

# Village of South Chicago Heights

## Comprehensive Plan

Adopted April 2008



*prepared by*



## **Table of Contents**

<b>Section 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Legal Foundations &amp; Land Use Policy .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Comprehensive Planning Background &amp; Early Village History.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The South Chicago Heights Planning Area .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Section 2: Planning Process &amp; Community Outreach.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Community Outreach.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Project Initiation Meeting &amp; Workshop.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Community Workshop .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Key Person Interviews .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Public Hearing and Adoption .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>Section 3: Community Vision, Goals &amp; Objectives.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>South Chicago Heights 2025 Vision .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Goals &amp; Objectives .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>Section 4: Village-Wide Plans.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<i>Land Use Plan and Policies.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Transportation &amp; Circulation Plan.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Community Facilities and Open Space Plan and Policies.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<b>Section 5: Implementation.....</b>	<b>47</b>

## **Table of Figures**

<b>Figure 1: Existing Land Use.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Figure 2: Land Use Plan.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Figure 3: Metra Redevelopment Area Concept .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Figure 4: Transportation Plan .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Figure 5: Community Facilities &amp; Open Space Plan.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Figure 6: Redevelopment Opportunities &amp; Economic Incentives.....</b>	<b>48</b>

# **Section 1: Introduction**

This *Comprehensive Plan* was designed to serve the South Chicago Heights community for years to come by assisting the Village in maintaining and improving its overall community character, sense of place, and quality of life. The Plan was developed through a planning process that involved the entire community, including elected officials, appointed officials, various boards and commissions, residents, and members of the business community. This document is the Village's first ever *Comprehensive Plan*.

## **Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan**

This *Comprehensive Plan* for the Village of South Chicago Heights, Illinois sets forth long-range recommendations for the future growth and development within the community and for the maintenance of and enhancements to the existing image and character of Village.

The *Comprehensive Plan* summarizes the results of an 8-month planning process in South Chicago Heights. The Plan incorporates much of the material prepared over the course of study, including interim reports and memoranda.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is the Village's official policy guide for physical improvement and development. It considers not only the immediate needs and concerns of the Village, but also improvements and development over the next 10-15 years and beyond.

The *Comprehensive Plan* will assist the Village in preserving and protecting important existing features and resources, coordinating new growth and development, and establishing a strong, positive community image and identity.

The Plan is "comprehensive" in both scope and coverage. It encompasses the use of land; the movement of vehicles and pedestrians; the protection of open spaces and environmental resources; the provision of parks, schools and other public facilities; and a plan to improve and enhance the Village's character, image, and identity. The Plan addresses the Village's residential areas, commercial and business developments, institutional facilities, public spaces, and rights-of-way. The Plan addresses land currently within the corporate boundaries as well as the adjacent unincorporated areas that are within the Village's planning jurisdiction.

The *Comprehensive Plan* establishes "ground rules" for private improvements and developments. It provides the framework by which the Plan Commission and Village Board can review and evaluate private development proposals. The *Comprehensive Plan* also provides a guide for public improvements, and can help to ensure that local dollars are spent wisely and effectively.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is a policy document intended to help guide and influence growth and development decisions in the Village. The Plan is an expression of the community's expectations and aspirations for what it wants to become and what features and amenities should be available to its citizens in the future. It recognizes that the community's physical, social, political, cultural and economic characteristics are mutually dependent.

The *Comprehensive Plan* provides the basis for updates to the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations and it provides direction and the rationale for capital improvement plans, all of which should be used to implement planning policies and recommendations.

Finally, the *Comprehensive Plan* serves as an important marketing tool to promote the unique assets and advantages of the community. The Plan can be used to achieve the desired vision of the Village, while at the same time attracting new families and beneficial new development to the Village.

### **Legal Foundations & Land Use Policy**

The *Comprehensive Plan* is not a rigid or static set of rules. Rather, it is fluid and dynamic. The objectives and recommendations are intended to allow some flexibility in light of new information or opportunities. The Plan is not an attempt to predict the future; it is an attempt to record the basic, core community development values and principles that citizens of South Chicago Heights share and to use them as guideposts in future decisions concerning growth, (re)development, and improvement in the community. It should be consulted during every deliberation involving land development, land use regulations, and infrastructure investment. Its time frame is both the short-term and long-range. The *Comprehensive Plan* has no expiration date but it should be revisited on a regular basis to evaluate it against changes in technology, community values, and development practices and to keep the vision current.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is often characterized as a community's blueprint and it provides the general direction for decisions concerning growth and improvements in the Village. This *Comprehensive Plan* will do more than tell Village decision makers where development should occur. The Plan describes what kind of community residents want in the future, what it should look like, and what life should be like in South Chicago Heights. The Plan also helps local officials coordinate their decisions so they can anticipate how one decision can impact another.

### **Comprehensive Planning Background & Early Village History**

Although a Village since 1907, this Plan is the first *Comprehensive Plan* for the Village of South Chicago Heights. The community is experiencing redevelopment, shifting market demands, changing demographics, increased traffic and the opportunity to plan for a new Metra Station. To address these issues and take advantage of opportunities for enhancement, a *Comprehensive Plan* is desired to unify the community and provide a common vision and goal to work toward.

The Village grew from the intersection of the Sauk and Hubbard's Trails. Both routes had existed for hundreds of years as trade routes for native peoples and early settlers. At that time, the Sauk Trail could be traveled from Detroit, Michigan to the Mississippi River. Hubbard's Trail ran from Vincennes, Indiana, to Chicago. Early settlers included Adam and Phoebe Brown who arrived in 1833 from Ohio. They had nine children and owned a general store and inn at the northwest corner of Sauk Trail and Hubbard Trail (now Chicago Road). The intersection came to be known as Brown's Corner. In 1907, area residents and business owners near the old intersection, voted to become the village of South Chicago Heights. By 1910, the village had its own volunteer fire department and its first policeman.

## ***The South Chicago Heights Planning Area***

The Village of South Chicago Heights is located at the southern end of Cook County, generally 26 miles south of Downtown Chicago. The original settlement of the Village grew from the intersection of Chicago Road and Sauk Trail, along with 20th century neighborhood and commercial additions radiating from that center. South Chicago Heights is only just over two miles from east to west and less than one mile from north to south. The Village is bordered by the City of Chicago Heights to the north, the Village of Steger to the south, the Village of Sauk Village to the east, and the Village of Park Forest to the west.

Since its incorporation, the Village has grown to a population of 3,970 as recorded during the 2000 Census. The community is primarily residential, but includes a mix of commercial, institutional, and industrial uses. It is well-positioned within the Chicagoland area with excellent access to the Interstate System, a CTA Transit Hub, a future Metra Station on the Southeast Service Line, and a large area of Cook County Forest Preserve bordering to the west.

## **Section 2: Planning Process & Community Outreach**

The South Chicago Heights planning process incorporated a five step work program that entailed analyzing existing conditions, identifying issues and concerns, formulating a clear vision for the future, establishing goals and objectives, developing and evaluating alternative plans and policies, and preparing final *Comprehensive Plan* recommendations. The process was designed to produce a *Comprehensive Plan* that accommodates desirable new growth, development and redevelopment, while preserving and protecting community character, open space and the natural environment.

Village officials want the *Comprehensive Plan* to reflect and describe the kind of community South Chicago Heights residents desire, what it should look like, what features and amenities will be available to its residents, and what life in South Chicago Heights should be like in the years ahead. Village officials recognized community participation in the planning process was essential to achieve this objective. Following are highlights and summaries of the community outreach activities, including the facilities surveys, key person interviews, and public workshops.

### **Community Outreach**

Several Community Outreach efforts were undertaken by the Consultant to involve elected officials, property owners, developers, builders, business persons and residents in the planning process. These outreach efforts provide the Village officials with important insight on local issues, concerns and opinions from residents, community leaders, the business community, and other participants. Some of the most important issues noted during the Community Outreach activities included:

- Increasing Village revenues;
- Planning for the proposed Metra Station;
- Diversifying housing to allow for downsizing and family living;
- Addressing issues with the sanitary sewer system; and
- Revitalization of the Chicago Road Corridor.

As part of the planning process, the following outreach efforts were conducted:

- A **Project Initiation Meeting** was conducted with the Village Board on July 2, 2007 at Village Hall.
- A **Community Workshop** was conducted with the residents of South Chicago Heights on July 18, 2007 at the Village Hall.
- **Key Person Interviews** were conducted with a cross section of residents and business owners, by phone during the fall of 2007.

## **Project Initiation Meeting & Workshop**

The *Comprehensive Planning* process was initiated at a Village Board meeting on July 2, 2007. The purpose and importance of having a *Comprehensive Plan* was discussed, as not only a necessary part of most state and federal grant submittals, but also as a long range blueprint for investment, policy and development in South Chicago Heights.

To begin the Community Outreach efforts that inform the *Comprehensive Plan*, the Consultant facilitated a discussion with the elected officials and key Village Staff regarding significant issues facing the Village and its assets that establish the character of South Chicago Heights. The feedback from the elected officials during the meeting, along with written responses from them and key staff members help to establish the baseline for other Community Outreach efforts.

This summary of the feedback from the Project Initiation Workshop reflects the opinions and comments stated during workshop dialogue and includes a summary of participants' responses to the workshop questionnaire.

First, participants were asked to identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the Village of South Chicago Heights. There was a high level of consensus regarding the following issues:

- Finances/Revenue (decreasing sales tax revenues)
- Economic Development (Sauk Trail & Chicago Road)
- Public Safety/Police Protection
- Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation

Other issues discussed by the participants included:

- Transportation (Improved Public Transportation)
- Recreation/Park Improvements
- Water Services Rehabilitation
- Update to 911 Emergency Services
- Senior Center Building Improvements
- Village Beautification
- Housing, including the need for affordable townhomes/condos, upgrade (for downsizing)
- Obsolete/Aging Housing Stock
- Marketing to All Potential New Residents
- Parking for Businesses on Chicago Road
- Vacant Building/Underutilization/Obsolete/Aging Commercial Buildings
- State & Federal Unfunded Mandates
- Limited Growth Opportunities since Village is landlocked
- Community Involvement

Once the participants had shared their ideas and listened to others in the group, they were asked to rank in order the top three issues or concerns that had been discussed so far. The top issues and concerns as indicated by the written responses related to two general topics: 1) Village finances and 2) public safety. First, the issues and concerns regarding finances related to the basic functions of the Village in collecting enough revenues to provide the required services to the community.

Participants agreed that a top issue for the Village is enhancing and redeveloping commercial areas of the community, specifically along Chicago Road and Sauk Trail, which in turn will increase needed revenues to the Village. The second topic of much concern is public safety and the ability to provide adequate police and fire protection to the community. Other highly rated issues included the mandated sanitary sewer rehabilitation which is very costly, yet a necessary service. Other issues noted among the most significant included public transportation, housing, and senior and recreational facility improvements.

Once the participants had focused on the issues and concerns facing South Chicago Heights, they were asked to identify specific projects or actions that should be undertaken by the Village. Top among the specific projects was building a new police and fire station for the community which clearly relates to significant concerns among the participants. Other specific actions suggested were building a new Village Hall; securing a Metra Station in town; improving park facilities; attracting redevelopment and enhancement of commercial business along Chicago Road; assisting homeowners with the monetary impact of required sanitary sewer improvements; and actively seeking grants to aid in implementing required and desired projects.

