



VILLAGE OF
MOKENA

DOWNTOWN STATION AREA PLAN

Prepared by: **HNTB**
With assistance from:
Goodman Williams Group

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Acknowledgements

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The following Steering Committee members served throughout the planning process for the Downtown Station Area Plan:

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I. Executive Summary

The consultant team of HTNB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group was engaged by the Village of Mokena to prepare a Station Area Plan for the area surrounding its Metra station. The Village received a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) through its Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) to conduct this study. The purpose of this study was two-fold: (1) the Village wanted to strengthen the Downtown around the Mokena-Front Street Station, making it a focal point of the community; and (2) the Village wished to consider a strategic move of the existing Mokena-Front Street Station location to a new location, as proposed in the previous *Downtown Concept Plan* prepared by Teska Associates in January 2002. The overall purpose of this Plan is to make the area more transit-supportive, determine appropriate future land use patterns and improve access. This study provided an estimate of development potential for the area and outlined specific strategies to implement its recommendations.

As part of this process, a Steering Committee was developed and an intensive public participation program was carried out. The Steering Committee was composed of various community leaders and members to lend insight into the Plan at milestone points in the planning process. Additionally, the public was

involved twice, during a Visioning Workshop and a Community Open House, to gain input on the planning progress.

Vision and Development Principles were established. The Vision helps steer the Plan to provide guidance for addressing future issues within the context of the Plan's overall framework. Recommendations are designed to work together to support realization of the Vision. For example, actions to encourage reinvestment in Downtown properties will enhance vitality and attract more visitors to Downtown Mokena – stimulating economic activity and increasing the Village's tax base.

The research that was completed to prepare the Station Area Plan included an analysis of existing physical conditions, including land use, transportation, urban design and current zoning and planning policies impacting the study area and a market analysis of the area to determine potential future land use mix, including the amount of residential and commercial uses that can be supported by the market in different phases of time.

Based on the Vision and Development Principles, two alternative concepts were developed for Downtown Mokena and are presented in this report, the "Preferred Concept" and "Alternate Concept." The Preferred Concept illustrates the potential relocation of the Mokena-Front Street Station to a site further east; the Alternate Concept maintains the station in its present location.

Both concepts are based on the following elements:

- Both concepts were developed to reflect a "Phase I" market potential identified by Goodman Williams Group, which consists of approximately 30,000 to 35,000 square feet of net new commercial space and approximately 100 to 150 new residential units within the Downtown in the next approximately eight to ten years;
- Both concepts assume that Yunker Park will develop as a major community amenity adjacent to the Downtown, and are structured to respond to this opportunity;
- Both concepts anticipate similar heights and densities of mixed use and commercial redevelopment throughout the Downtown;
- Both concepts anticipate that buildings with historic value will be retained and reused to the extent feasible, with new developments designed to be compatible with existing structures; and

- Both concepts depict ample commercial parking capacity to allow for future flexibility as proposals are revised.

A. PREFERRED CONCEPT

The Preferred Concept depicts an extended core area of retail activity, stretching from the Wolf Road/Front Street intersection to a new Metra station at Division Street, with transitional residential uses at the Downtown perimeter. The framework plan illustrates the following:

- Mixed use development at the intersection of Wolf Road and Front Street, and at the intersection of Front Street and Division Street;
- Approximately half of the Walnut Lane area would be utilized for a new mixed use facility (incorporating the station) and commuter parking, with the remainder redeveloped for residential uses;
- Commercial uses along the railroad tracks at Mokena Street and south along Wolf Road to just south of LaPorte Road and along McGovney Street and Willow Avenue extended;
- Condominium and townhouse development extending north along Wolf Road, west of Wolf Road along Front Street, east along Front Street and east along a new extension of Willow Avenue (adjacent to the new Metra station in the Walnut Lane area);
- Maintaining the single family character along the south side of McGovney Street, with limited office or commercial conversions of existing residential structures;
- New open space east of Mokena Street along a new extension of Willow Avenue, to link the Downtown to Yunker Park;
- A new street connection along Willow Avenue;
- A potential relocation of the Mokena-Front Street Station and associated at-grade pedestrian crossing;
- A potential location for the relocated Metra maintenance siding (necessitated by the station relocation);
- Enhancements to the pedestrian and bicycle network throughout the Downtown; and
- Key gateway locations, which will define the limits of an area with a distinctive streetscape identity and banner signage to promote a Downtown “brand.”

- Thirty-eight of the 342 existing commuter spaces would be relocated and replaced due to redevelopment. 563 new additional commuter spaces would be built. Thus, a total of 905 commuter spaces would be built in the station area.

B. ALTERNATE CONCEPT

The Alternate Concept depicts a compact and contiguous core area of retail activity, centered on the Mokena – Front Street Station in its current location, with transitional residential uses at the Downtown perimeter. The framework plan illustrates the following:

- Mixed use development along Front Street to just past Division Street, extending south along Wolf Road to McGovney Street, and extending north along Wolf Road to 3rd Street on the west side;
- Commercial uses along the railroad tracks from Mokena to Division Streets, and south along Wolf Road to just south of LaPorte Road;
- Condominium and townhouse development extending north along Wolf Road, west of Wolf Road along Front Street, behind the commercial uses on the west side of Wolf Road, east along Front Street and east along a new extension of Willow Avenue (in the Walnut Lane area);
- Maintaining the single family character along the south side of McGovney Street, with limited office or commercial conversions of existing residential structures;
- New open space east of Mokena Street along a new extension of Willow Avenue, to link the Downtown to Yunker Park;
- A new street connection along Willow Avenue;
- Enhancements to the pedestrian and bicycle network throughout the Downtown, including improved access to existing station platforms; and
- Key gateway locations, which will define the limits of an area with a distinctive streetscape identity and banner signage to promote a Downtown “brand.”
- Thirty-eight of the 342 existing commuter spaces would be relocated and replaced due to redevelopment. 391 new additional commuter spaces would be built. Thus, a total of 733 commuter spaces would be built in the station area.

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Mokena Station Area Plan identifies key implementation strategies to complete the recommendations presented in the Plan. These strategies include public and private sector responsibilities and potential funding sources. Some recommendations refer to the realization of specific policies or actions, while others refer to broader area-wide efforts. The Implementation Plan attempts to synthesize the ideas, issues and opportunities presented throughout the report into a manageable approach for the future. The key strategies are as follows:

- Strategy 1: Establish a Station Area Task Force
- Strategy 2: Assess Feasibility of Station Relocation
- Strategy 3: Amend Development Regulations
- Strategy 4: Enforce Design Guidelines
- Strategy 5: Determine Financing Opportunities and Assistance
- Strategy 6: Implement Major Capital Improvements
- Strategy 7: Focus on Key Redevelopment Project Priorities

Redevelopment of the Downtown will occur over a period of years given the additional study required to address a potential station location and multiple owners of potential redevelopment sites. In addition, retail and residential development will necessarily be phased to reflect realistic rates of market absorption.

II. Purpose and Background

The Chicago region contains one of the largest commuter rail systems in the U.S.; Metra operates on over 1,200 miles of track and serves 239 stations along eleven rail service lines. Many communities have recognized train service as an economic development asset and created transit-oriented development (TOD) plans to spur new growth and increase transit use. The Village of Mokena conducted this study to identify new development and redevelopment opportunities near the Mokena-Front Street Station in Downtown Mokena, as well as transit-related infrastructure improvements.

A. STATION AREA PLANNING PROCESS

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has worked with over 50 communities to create station area plans or transit-oriented development plans through its Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP). Using this program, the Village of Mokena has hired HNTB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group to provide planning, urban design, and market consulting services for a station area study. The planning process generally involved the following steps:

- Analysis of existing land use, transportation, and market conditions;

- Creation of alternative concept plans for the Downtown Station Area; and
- Preparation of design guidelines and implementation strategies.

The planning process engaged civic leaders, property owners, developers and the general public to help generate a preferred concept plan for future development and improvements. A Steering Committee of local leaders and transportation agency representatives provided oversight and feedback throughout the planning process. Input opportunities included the following:

- Kick-off Meeting and Stakeholder Interviews (June 2007)
- Visioning Workshop (December 3, 2007)
- Community Open House (April 22, 2008)
- Steering Committee Meeting (June 3, 2008)
- Village Board Review (June 30, 2008)

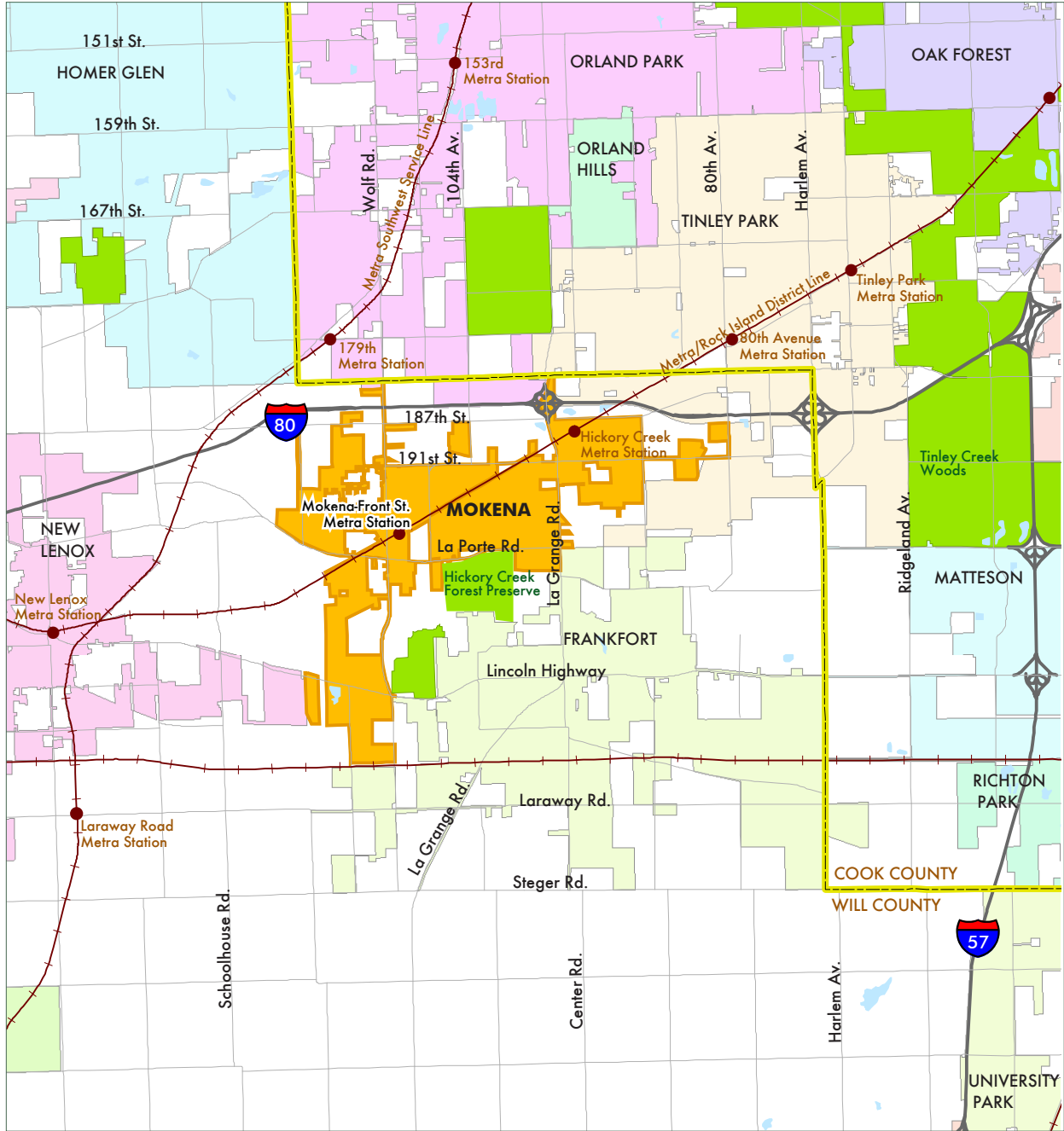
B. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The Village of Mokena is located in Will County, approximately 27 miles southwest of the Chicago Loop. According to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), Will County is one of the fastest growing collar counties, with a 2000 population of 502,266 that is estimated to double to 1,107,778 by 2030. Due to its location in Will County, its proximity to Interstate 80, and the amount of available land, Mokena is expected to grow substantially from 18,669 people in 2007 to an estimated 27,000 by 2030. The Village wishes to capitalize on this growth by determining TOD opportunities that will help create a more vibrant Downtown environment. *Figure 1: Location Map* highlights Mokena's location relative to adjacent communities, highways and commuter rail lines. Note that the map is taken from CMAP's Digital Map of the Region and may not reflect current municipal boundaries in some areas.

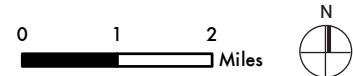
Historical Development

The area of present-day Mokena was first settled in the early 1830s along the banks of Hickory Creek. Similar to other neighboring communities, the construction of a rail line, the Rock Island Railroad in 1852, helped to focus the town on its depot site. Due to its Mokena-Front Street Station, the Village

FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP



Data Sources: U.S. Census 2000 and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Digital Map of the Region, 1999





Historical Images of Downtown Mokena (Courtesy of Mokena Historical Society)

became a rural market center serving a large farming community. By the late 1870s, Mokena had several general stores, blacksmith shops, hotels, butchers and saloons, among other businesses. Front Street has served as the village's main commercial district since that time, and still maintains several structures that survive from this era. Mokena incorporated in 1880, with a population of 522. The village did not experience significant growth until after World War II, when additional commuter rail service and the construction of Interstate 80 in 1968 created greater regional access. Mokena's population increased from 657 in 1940, to 1,643 in 1970, and to 14,583 in 2000. A recently completed special census indicates that Mokena has a 2007 population of 18,669, representing a 28 percent increase in population since 2000.

C. STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

Transit station areas are generally thought of as including the area within a half-mile radius of a transit station. This definition of a station area is based on the land use influence that a station can have due to the accessibility provided for pedestrians, with a half-mile, or ten minute, walk considered an acceptable distance for most transit riders. *Figure 2: Study Area Boundary* illustrates this half-mile walk circle centered on the Mokena - Front Street Station. The circle encompasses all of Downtown Mokena and includes portions of residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown, including some unincorporated areas falling within Mokena's extra-territorial jurisdiction for planning purposes. This planning process identified ways to improve access to the Downtown from all directions, with particular emphasis on the half-mile radius. The following sections provide context for the existing conditions within the study area, from the *Alternative Concepts Memorandum*.

D. EXISTING LAND USE CHARACTER CONSIDERATIONS

Front Street and Old Mokena

The traditional heart of Mokena's Downtown is located along Front Street between Wolf Road and Mokena Street. Historic and contemporary buildings on Front Street contain a variety of retail, hospitality, service, office, institutional and residential uses. The Mokena - Front Street Station and associated commuter parking is located on the south side of Front Street at Wolf Road, creating a one-sided main street—a condition that is common in Chicago commuter rail suburbs, especially in smaller and more distant communities.



Mokena - Front Street Station

East of Division Street, the business district along Front Street transitions from commercial office and service uses into multi-family and single-family residential uses. A significant public land use, Mokena's police department is located in the middle of this block, backing up to the railroad tracks. The single-family residential homes on this block vary in size and character, and are generally well-maintained and in good condition. South of the railroad right-of-way is the location of Mokena's Walnut Lane industrial district. There are light industrial and commercial service buildings within this district; the majority of buildings are utilitarian in character, vary in style and design, and do not create a unified industrial park atmosphere.

