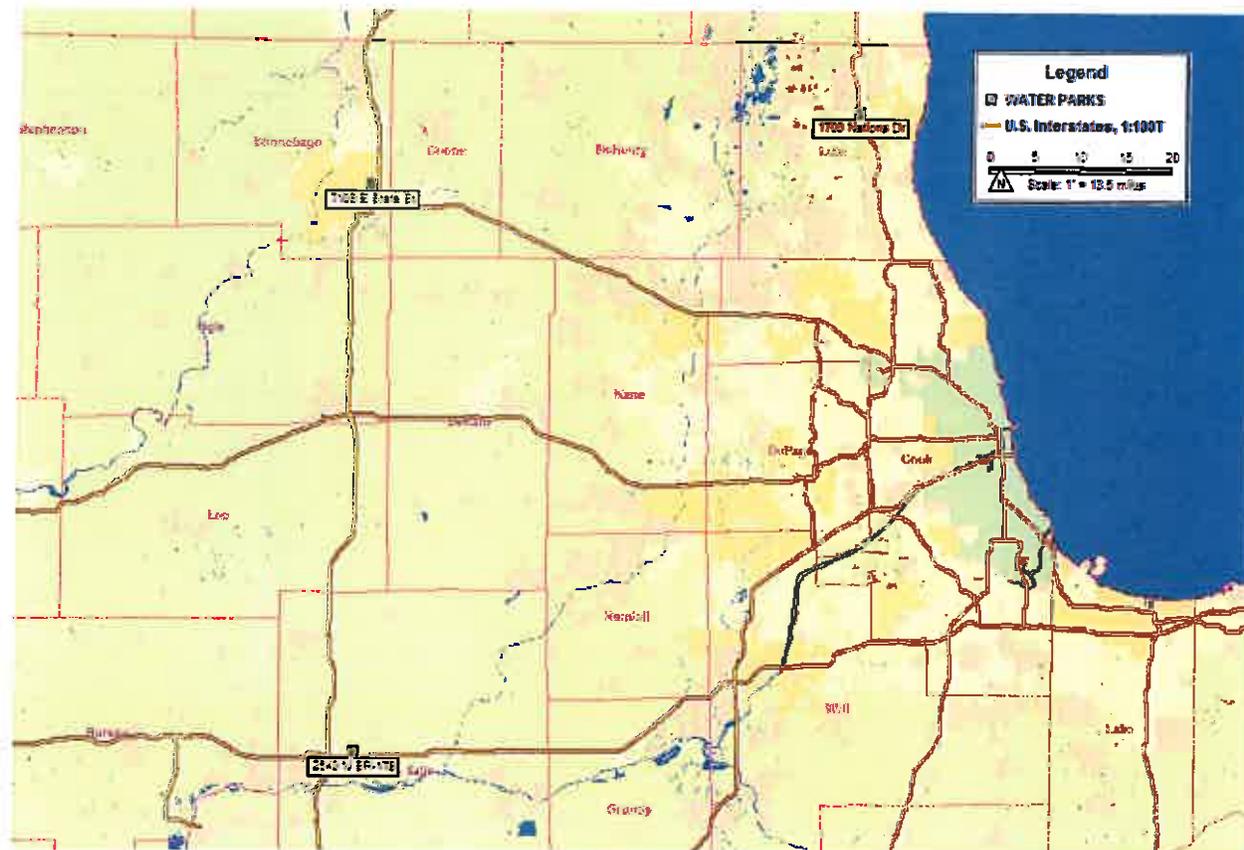


Figure 7: Water Parks

There are three major water parks in the Chicago Ridge area, including Key Lime Cove in Gurnee, CoCo Key Water Resort in Rockford, and Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Resort in Utica. The Harlem Triangle site is large enough to accommodate a water park and it would provide a much closer alternative for such recreation for much of the Chicago area.



Future Land Use Plan Scenarios

Three possible future land use plan scenarios have been developed based on an analysis of existing conditions, the planning objectives of the Harlem Triangle and an understanding of the local market and its potential as reflected in the sample studies contained above.