Finally, participants were asked to relate the primary strengths and assets of South Chicago Heights in order that the *Comprehensive Planning* process seeks to build upon, preserve and enhance them. Participants agreed that the Village has strengths in its small community and "tight knit" neighborhoods. They shared the belief that South Chicago Heights is a good place to raise a family and younger families moving to the community currently is a benefit. They also strongly agreed that the experienced and committed elected officials provide a stable political environment and effective communication with and implementation of the general public. Another key strength noted is the residents, including seniors, whose involvement in community issues is seen as an asset, noting resident's high energy and good work ethic. Many participants also noted the location at the crossroads of Sauk Trail and Chicago Road and accessibility to expressways of the Village as one of its major advantages. Other assets of the Village mentioned included a good economic base, a viable industrial park, and a nice diversity of population.

## **Community Workshop**

A Community Workshop was conducted with residents on July 18, 2007 at the Village Hall. The workshop was conducted to obtain resident opinions, comments, and concerns about the Village as it began the *Comprehensive Planning* process. Approximately 20 people attended the workshop. The following summary reflects the opinions and comments stated during workshop dialogue and include a summary of participants' responses to the workshop questionnaire.

The workshop participants discussed a full range of concerns regarding the Village. One of the top concerns is safety within the community and the maintaining a sense of security for residents, business and property owners, customers and families. Residents suggested that property maintenance, lighting and filling of vacancies could assist the police force in preventing crime and providing a more comfortable environment.

Participants also stressed the importance of economic development, reinvestment and revitalization of commercial areas and industrial base to maintain and increase revenues for the community. Along with attracting and improving existing commercial areas of the Village, was the importance of business retention and expanding employment opportunities within the community.

Other issues brought up during the Workshop included anticipation and expectations regarding the proposed commuter Metra Station and associated redevelopment area. Participants were interested in considering mixed use redevelopment in the area of the station.

Transportation and other infrastructure needs were frequently mentioned throughout the Workshop, including maintaining good road conditions, sewer reconstruction and required upgrades, traffic congestion, safe level of street and alley lighting, speed enforcement especially at 34th Street and Sauk Trail, and the importance of maintaining a high level of infrastructure and service level.

Another issue that residents discussed was in relation to residential neighborhoods and housing. While some participants desired more emphasis on single family housing, encouraging home ownership and increasing property values. Property maintenance and vacancies were also a concern since these were deterring from the positive appearance of neighborhoods.

The appearance of the community was also important to participants. They noted that litter and junk cars are of concern, along with general property upkeep, code enforcement of existing properties, and follow through with absent landlords.

Other concerns discussed during the Workshop included improving communication with the school districts and maintaining a high standard for education. Some residents expressed a desire for more community involvement and reaching out to new residents. Finally, the importance of enhancing existing parks with updated equipment was expressed.

Participants were asked to suggest projects or actions they would like to see undertaken to improve the Village. Suggestions included more regular property maintenance enforcement;

improvements to the appearance to American Plaza shopping area on Sauk Trail; planning and implementation of the proposed Metra commuter station; increase Village revenues and tax base; attain grants to supplement Village funding; install safety-camera surveillance at key intersections; improve road conditions; redevelopment property; and upgrade park facilities.

Strengths of South Chicago Heights that were listed during the Workshop included: sense of community; a good place to live and raise a family; the elected officials and responsive staff; a shared community vision committed to improvements; the friendly people in the Village; affordable homes and ownership; long time residents and natives moving back to raise their families; the ability to change and grow; history and pride; and the location of the Village.

## **Key Person Interviews**

As part of the outreach for the Village's *Comprehensive Plan*, the consultant team conducted key person interviews in the fall of 2007. The interviews provided insight on local issues, concerns and opinions. Interviews were conducted by telephone and included long-time and newer residents as well as business owners, investors and property owners.

### **1. Describe the character of South Chicago Heights.**

Participants described South Chicago Heights as small, close knit, community that prides itself on a cooperative, well run, business-friendly, Village. South Chicago Heights is considered by its residents as a safe, friendly place to raise children in neighborhoods with generally well-maintained and affordable homes. The business community enjoys prompt and effective police and emergency services, a quiet and safe environment, and due consideration by Village staff and officials.

### **2. What do you believe are the primary assets and advantages of South Chicago Heights?**

South Chicago Heights stakeholders noted several characteristics as primary assets and advantages of the Village, including:

- low taxes;
- reasonable home prices;
- efficiency of the Village administrative efforts and concern for seniors and children;
- accessible, responsive and cooperative Village staff and administration;
- location near I-394;
- diversity of the population;
- safety and quality police and other emergency response services; and
- developing community.

### **3. What do you believe are the primary weaknesses and disadvantages of South Chicago Heights?**

Weaknesses and disadvantages of the Village were more difficult for participants to identify, though some noted the physical lack of growth area; aging population as it relates to the commercial retail market; the condition and appearance of the commercial area along Chicago Road; and the lack of regional name recognition and accurate image.

### **4. What do you consider to be the single most important issue confronting South Chicago Heights today?**

Important issues confronting South Chicago Heights currently, according to interviewees included the following:

- Municipal finances and the need to increase revenues;

- Importance of marketing the Village's strengths and attributes; and
- Planning for and implementing the proposed Metra Station.

**5. If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement within South Chicago Heights, what would it be?**

Projects and improvements desired by interviewees included removal of old buildings and redeveloping those properties, taking care of the sewer service issues; implementing the proposed Metra station and mixed-use Transit Oriented Development (TOD) near that station; marketing efforts focused to the I-394 Corridor; recreation facilities for youth and teens; and Chicago Road commercial improvements.

**6. What are your primary concerns regarding the growth and development of the South Chicago Heights area?**

There were few concerns with growth and development; instead many participants desired it, recognizing its role in business and economic development. Related concerns were in regards to the lack of land area for commercial development and residential growth. Participants also noted that the Village should focus on attracting more industry to add to the Village's tax base. Finally, several participants noted that they are in favor of continuing to embrace the diversity of the Village's population while maintaining the cooperative spirit of the community.

**7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding our work on South Chicago Height's Comprehensive Plan?**

Other suggestions regarding the long-term plans for the Village included remaining competitive with neighboring communities who may offer development incentives and Tax Increment Financing (TIF); work to maintain low taxes; and enhance existing park facilities in the Village with new equipment.

**Public Hearing and Adoption**

Prior to the adoption of the Plan, a Public Hearing was held to present the Plan to the Community.

## **Section 3: Community Vision, Goals & Objectives**

The Vision Statement was developed after public meetings, key person interviews, community facilities surveys, and extensive existing conditions analysis. It summarizes and outlines the goals, objectives and values for the community, as expressed by Village residents.

### **South Chicago Heights 2025 Vision**

As the Village of South Chicago Heights changes and redevelops, its residents seek to preserve the friendly atmosphere, the quality of neighborhoods affordability of homes, and the spirit of cooperation in providing and paying for Village services. The vision for South Chicago Heights includes providing residents with new choices and options for housing, transportation, recreation, employment opportunities, and convenient shopping and dining; protecting property values by enforcing high maintenance standards; and emphasizing the importance of increasing Village revenues and revitalizing the Chicago Road Commercial Corridor.

The community Vision is for each infill project, new development and redevelopment to enhance the Village's setting by contributing attractive architecture; parks or public plazas; attractive, pedestrian-friendly and updated commercial areas; walkable and bikeable neighborhoods; and enhanced property tax base and sales tax revenues.

Residents want South Chicago Heights to be a place where residents, business owners and government continue to work together, even as the community diversifies; where the elected and appointed officials continue to be accessible, knowledgeable and fiscally responsible, yet attend to the community's needs for expanding health, safety and other public services; and, where they can be proud of the sense of community and involvement.

In order to achieve the South Chicago Heights Vision, recommendations and ideas were prepared that, if implemented, will help to fulfill the vision. These recommendations represent specific guidelines to follow and actions to be undertaken by the Village, directions to influence future decisions, and ideas to stimulate creativity among landowners, developers and investors wishing to do business in South Chicago Heights. These recommendations are found in this document in the sections entitled Village-Wide Plans and Implementation Strategies.

## **Goals & Objectives**

Together, the goals and objectives paint a picture of what South Chicago Heights wants to accomplish with its *Comprehensive Plan* and with other development tools and ordinances. They provide direction and serve as a guide for evaluating specific projects and land use alternatives.

**Goals** describe desired results toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.

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

The goals and objectives presented below are based on input from Village staff, community workshops, key person interviews, and from feedback and discussions at various public meetings.

The goals and objectives have been categorized by the following topics:

- Village Image and Identity;
- Community Facilities & Services;
- Recreation, Open Space & Environmental Features;
- Housing & Residential Neighborhoods;
- Commercial Land Use Areas;
- Industrial Land Use Areas;
- Transportation & Circulation;
- Intergovernmental & Organizational Cooperation;
- Fiscal & Economic Development; and
- Plan Implementation.

## **Village Image & Identity**

### **Goal**

Improve the community's image through public and private improvements which enhance various physical features of the community and which brings the community together.

### **Objectives**

- Improve the image and appearance of all existing commercial areas, with particular emphasis on the appearance of buildings, signage, site landscaping, and streetscape amenities.
- Establish gateway or entry features at key locations to "announce" arrival into South Chicago Heights and distinguish the Village from neighboring communities and to improve the Village's image for motorists entering into and passing through the Village.
- Build a new Village Hall and new Police Station near the new Metra Station to set the tone for redevelopment along Chicago Road, the Metra Redevelopment Area and to have a welcoming presence along the Village's main arterial.
- Plan for landscaping and updates at the Senior Center and Owen Pavilion Park that enhance the community image along Sauk Trail.
- Improve and maintain an attractive appearance of all areas of the Village, such as parkways, parking lots and neighborhoods.
- Encourage compatible and high-quality design and construction for all developments, with an emphasis on quality site design, building orientation, architecture, building materials, and site improvements.
- Maintain consistent and high quality improvement of all local streets, parkways, sidewalks, and other visible municipal infrastructure.
- Develop and implement landscaping and tree planting and maintenance programs that beautify the residential and business areas.
- Develop programs and events such as community festivals (i.e.: Taste of South Chicago Heights) to embrace the diverse culture of the residents. These programs and events bring the community together and create a sense of unity for Village residents.
- Develop a program to bury utility lines along commercial corridors.
- Promote Village activities and events and explore opportunities to approach tourism on a regional level.
- Build upon the Village's past as cultural and design elements in the community's future growth.

## **Community Facilities & Services**

### **Goal**

Ensure the provision of high-quality public services, including municipal and health facilities, for all residents of the community.

### **Objectives**

- Maintain an adequate level of fire and police protection throughout the Village.
- Maintain adequate sites for the Village Hall, Police Station, Public Works, Fire Station and other Village facilities; constructing, renovating, and relocating facilities when necessary.
- Construct new medical services facilities within the community.
- Improve and expand specialized facilities and services for senior citizens and youths.
- Provide the proper mix of governmental and community facilities in appropriate locations.
- Improve coordination and communication between the Village, Bloom Township, Cook County, School Districts, Park District, Library, Forest Preserve and neighboring communities to maximize the mutually beneficial assets these institutions can provide each other and the residents.