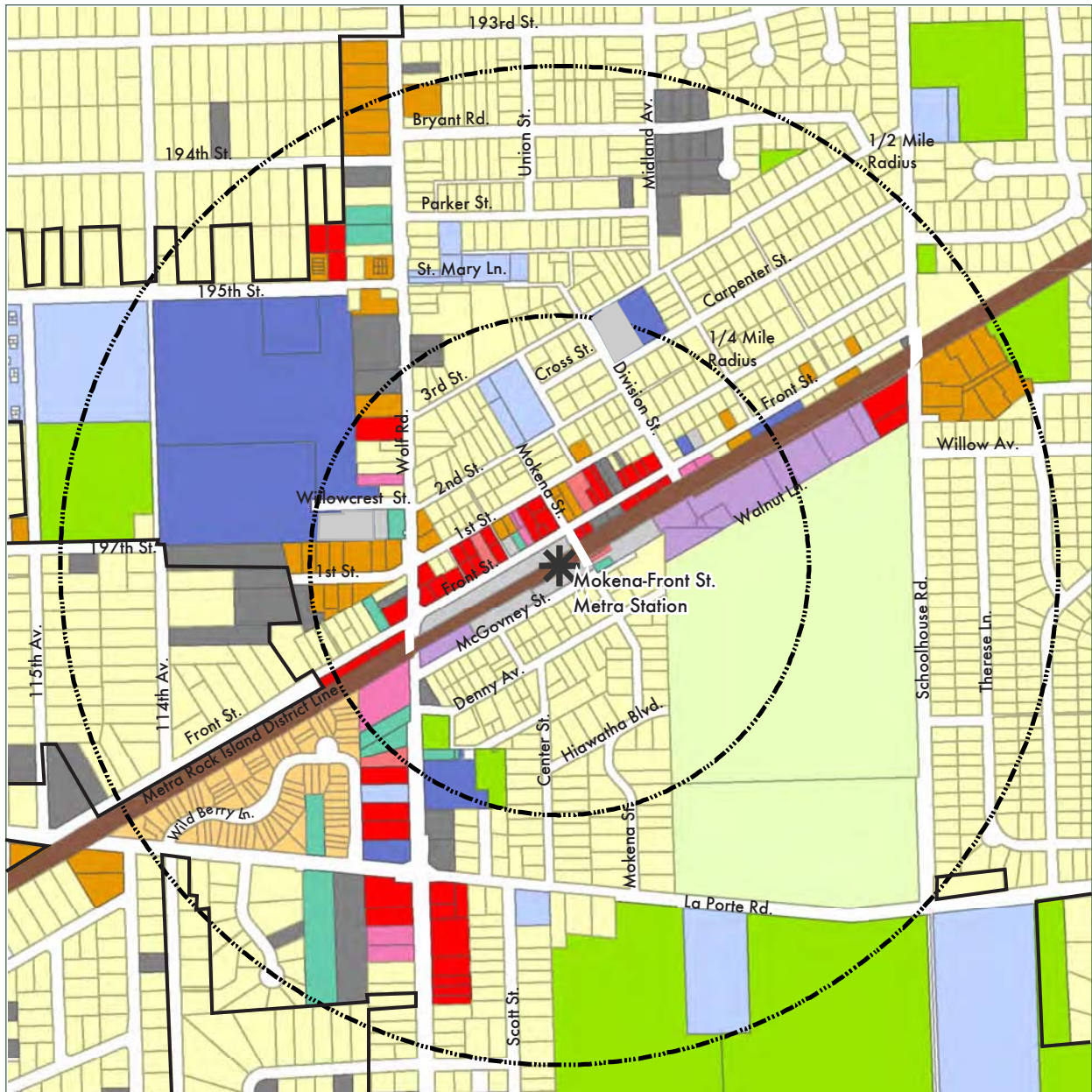


Historic structure at the corner of Division Street and Front Street

Figure 3: Existing Land Use depicts these existing land uses concentrated in the half-mile walk circle centered on the Mokena - Front Street Station.

North of Front Street and east of Wolf Road is the village's oldest residential neighborhood along First, Second, and Third streets.

FIGURE 3: EXISTING LAND USE



Legend

Village Boundary (Approximate)

Station Study Area

Existing Land Use

Single Family Residential

Two Family Residential

Multi-Family Residential

Public

Institutional

Mixed Use

Office

Industrial

Commercial

Restaurant

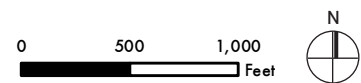
Open Space

Agriculture

Railroad

Parking

Vacant



Note: Land use survey conducted in June 2007.

The narrow roads in this area combine a sidewalk with a rural road cross section without curb or gutter, creating a rural village aesthetic that is not found in other Chicago commuter rail suburbs. The single-family homes in this area are primarily well-maintained and reflect architectural styles that may be considered historic.

Wolf Road Corridor

Access to Downtown Mokena from Interstate 80 is not direct, but rather via U.S. Route 45 to 191st Street and then south onto Wolf (or Schoolhouse) Road. This access route makes Wolf Road the main arterial into Downtown Mokena, and land use along Wolf Road is undergoing a slow transition to commercial uses that benefit from higher traffic levels and visibility. In contrast to the smaller scale, walkable district along Front Street, which was first developed in response to rail service, the development pattern along Wolf Road is oriented to access via automobiles. Newer buildings are set back from the road with parking in front.

Downtown Neighborhoods

Moving out from the historic center of the village, newer residential construction and subdivisions are found at the edges of the half-mile radius study area. The majority of these homes have prominent garages and driveways.



New Residential Housing Construction in Mokena

Planned Yunker Park Improvements

The Mokena Community Park District manages and maintains sixteen parks in the village, four of which are in the Downtown study area. To the east and south of the Mokena-Front Street Station, the Yunker Farm is an agricultural property that will be redeveloped by the Mokena Park District as a significant community park facility. The northwest corner of the planned Yunker Park, is located roughly 500 feet east of the transit station. According to information on the Park District's website, plans for Yunker Park include historic restoration of a barn and surrounding outbuildings for a demonstration farm. Other planned features include fountains, botanical gardens, ball fields, a splash park and an ice skating rink. The park, to be constructed on the single largest undeveloped

property in the study area, will not generate transit riders or benefit from its



The Farm at Yunker Park

close proximity to the station. However, the amenity of the park will add value to the Downtown as a place to live and has the potential to bring additional visitors to Downtown businesses, particularly if programmed events (such as concerts) in the park bring additional visitors to the Downtown.

E. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Vehicle Circulation and Access

Wolf Road is the primary north-south arterial roadway providing access to the study area. LaPorte Road provides east-west access into the station area. Front Street, Schoolhouse Road, 195th Street and Willow Avenue serve as collector roadways in the study area. Front Street was upgraded in recent years between Wolf Road and Division Street with a Downtown streetscape treatment and on-street parking. New street lights and street trees were also installed from Division Street to Schoolhouse Road. On-street parking is provided along Front Street to serve local businesses, including on-street diagonal parking spaces in the first block east of Wolf Road.

Schoolhouse Road provides an alternate Downtown access route from 191st Street to the north, where a new signal will also be installed. Schoolhouse Road is slated to be upgraded in conjunction with pending Yunker Park improvements to provide a continuous turn lane and sidewalks adjacent to the park. Willow Avenue and 195th Street provide local access into the Downtown area from the east and west, respectively.

As part of the annexation agreement between the Village and the Park District for the Yunker Farm property, it is anticipated that a new street connection from Willow Avenue to either Denny Avenue or McGovney Street will be accommodated as Yunker Park is developed. An easement exists for this purpose, with its exact alignment yet to be determined; the new road could potentially follow the current alignment of Walnut Lane.

At-grade railroad crossings in the study area are located at Wolf Road, Mokena Street and Schoolhouse Road. An at-grade crossing at LaPorte Road also exists just west of the study area. One pedestrian track crossing is aligned to the depot, just west of Mokena Street, providing access between the inbound and outbound platforms.

On-street parking convenient to Downtown businesses is provided along Front Street. Commuter parking lots are present both north and south of the Metra tracks. Many businesses within the Downtown provide dedicated off-street parking.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Locations of existing sidewalks within the study area are indicated in *Figure 4: Existing Access and Circulation Features*. Generally, surrounding neighborhoods have streets with a rural cross-section (lacking curb and gutter) and if a sidewalk is present it is on only one side of the street. Front Street and 1st Street are the exceptions to this condition.

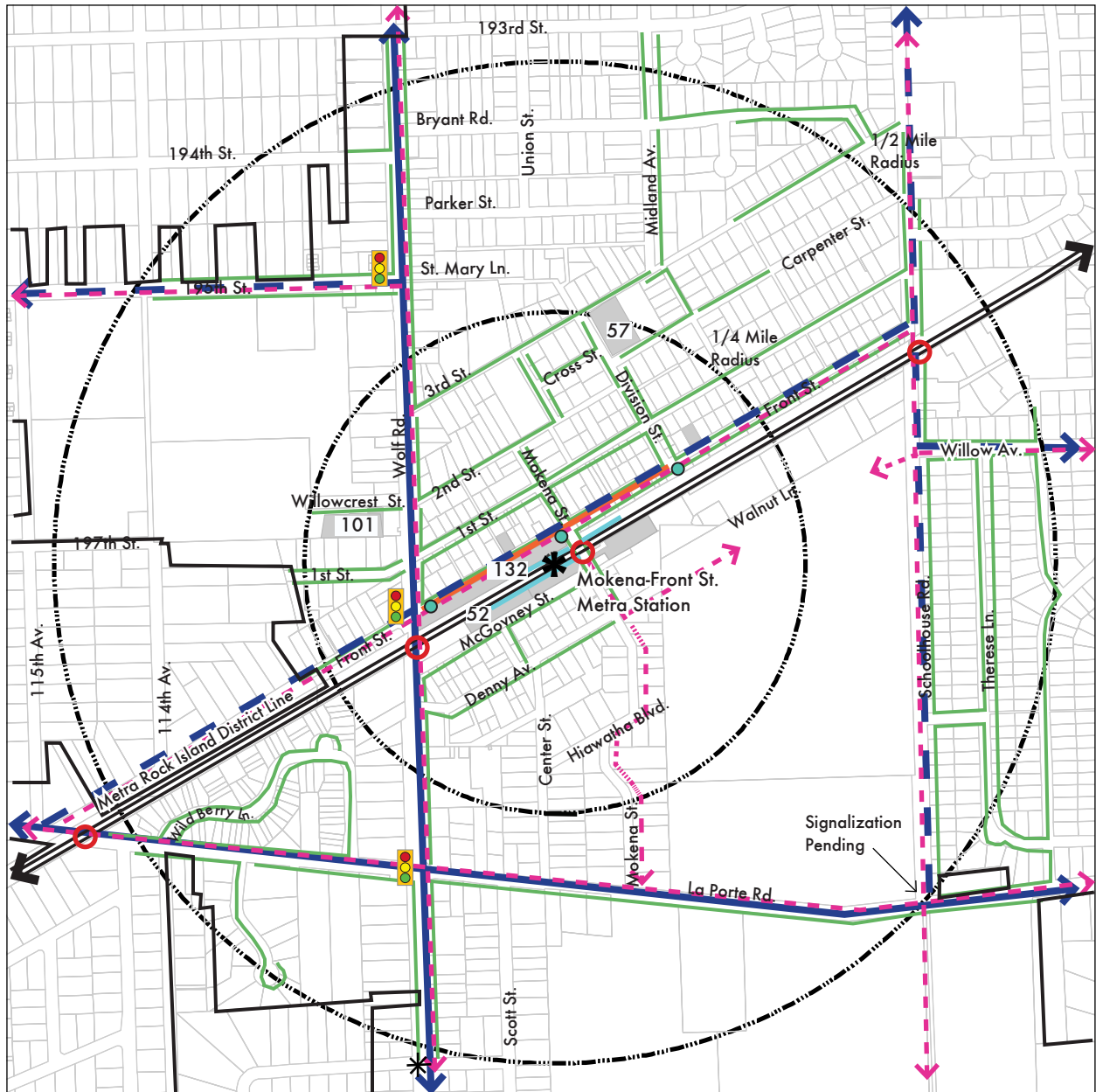
Front Street that includes continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street and a planted parkway. In conjunction with the streetscape improvements, plaza seating areas were also created adjacent to both Wolf Road and Mokena Street between the railroad tracks and Front Street (book-ending the commuter parking lot), and also opposite the end of Division Street next to the railroad tracks.



Bicycle Parking in Downtown Mokena

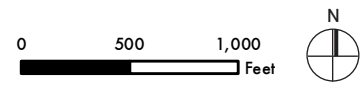
Figure 4 delineates a proposed system of bicycle routes, which the 1999 Transportation Plan recommended to provide community-wide bicycle access. Routes would be signed on-street routes, with dedicated lanes or wide shared

FIGURE 4: EXISTING ACCESS AND CIRCULATION FEATURES



Legend

- Village Boundary (Approximate)
- Station Study Area
- Arterial Roadway
- Collector Roadway
- Existing Sidewalks
- Special Streetscape and On-Street Parking
- Proposed Bike Routes (1999 Transportation Plan)
- Existing Gateway Sign
- Plaza/ Seating Area
- Signalized Intersection
- At-Grade Railroad Crossing
- Parking Lots (# of Commuter Spaces Indicated)
- Metra Boarding Platforms (Approximate Location)



lanes depending upon available right-of-way and existing conditions. This document will address in more detail the potential for bicycle access and parking areas as redevelopment occurs in the Downtown, potentially adjusting the proposed routing.

F. PUBLIC TRANSIT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Metra Commuter Rail Service

There are two Metra stations in the Village of Mokena (Front Street and Hickory Creek), both along the Metra Rock Island District Line. Both of these stations are located in Metra Fare Zone F, and travel time from the Mokena-Front Street Station to La Salle Street Station in Downtown Chicago is approximately 55 minutes. On weekdays both stations are served by 23 inbound trains between 5:15 a.m. and 10:40 p.m., and 23 outbound trains between 7:00 a.m. and 1:40 a.m. Typically, there is a train every hour in both directions. In addition, during the peak periods, the stations are served by peak direction trains approximately every 10 to 30 minutes. On weekends and holidays, trains run approximately every two hours in both directions.

The Mokena-Front Street Station is located at the intersection of Front Street and Mokena Street. The station building is contemporary in style and well-maintained with a waiting room, a Metra signal maintainer facility and loading



dock on the west side of the building. The extent of the inbound and outbound platforms is indicated in *Figure 4: Existing Access and Circulation Features*. There is an at-grade pedestrian crossing of the tracks that leads to the station building, access to which is guided by fencing along the north platform.

Mokena - Front Street Station and Boarding Platforms

Metra Ridership

According to the weekday boarding and alighting count conducted by Metra in 2006, on an average weekday, a total of 634 riders get on the train at Front Street

and roughly the same alight at Front Street across the evening peak period. Passenger boardings are significantly less on Saturdays and Sundays. Counts conducted by Metra in 1999 show 39 boardings on Saturday and 37 boardings on Sundays.