Scenario I

In Scenario I, all of the land within the Harlem Triangle would be redeveloped as a regional mixed-use environment that could include uses such as an activity center, entertainment uses, an auto mall and large-scale commercial establishments similar to those discussed earlier (See *Figure 8: Scenario I*) A unified development of the Harlem Triangle could have access points at 100th Place, 103rd Street, 105th Street and Southwest Highway. This regional mixed-use environment could accommodate significant parking demand in either surface parking lots or parking structures. The land uses along Southwest Highway would maintain the existing character of the corridor with retail goods and office uses near Harlem Avenue and the Tri-State Tollway overpass, while local mixed-use development would be located at the center of Southwest Highway, including multi-family residential, limited office and commercial uses.

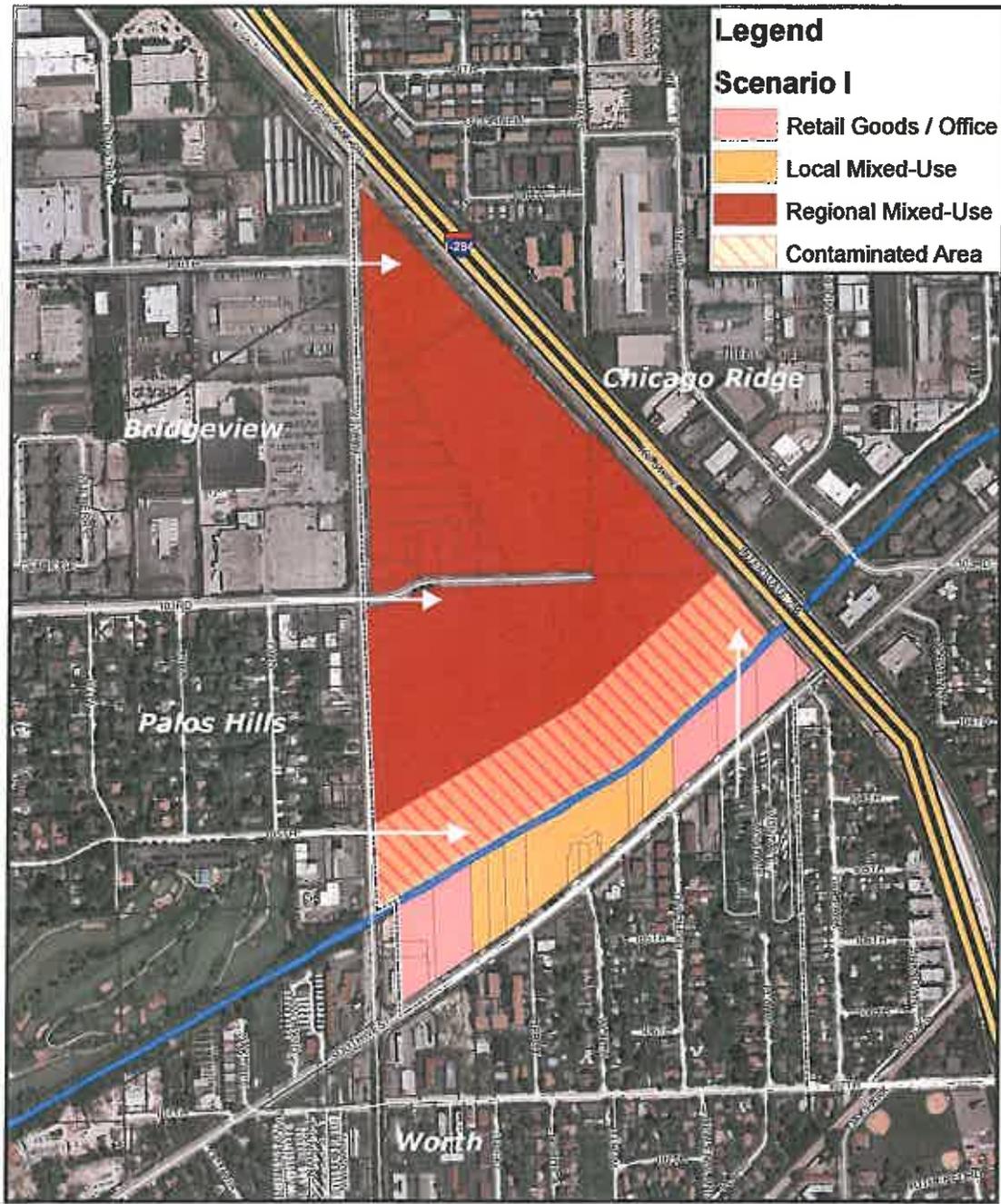
Scenario II

Scenario II is similar to Scenario I in that it shows much of the Harlem Triangle as a regional mixed-use center and shows Southwest Highway as a corridor of retail goods, office and local mixed-use development. (See *Figure 9: Scenario II*) The key difference between Scenario I and Scenario II is that Scenario II accommodates a community-oriented commercial area along Harlem Avenue, similar to existing development. This plan would maintain the overall character of the existing commercial uses with parking and loading facilities at the front and rear of the site and curb cuts along Harlem Avenue to provide access to the site.