## **Parks, Open Space & Environmental Areas**

### **Goal**

Maintain and enhance the system of parks and open spaces that satisfies the recreational, social, leisure-time, and environmental protection needs of South Chicago Heights residents.

### **Objectives**

- Maintain/support a local public park system that maximizes recreational opportunities that are available within the community.
- Concentrate park equipment improvements and other investment at Owen Pavilion Park to provide one Community Park including active play areas north of the center and attractive landscaped passive park area to the west along Sauk Trail.
- Take Eddie Mitchell Park offline due to its poor location, access and visibility.
- Remove aging park equipment from the Grant School park at 28<sup>th</sup> Street, in its place install a grouping of trees (shade, evergreen, ornamental) that will provide an attract terminus when traveling west on 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Ensure adequate resources for the maintenance of Village owned parks and recreational facilities.
- Coordinate with Com Ed to allow for the installation of a multi-use trail in the right-of-way, connecting from the Sauk Trail Woods trail head at the west end and Jackson Avenue at the east.
- Ensure that existing and future parks and open space are designed to maximize their utility and usefulness to residents in terms of meeting the demand for programmable recreation space, athletic facilities, and other desirable uses and amenities.
- Monitor local community needs and perceptions and develop new recreational facilities and services which respond to specific desires of Village residents.
- Promote continued cooperation between the Village, Bloom Township, Chicago Heights and Steger Recreation Departments, and the School Districts in the provision of recreational services.
- Support efforts to promote Sauk Trail Woods as a destination for tourism and recreation.

## ***Housing & Residential Neighborhoods***

### ***Goal 1***

Provide a diverse housing inventory and living environment which supports the local population of the Village.

#### ***Objectives***

- Maintain and enhance the predominant single-family character of the Village.
- Monitor the number of new multi-family development within the Village and discourage “large-scale” apartment and townhome developments.
- Encourage growth consistent with the density and intensity that provides the Village’s present character.
- Ensure the Village’s senior citizens have quality housing options through high quality new development or redevelopment of senior targeted, maintenance free housing choices.
- Promote appropriate condominium development in the new Metra Station area as part of a new commercial/mixed-use area.
- Promote the economic importance of the diversity of the Village’s housing stock and work to ensure neighborhood stability in all areas of the Village.
- Work to keep local financial and lending institutions committed and involved in meeting all housing needs of the Village.

### ***Goal 2***

Maintain attractive and safe housing that reflects the desired character of the community.

#### ***Objectives***

- Strictly enforce all building, zoning and fire codes to prevent overcrowding, unsafe conditions, and misuse of residential dwellings including garage conversions and basement apartments.
- Encourage the use of attractive architectural design and landscaping in all neighborhoods.
- Encourage new development and infill development/redevelopment which are complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential uses.
- Preserve sound existing housing through regular and active code enforcement and preventative maintenance programming. Promote removal or rehabilitation of deteriorating housing units.
- Promote the expansion of Neighborhood Watch Programs and encourage efforts to reduce crime and increase community awareness of public safety.

## **Commercial Land Use Areas**

### **Goal 1**

Achieve a compatible and marketable system of attractive commercial development that is organized to provide various goods and services within the community and is located along arterials with maximum exposures in the greater region.

#### **Objectives**

- Maintain a range of retail and service commercial activities throughout the Village.
- Promote new commercial development and redevelopment primarily along Chicago Road, but also along Sauk Trail and near the proposed Metra Station redevelopment area.
- Initiate programs to encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older commercial buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete including improvements to facades, signage, and parking areas as well as encouraging the provision of additional site amenities.
- Implement more systematic and proactive property maintenance and code enforcement in commercial areas of the Village.
- Develop and enforce a signage ordinance to promote appropriate and aesthetic signage in the Village's commercial areas, including the amortization of non-compliant signage.
- Promote and require landscaping within commercial areas and require the upkeep of parking lots, opaque screening of service areas, drives, buildings, and incompatible uses.

### **Goal 2**

Enhance the economic viability of the Village's arterial streets as primary commercial corridors, providing regional shopping where marketable.

#### **Objectives**

- Promote a healthy and mutually reinforcing mix of commercial, retail, and service uses along Chicago Road.
- Identify and prioritize economic strategies in conjunction with commercial property owners and managers to ensure economic vitality and stability in all commercial corridor areas.
- Identify specific actions and strategies to be undertaken which will enhance the economic health of the Village's commercial corridor areas.
- Provide safe and efficient access to shopping areas by varied transportation routes and modes. Encourage coordinated and shared vehicle access wherever possible.

### **Goal 3**

Focus efforts on the proposed Metra Station redevelopment area as the Village's primary mixed-use pedestrian environment.

#### **Objectives**

- Promote a healthy and mutually reinforcing mix of commercial, office, and multi-family uses within the Metra Station redevelopment area.
- Identify and prioritize economic strategies in conjunction with commercial property owners and managers to ensure economic vitality and stability in the pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use area.
- Establish a consistent approach to providing attractive and functionally well placed pedestrian amenities throughout the mixed-use area.
- Promote shared parking facilities.

### **Goal 4**

Develop aesthetically pleasing and functionally well-designed retail and commercial shopping areas.

#### **Objectives**

- Encourage high-quality development and redevelopment of sites, buildings, and amenities in commercial areas.
- Encourage the design of new commercial development to facilitate a system of pedestrian access and amenities.
- Establish a program that reasonably and uniformly regulates signage while providing for the identification of Village businesses.
- Ensure that new development and redevelopment of private property is designed in scale with, and complementary to, existing development.
- Establish design and development guidelines for commercial areas, for appropriate scale, appearance, orientation, and overall character of new development.
- Ensure that all new, improved and existing commercial development is effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential uses.

## **Industrial Land Use Areas**

### **Goal 1**

Improve the existing light industrial areas in the Village and encourage/support the relocation of existing industrial uses to designated industrial/business park locations.

#### **Objectives**

- Expand upon the existing light industrial uses along Sauk Trail and south of Sauk Trail to capitalize on the Village's proximity to I-394 and maximize the use of the local labor force.
- Improve the appearance of the existing light industrial areas to be more reflective of the Village's overall character and appearance.
- Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of functionally obsolete industrial buildings to accommodate more appropriate and market viable uses.
- Minimize traffic from light industrial areas from cutting through adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage and promote the relocation of inappropriately located existing industrial uses to planned industrial park locations.

### **Goal 2**

Develop and maintain an environmentally compatible industrial base that enhances the tax base and provides employment.

#### **Objectives**

- Ensure that new or expanded industrial development is concentrated in areas of similar or compatible use.
- Establish design and development guidelines to ensure that new light industrial and commercial service developments use "green technology" and complement the overall character of the Village.
- Minimize the negative impact of industrial activities on neighboring residential areas through the effective use of screening and buffering with landscaping, fencing, or a combination of the two.
- Maximize industrial development potential associated with area transportation facilities.
- Identify truck routes which provide convenient access to industrial areas and minimize conflict with local traffic.
- Promote the development of industry which exceeds environmental performance standards.

## ***Transportation & Circulation***

### ***Goal***

Provide a balanced transportation system which ensures the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

### ***Objectives***

- Protect and improve the function of the overall street hierarchy within the community through effective access, land-use controls, and street/intersection design improvements.
- Ensure adequate resources are made available for the maintenance of Village streets and public rights-of-way.
- Continue the Capital Improvement Program to annually budget infrastructure maintenance and construction projects throughout the Village.
- Minimize curb cuts on arterial and major collector streets to the extent possible and use intersecting side streets for access into properties.
- Implement traffic management strategies to minimize the impact of peak traffic flows in the Village.
- Correct localized traffic operational problems, including the placement of traffic signals and readability and placement of traffic related signage.
- Minimize non-local traffic within residential neighborhoods.
- Work with Metra and other necessary agencies to implement the proposed commuter station, coordinating and assisting with necessary land acquisition and approvals.
- Work with PACE to further improve bus/shuttle service throughout the community, either through expanded PACE bus service or the addition of new shuttle/van service.
- Coordinate median, parkway, pedestrian, residential screening and similar improvements along the Chicago Road and Sauk Trail corridors.

## ***Intergovernmental & Organizational Cooperation***

### ***Goal***

Encourage the coordination and cooperation among federal, state, county and local agencies and organizations potentially having interest in South Chicago Heights to ensure the greatest level of efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of municipal services.

### ***Objectives***

- Coordinate with other municipal service providers, surrounding communities, and county and regional agencies to ensure continuity and consistency of overall community planning and development activities.
- Establish meaningful lines of communication with communities, agencies and organizations that can assist the Village in meeting its overall planning objectives and work to secure participation from these agencies and organizations in realizing mutual objectives.
- Continue to seek cooperative working relationships with adjoining communities in the financing of local community facilities and services that provide area benefits.
- Continue to seek grants, loans, and other sources of intergovernmental funding transfers.
- Work cooperatively with adjoining communities regarding mutual concerns and needs to improve the overall appearance and economic health of the Village's major street corridors.
- Continue to encourage communication and collaboration among service providers to provide the most efficient and cost effective services possible.
- Continue utilizing governmental and private partnerships to establish and promote Raceway Woods as a destination for tourism and recreation.
- Develop a marketing campaign to promote the advantages and benefits of living, working, doing business in, or visiting the Village.
- Improve communication to residents in an effort to increase awareness of and participation in programs, services and events within the Village.
- Improve and maintain relationships with the press and other media.

## ***Fiscal & Economic Development***

### ***Goal 1***

Achieve economic prosperity by maintaining and enhancing a balanced diversity of retail, personal and commercial service, office, and light industrial uses.

#### ***Objectives***

- Improve resources for maintenance of the Village's physical facilities, including buildings, properties, and infrastructure.
- Coordinate planning and economic development activities in a manner which provides regular opportunities for contact between business and development interests within the Village.
- Seek opportunities for new employment growth through retention and expansion of existing South Chicago Heights employers.
- Ensure that new development pays its fair share attributable to the additional demand on the infrastructure, public facilities and services.
- Encourage the maximization of retail sales tax generating uses in key commercial areas.
- Establish marketing strategies to retain and attract businesses and developers along Chicago Road.
- Promote locally based marketing programs to boost local investment and awareness between the residential and business community.
- Seek an appropriate balance between retail, personal and commercial service, office, and light industrial uses.

### ***Goal 2***

Provide employment opportunities within the Village in order to sustain a strong property tax base and encourage a daytime working population.

#### ***Objectives***

- Expand the existing industrial base by attracting new light industrial and office research facilities to areas designated for industry.
- Promote a wider range of retail and professional service uses within the Village.
- Encourage the location of regional commercial uses at Chicago Road and Sauk Trail.

## **Program Administration**

### **Goal**

Implement, monitor progress, and update the *Comprehensive Plan*.

### **Objectives**

- Annually, in conjunction with the Village's budget schedule, develop a 1 to 3 year action plan to prioritize objectives and list accomplishments of proceeding years.
- Make available existing and/or new financial resources to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*.
- Establish a process for the regular review of and updates to the Village's Zoning Ordinance to appropriately meet the changing needs of the community.
- In the *Comprehensive Plan* review and amendment process, the Village should consider any input and involvement of the Village Board, Planning Commission, Village committees, local organizations, and individuals.
- Identify and engage agencies and organizations willing to share in the responsibility for active implementation of the Plan.