Mode of Access and Origins

According to a 2002 Origin-Destination survey conducted by Metra, 67 percent of riders depend on driving alone to get to Mokena - Front Street Station, with walking (11 percent) and getting 'dropped off' (18 percent) as the next most popular modes. With respect to the origins of the passengers alighting at the Mokena - Front Street Station 61.7 percent of the riders come from Mokena with less than 10 percent coming from New Lenox, Frankfort (7 percent), Orland Park (6 percent), Homer Glen (2 percent), Manhattan (2 percent) and other communities (12 percent).

Commuter Parking

Commuter parking is available at the Mokena-Front Street Station. There are three lots to the north of the tracks and one lot to the south. Of these four parking areas, there are two lots that are track adjacent, one to the south and one to the north of the station. Disabled and employee parking (seven and two spaces respectively) is available only in the lot to the south of the tracks. All are daily fee lots with collection boards, costing \$1 per day for both resident and non-resident users. There are 132 parking spaces directly adjacent to the tracks on the north side and 52 spaces (including the nine restricted spaces) directly adjacent to the tracks to the south.

There are 57 spaces in the lot adjacent to the Village Hall three blocks northeast of the station on Carpenter Street and finally, there are 101 spaces in a lot on Willowcrest Lane (owned by the School District), three blocks from the station to the northwest. Taken together, these lots provide



a total of 342 spaces near to the Mokena - Front Street Station. This count does not include the 15 spaces in the lot reserved for Downtown business parking or the seven Kiss and Ride spaces. Privately owned spaces rented to commuters are not included in these totals.

A May 2007 parking survey completed by Metra showed the lot to the south of the tracks to be 89 percent in use (40 out of 45 unrestricted spaces occupied) and the lots to the north of the tracks also well-utilized. The track adjacent lot was found to be 96 percent in use (127 of 132 spaces filled) and the satellite lots to the east (35 percent, 20 out of 57) and west (52 percent, 53 out of 101) less heavily parked.

Metra has recently updated its projections for future commuter parking needs at both Mokena stations. The estimate of the need for new parking at the two stations located in Metra's Rock Island District's Fare Zone F (Mokena Front Street and Hickory Creek) is based on CMAP household forecasts to 2030. It is estimated that a minimum of 1,000 new commuter parking spaces will need to be added by 2030 at stations within the fare zone (Mokena and Hickory Creek) to support the anticipated development and household growth in the area. This projection presumes that all existing commuter spaces remain in their current locations.

Pace Suburban Bus Service

Currently there are no Pace routes operating in Mokena. Route 354 is the nearest route, serving nearby Tinley Park. The area is under study in Pace's "South Cook-Will County Initiative." Under the proposed plans (due to be implemented in November 2008) there will be a small extension of the Tinley Park Pace bus line and continued Pace service to the north. However at this time, there is no service planned for Mokena.

G. MARKET CONDITIONS

The following presents the "Introduction and Conclusions" of the *Downtown Market Assessment, Village of Mokena*, prepared by Goodman Williams Group in October 2007. The complete market assessment report is available under a separate cover.

Located south of Interstate 80 approximately 25 miles southwest of Downtown Chicago, Mokena is in the path of suburban growth. The 2007 population of 18,669 is expected to increase to more than 27,000 by 2030. Recent residential development in Mokena has primarily occurred in large single-family subdivisions along the Village's periphery. Mokena's retail inventory includes

the automobile-oriented commercial stretches along Wolf Road and LaGrange Road (U.S. Route 45) and, to a lesser but increasing extent, along 191st Street.

All of Mokena, and Downtown in particular, will benefit from the development of the Yunker Farm property into a park that will offer a variety of recreational and cultural amenities. The northern 63-acres will be adjacent to the Downtown, providing a unique venue for public events. Future development in Downtown Mokena should be designed to take advantage of the proximity to new park, the Metra station, and the access and visibility provided by Wolf Road.

Transit-Oriented Commercial Opportunities

Downtown Mokena is not likely to be a major hub of regional commercial activity in the future. Instead, future new commercial development in Downtown Mokena should be small in scale and oriented to area residents and commuters. The current inventory is dominated by service businesses with a limited retail presence. The following categories present opportunities for additional retail development in the Downtown:

- Full-service restaurants, some of which could offer live entertainment;
- Limited-service restaurants;
- Small-scale food and beverage stores; and
- Miscellaneous retailers, including stores selling cards/stationery, party-goods, kitchenware, and other home-related items.

As the Downtown population grows, some additional service businesses can also be accommodated, including dry cleaners, salons, medical offices and financial service firms. The availability and configuration of on- and off-street parking, available sites and the ultimate location of the train station may impact the size of future commercial developments and the total amount of square footage.

Depending on how these physical issues are addressed, it is estimated that Downtown Mokena can support up to 35,000 square feet of additional commercial space over the next 10 years. Future commercial development in Downtown Mokena should be located on, or oriented toward, Wolf Road, where traffic counts are highest and visibility is best. Locating additional retail around the corner onto Front Street east of Division Street or onto McGovney

Street presents more of a challenge, unless visibility and easy access from Wolf Road can be provided.

Transit-Oriented Residential Opportunities

Downtown Mokena is an appropriate location for new multi-family development. In downtowns throughout metropolitan Chicago, new multi-family projects built near commuter train stations have met with strong market acceptance. In particular, Downtown Mokena enjoys the following residential amenities:

- Proximity to the Mokena – Front Street commuter station.
- A drug store, a grocery store, and other commercial amenities.
- Nearby open space and recreational amenities. Once completed, Yunker Park will offer perhaps the most significant amenity for future residential development. Proximity to, and views of, this new park will enhance the desirability and value of future residential developments.

An analysis of the age and income of households in the primary market area suggests there is adequate support for 100 to 150 new residential units in Downtown Mokena over the next 10 years. Two product types would be particularly well-suited for this market:



New Condominiums on Wolf Road, just south of the rail line

- Condominium buildings, perhaps with ground floor commercial space, are appropriate along Wolf Road and Front Street.
- Larger buildings, comparable in size to the four-story, 24-unit Mokena Mills, are best suited for sites along Wolf Road, while smaller buildings are more appropriate along Front Street.
- Urban-style townhomes (also known as rowhomes) are another appropriate housing type for Downtown Mokena. If the industrial uses along Walnut Lane are relocated and the area is redeveloped for

residential uses, urban-style townhomes could take advantage of proximity to Yunker Park.

With 100 to 150 units, future residential developments in Downtown Mokena would have enough a critical mass to create the feel of an urban neighborhood. New residents would help support additional retail and restaurants, contributing to a new sense of energy and activity in Downtown Mokena.

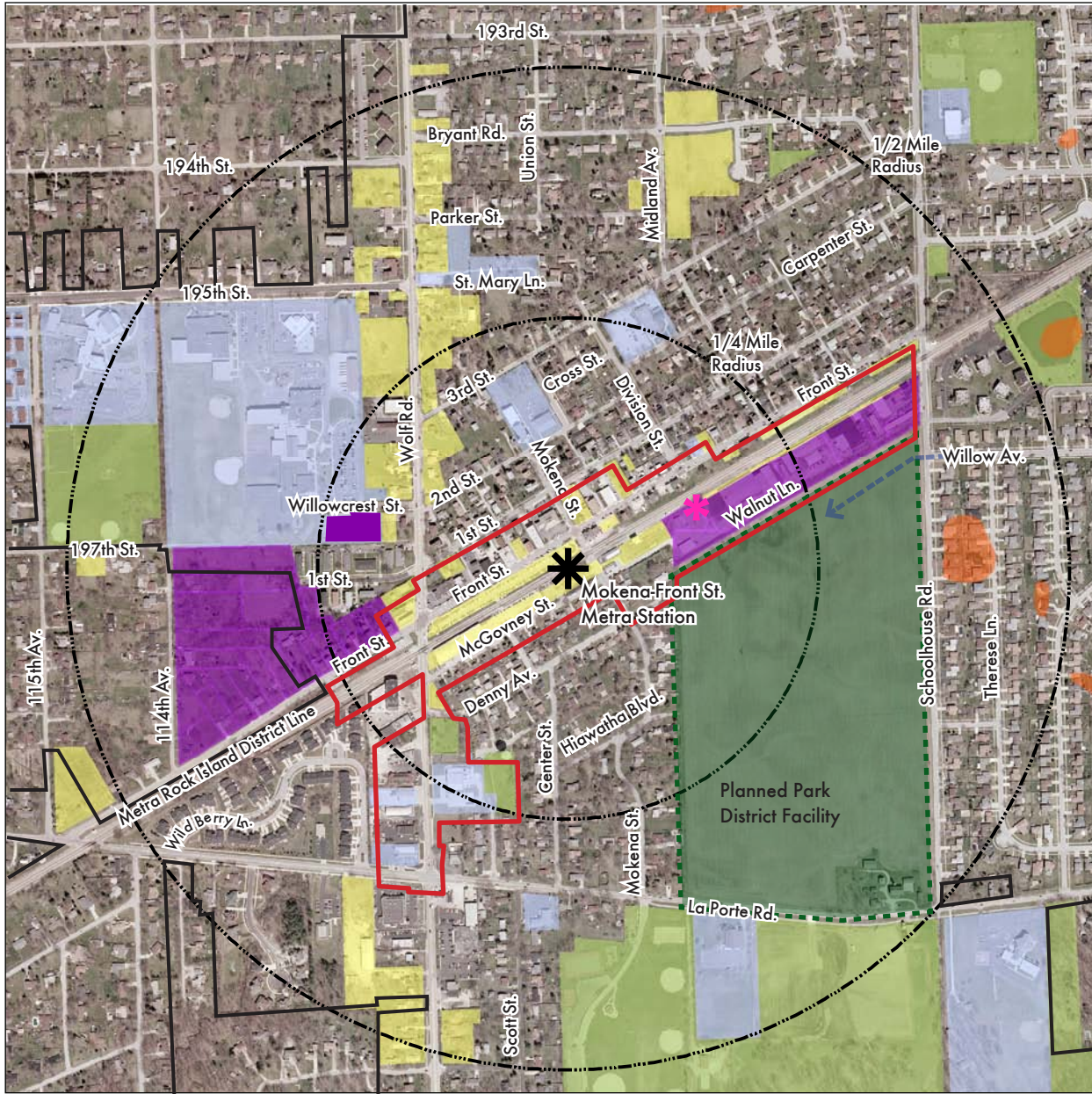
III. Planning Issues and Opportunities

The following summarizes key planning issues and opportunities in the study area that were explored to create the preferred planning concept. These were based upon the physical context, existing planning policies, market factors and community preferences, as expressed during stakeholder interviews and community meetings. Several of these issues and opportunities are noted on *Figure 5: Preliminary Planning Framework*, on the following page.

A. LAND USE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Three areas near the station can be considered key TOD redevelopment opportunity sites, due to their size, and location in close proximity to the Mokena - Front Street Station, and their current condition:
 - The Walnut Lane industrial area contains several aging, utilitarian industrial structures and minimal site improvements. The private access road serving the area is intermittently paved and most parking areas are unimproved.
 - There is a large, contiguous area containing several single family residential homes on large lots located just west of Wolf Road on Front Street, facing the Metra tracks. Due to its proximity to the Metra station, this area could support more development density.

FIGURE 5: PRELIMINARY PLANNING FRAMEWORK



Legend

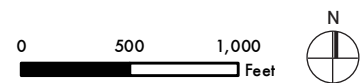
Village Boundary (Approximate)

Station Study Area

Potential Alternate Station Location (Approximate)

Key TOD Redevelopment Opportunity Areas

Future Extension of Willow Avenue (Alignment to be Determined)



Areas Susceptible to Market Pressure

Proposed TIF Boundary (Study Currently Underway)

Wetlands (Per National Wetlands Inventory Center Data)

Open Space

Public/ Institutional Uses

- The Mokena School District-owned “remote” commuter parking lot located on Willowcrest Lane west of Wolf Road is not fully utilized currently. If additional commuter parking capacity is achieved closer to the rail station during redevelopment efforts, it is possible that this area could become available for a more intensive use.
- Several additional parcels within the study area can be considered susceptible to market pressure, in that they are close to the station and/or are currently developed with low-intensity uses (such as parking lots or single-family detached dwellings) in areas that are highly visible and/or very accessible. However, for the most part they are smaller in scale, oddly-shaped or proportioned, or otherwise challenging to redevelop. However, if initial redevelopment efforts are successful, it is reasonable to expect that redevelopment may be proposed on these sites. For this reason, they should be carefully considered during the planning process.
- Open space, public and institutional uses are activity generators that will help spur interest in new commercial development, and can serve as buffers between adjacent residential neighborhoods and more intensive uses in the core of the Downtown. Yunker Park, as it develops, will be a key force for creating pedestrian foot traffic in the Downtown area. It will also create a very desirable environment for future residential development that can benefit from not only proximity to the Downtown, but also from views and access to the park.
- A pedestrian-oriented downtown environment that serves as a special destination for those other than commuters and nearby residents can be successfully accommodated by providing a desirable mix of business types: restaurants, convenience and specialty retailers, service businesses, and medical and professional offices. Some of the key factors for the success of these industries will be visibility from Wolf Road, access to convenient parking and coordinated business hours and marketing to encourage multi-destination trips to the Downtown.
- Mixed use development should be explored for key sites in the core of the Downtown where ground floor businesses can benefit from both a strong pedestrian environment and convenient nearby parking areas. As

a development model, mixed use land uses will be most appropriate in the core of the Downtown where it can benefit from shared parking for retailers.

- The Walnut Lane industrial area, due to its proximity to the future Yunker Park and its location within easy walking distance of the Mokena-Front Street Station, offers a prime opportunity to bring new households into the Downtown area, which will in turn provide support to area businesses. New housing options near the rail line west of Wolf Road would also boost the marketability of the Downtown as a retail and restaurant location. Taken together, new housing in the downtown area can serve to diversify the available housing types in Mokena.
- Several historic structures remain in the Downtown. Infill redevelopment along Front Street can close the “gaps” in the existing street wall while protecting and enhancing structures that are important to Mokena’s history. Several of these existing commercial structures, regardless of their historic significance, do not exhibit attractive and appealing storefront facades, however, and are in need of a facelift.



• *Y*
Maintain the Streetwall along Front Street (as in the image of Oak Park Avenue in Downtown Tinley Park)

- Yunker Park will be a unique feature of the Downtown area, and upon its completion, provides a significant opportunity to support local

businesses if a strong connection between the park and the Downtown core can be created. In addition to the traffic generated by activities at Yunker Park, the Downtown needs to be a location for other community-wide events and programs (such as the French Market on Saturday mornings). Downtown redevelopment efforts should accommodate appropriate venues for such events, to complement a diverse mix of retail and restaurant offerings. While Village Hall and the Post Office are located a few blocks away from the Downtown core, they both provide a steady flow of visitors that can be encouraged to conduct other business in the Downtown, also.

B. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- The potential relocation of the Mokena-Front Street Station east to approximately Division Street should be explored to determine if such a major infrastructure project would result in a clear benefit to the community and support Downtown revitalization efforts. In any event, pedestrian enhancements at and surrounding the station and platforms should be considered, with potential improvements to platform and commuter parking access increasing the synergy between the station and surrounding businesses.