Scenario III

Scenario III concentrates on the area solely within the Harlem Triangle, creating a unified development that incorporates several different land use precincts within the overall site. (See *Figure 10: Scenario III*) The scenario suggests an interior network of streets that divides the site into four quadrants with four different types of land use. All of the uses would be clearly visible from Harlem Avenue, but would be oriented to the interior of the site. The northwest area could include small scale local commercial uses, while the northeast area of the site would include a large-scale destination center such as an indoor resort, as mentioned earlier. South of 103rd Street, the Scenario includes a mixed-use center that could accommodate upper level office and/or residential uses integrated with commercial development on the ground floor. The mixed-use center would be the heart of the development providing a walkable environment for users with parking located behind the center. Scenario III includes an open space area north of Stoney Creek to alleviate the need for development on an area that has been identified as a contaminated site and to provide a park-like transition between the potential mixed use town center and the uses along Southwest Highway.

Figure 8: Scenario I



*Data Source: Cook County GIS; Camiros

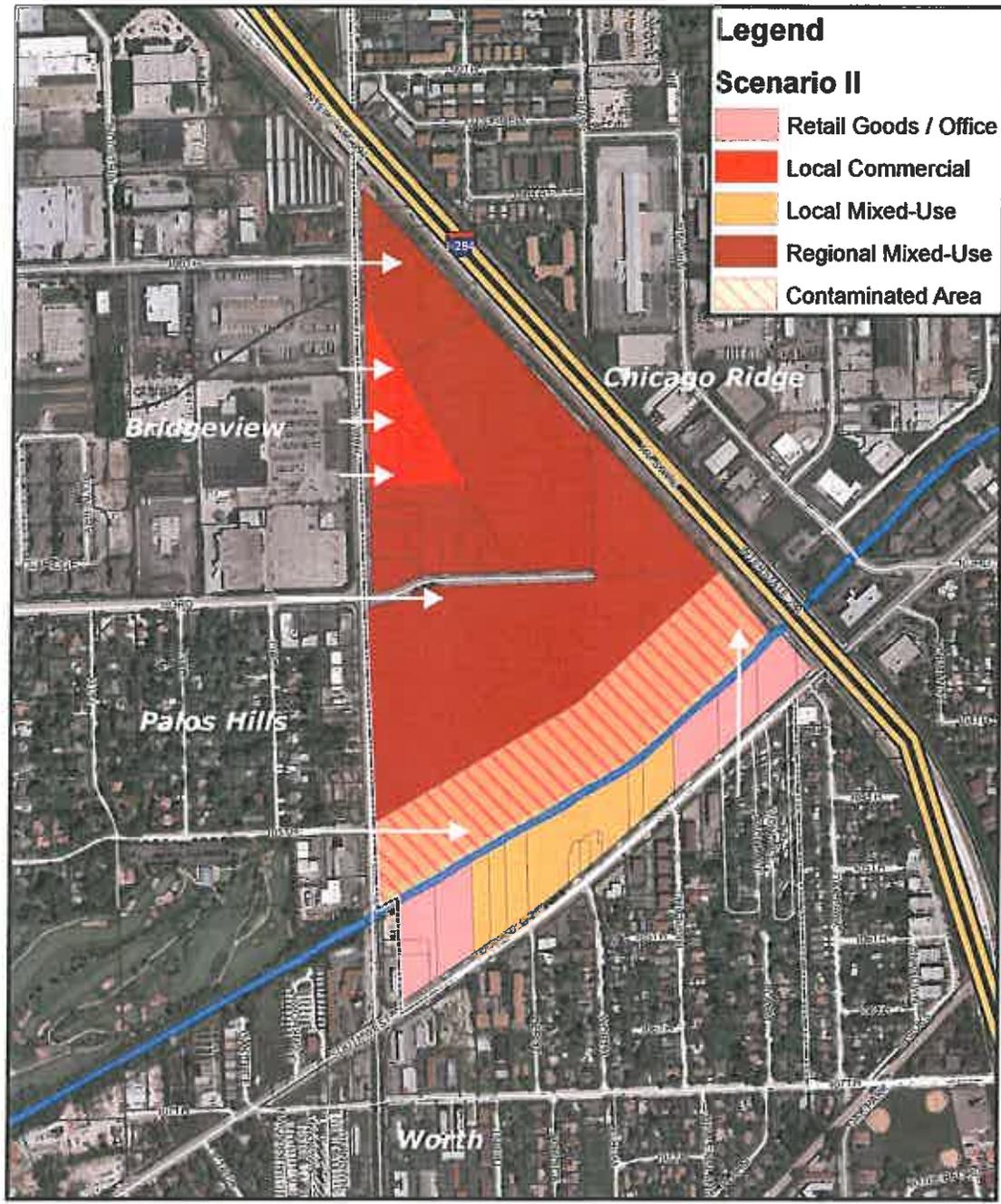
Scenario I

Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan
 Village of Chicago Ridge, Illinois



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Figure 9: Scenario II



Scenario II

Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan
 Village of Chicago Ridge, Illinois



Figure 10: Scenario III



Data Source: Cook County GIS; Camiros

Scenario III

Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan
Village of Chicago Ridge, Illinois



CAMIROS

Recommended Future Land Use Plan

The recommended future land use plan for the Village, (See *Figure 11: Future Land Use Plan*) best meets the objectives for this subarea. It is broad enough to accommodate mixed-use redevelopment that meets the subarea objectives and will provide the flexibility to accommodate redevelopment proposals emerging from various developers for specific portions of the site. Thus, the Village can be in a position to respond to various markets. The future land