## Section 4: Village-Wide Plans

The South Chicago Heights *Comprehensive Plan* is set forth in words and illustrations in the following pages. This portion of the planning document will:

- Act as the blueprint for the community as it grows and redevelops;
- Be used as a tool to evaluate every development and redevelopment proposal;
- Guide land owners, developers and builders in planning for specific projects; and
- Require regular updating as development occurs and planning factors change.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is made up of several elements – all equally important to the success of plans as a useful tool to the community. This section includes the following elements that together, make up the Village-Wide Plans:

- Land Use Plan & Policies,
- Transportation & Circulation Plan, and
- Community Facilities & Open Space Plan.

Together, these Village-Wide plans provide details regarding the plans of the Village as it changes, attracts further redevelopment and enhances existing areas of the community. This set of planning graphics indicate general land use patterns, transportation and open space networks, as well as important community facilities. As the Village vision and policies shift, so should the elements of The Plan. Regular amendments, additions and revisions should be incorporated so that this document may remain a useful tool as well as an accurate reflection of the Village's goals and objectives. The following plans are considered the Village-Wide Plans for the Village of South Chicago Heights and are intended to guide land use, development form and spatial relationships:

**Land Use Plan & Policies.** This plan includes land use designations for residential neighborhoods; corridor commercial uses; mixed use areas; commercial business and industrial uses; and parks and open space. The plan indicates areas designated for specific land uses categories, which should be considered as redevelopment occurs.

**Transportation & Circulation Plan.** This plan lays improvements to the network of arterials and collector streets. Proposed traffic signal locations are also specified in coordination with a proposed Metra Station.

**Community Facilities & Open Space Plan.** This plan illustrates existing parks; squares; private open spaces; and conservation areas and the long-range needs of the Village and its cooperating districts and agencies in providing services to the community. It is a guide to keep public facilities and services in mind as other zoning, land use and redevelopment decisions are made.

# **Land Use Plan and Policies**

The Land Use Plan presents recommendation and policies for the location and improvement of land uses and development within the Village of South Chicago Heights. The Land Use Plan does not advocate condemnation, but simply indicates and describes the land uses and development pattern desired by the Village and its residents. To achieve the recommendations of the Land Use Plan, it is recommended that the Village work with property owners, developers and other agencies to communicate the desired vision for the community to cooperatively realize the objectives of the Plan. The Land Use Plan is divided into 3 sections: 1) Residential Areas Plan and Policies; 2) Commercial Areas Plan and Policies; and, 3) Industrial/Business Area Plan and Policies. First a brief description of current land use and zoning issues is presented.

## **Existing Land Use**

A review of the existing land uses was conducted as part of the Planning process and is recorded on the Existing Land Use Map on the following page. Land use in the Village is typical of areas that urbanized in the early half of the 20th century, with commercial land uses stripped along the Chicago Road corridor and single neighborhoods nearby. A defined industrial district has developed on the east side of town, east of the railroad tracks.

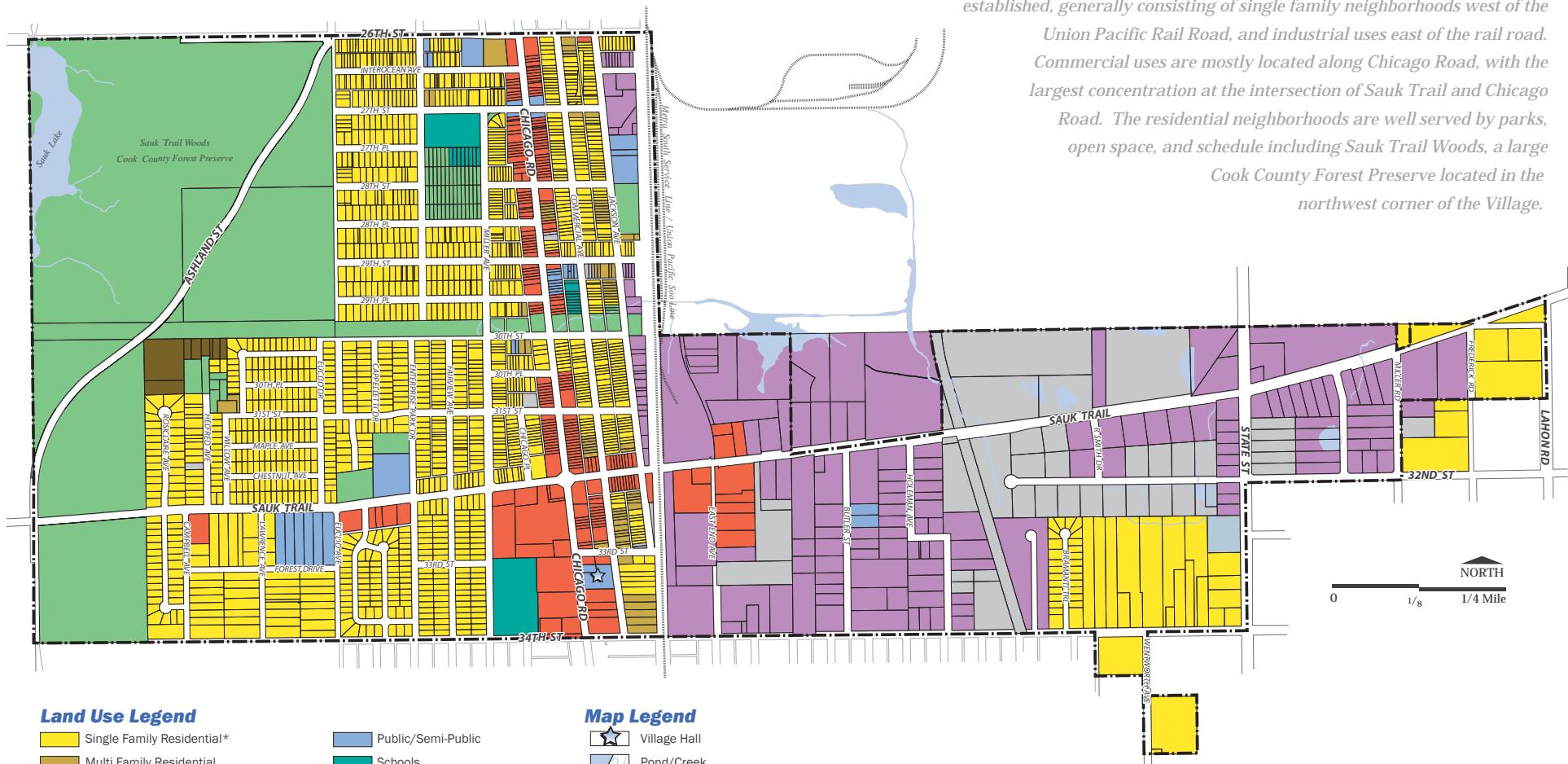
Some incompatible land use areas exist where residential uses and commercial or industrial uses are near one another with little screening or buffering. For instance, some uses on West Sauk Trail, near residential neighborhoods, could be considered for redevelopment as more intense residential uses or more compatible non-residential uses. Chicago Road businesses have seen some reinvestment, although the community sees this north-south corridor as an opportunity to revitalize retail uses and provide for a more sustainable tax base for the Village. Parcel depth will constrain large-scale retail development at most locations along the Corridor but opportunities may exist to consolidate parcels in key locations.

## **Zoning**

The zoning of parcels within the Village has followed traditional practices for more urbanized communities. This includes: business zoning generally lining the primary north-south corridor, Chicago Road (Route 1); transitional residential uses buffering the main commercial corridor; single family residential zoning filling in the rest, primarily on the west side of town with few scattered exceptions on the east side of town; industrial zoning areas are adjacent the rail lines and extend east along Sauk Trail. Additionally, there are limited areas of multi-family zoning at the far west and far east of the community, as well as several smaller areas of business zoning intermingled with the single family areas and industrial areas. In order to better define business uses and concentrate like business together, the Village may want to consider provide at least two different business districts. Creating a second district would allow distinctions between retail/shopper oriented business (as found along Chicago Road) and wholesale/service business. A need for limited townhome or empty-nester housing has been identified through the community outreach activities. Zoning amendments will be necessary to encourage the specific type, intensity and character of desired development forms and locations. Along the same lines, there are several properties along the rail line that are zoned for business (B-1) but are similar in business type to many of the developed industrial zoned parcels.

# Figure 1 Existing Land Use

The existing land use pattern of the Village of South Chicago Heights is well established, generally consisting of single family neighborhoods west of the Union Pacific Rail Road, and industrial uses east of the rail road. Commercial uses are mostly located along Chicago Road, with the largest concentration at the intersection of Sauk Trail and Chicago Road. The residential neighborhoods are well served by parks, open space, and schedule including Sauk Trail Woods, a large Cook County Forest Preserve located in the northwest corner of the Village.



## **Residential Areas Plan and Policies**

The residential neighborhoods define the Village of South Chicago Heights. As a primarily residential community, it is needless to say that its residential areas are among its most important assets. Existing residential uses in South Chicago Heights consist of a wide variety of housing types and densities. Neighborhoods are generally oriented around single-family homes, but a number of single-family conversions and multiple-family dwellings also currently exist. Plan recommendations seek to:

- 1) preserve single-family detached housing;
- 2) eliminate residential conversions in areas now zoned for single-family detached housing;
- 3) maintain and/or reduce the density within multiple-family areas to improve the quality of residential neighborhoods within the Village; and
- 4) promote transit-supportive land uses, including multi-family residential and mixed use development around the future Metra Station.

### **Single-Family Residential Areas**

The Village's existing single-family residential areas should be strengthened through a range of activities related to housing rehabilitation and code enforcement. The housing stock is generally well maintained, and residents exhibit pride in their homes and neighborhoods. As a measure to protect its neighborhoods, the Village should continue to take actions to address the issue of overcrowding of residential areas. Particularly for single-family residential areas, this includes zoning and building code enforcement. The Village should explore funding mechanisms and financial incentives program to induce re-conversion back to single-family uses.

Residential areas should be improved through the provision of adequate community facilities and infrastructure improvements, including street and alley repair and maintenance. Transportation projects should be undertaken to reduce through-traffic within neighborhoods. This includes the consideration of cul-de-sacs on local streets where they connect to major arterials. The use of cul-de-sacs should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, requiring notification of surrounding property owners and a traffic study for the area before action is taken. Areas where cul-de-sac closure might be considered appropriate include local streets connecting to Chicago Road and Sauk Trail. Where appropriate, cul-de-sacs will help the Village to maintain a neighborhood atmosphere in which residents feel safe and secure.

Since South Chicago Heights is essentially built-out, little, if any new single-family development is anticipated, except where re-conversions occur or where existing homes or other uses are replaced with new single-family construction. The Village should encourage new single-family homes to be compatible with the existing scale of and density of the existing single-family neighborhoods. This could include the identification of single-family housing design prototypes reflecting the existing character of homes within the residential areas of the Village or a design manual illustrating design and building practices that could be deployed to ensure compatibility.

### ***Multiple-Family Residential Areas***

The Plan emphasizes the “containment” of high-density residential areas to concentrations near services. This includes the area north of Sauk Trail between Chicago Road and the Union Pacific Soo Line that provides land-use classifications reflecting transit supportive land uses within close proximity to the future Metra Station. Also single-family areas west of the commercial intersection of Chicago Road and Sauk Trail, west to the Senior Center could be encouraged for senior-targeted multi-family housing. Furthermore, the plan seeks to lower densities within the single-family areas wherever possible to preserve its traditional single-family development pattern that was not designed to support intensive residential developments.