- Alternative methods to create and enhance a “walkable” environment within the Downtown will assist in creating a thriving and community-oriented gathering place. Enhancing bicycle access from surrounding areas can bring in more visitors will be explored, including both public realm improvements and consideration of the placement of buildings and parking areas to avoid disrupting the flow of pedestrian movement. In addition, enhancing access to the Downtown



Construct a generous sidewalk network (as in Downtown LaGrange)

from surrounding areas should be considered, including providing convenient bicycle routes and appropriate locations for bicycle parking.

- Wolf Road provides the primary access route into and through the Downtown, and visibility and access from Wolf Road will be important for the success of Downtown retailers. As Wolf Road is currently operating almost at capacity, and the service level will decrease over time, drivers may begin to rely more heavily on Schoolhouse Road as an access route into Downtown, in particular once Yunker Park is in use. Creating a secondary entry route from Schoolhouse Road south of the Metra Rock Island District Line (Willow Avenue extended) could provide improved access and visibility for potential commercial sites and commuter parking locations to the south, expanding Downtown Mokena beyond its historical roots as a single commercial street north of the tracks.
- As redevelopment is undertaken, maintaining both an appropriate quantity and distribution of parking spaces will be important. Opportunities to achieve efficiencies in parking through shared parking arrangements can benefit many users of the Downtown – including the potential to share parking between commuters, business patrons and park users so that available spaces are as fully utilized and the amount of land devoted to parking can be minimized.

C. URBAN DESIGN ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Creating a consistent visual character for Downtown Mokena that reflects its traditional roots as a rural community will help to clearly define its extents, create a stronger connection between the Metra Station and its surroundings, and strengthen the overall investment environment for businesses. Gateway and wayfinding features will also be important, as visitors will need to be encouraged to turn off of Wolf Road, 191st Street, Schoolhouse Road and LaPorte Road to explore what Downtown Mokena has to offer. Private investment in facade enhancements, whether to buildings of historic character or not, can contribute to an appropriate streetscape theme through the clarification of existing design guidelines.

- Downtown should be a place for the community to come together, providing ample venues for community gatherings of various sizes and formats that are complementary to nearby park facilities. Building upon the small plazas created during the recent



Create Community Gathering Spaces

streetscape project, other opportunities to accommodate plazas, sculptural or water features and green space should be explored. The location(s) of gathering spaces can also help to ensure good visibility for commercial businesses from key vantage points such as Wolf Road and the Metra boarding platforms.

IV. Vision and Development Principles

The Downtown Vision and Development Principles represent a concise yet thorough statement of the Village of Mokena's aspirations for future enhancement and redevelopment of the Downtown area. The Vision describes the desired future of the Downtown twenty years hence, drawing from community and Steering Committee input and building upon established Downtown assets. The Development Principles include concepts and ideas that have guided the development of two Alternative Concepts by delineating key policies with regard to land use, access and circulation, and urban design. The Alternative Concepts have been assessed with regard to how well they achieve the aspirations represented by the Development Principles, as discussed later in this report.

A. A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN MOKENA

Residents both old and new are frequent visitors to Downtown Mokena, a vibrant and attractive activity center for the Village. Anchored by Metra's Mokena - Front Street Station, the Downtown provides a varied mix of retail and restaurant destinations, in addition to professional and commercial services, in a cohesive and pedestrian friendly environment. Surrounded by high quality residential neighborhoods and strong institutions, Downtown Mokena offers a variety of

living styles for residents convenient to transit and shopping, including condominiums above storefronts in the Downtown core.

Families stroll between the Downtown and Yunker Park during community events, after walking or biking Downtown from nearby neighborhoods or parking in a convenient parking space. Commuters and Downtown visitors park and walk to their destinations, supporting local businesses and generating an active street environment. Shared parking spaces are well utilized throughout the day and evening and all year, accommodating commuters, shoppers, diners and visitors to special events.

The Downtown is a well defined and unique environment in Mokena, maintaining the community's historic character while integrating newer commercial and residential opportunities. Infill development in the Downtown core blends with attractive older facades, while new residential and commercial developments at the periphery provide an effective transition to adjacent neighborhoods. Gateway features, streetscape and signage treatments combine to create a consistent visual identity for the Downtown, while public open spaces within the Downtown provide for pedestrian comfort and encourage community interaction.

B. DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Land Use Principles

1. Mixed use development should be accommodated in the core of the Downtown, in locations where increased building height can be effectively buffered from adjacent neighborhoods.
2. Retail and restaurant activity should be concentrated in a contiguous area with adequate access and visibility from Wolf Road and the Mokena - Front Street Station, near convenient parking, and in a manner that encourages pedestrian movement between businesses.
3. Existing structures of historic value and/or high quality should be preserved and enhanced, blending effectively with new infill development.
4. New residential development should include both upper-floor residential units in the Downtown core and additional housing

opportunities surrounding the Downtown core, both of which will benefit from nearby transit and provide support to local businesses.

5. The Downtown should have a higher density of residential units within walking distance of the station than the surrounding areas.
6. The Downtown should have clearly defined extents, beyond which single family neighborhoods are enhanced and buffered from Downtown-related activity.
7. Downtown redevelopment should establish a strong connection with Yunker Park, encouraging movement between the two areas and providing open spaces that complement park venues and activities.

Access and Circulation Principles

1. The placement of commercial storefronts and shopper parking areas should encourage a “park-and-walk” pattern of use, facilitating multiple destination visits to the Downtown.
2. Comprehensive and clearly marked pedestrian and bicycle routes into and through the Downtown should be provided, linking shopping areas with the Metra station, Yunker Park and nearby institutions.
3. To the extent feasible, pedestrian crossings of Wolf Road and the Metra tracks should be enhanced with nearby streetscape elements, to minimize the physical separation of the four “quadrants” of the Downtown area. Improvements will need to be undertaken outside of Metra’s right-of-way, and in coordination with Metra to ensure that necessary sight lines and access are maintained.
4. Access to and wayfinding for the Downtown from Wolf Road, Schoolhouse Road and LaPorte Road should be accommodated, including a strong connection between the Downtown and Yunker Park.
5. Vehicle access into the Downtown should be maintained while avoiding speeding and cut-through traffic in nearby residential areas.
6. Impacts on traffic movement along Wolf Road should be carefully assessed prior to redevelopment, with site planning strategies along Wolf Road seeking to alleviate traffic conflicts rather than exacerbate them.
7. Commuter parking should be located in areas convenient to the station, where off-peak use of the lots can be maximized, and where commuter walking patterns will encourage patronage of local businesses.
8. Access to the Downtown, and to Metra station drop-off and pick-up areas in particular, should provide for efficient potential future routing of Pace buses and/or locally operated shuttle buses.

9. Shared parking facilities should be readily accessible and convenient, yet screened from view with structures, landscaping and/or ornamental fencing.
10. During all phases of the Downtown redevelopment process, commuter parking capacity should remain at current levels, at a minimum, to avoid inconveniencing current commuters. To the extent feasible, additional commuter parking capacity to address expected growth in Metra ridership demand should also be accommodated.
11. Bicycle parking should be accommodated in several locations throughout the Downtown, at Yunker Park and at nearby institutions.

Urban Design Principles

1. The Mokena - Front Street Station should serve as a visual anchor and activity hub for the Downtown, facilitating transit ridership and encouraging commuters to linger in the area or return at other times.
2. Plazas, seating areas, water features and/or public art installations should be accommodated in key locations to provide a counter-point to higher density development and enhance the pedestrian experience.
3. Gathering spaces should be sized and located to accommodate community events or programs, in locations accessible to and complementary to Yunker Park.
4. Design standards should be maintained for new mixed use, commercial and multi-family development, to ensure compatibility with existing structures and a cohesive Downtown environment.
5. Facade and signage enhancements at existing buildings should be undertaken to preserve and enhance the character of the Downtown and contribute to a consistent visual identity.
6. Surrounding neighborhoods should be buffered from Downtown impacts with generous physical setbacks and/or fencing and landscaping at the edges of the Downtown area.
7. Gateways treatments should be established at defined entry points to the Downtown, from all directions.
8. Wayfinding signage should draw visitors into the Downtown from the broader area, utilizing a consistent Downtown “brand” that can also be used in advertising and marketing efforts.

V. Downtown Redevelopment Concepts

Based on the Vision and Development Principles, presented above, two alternative concepts were originally developed for Downtown Mokena. Per direction from the Village, “Concept A” assumed that the Mokena - Front Street Station remained in its existing location. “Concept B” considered the potential relocation of the Mokena-Front Street Station to a site further east, aligned with Division Street (as originally depicted in the *Downtown Concept Plan* prepared by Teska Associates in January 2002).

A series of evaluation factors were developed to aid in reviewing and discussing the two alternative concepts to arrive at a preferred concept. The evaluation factors were based on the Development Principles discussed previously in this report. Through this process and subsequent discussion, the original Concepts were refined to create the “Preferred Concept” (based on Concept B) and the “Alternate Concept” (based on Concept A). These concepts further clarified parking needs, phasing implications and development control impacts.

Both the Preferred and Alternate Concepts described here include a set of three graphics that build upon one another:

- A **Redevelopment Framework**, which depicts a general pattern of future land uses for the Downtown and its surroundings, key circulation and

- access patterns (roadway and bicycle/pedestrian connections), Downtown gateways and focal points, and open space opportunities;
- A **Station Facility Diagram**, which depicts the general layout of a new station facility and platforms (Preferred Concept) and enhancements to the existing station facility and platforms (Alternate Concept); and
 - A **Concept Plan**, which delineates phased redevelopment opportunities in greater detail, the relationship of new buildings to proposed streetscape and open space improvements, and potential locations for additional commuter and shopper parking.

Germane to both concepts are the following elements:

- Both concepts were developed to reflect a “Phase I” market potential identified by Goodman Williams Group, which consists of approximately 30,000 to 35,000 square feet of net new commercial space and approximately 100 to 150 new residential units within the Downtown in the next approximately ten years. This redevelopment potential is proposed within a “core area” the extent of which varies based upon the placement of the Metra station. Core area redevelopment that is anticipated to occur in both a first phase (next five to ten years) and a second phase (beyond ten years) is depicted in some detail, to indicate key physical relationships between first phase and second phase projects and existing areas to remain.
- Both concepts assume that Yunker Park will develop as a major community amenity adjacent to the Downtown, and are structured to respond to this opportunity. It is important to note that both concepts seek to preserve and enhance several historic Downtown structures, both mid-block between Wolf Road and Mokena Street on Front Street and directly south of the tracks in the area east of Mokena Street.
- Both concepts anticipate that mixed use and commercial redevelopment up to four stories in height will be accommodated on parcels directly fronting Wolf Road between McGovney and 3rd Street (on the west side only north of 1st Street). Development up to three stories in height will be considered along Front Street extending east to Mokena Street. East of Mokena Street, redevelopment along Front Street will be limited to two stories in height and a half-block depth, so as not to encroach on the

existing residential development pattern on 1st Street. Throughout the Downtown, buildings with historic value will be retained and reused to the extent feasible, with new developments designed to be compatible with existing structures.

- Both concepts depict ample commercial parking capacity; 5.9 spaces per 1,000 in the Preferred Concept, and 7.9 spaces per 1,000 in the Alternate Concept. Presuming that commuter spaces will be available for evening and weekend parking, the supply of parking will be even greater during peak restaurant use times. As redevelopment occurs parking capacity will need to be carefully analyzed, but the concepts suggest that there can be an ample supply of parking created in surface lots throughout the Downtown; in all likelihood fewer spaces than those depicted will be deemed necessary. Ensuring that parking reserved for commercial uses is conveniently located, and that commuter parking is also convenient for Metra users, will be a critical consideration as redevelopment progresses.

A. PREFERRED CONCEPT

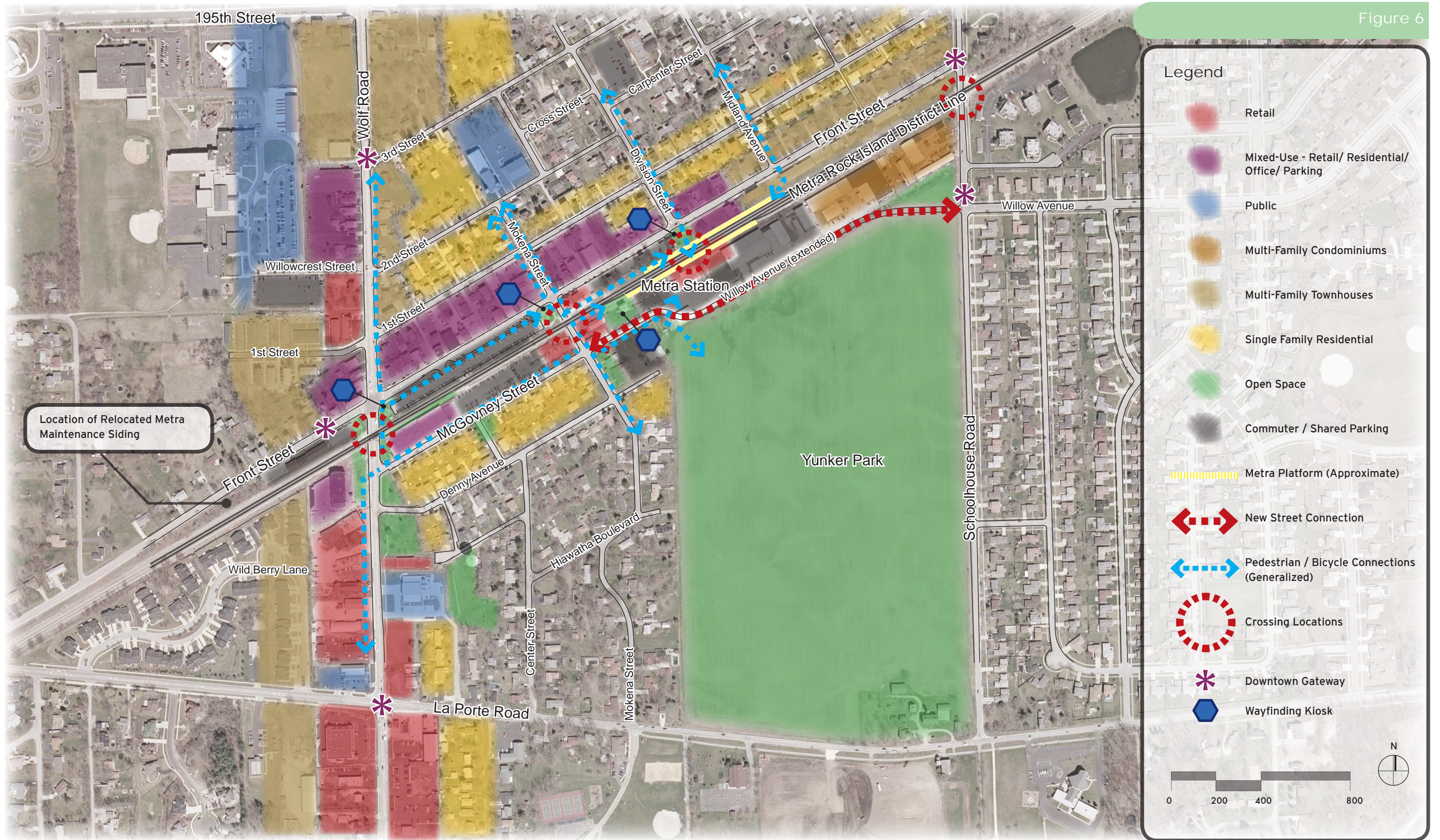
Redevelopment Framework

The Preferred Concept depicts an extended core area of retail activity, stretching from the Wolf Road/Front Street intersection to a new Metra station at Division Street, with transitional residential uses at the Downtown perimeter. *Figure 6: Redevelopment Framework – Preferred Concept* generally depicts the following:

- Mixed use development at the intersection of Wolf Road and Front Street, and at the intersection of Front Street and Division Street (development of mixed uses east of Mokena Street would occur beyond the first phase of redevelopment);
- Approximately half of the Walnut Lane area would be utilized for a new mixed use facility (including the station) and commuter parking, with the remainder redeveloped for residential uses;
- Commercial uses along the railroad tracks at Mokena Street and south along Wolf Road to just south of LaPorte Road (reflecting the existing pattern and an understanding that commercial uses further east will be both less visible and more likely to impact adjacent residential

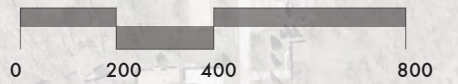
neighborhoods) and along McGovney Street and Willow Avenue extended;

- Condominium and townhouse development extending north along Wolf Road, west of Wolf Road along Front Street, east along Front Street and east along the a new extension of Willow Avenue (adjacent to the new Metra station). This additional residential redevelopment will increase the population directly adjacent to the Downtown, providing support for Downtown businesses and enhancing Metra ridership, with minimal traffic impacts;
- Maintaining the single family character along the south side of McGovney Street, with limited office or commercial conversions of existing residential structures;
- New open spaces east of Mokena Street along a new extension of Willow Avenue, to link the Downtown to Yunker Park;
- A new street connection along Willow Avenue;
- A potential location of relocated Metra maintenance siding (necessitated by the station relocation);



Location of Relocated Metra Maintenance Siding

- Legend**
- Retail
 - Mixed-Use - Retail/ Residential/ Office/ Parking
 - Public
 - Multi-Family Condominiums
 - Multi-Family Townhouses
 - Single Family Residential
 - Open Space
 - Commuter / Shared Parking
 - Metra Platform (Approximate)
 - ↔ New Street Connection
 - ↔ Pedestrian / Bicycle Connections (Generalized)
 - Crossing Locations
 - ✱ Downtown Gateway
 - ⬡ Wayfinding Kiosk



- Enhancements to the pedestrian network throughout the Downtown, including improved access from commuter parking areas to new boarding platforms; and
- Key gateway locations, which will define the limits of an area with a distinctive streetscape identity and banner signage to promote a Downtown “brand.”

The Preferred Concept anticipates that the Wolf-Therafin site will be redeveloped, along with improvements to the parking area to the east to provide both commercial and commuter parking capacity. In this concept, a mixed use development is anticipated, along with a potential restaurant development where the station is currently located.

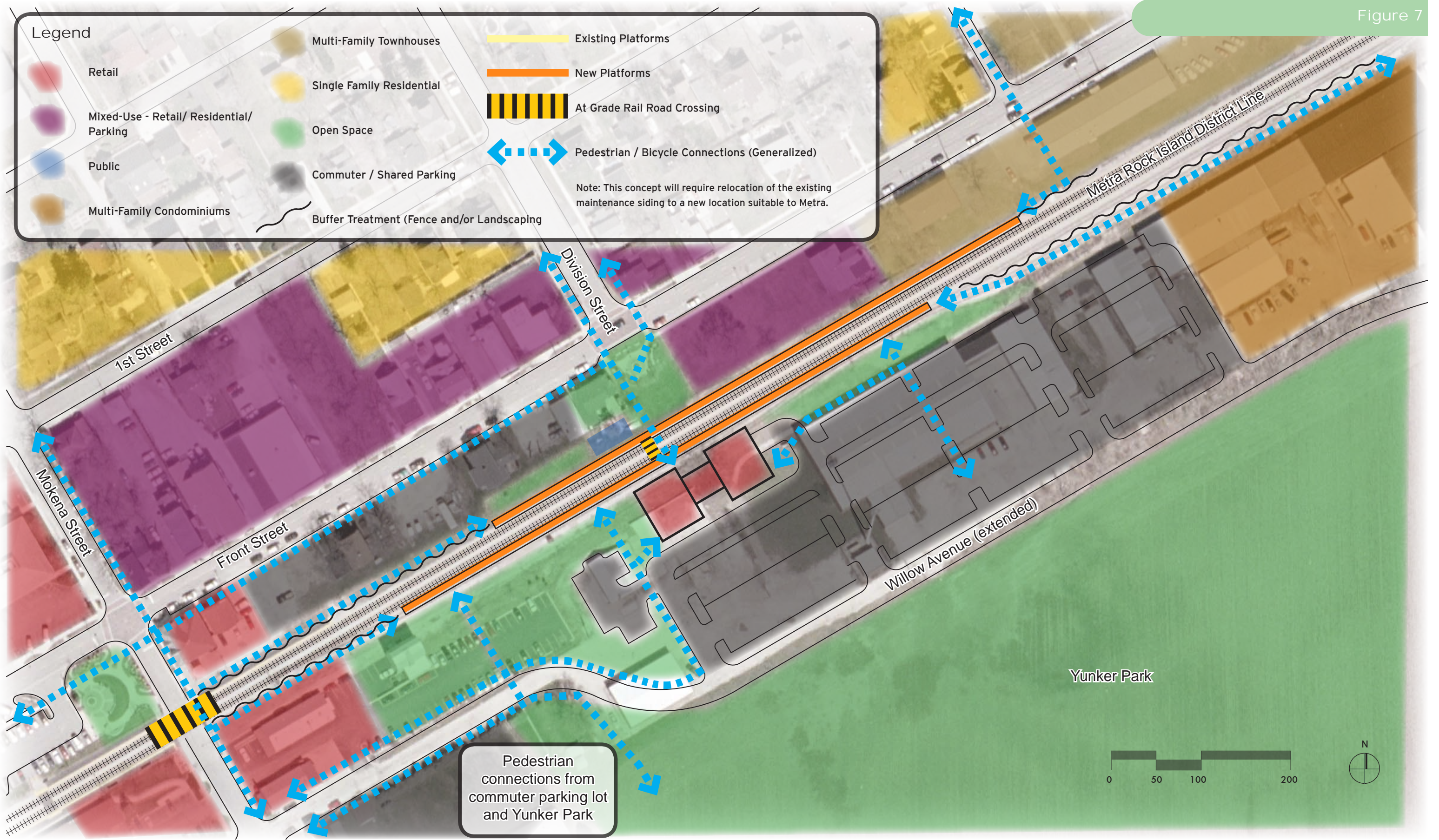
Station Facility Diagram

A relocated Metra Station is depicted, along with several potential enhancements, in *Figure 7: Station Facility Diagram – Preferred Concept*. Acknowledging that further study is needed to determine the feasibility of relocating the station and that it may be cost prohibitive, the development pattern reflected north of the tracks is one that would be not directly impacted by the eventual location of the station. It is anticipated that Downtown redevelopment efforts will be underway in advance of making a final determination as to the feasibility of moving the station and platforms.

Overlaid over the redevelopment framework for ease of reference, Figure 7 depicts the following:

- A new Metra Station as part of a two-story commercial building on the south side of the Metra Rock Island District Line, roughly aligned with Division Street (accommodating a signal maintainer facility to replace the existing facility);
- New commuter parking lots and vehicular drop-off areas both north and south of the new station;
- A new warming shelter on the north side, adjacent to the new commuter lot and drop-off area, both for passenger comfort and to provide a stronger physical presence for the station;

Figure 7



Legend

- Retail
- Mixed-Use - Retail/ Residential/ Parking
- Public
- Multi-Family Condominiums
- Multi-Family Townhouses
- Single Family Residential
- Open Space
- Commuter / Shared Parking
- Buffer Treatment (Fence and/or Landscaping)
- Existing Platforms
- New Platforms
- At Grade Rail Road Crossing
- Pedestrian / Bicycle Connections (Generalized)

Note: This concept will require relocation of the existing maintenance siding to a new location suitable to Metra.

Pedestrian connections from commuter parking lot and Yunker Park

- New 680' outbound (north) platform and inbound (south) platforms, with a new pedestrian crossing adjacent to the station (replacing the existing pedestrian crossing west of Mokena Street);
- Buffer treatments (fencing and/or landscaping) to discourage illegal railroad crossing movements near the new station, directing commuters along defined paths to the ends of boarding platforms (these paths and buffer treatments will be placed outside of the railroad right-of-way at a minimum of nine feet from the centerline of the tracks); and
- The existing at-grade railroad crossing at Mokena Street would remain.

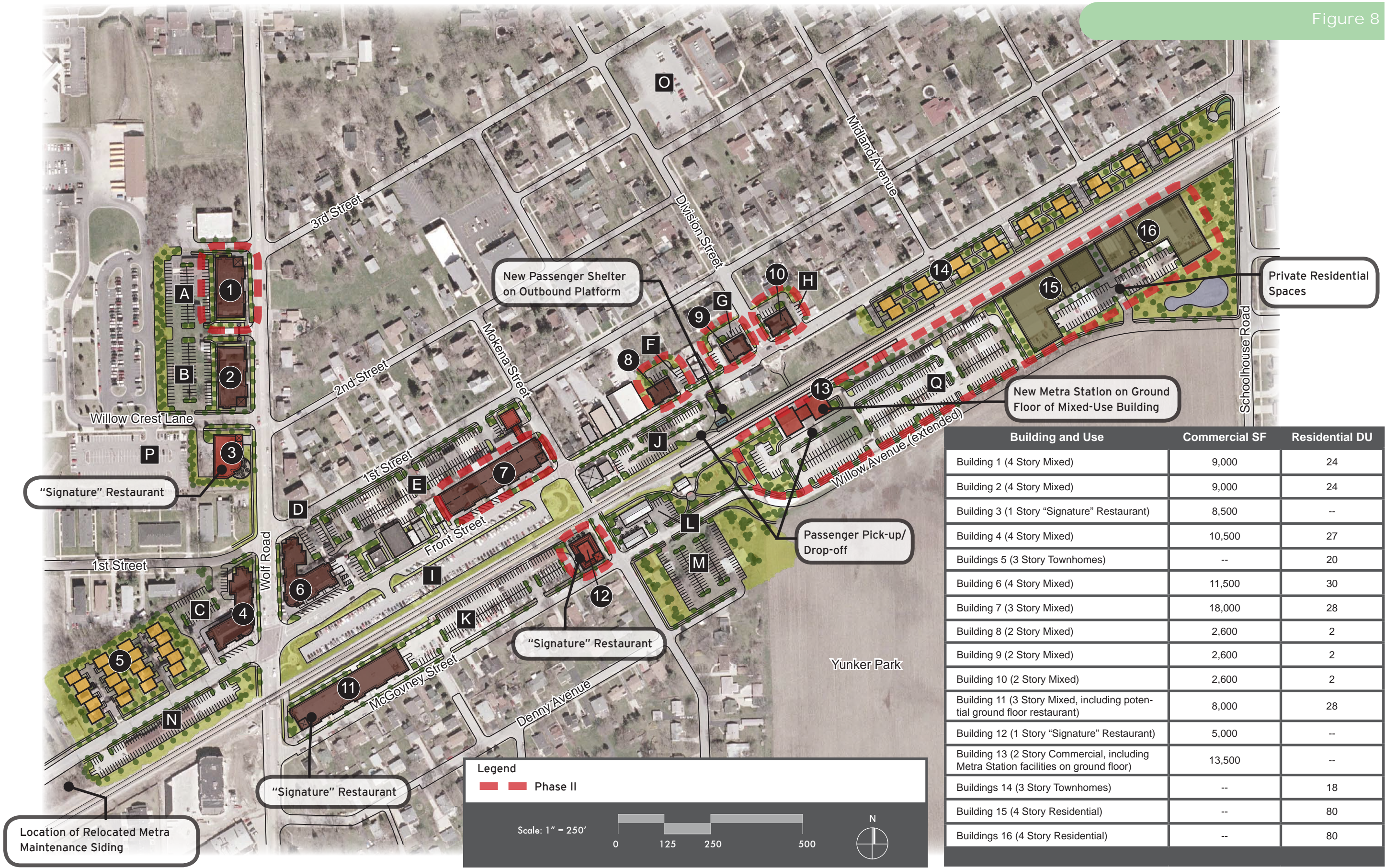
Note that for this new Metra Station to be pursued, the existing maintenance siding east of Mokena Street will need to be relocated. A suitable relocation site has been identified west of Wolf Road, east of Hamilton/LaPorte Roads, north of the railroad tracks, and south of Front Street. This site is possible if Metra can utilize a portion of the Village's Front Street right-of-way. The new maintenance siding must be operational before any station-related construction can begin. The cost related to relocating this maintenance siding must be assumed by private developers and/or government agencies other than Metra.

Concept Plan

Figure 8: Preferred Concept Plan depicts in more detail a redevelopment concept for a "Phase I" and "Phase II" redevelopment, aligned with the market potential identified by Goodman Williams Group. While the "Phase II" projects are expected to be undertaken beyond the ten-year horizon of the market assessment, their placement and design elements will have a strong physical relationship with earlier redevelopment. For this reason, they are also depicted in more detail to clarify the way in which the phases will build upon one another.

In addition to mixed use, commercial and residential redevelopment, the Preferred Concept depicts new parking lots to accommodate shoppers, commuters and Downtown residents. Open space enhancements are also delineated, organized in conjunction with an enhanced network of pedestrian/bicycle paths (see Figures 6, 7) to create stronger linkages between Downtown retail, Downtown residential areas, the Metra Station and the future Yunker Park.

Figure 8



Estimates of new commercial and residential development capacity as depicted are summarized in Table 1 below. This concept indicates more commercial redevelopment potential primarily because of the commercial uses anticipated in conjunction with the new station and at the site of the existing station. A breakdown of estimated off-street parking capacity by lot is provided in Table 2 (Lot numbers referenced in the table are indicated on Figure 8), reflecting an overall ratio of 5.9 spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space, as mentioned previously. Thirty-eight of the 342 existing parking spaces would be relocated and replaced due to redevelopment. 563 new additional commuter spaces would be built. Thus, a total of 905 commuter spaces would be built in the station area.