use plan provides the opportunity for the Village to develop an underutilized area as a centerpiece of the community and takes advantage of existing local commercial development. The regional mixed-use component includes master planned and coordinated redevelopment with uses such as hotel, convention and entertainment, large single purpose commercial facilities and commercial centers, which expand market choice in the community and support the Chicago Ridge Mall market and similar destination uses. The local mixed-use element will include residential development, small office space and commercial uses servicing local community needs. This future land use plan provides flexibility for the Village in the types of commercial development that may eventually be developed, that ranges from a destination center to a mixed-use center to open space amenities. This mix of uses may vary both in composition and layout to fit the realities of market conditions and the results of detailed site condition investigations.

Implementation

Three significant implementation issues should be addressed to enable the Village to implement this Harlem Triangle subarea plan.

Subarea Plan Adoption

The Village should adopt the proposed subarea plan as a part of its Comprehensive Plan. This can be achieved by formally amending the present Comprehensive Plan to replace the land use designations within the Harlem Triangle with those shown in any of the desired scenarios provided within this report.

Rezoning

The Village should establish a new zoning district to facilitate the mixed use development of the Harlem Triangle. As the site is unique in terms of area, site conditions and use potential, the zoning district should clearly specify the form and type of development allowed so that the intentions of the Village are clearly stated. The zoning regulations for the Harlem Triangle should maintain a degree of flexibility in order to make the space work for a variety of commercial developers. It may be desirable to establish a form-based, mixed-use district to include building design standards in regard to façade articulation, fenestration, rooflines, entrances and building materials. These standards will provide developers with an indication of how the project should interact with users of the space and provide minimum level design parameters.