The Plan presents a classification system and pattern of multiple-family uses, which provides housing opportunities for all stages of life, and an opportunities for new multiple-family housing in the community, either as stand alone multi-family buildings south of the Com-Ed power lines, or as mixed use development north of the Com-Ed power lines near the future Metra Station.

All new multiple-family development should be carefully monitored to ensure compatibility with adjacent single-family areas, specifically, as the areas east of Chicago Road near the Metra Station begin to transition to multi-family uses, they will be adjacent to, or near, single-family uses until they are also redeveloped. To ensure compatibility, the Village should establish a plan review process before new multi-family developments area approved. The plan review process should include a review of all density and design issues.

Additionally, the Village should consider a rental license program to regulate the large number of multiple-family structures within the community. This program would require a yearly license renewal and possibly inspection to ensure compliance with the Village codes and ordinances.

### ***Improvement Guidelines***

Several principles should guide residential improvements within South Chicago Heights. Residential neighbor-hoods should be self-contained areas designed primarily for residential uses. The local street system should be used to serve these areas, with through-traffic being discouraged or served by the collector streets within the community.

The concept of traditional neighborhood development is already present in South Chicago Heights and should be enhanced and preserved. The local elementary schools within neighborhoods should remain with expanded park and playground facilities where possible. Safe pedestrian walkway systems should connect homes with schools and neighborhood facilities.

The boundaries between residential areas and commercial and industrial areas should be clearly defined, and the adjoining areas should be screened and buffered. This is particularly important in the Village’s east side, where industrial and business land uses are located adjacent to residential areas.

South Chicago Heights should continue to maintain and provide a diverse housing stock to accommodate a diverse population. Single-family residential should be promoted as the preferred type of residential housing west of Chicago Road, with multi-family residential encouraged east of Chicago Road, specifically around the future Metra Station. Existing multiple-family residential housing should be improved and enhanced where possible, with the exception of multi-family buildings located along Chicago Road, where they should be taken off line and replaced with commercial land uses that can capitalize on the heavily trafficked street. New senior citizen housing and housing designed to attract new families to the community should be promoted within walking distance of everyday services.

All new residential development should be characterized by high-quality design and construction, and should be compatible with the scale and character of nearby existing homes.

### ***Residential Impact Fees***

South Chicago Heights should strongly consider the use of impact fees for new residential development. As discussed under the Community Facilities portion of the Plan, the Village has a great need for park and school land. Fees would apply where the number of housing units exceeds the units replaced in a development project. Impact fees could include funding for park, school, and other civic improvements. Consideration should be given to the police and fire services needed to serve new development. Based upon the built-out character of the community, cash in lieu of land dedications might be preferable.

## **Commercial Areas Plan & Policies**

South Chicago Heights' commercial areas are generally concentrated along Chicago Road and to a lesser extent, Sauk Trail. Because these areas represent the location of much of the community's economic development opportunities, it is critical to maintain and improve the health, vitality and commercial viability of these areas in the future. Commercial land-use areas are critically important for the Village for the following reasons:

Commercial corridors are among the most visible locations in the community due to their nature as gateways into and out of South Chicago Heights. Their appearance and image reflect upon the overall image and quality of the community as a whole.

The Village's commercial corridors provide a critically important fiscal resource to the Village. Ensuring economic stability of the corridors is almost synonymous with ensuring fiscal resources to maintain quality community facilities and services.

### **Commercial Areas**

Generalized land-use recommendations for the Village's primary commercial areas are highlighted below. More detailed recommendations for improving and enhancing each of these areas are described within this section of the Plan.

***Chicago Road:*** The Chicago Road corridor is the most critically important commercial area within the Village. The Chicago Road corridor is an auto-oriented commercial corridor that capitalizes on traffic traveling through the Village, and should continue to do so. Generally, commercial uses located along Chicago Road should serve the local residents of the community and the greater regional area, generating sales tax revenue from other communities. Reinvestment has occurred within the Corridor, however, opportunities still exist for redevelopment and revitalization, particularly in the northern section of the Corridor where the conversion of residential and single-family uses is promoted. The Village should consider actions to provide a unified visual appearance for both public and private properties located along the corridor. Additionally, ways to improve the location and appearance of parking areas, including the consolidation of access points along Chicago Road should be explored.

***Sauk Trail Road:*** The Sauk Trail Road commercial corridor is a tributary from the development located along Chicago Road. Similar to Chicago Road, businesses located along Sauk Trail benefit from the visibility provided by the busy roadway. Unlike Chicago Road however, there should be an emphasis on utilizing Sauk Trail Road commercial areas for neighborhood convenience and shopping uses, catering specifically to the residents of the community. Wherever commercial uses are adjacent to residential uses, impacts on adjacent residential areas should be minimized.

***Metra Station Area:*** Once constructed, the new Metra Station will have a catalytic effect on the area around it, spurring new investment and development. Commercial redevelopment (and residential redevelopment) and improvement opportunities should be explored along Chicago Road in anticipation of the commuter station. Establishing a strong mix of uses, with an

emphasis on retail uses, is recommended within this area. Further study and planning is necessary to ensure the type, intensity and quality of redevelopment best supports Metra and Pace ridership and revitalizes retail areas to increase and stabilize Village revenues.

### ***Improvement Guidelines***

Each of the Village's existing commercial areas could be substantially improved and upgraded in the future. Viable existing businesses should be improved and enhanced, while at the same time promoting new commercial uses, especially new retail development. Mixed uses, including residential and office uses, should be considered within the areas near the Metra Station. Neighborhood retail and commercial service uses should be located along Sauk Trail Road, and retail uses with a larger regional draw should be located along Chicago Road. The zoning ordinance should be amended to reflect these recommendations.

Commercial developments should be characterized by the highest possible standards of design and construction that are sensitive the improvement costs that will not deter new investment within the community.

Since commercial areas are located along major traffic routes, access to commercial properties should be carefully controlled to minimize conflicts with through traffic movements. The consolidation of access drives for adjacent properties should be encouraged.

All new commercial developments and parking lots, regardless of where they are located, should provide internal and perimeter landscaping. Existing uses should be encourage to comply with these requirements on a volunteer basis, however significant changes to existing commercial property should entail full compliance. This is especially important along Chicago Road, where perceptions of the Village are established by visitors passing through the community. The Village should consider the addition of landscaping provisions within their zoning ordinance to accomplish this goal.

The image and appearance of commercial areas should be upgraded. Projects should be undertaken to improve the appearance of the public right-of-way within commercial areas, including landscaping, lighting, signage, sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian amenities. Enhancements to private properties should include facade, parking lot, circulation and signage improvements. Commercial areas should not adversely impact adjacent residential neighborhoods. Firm boundaries should be established for the commercial areas.

Screening and buffering should be promoted, including landscaping and decorative fencing where possible. Commercial traffic and parking should not spill over into residential areas if possible. Noise, safety and maintenance should be carefully monitored within commercial areas.

## **Industrial and Business Area Plan and Policies**

The South Chicago Heights industrial and employment areas are important to the Village. Recognizing this, the *Comprehensive Plan* establishes recommendations to further strengthen and support these uses, and expand them where opportunities exist. The Village should focus on enhancing the image and character of existing industrial areas and on promoting the replacement of older industrial properties with compatible new industrial and employment uses.

The Plan promotes the “containment” of industrial and business uses to areas generally east of the Union Pacific Soo Line, where adjacency to single family areas is minimized. Key to the success of any redevelopment efforts will be to position new employment uses in a manner which does not negatively affect the surrounding residential neighborhood. Redevelopment activity needs to be sensitive to the residential uses nearby. Adequate screening and buffering should be provided to minimize adverse impacts from industrial activities.

Although there is a significant amount of land area that is already developed for industrial uses, there is a large amount of vacant land. With the exception of the auto-auction facility, the industrial areas can be described as older industrial area in need of redevelopment. The area has good access off of Sauk Trail with connections to the east to the Bishop Ford Freeway and numerous opportunities exist to assemble parcels for larger developments if necessary. Additionally, there are several vacant or underutilized parcels in this area presenting opportunities for redevelopment. Redevelopment efforts in this area may need financial inducement by the Village to attract new employment uses to the area. The Village should promote the development of the vacant areas for industrials and business uses and consider establishing a Special Service Area (SSA) or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in this area to realize substantial redevelopment that could generate a mix of employment uses and including light industrial or business park uses. Funding is primarily needed to complete the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street extension west of State Street in order to allow access to the industrial area which is already served by water and sewer.

### **Redevelopment Tools**

As indicated in the discussion above, redevelopment of a significant portion of these areas is possible. To encourage this redevelopment and help guide the outcome, the Village may need to utilize several redevelopment tools. These programs are discussed in more detail in the Implementation portion of the Plan. Through the use of Tax Increment Financing, Special Service Areas, and other improvement programs, the Village can work to attract and induce new development within these areas.

### **Zoning Issues**

The ability to control and direct the improvement of the Village’s employment areas will be critical to the success of the plan. Financial tools will be crucial to this effort, as well as the ability to control the use mix and design once redevelopment and reinvestment starts to occur. The Village will need to review and amend the current zoning ordinance. This involves updating the uses permitted, bulk and area regulations and performance standards to ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses.

### **Improvement Guidelines**

It is recommended industrial uses within South Chicago Heights be limited to the areas east of the Union Pacific Soo Line. There is some vacant land within this area, that could accommodate development, and some of the existing uses are could be considered underutilized and be in need of reinvestment or redevelopment.

In general, new light industrial and warehouse operations would be appropriate with buildings constructed in a manner to complement and enhance the scale and character of adjoining land uses. Additionally, storage and distribution businesses can utilize the local transportation infrastructure, including local streets which connect to the Bishop Ford Freeway and railroad that runs through the Village.

Safe and convenient access should be provided to industrial properties for trucks, autos and public transportation. Major roadways serving industrial areas should be attractively landscaped and visually distinctive.

Metra service to the Village will expand the labor pool available for businesses within South Chicago Heights. Pace Bus service, and local shuttles could be deployed to better connect the new Metra Station with the employment uses in the east areas of the Village.