Table 1. Development Estimates – Preferred Concept

	PHASE I	PHASE II	TOTALS
New commercial development	47,500	53,300	100,800
Existing commercial development displaced	14,000	21,000	35,000
Net New Commercial development (sq ft)	33,500	32,300	65,800
New condos	109	228	337
New town homes	38	0	38
New Downtown residential units	147	228	375

Table 2. Parking Estimates – Preferred Concept

	Unaffected Commuter Spaces*	Replacement Commuter Spaces*	New Commuter Spaces	Total Commuter Spaces	Total Commercial Spaces	LOT TOTAL
Lot A	0	0	0	0	73	73
Lot B	0	0	0	0	73	73
Lot C	0	0	0	0	32	32
Lot D	0	0	0	0	27	27
Lot E	0	0	77	77	46	123
Lot F	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot G	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot H	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot I	100	0	0	100	26	126
Lot J	0	0	41	41	10	51
Lot K	46	0	86	132	54	186

	Unaffected Commuter Spaces*	Replacement Commuter Spaces*	New Commuter Spaces	Total Commuter Spaces	Total Commercial Spaces	LOT TOTAL
Lot L	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot M	0	38	68	106	0	106
Lot N	0	0	140	140	0	140
Lot O	57	0	0	57	0	57
Lot P	101	0	0	101	0	101
Lot Q	0	0	151	151	32	183
TOTALS	304	38	563	905	413	1,318

* Existing commuter parking spaces total 342 spaces (304 unaffected + 38 replaced)

NOTES:

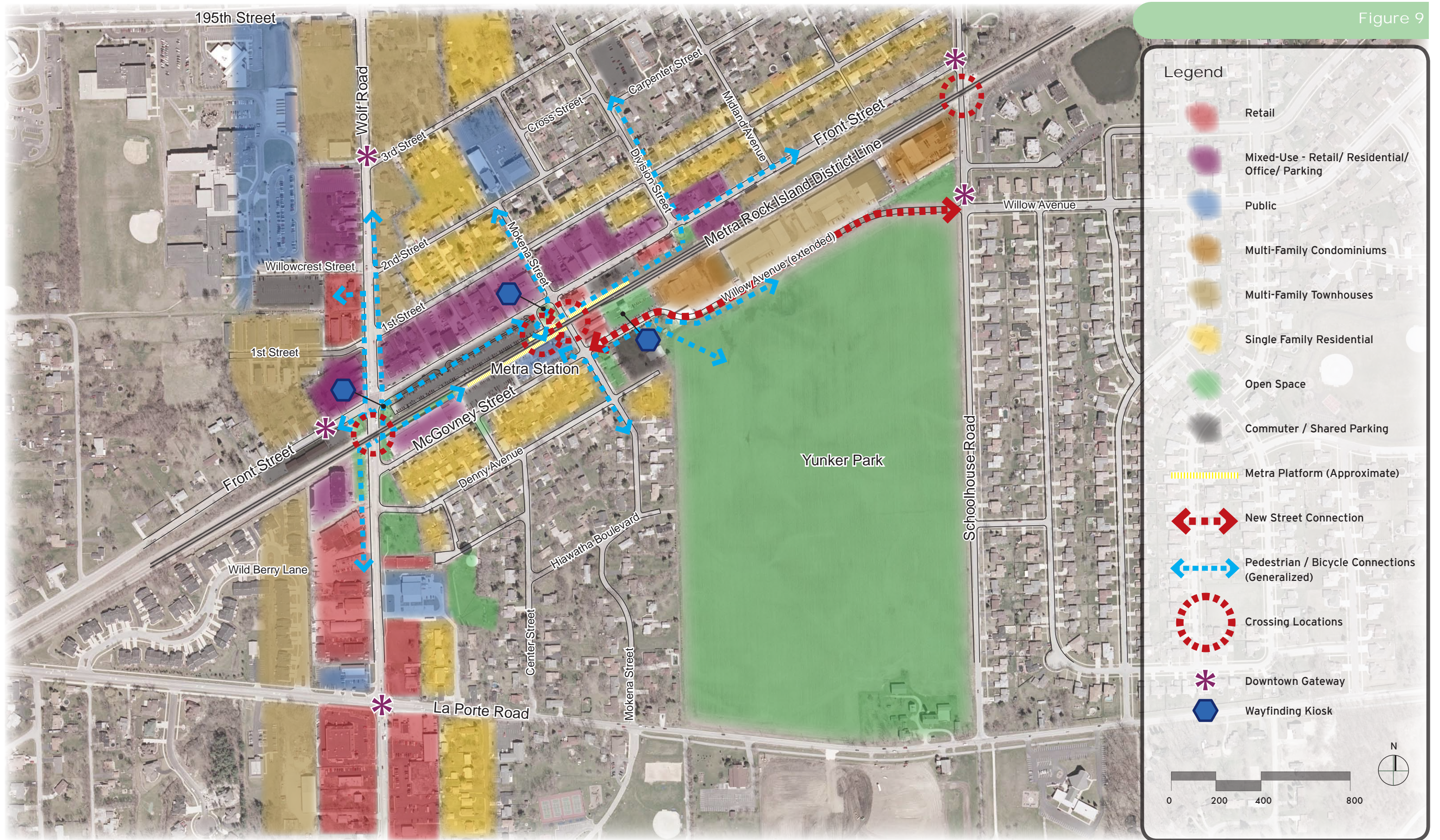
1. All figures are estimated due to the conceptual nature of the plan.
2. On-street parking spaces are not included in the analysis.
3. "Total commercial spaces" represent the total commercial parking capacity after redevelopment occurs; some spaces represent replacement of existing parking spaces as sites are reconfigured during redevelopment.
4. Residential parking spaces are presumed to be accommodated within new mixed-use or residential developments (at grade, below grade and/or above grade).
5. Some commuter parking spaces can potentially be shared with other uses during off-peak time periods (evenings and weekends), providing additional capacity for restaurant patrons and Yunker Park visitors.
6. Some privately controlled off-street spaces are currently utilized for private commuter permit parking; these spaces are not included in Metra's parking capacity or usage data, nor are they reflected in this analysis as the quantity and location of these spaces are unknown.

B. ALTERNATE CONCEPT

Redevelopment Framework

The Alternate Concept depicts a compact and contiguous core area of retail activity, centered on the Mokena – Front Street Station in its current location, with transitional residential uses at the Downtown perimeter. *Figure 9: Redevelopment Framework – Alternate Concept* generally depicts the following:

- Mixed use development along Front Street to just past Division Street, extending south along Wolf Road to McGovney Street, and extending north along Wolf Road to 3rd Street on the west side (development of



Legend

- Retail
- Mixed-Use - Retail/ Residential/ Office/ Parking
- Public
- Multi-Family Condominiums
- Multi-Family Townhouses
- Single Family Residential
- Open Space
- Commuter / Shared Parking
- Metra Platform (Approximate)
- ↔ New Street Connection
- ↔ Pedestrian / Bicycle Connections (Generalized)
- Crossing Locations
- ✱ Downtown Gateway
- ⬡ Wayfinding Kiosk

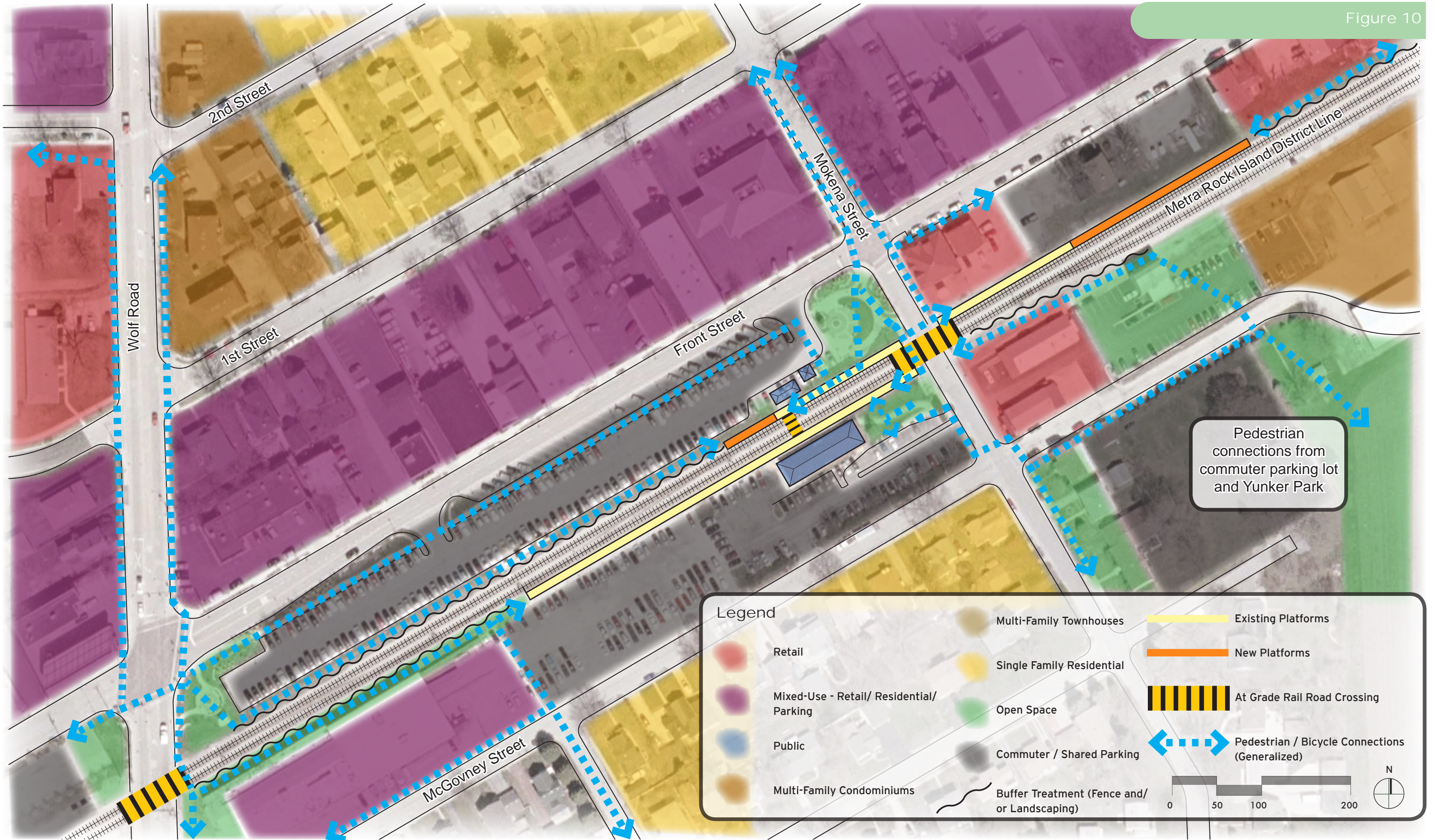
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mixed uses north along Wolf Road and east of Mokena Street would occur beyond the first phase of redevelopment);

- Commercial uses along the railroad tracks from Mokena to Division Streets, and south along Wolf Road to just south of LaPorte Road (reflecting the existing pattern and an understanding that commercial uses further east will be both less visible and more likely to impact adjacent residential neighborhoods);
- Condominium and townhouse development extending north along Wolf Road, west of Wolf Road along Front Street, behind the commercial uses on the west side of Wolf Road, east along Front Street and east along a new extension of Willow Avenue (in the Walnut Lane area). This additional residential redevelopment will increase the population directly adjacent to the Downtown, providing support for Downtown businesses and enhancing Metra ridership, with minimal traffic impacts;
- Maintaining the single family character along the south side of McGovney Street, with limited office or commercial conversions of existing residential structures;
- A new open space east of Mokena Street along a new extension of Willow Avenue, to link the Downtown to Yunker Park;
- A new street connection along Willow Avenue;
- Enhancements to the pedestrian network throughout the Downtown, including improved access from commuter parking areas to extended station platforms; and
- Key gateway locations, which will define the limits of an area with a distinctive streetscape identity and banner signage to promote a Downtown “brand.”

Like the Preferred Concept, the Alternate Concept also anticipates that the Wolf-Theraphin site will be redeveloped, along with improvements to the parking area to the east to provide both commercial and commuter parking capacity. In the Alternate Concept, a restaurant development is anticipated at this site, benefiting from a high profile location along Wolf Road.



Pedestrian connections from commuter parking lot and Yunker Park

Station Facility Diagram

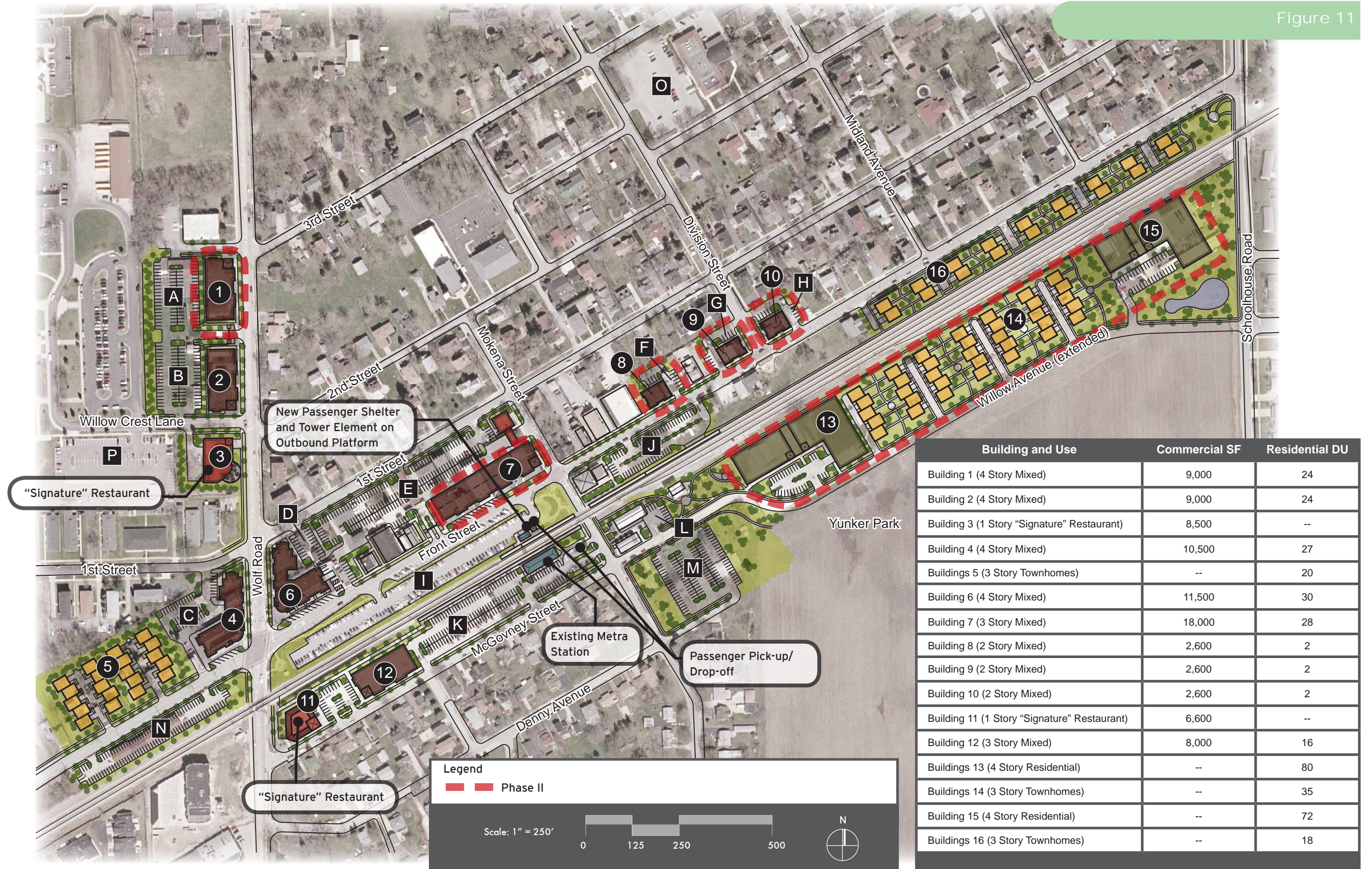
The existing Mokena - Front Street Station is depicted, along with several potential enhancements, in *Figure 10: Station Facility Diagram – Alternate Concept*. Overlaid over the land use and circulation framework for ease of reference, Figure 10 depicts the following:

- Enhancements to the vehicular drop-off areas both north and south of the existing station, with new commuter lots both north and south;
- A new warming shelter and tower element on the north side, to coincide with potential facade and signage enhancements to the existing station building and provide a stronger physical presence for the station;
- Extensions to create a 680' outbound (north) platform, maintaining the existing pedestrian crossing adjacent to the station;
- Buffer treatments (fencing and/or landscaping) to discourage illegal railroad crossing movements between Wolf Road and Mokena Street, directing commuters along defined paths to the ends of boarding platforms (these paths and buffer treatments will be placed outside of the railroad right-of-way at a minimum of nine feet from the centerline of the tracks); and
- The existing at-grade railroad crossing at Mokena Street would remain.