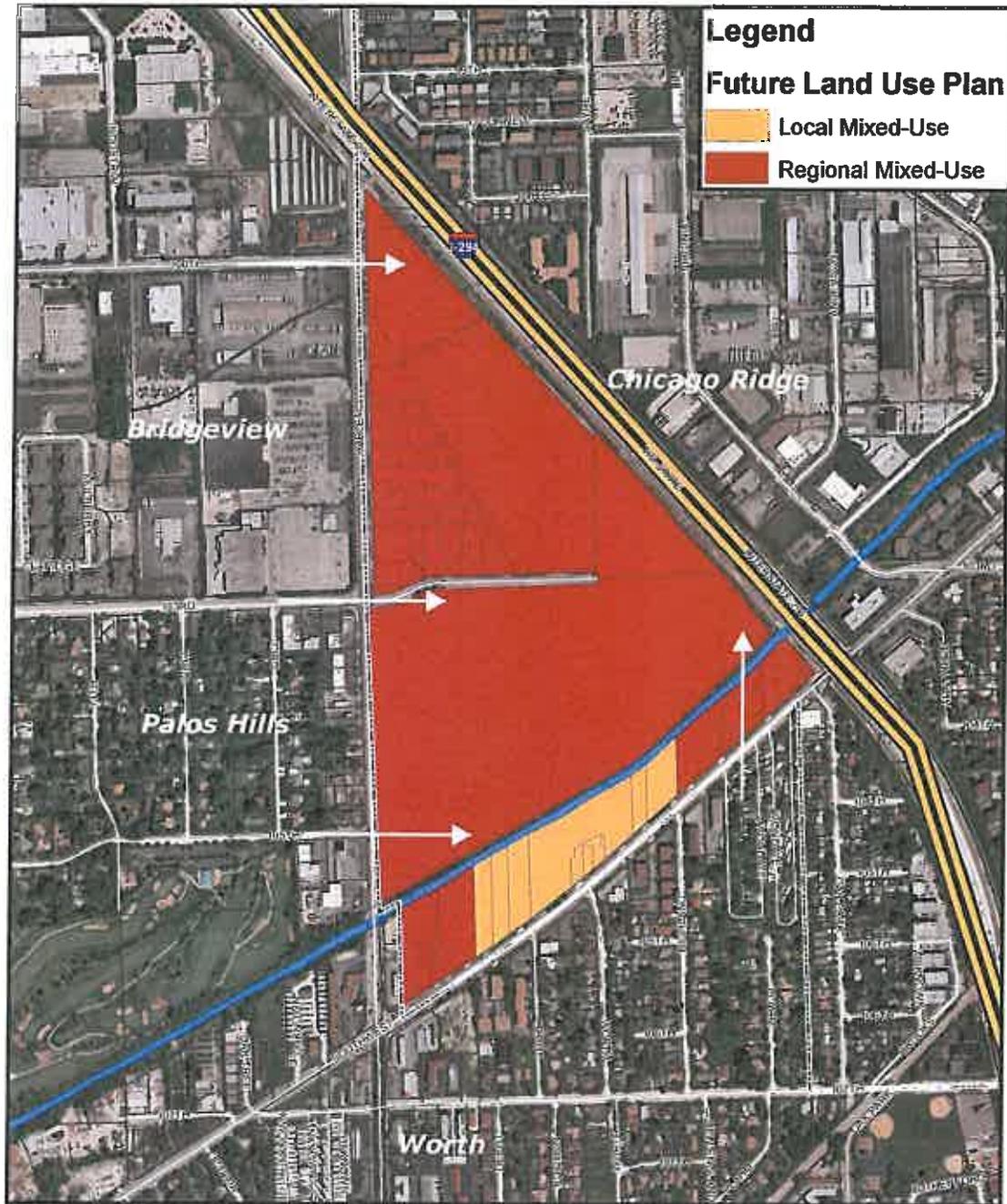
Redevelopment Finance

The realization of the Harlem Triangle subarea plan is a major undertaking even in the best of times. Dependence solely upon the private market to secure, assemble and finance a project of this complexity will markedly reduce the potential to achieve the plan in a timely manner. Some degree of public involvement is necessary to facilitate revitalization and redevelopment of the site. Even if the major landowners all agreed to act in unison, certain required improvements, such as roadway infrastructure improvements and environmental clean-up, may still require public intervention to be successful. Therefore, the Village should act to establish a tax increment financing district or other redevelopment tool to facilitate site assembly and possible public-private redevelopment financing to implement the proposed plan. Projects of this magnitude and complexity often require public involvement to bring such plans about.

Developer Attraction and Development Agreement

The Village should establish a program to identify and secure a quality, experienced developer for the project. Working in tandem with that developer, the Village should prepare a public-private redevelopment program which identifies the responsibilities of each party to prepare the project plan, secure financing, undertake required infrastructure improvements, attract acceptable tenants, and build out the project in a manner acceptable to all parties involved.

Figure 11: Future Land Use Plan



Future Land Use Plan

Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan
Village of Chicago Ridge, Illinois

0 360 720 1,170 1,500 Feet

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