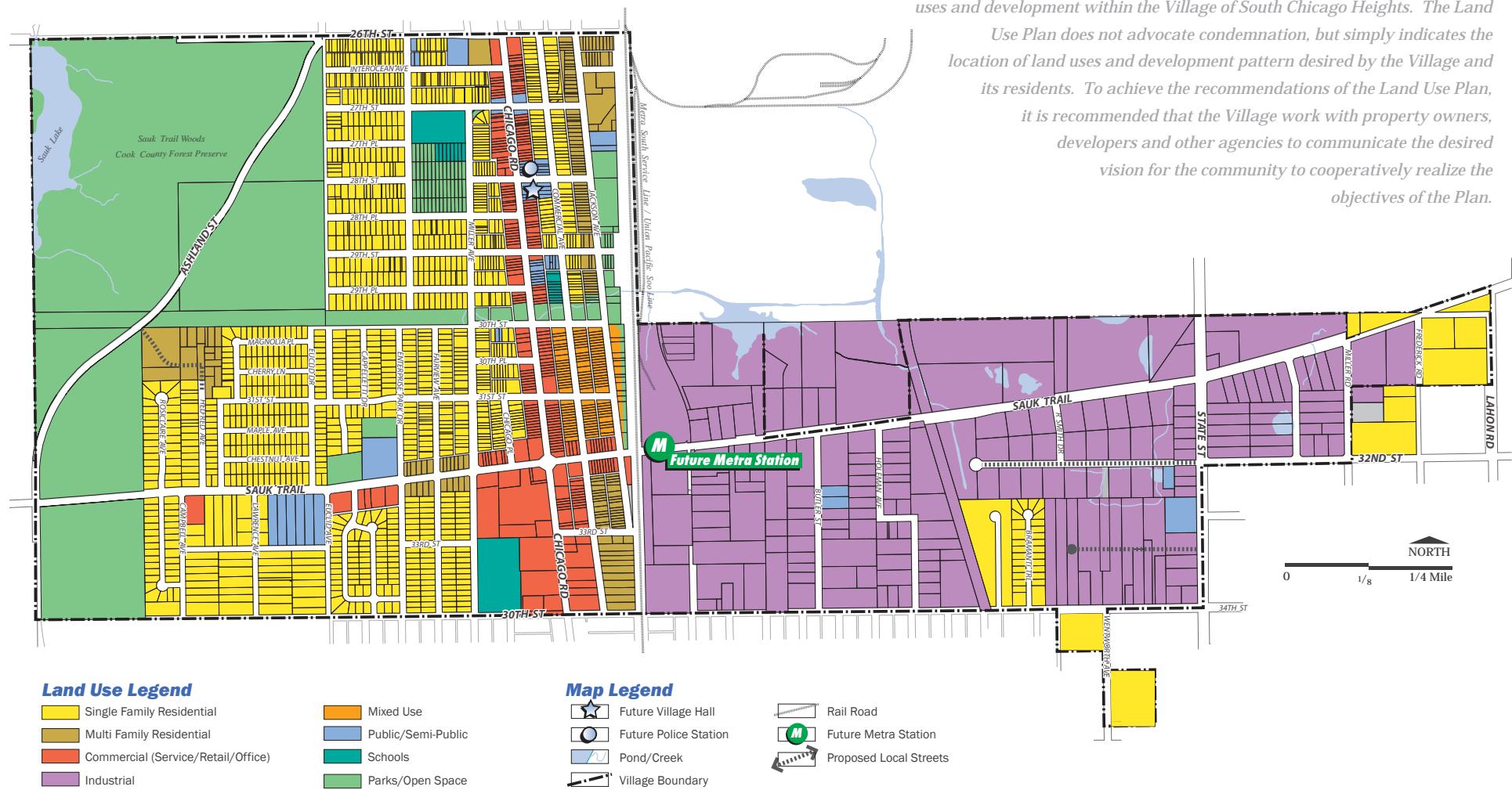
While the industrial areas should continue to be oriented primarily to vehicular traffic, the needs of pedestrians and cyclists should also be considered. All streets within and along industrial areas should have sidewalks. Where possible, loading and service areas should be located behind buildings and, at a minimum, should be positioned away from front entrances and major streets.

New industrial construction should be compatible with the surrounding built environment and context of the site. Consideration should be given to the appearance of buildings and landscaping of sites, and architectural features should be promoted to add visual interest to industrial buildings located along major streets or on other highly visible sites. The fronts of buildings should be attractively landscaped. Signage should consist of monument signs in the front of the parcels and individual letter wall mounted signs on the buildings. Signage should be restricted to the name of the company.

Landscaping and screening should be promoted around the perimeter of industrial sites. Similar treatments should also be used to screen parking lots, loading and service areas, and outdoor storage yards. The use of chain link fencing should be discouraged and allowed only in areas not visible to the public.

# Figure Land Use Plan 2

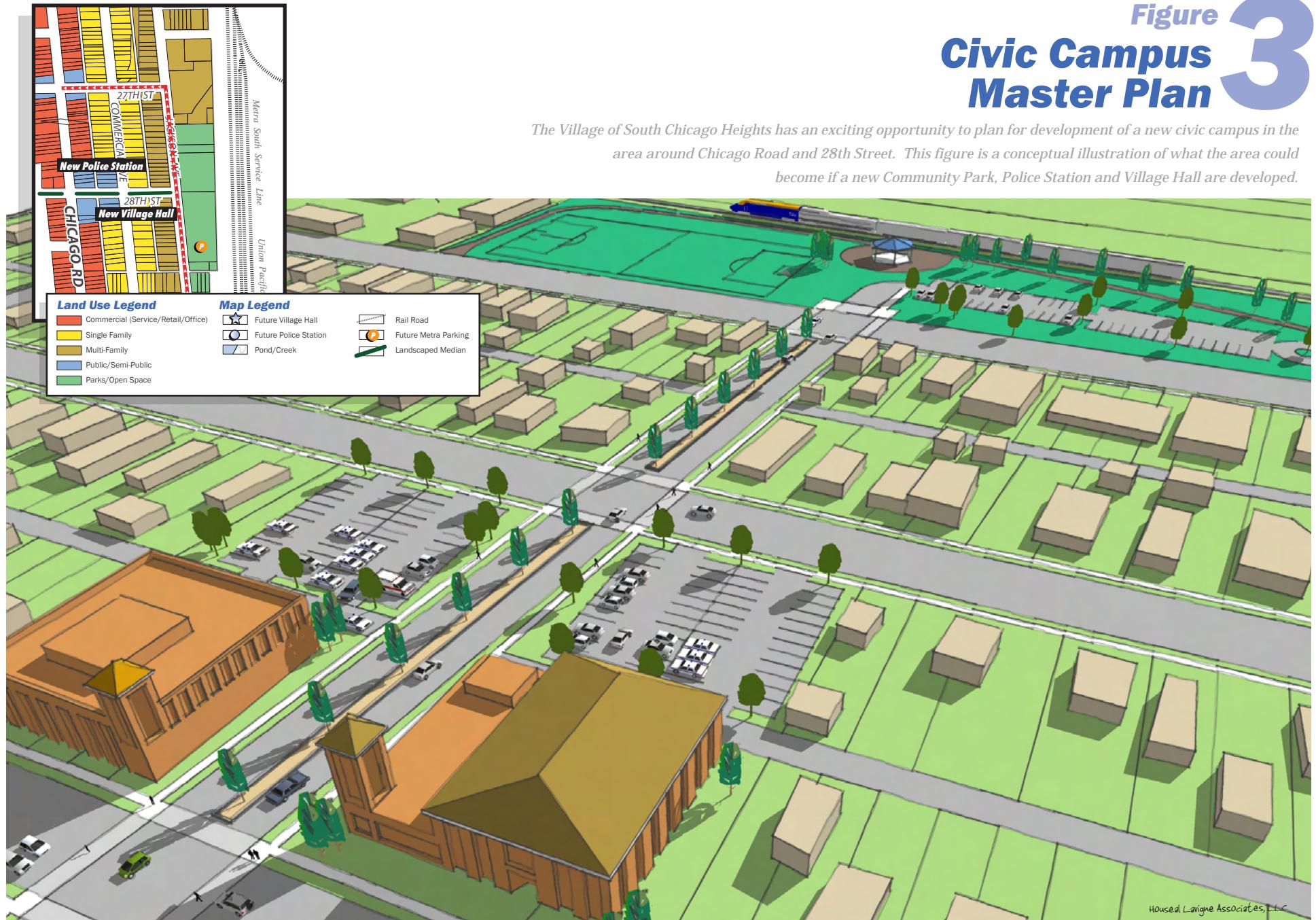
Figure 2 presents the Village's Land Use Plan, illustrating the location for land uses and development within the Village of South Chicago Heights. The Land Use Plan does not advocate condemnation, but simply indicates the location of land uses and development pattern desired by the Village and its residents. To achieve the recommendations of the Land Use Plan, it is recommended that the Village work with property owners, developers and other agencies to communicate the desired vision for the community to cooperatively realize the objectives of the Plan.



**Village of South Chicago Heights • Comprehensive Plan • April 2008**

# Figure 3 Civic Campus Master Plan

The Village of South Chicago Heights has an exciting opportunity to plan for development of a new civic campus in the area around Chicago Road and 28th Street. This figure is a conceptual illustration of what the area could become if a new Community Park, Police Station and Village Hall are developed.



# **Transportation & Circulation Plan**

The Village of South Chicago Heights is served by a well-developed transportation system. This section of the Plan presents the Transportation and Circulation recommendations for the roadway, bicycle and pedestrian and transit system within the community. The Transportation & Circulation Plan for the Village of South Chicago Heights strives to provide a balanced transportation system to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The Village should utilize this Plan to achieve the desired Vision of the community and reinforce and assist in achieving the Goals and Objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

## **Functional Street Classification**

Before improvements for roadway capacity can be made, it is important to first determine the hierarchy of streets within the community. The functional street classification determines the type of traffic a street will carry and the level of access it requires to serve adjacent land-uses. Once the hierarchy is established then the Village can undertake street improvements supporting each streets function or role.

The three functional street classifications below describe the expected use of the street and are intended to be consistent with current regional and community transportation plans. The hierarchy is related to the number of vehicles (traffic volume) a street is designed to carry, the type of service the street is intended to provide, and the type of access provided to properties adjacent to the street.

The Village should protect and improve the function of the overall street hierarchy as this comprehensive network of roadways provides access to the Village from surrounding areas and enables the movement of people and vehicles within and around the Village. The efficiency and convenience of the transportation system significantly affects the quality of life within the community, and will influence any new development and redevelopment within the Village.

**Arterial Streets:** Arterial streets move traffic within and through the Village. These streets are generally wider and have limited access points, which allow vehicles to move safer and faster. Arterial streets are intended to serve all types of trips, with a significant portion of trips having destinations beyond the boundaries of the Village. The Village should monitor traffic flow on these arterial streets and to widen, add additional lanes or improve intersections when warranted, and eliminate or reduce access points when possible.

As commercial development occurs along Chicago Road, it is important that access is restricted as to not impact the flow of traffic and compromise the safety of the road. Access to commercial development should be coordinated, and cross access among adjacent parcels should be encouraged to provide for shared access points and curb cuts.

**Collector Streets:** Collector streets “collect” traffic from local streets and the residential neighborhoods of the South Chicago Heights and move the traffic toward arterial streets or other collectors. Collector streets are intended to serve the local population and are an important component of the Village’s street hierarchy.

**Local Streets:** Residential or local streets provide a means of access between a property and the other streets within the Village's street hierarchy. Local streets are not designed to accommodate high volumes of traffic. Their function of this type of street is to provide access to and from individual properties within the neighborhood. Traffic using local streets for purposes other than property access can create safety concerns and is problematic as a local street is intended, and designed, to serve only those vehicle trips generated by land uses abutting the street. Local streets should be designed to discourage through traffic.

### **Metra Service**

Currently, the closest Metra station to South Chicago Heights is the Richton Park Station, located three and half miles to the west, at the intersection of Richton Road and Sauk Trail. To meet the population "explosions" within Northeastern Illinois, Metra has begun planning to address transportation issues in four separate areas, including the a 33-mile South East Service (SES), proposed to run along the Union Pacific/CSX railroad tracks, enhancing Metra's commuter rail service between the south suburbs and downtown Chicago.