Concept Plan

Figure 11: Alternate Concept Plan depicts in more detail a redevelopment concept for a “Phase I” and “Phase II” redevelopment, aligned with the market potential identified by Goodman Williams Group. While the “Phase II” projects are expected to be undertaken beyond the ten-year horizon of the market assessment, their placement and design elements will have a strong physical relationship with earlier redevelopment. For this reason, they are also depicted in more detail to clarify the way in which the phases will build upon one another.

In addition to mixed use, commercial and residential redevelopment, the Alternate Concept depicts new parking lots to accommodate shoppers, commuters and Downtown residents. Open space enhancements are also delineated, organized in conjunction with an enhanced network of pedestrian/bicycle paths (see Figures 9, 10) to create stronger linkages between Downtown retail, Downtown residential areas, the Metra Station and the future Yunker Park.



Building and Use	Commercial SF	Residential DU
Building 1 (4 Story Mixed)	9,000	24
Building 2 (4 Story Mixed)	9,000	24
Building 3 (1 Story "Signature" Restaurant)	8,500	--
Building 4 (4 Story Mixed)	10,500	27
Buildings 5 (3 Story Townhomes)	--	20
Building 6 (4 Story Mixed)	11,500	30
Building 7 (3 Story Mixed)	18,000	28
Building 8 (2 Story Mixed)	2,600	2
Building 9 (2 Story Mixed)	2,600	2
Building 10 (2 Story Mixed)	2,600	2
Building 11 (1 Story "Signature" Restaurant)	6,600	--
Building 12 (3 Story Mixed)	8,000	16
Buildings 13 (4 Story Residential)	--	80
Buildings 14 (3 Story Townhomes)	--	35
Building 15 (4 Story Residential)	--	72
Buildings 16 (3 Story Townhomes)	--	18

Estimates of new commercial and residential development capacity as depicted are summarized in Table 3 below. This concept depicts slightly more residential units than the Preferred Concept, reflecting the additional redevelopment capacity at the Walnut Lane area if the station remains in its current location. A breakdown of estimated off-street parking capacity by lot is provided in Table 4 (Lot numbers referenced in the table are indicated on Figure 11), reflecting an overall ratio of 7.9 spaces per square feet of commercial space, as mentioned previously. Thirty-eight of the 342 existing commuter spaces would be relocated and replaced due to redevelopment. 391 new additional commuter spaces would be built. Thus, a total of 733 commuter spaces would be built in the station area.

Table 3. Development Estimates – Alternate Concept

	PHASE I	PHASE II	TOTALS
New commercial development	54,100	34,800	88,900
Existing commercial development displaced	14,000	21,000	35,000
Net New Commercial development (sq ft)	40,100	13,800	53,900
New condos	97	210	307
New town homes	38	35	73
New Downtown residential units	135	245	380

Table 4. Parking Estimates – Alternate Concept

	Unaffected Commuter Spaces*	Replacement Commuter Spaces*	New Commuter Spaces	Total Commuter Spaces	Total Commercial Spaces	LOT TOTAL
Lot A	0	0	0	0	73	73
Lot B	0	0	0	0	73	73
Lot C	0	0	0	0	32	32
Lot D	0	0	0	0	27	27
Lot E	0	0	77	77	46	123
Lot F	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot G	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot H	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot I	100	0	0	100	26	126
Lot J	0	0	41	41	10	51
Lot K	46	0	65	111	36	147
Lot L	0	0	0	0	10	10
Lot M	0	38	68	106	0	106

	Unaffected Commuter Spaces*	Replacement Commuter Spaces*	New Commuter Spaces	Total Commuter Spaces	Total Commercial Spaces	LOT TOTAL
Lot N	0	0	140	140	0	140
Lot O	57	0	0	57	0	57
Lot P	101	0	0	101	0	101
TOTALS	304	38	391	733	363	1,096

* Existing commuter parking spaces total 342 spaces (304 unaffected + 38 replaced)

NOTES:

1. All figures are estimated due to the conceptual nature of the plan.
2. On-street parking spaces are not included in the analysis.
3. "Total commercial spaces" represent the total commercial parking capacity after redevelopment occurs; some spaces represent replacement of existing parking spaces as sites are reconfigured during redevelopment.
4. Residential parking spaces are presumed to be accommodated within new mixed-use or residential developments (at grade, below grade and/or above grade).
5. Some commuter parking spaces can potentially be shared with other uses during off-peak time periods (evenings and weekends), providing additional capacity for restaurant patrons and Yunker Park visitors.
6. Some privately controlled off-street spaces are currently utilized for private commuter permit parking; these spaces are not included in Metra's parking capacity or usage data, nor are they reflected in this analysis as the quantity and location of these spaces are unknown.

VI. Design Guidelines

The Guidelines provided below address design characteristics unique to the Downtown area. The Downtown area is comprised of the mixed use, commercial, multi-family residential and municipal uses surrounding the Mokena – Front Street Station. The majority of the Downtown is comprised of frontage along Front Street and Wolf Road. These Guidelines should be applied to all development proposed within the TOD Overlay District, as indicated in *Figure 12: Preliminary TOD Overlay District*. They are organized in the following sections: Development Pattern, Character and Architectural Design, Circulation and Wayfinding, and Parking.

Figure 12. Preliminary TOD Overlay District



A. Development Pattern

These guidelines communicate the appropriate relationship of development sites to the public realm in the Downtown area.

- a) Encourage contiguous redevelopment efforts that provide a unified, cohesive image;
- b) Development on small and isolated parcels should generally be avoided – larger scale mixed use developments are favored, especially along Front Street and Wolf Road;
- c) Provide adequate public space within the Downtown area that is highly visible to both pedestrians and automobiles;
- d) Incorporate gateways and entry markers into public and open space, especially at the intersection of Front Street and Wolf Road;
- e) Develop a cohesive pedestrian environment that accommodates access to the Metra station as well as adjacent amenities, commercial, and housing;
- f) Accommodate and maintain parking to allow for efficient capacity for commercial, residential, and Metra commuter use;
- g) Where feasible, pursue shared access and shared parking between adjacent properties;
- h) Provide mid-block pedestrian walkways between buildings for access to rear parking lots; and
- i) Reduce visual disruption of the streetscape by minimizing curb cuts throughout the Downtown area, especially along Front Street.



Incorporate downtown urban plazas



Incorporate mid-block pedestrian walkways



B. Character and Architectural Design

These Guidelines address maintaining existing character elements in the Downtown area, with an emphasis on ensuring the compatibility of new development. These Guidelines take into consideration a multitude of design elements that maintain and enhance the quality of the Downtown Area.

Siting and Orientation

- a) Commercial and mixed use structures should be built at or within five (5) feet of the front lot line to create a pedestrian-oriented “street wall”, in particular along Front Street;
- b) Primary entrances should be located along major streets, including Wolf Road and Front Street, while maintaining a secondary entrance at the rear of the building or along a secondary street if warranted;
- c) All entrances and access points to buildings should be easily identified and be visible from the primary access street;
- d) At corner sites, primarily along Wolf Road, commercial entrances should be oriented to the corner;
- e) All services, including trash and delivery, along with loading areas, should be accessed through rear parking lots and secondary entrances, while being screened from view from adjacent streets; and
- f) Building orientation, location and amenities should encourage pedestrian and bicycle access.



Provide a consistent street wall

Height, Bulk, and Massing

- a) Buildings should be up to four (4) stories in height along Wolf Road to establish a strong street presence and to provide visual cues to the Downtown core;
- b) Along Front and McGovney Streets buildings should be up to three (3) stories in height to establish a strong street wall east to Mokena Street;
- c) East of Mokena Street on Front Street, buildings should be limited to two and one-half (2½) stories in height for compatibility with adjacent residential uses;
- d) In the Willow Avenue area, buildings should be up to four (4) stories in height to take advantage of park views;
- e) The mass and bulk of any commercial and mixed use buildings should be broken up with vertical storefront divisions and/or horizontal elements that provide an



Break up storefront facades in mixed use areas



Provide balconies and varied façade elements at condominiums

intimate scale for pedestrians and visual interest for drivers; and

- f) On upper stories, setbacks may be used to provide a break in any perceived height/bulk issues as well as provide adequate private balcony/roof deck space for residences.

Facade and Articulation

- a) Facades and articulation should be in accordance with the Village's Downtown Facade Design Guidelines.
- b) All building facades, especially on Front and McGovney Streets, should accommodate a pedestrian-scale with glazed storefronts accommodating attractive displays;
- c) Windows should be supported by a continuous solid base/ bulkhead;
- d) Upper stories of buildings may provide balconies that are attached or inset in order to provide visual interest;
- e) All fenestration or window placement should reflect existing character and not compete with the scale of storefronts or upper stories on existing buildings; and
- f) Residential buildings should include windows on the first floor where possible; foundation landscaping and detailed wall articulation should also be incorporated.



Address pedestrian with scale elements on facades at ground floor

Materials

- a) High quality materials including LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified materials should be recommended in all developments and should vary, yet be complementary to the existing character of the Downtown area;
- b) Traditional stone, masonry, and other similar construction techniques are most appropriate for any new developments within the Downtown area;
- c) Any building accents should be constructed from wood, stone, steel or other metal alloys similar to the existing buildings within the Downtown area;



Use appropriate materials for all buildings

- d) Avoid concrete blocks or pre-cast concrete panels for use as a facade treatment;
- e) All building types should include finished surfaces on all vertical sides, especially along the “street wall”; and
- f) Building materials should be recyclable, renewable, and/or conservation oriented for new construction and development.

Architectural Elements

- a) Locate signage in between the first and second story and should not project above or obstruct second story windows;
- b) Provide additional signage on first floor awnings, or on first story windows;
- c) Provide signage for second floor uses as a plaque or single sign at second floor lobby entrance;
- d) Coordinate awnings and signage with the scale and color scheme of the building as well as neighboring buildings, and should not cover any architectural details; and
- e) Utilize exterior lighting to reinforce entry ways and to highlight architectural features and signage.



Appropriate signage, awning and lighting placement and scale

Site Design and Landscape

- a) Provide a minimum of six (6) feet of clearance for pedestrians at all storefront commercial areas;
- b) Provide streetscape furniture (street lights, benches, waste receptacles, etc.) and landscape treatments in new developments consistent with Front Street streetscape in order to create a more seamless and cohesive Downtown Area;
- c) Utilize dark sky compliant lighting along streets and sidewalks to reduce impact of light pollution, while illuminating all pedestrian areas;
- d) Integrate traffic control devices with ornamental lighting and should be of similar or color matched materials;



Provide a walking zone and an amenity zone at public sidewalks

- e) Incorporate generous shade landscaping and ornamental trees, as well as implement a variety of shrubs and perennials where space permits;
- f) Incorporate best management practices for stormwater management such as rain gardens, bioswales, and stormwater infiltration planters in new developments, including at adjacent public rights-of-way;
- g) Incorporate on-site plazas into pedestrian walkways that link to parking lots at the rear of buildings;
- h) Incorporate public art such as sculptures, mosaics, or murals into the Downtown area and be visible to both pedestrians and automobiles;
- i) Provide benches, bicycle racks, and waste receptacles near building entries and at on-site plazas; and
- j) Provide defined areas for outside seating at restaurants.



Incorporate locations for stormwater infiltration, even in the Downtown core



Feature public art installations in high profile locations

C. Circulation and Wayfinding

These Guidelines address the ability of the user (pedestrian, bicyclist, automobile, etc.) to orient and circulate throughout the Downtown Area. These Guidelines provide direction regarding signage and wayfinding techniques that will facilitate a more cohesive pedestrian-oriented environment.

Circulation

- a) Provide on-street bicycle lanes within the right of way where recommended (see Figure 4);
- b) Provide mid-block pedestrian walkways to parking areas at rear of buildings;
- c) Provide a walkable environment with minimal impact from obstructions such as curb cuts or other auto-oriented features;
- d) Maintain pedestrian connections and cross-walks at key intersections, including along Wolf Road, Front and McGovney Streets; and
- e) Provide connections between parking lots on adjacent properties in order to allow for improved off-street circulation.



Provide signed on-street bicycle routes



Highlight key pedestrian crossings with distinctive markings

Wayfinding

- a) Provide both pedestrian and auto-oriented wayfinding elements and signage that identify points of interest, routes, and uses;
- b) Provide interpretational or educational signage to distinguish points of interest or historical significance in the Downtown area;
- c) Provide directional signage that clarifies routes to and from the Mokena - Front Street Station and adjacent commuter parking lots;
- d) Wayfinding should be of appropriate scale based on the intended user and should reflect a consistent theme; and
- e) Provide gateway signage at Downtown entry points scaled for visibility for all users.



Example of wayfinding signage



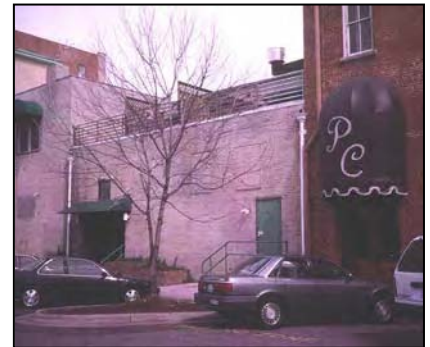
Example of gateway identity signage

D. Parking

These Guidelines address parking improvements for future development, as well as existing and future commuter parking lots. These Guidelines address design issues for combined lots that will maximize parking utilization for all functions in the Downtown area. In addition to the guidelines described below, Metra's *Station and Parking Design Guidelines* (available under separate cover from Metra) are an important resource when designing new commuter facilities.

Parking Lot Layout

- a) Consolidate and promote shared off-street parking within blocks to minimize curb cuts;
- b) Locate parking lots for commercial developments behind or beside buildings;
- c) Provide employee parking in perimeter lots, away from storefronts;
- d) Provide residential parking within the building where feasible;



Provide attractive landscaping and rear entry features at rear parking lots

- e) Locate commuter parking within sight of the Metra station wherever feasible;
- f) Provide additional secure residential parking on-site or beside behind buildings; and
- g) Accommodate on-street parking where feasible for additional commercial parking.

Landscaping and Stormwater Management

- a) Provide a minimum five (5) foot setback from sidewalk to pavement edge to provide a landscape buffer;
- b) Maintain a continuous planting bed of indigenous or hardy plants that can withstand drought conditions around the perimeter of parking lots – not to exceed four (4) feet in height;
- c) Provide ornamental or shade trees along the perimeter and in planting islands within parking lots;
- d) Stagger or offset trees around the lot perimeter with parkway or sidewalk trees;
- e) Provide a maximum four (4) foot high ornamental fence around perimeter of parking lot, closest to parking spaces;
- f) Utilize water infiltration systems such as bioswales or rain gardens and integrate on-site for stormwater management;
- g) Consider permeable paving systems such as concrete unit pavers and porous concrete/asphalt as a pavement alternative (especially in parking stalls) to contain and filter stormwater discharge on-site; and
- h) Provide charging stations for electric vehicles as well as preferred parking for alternative fuel cars.