It is planned and expected that South Chicago Heights will have a station along the new service, east of Chicago Road, north of Sauk Trail Road. While the impacts of the new commuter station will be mostly positive, the local transportation network should be subjected to further study to explore the feasibility and necessity of establishing a kiss 'n ride loop through to the station and an additional traffic signal at Chicago Road.

### **Pace Bus Services**

Pace, the suburban bus division of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), is currently the only form of public transportation within the Village. Route 358 is the only Pace bus route that serves the Village, running through the community and linking to other routes at the Chicago Heights Transit Center located at 1620 Vincennes Avenue in Chicago Heights. From that transit center passengers can transfer to the following routes: 352, 357, 362, 366, 367, 370, and 890 that serve the greater area.

Once Metra service is provided with the community, the Village should work with representatives from Pace to determine if additional routes could be established to better connect the neighborhoods of South Chicago Heights and residential areas from adjacent communities to the new Metra Station.

### **Gateway Features**

Gateway improvements help to define the boundaries of the community and create a sense of place. Key entryways are located along each of the main arterial streets and can help to define each of these areas. It should be noted not all the gateway improvements need to be designed exactly the same. What should be common among them is the use of the Village logo integrated as part of a community-wide wayfinding system.

Gateways into the Village should include an appropriate entry monument signage with landscaping that identifies the Village of South Chicago Heights and welcomes people to the community. These gateway features should relate specifically to the site and should emphasize

and symbolize the qualities of South Chicago Heights and set the tone for the architectural quality expected in the Village.

These gateway features should also be consistent to assist in establishing a Village identity. In certain locations, additional hardscape elements and landscaping also may be added to enhance the gateway to the Village. In addition to the Village monuments themselves, development proposals in these key gateway areas should be scrutinized to a higher degree than in other areas that may not be as visible to the passerby. In other words, these areas should be considered the “front door” of South Chicago Heights.

### ***Non-vehicular Transportation***

The movement of pedestrians and bicyclists is an important consideration of the *Comprehensive Plan*. The Plan promotes sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities throughout the Village as components for consideration of any new development in the community. The *Comprehensive Plan* offers a unique opportunity to establish the desire to provide a potential variety of recreational and commercial uses within walking distance of future residents. However, unless properly planned and designed, pedestrian access will be discouraged due to conflicts with traffic or a lack of pedestrian bicycle corridors. As a result, any improvements, public or private, should consider the pedestrian and incorporate sidewalks, cross walks, greenways, and multi-use paths.

### ***Transportation and Circulation Improvements***

The Village should continue to work with the Regional Transportation Authority and promote its desire to provide Metra service to the community and utilize the new station as an economic development tool to attract reinvestment and redevelopment in the community.

When an arterial or collector street is deteriorating or in poor condition, the efficient flow of traffic is negatively affected. When a local street is in poor condition the curb appeal of a home and overall attractiveness of a neighborhood is impacted. The Village should ensure adequate resources are made available for the maintenance of all types of Village streets. Priority street improvements are highlighted on the Transportation Plan.

The Village should undertake repair and maintenance of sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian improvements throughout the community. These improvements could be implemented through the use of Special Service Area (SSA) designation, or a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Maintaining sidewalks and local streets is especially important in the residential areas of the community, which can often be over looked in favor of improving commercial or industrial areas.

The Village’s primary corridors should be improved through the implementation of a streetscape enhancement program. Public rights-of-way should be improved with street trees, grass parkways, connecting sidewalks, pedestrian and vehicular scaled lighting, improved pedestrian cross-walks, banners, plantings, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities. An attractive streetscape can have a striking impact on the overall character, image, and identity of a community.

Throughout the Village there are off-street surface parking areas that are very unsightly due to lack of screening and landscaping. All parking lots should have perimeter landscaping that consists of a continuous shrub hedge that is maintained at a height of 24"-36". In addition to perimeter screening, shade trees, landscape islands, decorative ground cover, and other landscape elements should be required for the interior areas of all parking lots. Where a landscaped perimeter can not be provided, a low masonry wall or decorative wrought iron fencing should be utilized.

All existing traffic signals within the Village should be maintained in good condition. Existing traffic signals should also be synchronized with one another to coordinate the flow of traffic within the Village.

# Figure 4 Transportation Plan

The Village of South Chicago Heights is served by a well-developed transportation system, that consists of streets, sidewalks, trails and bus service. The Transportation & Circulation Plan for the Village of South Chicago Heights strives to provide a balanced transportation system to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and support and accommodate the future Metra station, which will connect the Village of South Chicago Heights with the City of Chicago.



# **Community Facilities & Open Space Plan & Policies**

Community facilities, parks and open space are important parts of daily life providing valuable services to the residents and businesses of South Chicago Heights. These facilities significantly contribute to and define the Village's overall "quality of life." The Community Facilities Policies presents guidelines for maintaining and enhancing parks, schools, fire and police stations and other important community facilities.

## ***Improvement Guidelines***

In general, all community facilities should be well maintained, and repairs should be undertaken as required. The Village should be attuned to the changing needs and requirements of local residents and businesses and new facilities and services should be provided when needed.

The Village should consider the use of impact fees for school and park development. These fees would be applicable for new residential developments. Use of impact fees will help to ensure the provisions of adequate facilities throughout the life of the Plan. In establishing impact fees, it is important that the Village collect developer exactions that reflect a development's actual impact on the community and its service levels. Impact fees which aim to improve the level of service in a community, or assist with "catch-up" or correcting past mistakes can be challenged on the grounds that they are unconstitutional and can deter new development within the community. The Village should continue to promote cooperation and interaction among the various agencies and organizations providing facilities and services to the community, including the local school districts, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, community organizations, local religious institutions, neighboring communities, and others.

## ***Municipal Facilities***

Community services provided by the Village of South Chicago Heights are done so from three separate facilities: 1) The Village Hall located at 3317 Chicago Road; 2) Department of Public Works located at 3275 Butler Avenue; and, 3) Police and Fire Station located at 2729 Jackson Avenue. In addition the Village owns and operates the Senior Citizens Center at 3140 Enterprise Park Avenue.

The current Village Hall is an adaptive reuse of an old commercial building. Its location along Chicago Road provides excellent exposure and visibility to the Village, however it is a tax-exempt land use located in one of the few areas of the Village that has the potential to generate revenue for the community, near the Sauk Trail intersection. Given the size of the community, the Village should consider the development of a new "municipal complex" near the future Metra Station, consolidating municipal facilities to one location, including Village Hall, Police and Fire Departments. The new complex should provide room for the Police and Administrative Departments to expand in a location centrally located within the community, which could serve as a catalyst for development within the Metra Station Area. As an additional benefit, the Village could sell its current property on Chicago Road for commercial development, convert the current police and fire facilities to fire only and possibly make the current Public Works site available for private development.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The Village currently provides 4 park sites - Eddie Mitchell Park; 2) Jackson Park; 3) Grant Park; and, 4) Owen Pavilion Park. In order to provide the level of park facilities desired and make them accessible to all of the community, the Village should focus efforts on Owen Pavilion Park. The location of the park space near the Senior Center makes it usable for the entire community. Aging playground equipment at Grant Park should be removed and replaced with attractive landscaping, perhaps to be redeveloped as a neighborhood park as funds are available in the future. Eddie Mitchell Parks should be removed and perhaps consolidated with adjacent parcels for residential redevelopment, due to the park's poor location, visibility and access.

Although the community is largely landlocked, a logical approach to enhance utilization is to build upon the existing park sites, including additional recreation amenities or expansion of the park sites if adjacent land is donated or available for sale in the open market. School sites should also be explored as opportunities for recreation. Cooperative agreements with schools within the community could allow for the Village to provide recreation facilities to parts of the community with poor access to recreation facilities. In the long-term, an expanded recreation system will have enormous benefits for the community as a whole.

A multi-use trail should be coordinated with Com Ed and installed as funding is available, within the high tension wire right-of-way running east-west through the community. The path would provide access between the trailhead at Sauk Woods on Ashland and the Metra Redevelopment Area at Jackson Street, with an on-street connection from 30<sup>th</sup> Street north to the station.

Recreation within the Village is coordinated by the Recreation Department within the Village. Their mission is "to provide and maintain the best quality of life for South Chicago Heights youths." The Recreation department has the capacity to run numerous programs, including the Back to School Picnic, Children's Halloween Party, Breakfast with Santa, and Breakfast with the Easter Bunny. The Recreation Department also acts as a bridge to limit costs to South Chicago Heights residents for registering in activities in the Chicago Heights Park District or the Steger Recreation Department.

## **Forest Preserve District of Cook County**

The large forest preserve in the western section of the Village contributes to the character of the community and the quality of life enjoyed by residents. The *Comprehensive Plan* supports the continued operation of the forest preserves in the community. The large open space areas provide relief from the built environment. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County operates three preserves in the Village of South Chicago Heights: Sauk Trail Woods- North and South, Shuberts Woods. The preserves are part of the Thorn Creek Division that is comprised of a series of preserves situated along Thorn Creek, a 20-mile stream that connects the highlands of the Tinley Moraine with the Little Calumet River. The Forest Preserves in the Village provide picnic shelters, and multi-purpose trails, and fishing in Sauk Lake, a large body of water in the center of the preserves. The multipurpose trails are part of the Thorn Creek Trail, a larger trail network that consists of 4.7 miles in Sauk Trail Lake area and another winds through Lansing Woods and North Creek Meadow for 4.6 miles. A future extension of the trail will link these two sections bringing the overall trail length to 17.5 miles.

### **Schools**

Public schools are a very important asset, particularly in a predominantly residential community such as South Chicago Heights. Quality education and schools within a community have the ability to attract residents; retain existing residents; and increase property values. The quality of the public school system has a strong impact on the desirability and market-ability of the area.

The *Comprehensive Plan* supports the continued operation of the schools within the community and recommends that the Village support improvements necessary to maintain adequate educational facilities in the community.

The Village should also maintain an open line of communication with local school districts and monitor capacity levels of their schools and utilize bedroom calculation tables for all proposed residential development to ensure schools can accommodate additional children.

### **Telecommunications**

Telephone, cable and high-speed internet are services that should be provided by the Village. The Village of South Chicago Heights should continue to encourage the provision of these services through the granting of franchise agreements or the leasing of Village land for telecommunication facilities.

# Figure 5

## Community Facilities & Open Space Plan



### Community Facilities

- Public/Semi-Public
- Schools
- Parks/Open Space
- Cook County Forest Preserve
- Religious
- Com-Ed Right of Way
- Residential Redevelopment Opportunity

### Map Legend

- ★ Future Village Hall
- Future Police Station
- Metra Parking
- Pond/Creek
- Village Boundary
- Rail Road
- Multi-Use Trail

### Community Facilities

- 1 Sauk Lake
- 2 Sauk Tail Woods
- 3 Fellowship Baptist Church
- 4 US Grant Elementary School
- 5 School Park & Athletic Fields
- 6 American Legion
- 7 Fire Station
- 8 Cornerstone Christian Center
- 9 4 Square Gospel Church
- 10 Cornerstone Christian School
- 11 Full Gospel Tabernacle Church
- 12 Redevelopment Parcel
- 13 Owen Pavilion Park
- 14 Senior Center & Veteran's Memorial
- 15 Temple Baptist Church
- 16 Saukview Elementary School
- 17 Village Hall
- 18 Police Station
- 19 Public Works Facility
- 20 Elevated & Ground Water Storage Tanks: Future Site Dept Public Works Garage

# **Section 5: Implementation**

The *Comprehensive Plan* sets forth an agreed-upon “road map” for growth and development within the Village of South Chicago Heights over the next ten to fifteen years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the Village Board, Village staff, and South Chicago Heights residents, business and property owners.

However, in many ways the planning process in South Chicago Heights has just begun. Completion of the *Comprehensive Plan* documents the thoughtful work the Village has done since its beginnings and marks the official start to achieving the written goals of the Plan and the shared Vision of the community. Many next steps will be required, over the next ten to fifteen years in order to accomplish recommendations of the Plan.

The Village has several redevelopment opportunities discussed throughout the plan including the use of the existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and expansion of its physical boundary, the possibility of creating residential and commercial redevelopment opportunities by relocating park and Village Hall facilities, and the possible creation of a Special Service Area to fund roadway improvements to encourage industrial development. These opportunities and incentives are illustrated on the following page.

This section highlights those next steps that should be undertaken to begin the process of plan implementation. These include:

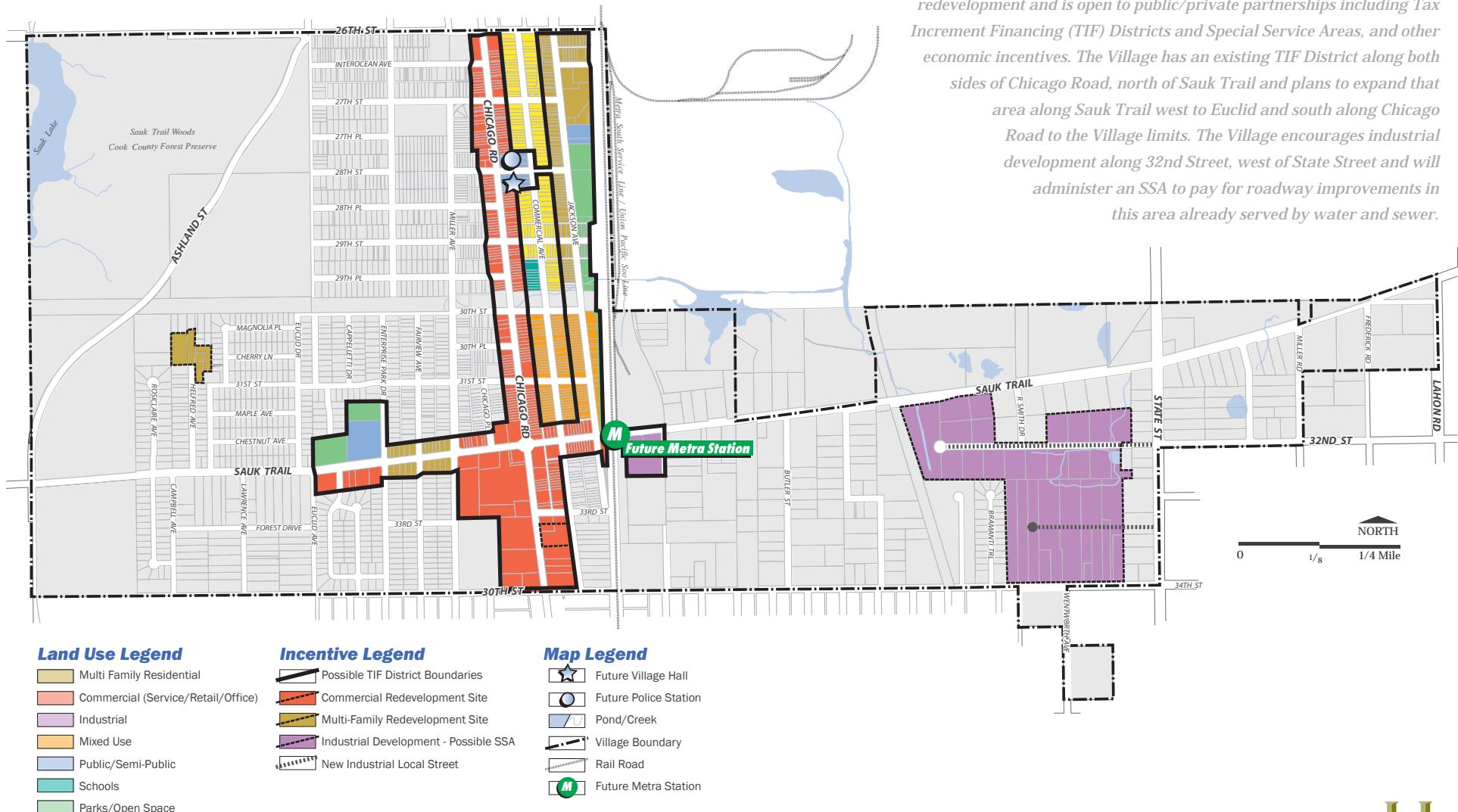
- Use the *Comprehensive Plan* regularly;
- Prepare an implementation “action agenda” including department;
- Review and update the Zoning Ordinance and other development controls;
- Explore possible funding sources and implementation techniques;
- Develop and utilize a regular Capital Improvements Program (CIP);
- Actively promote cooperation, communication and participation among various agencies, organizations, community groups and individuals;
- Prepare and adopt Development Standards and Design Guidelines; and
- Update the *Comprehensive Plan* on a regular basis.

## ***Use the Comprehensive Plan Regularly***

The *Comprehensive Plan* should become the official policy guide for South Chicago Heights to implement improvements and coordinate development or redevelopment projects within the community. It is essential that the Plan be adopted by the Village Board and then be used on a regular basis by Village staff, boards, commissions, and committees to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the community in the years ahead.

# Figure 6

## Redevelopment Opportunities & Economic Incentives



### **Prepare an Implementation Action Agenda**

The Village should prepare an implementation “action agenda” which highlights the improvement and development projects and activities to be undertaken during the next few years. For example, the “action agenda” might consist of:

- A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken with Village Board and staff input;
- The priority of each project or activity, including a suggested date of completion;
- An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity;
- An indication of possible funding sources and assistance programs that may be available/appropriate for implementing each project or activity; and
- In order to remain current, the “action agenda” should be updated once a year.

### **Review the Zoning Ordinance and Other Development Codes**

Zoning is an important tool in implementing planning policy. It establishes the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties, and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted.

Adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan* should be followed by a review and update of the Village’s various development controls including the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other related codes and ordinances. It is essential that all development controls be consistent with and complement the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The *Comprehensive Plan* sets forth policies regarding the use of land within the Village and establishes guidelines for the quality, character and intensity of new development to be promoted in the years ahead. The Plan’s policies and guidelines should greatly assist the Village in formulating new zoning and development code regulations that can better reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the South Chicago Heights community.

### **Funding Sources and Implementation Techniques**

The Village of South Chicago Heights is aware of many of the grants and funding sources available to the Community. These programs should be monitored and applications made at appropriate deadlines and cycles to implement projects planned for the upcoming fiscal year. Since many grants require a percentage match, ranging from 5% to 20%, it is important for the Village to budget the match even prior to receiving grant awards. Some time should be devoted to researching additional or new funding sources to enhance revenues that most often implement highly visible projects and make a difference in community function and appearance. Having a *Comprehensive Plan* to refer to in grant applications is a great improvement and will assist the Village in gaining more funds in the future.

Other than grants, other implementation techniques such as Tax Increment Financing, Special Service Areas, and more could be considered to spur the redevelopment and reinvestment desired for the Chicago Road Commercial Corridor and the Sauk Trail industrial area, as well as for the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) mixed use redevelopment planned for the proposed Metra Station area. It is critical to understand and analyze the incentives being offered by neighboring and communities in order to remain competitive in retaining and attracting businesses to South Chicago Heights.

### ***Capital Improvements Program***

Another tool for implementing the *Comprehensive Plan* is the Capital Improvement Program. It establishes schedules and priorities for all public improvement projects within a five-year period. The Village first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years. Then all projects are reviewed, priorities assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified.

The Capital Improvements Program typically schedules the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the *Comprehensive Plan*, particularly the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities and infrastructure facilities, including the water system, sanitary sewers, storm water facilities, the street system, and streetscape enhancements. Expansion, construction, or improvement for the Village Hall, police station facilities, and public works facilities would also be included in the Capital Improvements Program.

The Village's financial resources are limited, and even as new revenues come in to the community, public dollars must continue to be spent wisely. The Capital Improvements Program would allow the Village of South Chicago Heights to provide the most desirable public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints.

### ***Promote Cooperation and Participation***

The Village of South Chicago Heights should assume the leadership role in implementing the *Comprehensive Plan*. In addition to carrying out the administrative actions and many of the public improvement projects called for in the Plan, the Village may choose to develop and administer a variety of programs for local residents, businesses and property owners. However, in order for the *Comprehensive Plan* to be successful, it must be based on a strong partnership between the Village, other public agencies, various neighborhood groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector.

The Village should be the leader in promoting the cooperation and collaboration needed to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*. The Village's "partners" should include:

- Other governmental and service districts, such as the two school districts, Bloom Township, neighboring Recreation Departments, the Library District, Thorn Creek Basin Sanitary District, Cook County, the private utility companies, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Forest Preserve District, etc;
- Regional and local institutions, such as religious and philanthropic organizations;

- Local banks and financial institutions, which can provide assistance in upgrading existing properties, facilitating desirable new development and packaging assistance programs for residents and businesses;
- Builders and developers, who should be encouraged to undertake improvements and new construction that conform to the Plan and enhance the overall quality and character of the community; and,
- The South Chicago Heights community, since all residents and neighborhood groups should be encouraged to participate in the on-going planning process, and all should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions on improvement and development decisions within the community.

### ***Development Standards & Design Guidelines***

Prepare and adopt a set of Development Standards & Design Guidelines for the Village. Development Standards & Design Guidelines are a graphic and textual description of allocation of permitted land uses, form of lots and buildings, and standards for streets and parking. They describe land use and development guidelines – consideration of factors beyond the overall land use proposed on the Land Use & Development Plan. The document should include the expectations of South Chicago Heights for the development of the general land use categories including:

- Corridor Commercial,
- Neighborhood Commercial,
- Mixed Use Development, and
- Residential Infill and Redevelopment.

### ***Plan Monitoring & Maintenance***

The South Chicago Heights *Comprehensive Plan* is a long term and general policy guide. However it clearly depicts the intended pattern, intensity, character and conditions of growth in the community. The Plan should be regularly updated to reflect current policies, challenges and new opportunities. In an annual memorandum to the Village President and Board of Trustees, the staff, should report on necessary amendments to the plan and monitor progress of Plan Implementation. This report should be submitted annually, preceding sessions at the staff and Board levels to evaluate and update the plan and implementation strategies, especially as they may relate to budgeting for the following fiscal year, i.e. public street projects, specific site development, planning studies, etc.

Adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan* does not mark the end of the *Comprehensive Planning* process. Rather, it should be viewed as the beginning of the real effort to achieve the community vision. This document has identified numerous implementation strategies in each of the various plan elements needing to be initiated and completed. Many of these implementation strategies will be ongoing activities. All of the implementation strategies will require the Village to commit various resources to the effort.