Provide a continuous landscape buffer at perimeter of parking lots



Utilize permeable pavement and water infiltration islands in parking lots

VII. Implementation Strategies

The overall implementation process for Downtown redevelopment will require substantial political support, including staff and financial commitments from the Village of Mokena, as well as coordination with Metra and other partners. The implementation strategies build upon the Development Principles and Concept Plans described within this report.

A. IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

To successfully implement the recommendations in the *Station Area Plan*, the Village will need to solicit the involvement of various public and private sector partners, such as:

- Metra, the commuter rail agency, who will be involved with the design, coordination and implementation of transit facility improvements;
- Federal and state agencies to provide funding for transportation infrastructure and other improvements as noted in the *Station Area Plan*;
- Local business and property owners who can assist with marketing and business recruitment, as well as undertake improvements to their own properties per the *Station Area Plan* “vision”;

- The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association and the Will County Governmental League, who can assist with seeking and securing external funding;
- Local financial institutions who may provide financing assistance for the implementation of private sector aspects of the *Station Area Plan*;
- The Mokena Chamber of Commerce who can provide marketing and promotional activities for businesses in the station area;
- The Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau who can provide marketing for activities in the station area;
- The Will County Historic Preservation Commission who can assist by promoting cultural and architectural heritage in the station area;
- Technical assistance providers including the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Small Business Administration (SBA), who can provide training and assistance to business owners;
- Builders and developers who may pursue development within the station area once the *Station Area Plan* is in place and the Village actively begins to market the “vision”; and
- Citizens of Mokena who can get involved with various *Station Area Plan* initiatives, including patronizing and supporting station area businesses.

B. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following strategies are recommended for *Station Area Plan* implementation:

- Strategy 1: Establish a Station Area Task Force
- Strategy 2: Assess Feasibility of Station Relocation
- Strategy 3: Amend Development Regulations
- Strategy 4: Enforce Design Guidelines
- Strategy 5: Determine Financing Opportunities and Assistance
- Strategy 6: Implement Major Capital Improvements
- Strategy 7: Focus on Key Redevelopment Project Priorities

These strategies are described in detail below. A matrix describing implementation actions and indicating participants and responsibilities is also included at the end of this section. While “Strategy 1” is an optional action that should be undertaken immediately upon the adoption of the *Station Area Plan*,

there is no specific sequence for the remaining strategies. All are important and will require sustained attention and commitment.

Strategy 1: Establish a Station Area Task Force

As soon as the *Station Area Plan* is adopted, the Village should consider appointing a Station Area Task Force comprised of key Village representatives, members of the Steering Committee and other stakeholders to move the *Station Area Plan* forward. The Station Area Task Force would be responsible for helping to initiate and monitor *Station Area Plan* activities and visibly advocate for the redevelopment of the station area. Although the formation of a task force is not technically required for the initiation of the *Station Area Plan*, its formation may make implementation of the plan considerably easier. Meetings should be held on a regular basis to review ongoing initiatives and implementation progress. Under authority granted by the Village Board, activities would include, but not be limited to:

- Meeting with developers to promote and facilitate redevelopment;
- Issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to high priority development projects;
- Acquiring key properties from willing sellers to advance the *Station Area Plan*;
- Seeking and securing funding for key initiatives and coordinating with other agencies as needed;
- Providing assistance to property owners and developers to verify that projects meet the standards and intent of the *Station Area Plan*; and
- Monitoring and addressing the demand for parking; arranging interim parking facilities as needed as redevelopment occurs over time. During each phase of redevelopment, there should be no net decrease in commuter parking capacity.

Strategy 2: Assess Feasibility of Station Relocation

The Village should conduct a more detailed study to assess the feasibility of the potential station relocation, as illustrated in *Figure 7: Station Facility Diagram: Preferred Concept*. As part of this study, costs related to land acquisition, infrastructure, station construction and construction of associated new parking lots and drop-off areas should be analyzed. The study will need to accurately

determine the costs and potential phasing of relocation of the existing maintenance-of-way siding and replicating the maintenance and storage facilities currently located in the existing station building. Currently, the maintenance-of-way tracks are crucial for operational success along the Rock Island District Line. Without them, movement of equipment and delivery of materials would be severely compromised. Pending further study, additional funding sources will need to be identified to bear the associated costs of station relocation, related infrastructure relocation such as the signal maintainer facility currently adjoined to the existing depot, and other amenities such as passenger shelters, tower elements, a relocated pedestrian crosswalk and landscape buffer treatments. Final determination of a station location will allow the Village to move forward with a clear strategy for the Walnut Lane industrial area.

Metra will not consider funding station relocation for a facility that has not reached its useful life (as shown in the Preferred Concept). The useful life for the existing Mokena-Front Street Station is at a minimum 10 to 15 years away. Should station relocation prove to be feasible and desirable, any relocation costs (i.e. relocation of the platforms, at-grade pedestrian crossing, and any other track/signal work required by moving the station) would need to be borne by public and/or private entities other than Metra if the current facility has not reached its useful life. Once the useful life of the facility has been exhausted, further discussions would be required regarding Metra's assistance for relocation of the station and related infrastructure, as Metra's funding generally consists of rehabbing or building a basic station facility. Additional funding sources would need to be sought by the Village for the relocation costs, related infrastructure and any additional amenities, such as an outbound platform passenger shelter, tower element, new drop-off and pick-up areas near the existing station in the Alternate Concept, and landscape buffer treatments outside the Metra Rock Island District right-of-way.

All costs related to the potential relocation of the existing maintenance-of-way siding to accommodate the proposed relocation of the station (as shown in the Preferred Concept) would need to be fully borne by public and/or private entities other than Metra. These expenses include, but are not limited to, the signal and track installation for the relocated maintenance-of-way siding (necessitated by the station relocation), the relocation of the existing pedestrian crossing, and the relocation of the signal maintainer facility that is currently adjoined to the existing depot.

Strategy 3: Amend Development Regulations

The Village should amend development regulations to align them with the intent of the *Station Area Plan*, specifically to facilitate transit-oriented development in the station area. The following describes suggested zoning amendments.

- Amend the zoning for the Walnut Lane industrial district from I-1 Limited Industrial District to P-1 Public, Quasi-Public and Conservation District. This will allow for the potential future relocation of the train station to occur on the preferred site, as well as accommodate future potential public parking. After the feasibility of the station relocation is determined, some or all of the area should be rezoned to support multi-family residential uses.
- Extend C-4 Traditional Downtown Commercial District on Front Street to accommodate added commercial development and redevelopment compatible with the existing historic nature of the corridor, per the Future Land Use Framework.
- Allow additional R-6 Multi Family Residence District surrounding the Downtown, per the Future Land Use Framework, to allow for increased density in the Downtown area, building a population more likely to utilize transit and support Downtown retailers.
- Designate additional C-1 Traditional Shopping zones along Wolf Road to increase the commercial tax base and visibility of commercial establishments along a major transportation corridor, per the Future Land Use Framework.
- Amend development regulations to require new development proposals in the station area to submit a preliminary sketch plan and conduct a design review meeting with staff to ensure conformance with the Development Principles and Downtown Area Design Guidelines.

In addition to individual zoning amendments, a new TOD Overlay District should be created that would apply only to the Downtown area. Through use of an overlay district, many of the underlying zones would still be retained and supplemented with new transit-supportive overlay standards that would only apply within the Downtown. Where a conflict may be created between the requirements for the underlying and overlay zoning, the overlay district standards would be controlling. Overlay district standards that would

implement the *Station Area Plan* should modify the current zoning district requirements as follows:

- Increase allowable building height (4 to 5 stories) in the Downtown core to allow increased density of commercial and/or residential uses in areas that can be buffered effectively from adjacent neighborhoods, per the Concept Plans.
- Permit higher residential densities (12 dwelling units per acre) in the Downtown area, consistent with TOD principles, through reduced minimum unit sizes and/or lot sizes.
- Allow mixed use buildings, with residences located above commercial uses.
- Adjust the front yard requirements in the station area to set maximum allowable front setbacks (i.e. 5 feet maximum). The revised standard would require buildings to be located up to the public sidewalk or set back minimally to allow space for outdoor dining, architectural overhangs and pedestrian amenities. Parking would not be permitted within any front setback area. Reduced setbacks at perimeter multi-family residential areas should be encouraged with parking provided within the building or in rear parking areas.
- Reduce parking requirements and allow for parking fees-in-lieu of providing individual on-site spaces for new development. Permitted parking reductions recognize the proximity of transit and other modes of transportation. Parking requirements for multi-family residential could potentially be reduced to 1.0 to 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit due to the proximity to Metra commuter rail service. Allowing fees-in-lieu of individual on-site parking for non-residential development will help pay for the construction and maintenance of shared public parking facilities. Also, the Village should encourage shared parking for facilities with complimentary peak operating periods.
- Prohibit auto-oriented uses in the Downtown core. Limited drive-through facilities should be accommodated only in concealed rear parking areas. Maintain these use types in the C-1 zoning area along Wolf Road preserve Downtown compact development and walkability.

Strategy 4: Enforce Downtown Area Design Guidelines

To create a vibrant pedestrian-friendly business district, the Village should amend its development ordinances and update its *Architectural and Site Plan Review Guide* to require use of the Downtown Area Design Guidelines as part of its site development review process for properties within the TOD Overlay District. These could also be used in coordination with projects funded under the *Facade Improvements Assistance Program for the Traditional Business District*. The Guidelines could be administered as part of the development review process for new construction, redevelopment and building improvements. As the Village works to implement the “vision”, the built environment will change over time if the Village enforces the basic principles contained in the Downtown Area Design Guidelines.

The Village should provide the Downtown Area Design Guidelines to all property owners and developers proposing (re)development within the TOD Overlay District and amend the development review process to require a preliminary sketch plan submission and design review meeting. This review process will enable the Village to review a developer’s application and convey the basic principles of the Downtown Area Design Guidelines. In amending its regulations, the Village should provide flexibility in the Downtown Area Design Guidelines application to allow creative development solutions to challenging site conditions in the station area. This could be administered by the Planning Commission or the Station Area Task Force.

The Downtown Area Design Guidelines should be administered in conjunction with the *Facade Improvements Assistance Program for the Traditional Business District* that the Village already has in place to improve the facades of existing buildings.

Strategy 5: Determine Financing Opportunities and Assistance

The Village should determine potential funding opportunities and create financial incentives to spur the implementation of the *Station Area Plan*. Although not an exhaustive inventory of potential funding, the following funding resources are the most relevant for the Village’s implementation process at the present time.

Village Resources

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The Village should move forward with designating a TIF district within the Downtown to attract key development, redevelopment and facilitate the potential relocation of the Mokena-Front Street Station. TIF assistance can facilitate site acquisition/ assembly and preparation, infrastructure upgrades, and low-interest financing, which can reduce development costs significantly. To the extent feasible, the TIF district boundary should align with key redevelopment areas in the Concept Plans.

Although not used as commonly as TIFs, other financing programs that the Village could pursue for the station area would be establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID), Special Service Area (SSA), tax abatements, and forms of creative financing including Section 129 funding and state infrastructure banks that could provide assistance such as letters of credit, construction loans and capital reserves for bond financing of public improvement projects.

Federal and State Resources

Real Estate and Economic Development Resources

The Illinois Development Finance Authority and the Illinois Housing Development Authority administer a variety of funding programs for real estate development projects, such as grants, loans, bonds, and tax credits. These funding programs can be used to lower development costs for a municipality directly involved in a project, or for a developer who can demonstrate community support for a project.

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

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

Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning Grant Program

This program is sponsored by IDOT to support planning activities that promote the integration of land use, transportation and infrastructure facility planning to reduce traffic congestion and to promote balanced economic development. The Corridor Planning Grant Program will fund activities that address development of transit oriented/mixed use development plans to increase transportation options, improve walkability and enhance access to transit; development of public-private plans that provide for and encourage affordable housing for workers that is convenient to employment centers; projects that promote economic development and/or consider redevelopment opportunities; and projects that relieve traffic congestion. Various initiatives in the *Station Area Plan* could be candidates for more detailed study using this grant program, including development opportunities and traffic management improvements along Wolf Road.

Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program

If the Village seeks to develop a bicycle path program off the existing roadway network (non-vehicular trail), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources provides grants to communities to assist them in the acquisition, construction and/or rehabilitation of public bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. Grants are limited to up to 50% of the approved project costs. Construction grants are limited to \$200,000 per annual request; there is no maximum for acquisition projects. In coordination with the Park District, the Village should consider pursuing this funding to enhance access between the Downtown and Yunker Park, in conjunction with a Willow Avenue extension.

SAFETEA-LU¹

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is the federal act authorizing surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for a five-year time period, 2005-2009. SAFETEA-LU includes numerous programs that can support state transportation projects and local transit projects. The federal funds for SAFETEA-LU are allocated to IDOT, which uses certain funds for transportation projects and allocates other funds to regional public

¹ SAFETEA-LU is up for reauthorization in 2009; some of the described programs may or may not be available, and other new programs may be developed.

agencies. The following program resources may be available to assist the Village in implementing key aspects of the *Station Area Plan*.

- **Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)**

This program is administered by IDOT and used for projects such as train station improvements, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements. Funding reimbursement is available for up to 50% of the cost of right-of-way and easement acquisition and 80% of the cost for preliminary and final engineering, utility relocations and construction costs.

- **Illinois Green Streets Initiative**

The Illinois Green Streets Initiative is funded through the ITEP program, however applications for the Illinois Green Streets Initiative utilize a separate application unique to that program. Project sponsors may receive up to 80% reimbursement for project costs. The remaining 20% is the responsibility of the project sponsor. Funds for this program can only be used for planting of trees or prairie grasses.

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)**

This program is administered by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) (the former Chicago Area Transportation Study [CATS] combined with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission [NIPC]), and used for projects that can benefit regional air quality and reduce auto emissions. Eligible projects include transit improvements, new additional commuter parking, traffic flow improvements, and bicycle/pedestrian projects. These projects are federally funded at 80% of project costs. Typically, most grant dollars are not available for financing the replacement of commuter parking spaces that are displaced from existing designated commuter parking facilities.

- **Surface Transportation Program (STP)**

This program is also administered by CMAP, to improve the regional transportation network. Projects in this funding category must have a local sponsor and are selected based on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided.

Funding for Commuter Parking Facilities

Most grant dollars, including Metra's, are not available for financing the replacement of commuter spaces that are displaced from designated and/or historical commuter parking facilities. Thus, the Village and/or developer(s) would need to finance the replacement of any commuter spaces that are displaced due to development. Metra only participates in building net new commuter parking spaces where demand warrants and funding is available. Metra stipulates that throughout each step of the redevelopment process, the amount of commuter parking at the existing Metra stations must, at a minimum, remain at their current level resulting in no net loss of commuter parking during any phases of redevelopment. The displaced commuter parking spaces that may result from the proposed redevelopment cannot be replaced within other existing commuter parking lots. Because the construction of the existing commuter parking lots at the Mokena - Front Street Station was financed with state and federal funds, any redevelopment would need to be discussed with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The use of federal funds for the construction of new parking facilities may be restricted, if parking spaces that were federally or state funded, are removed or altered during redevelopment.

Any new commuter parking in Downtown Mokena should include the option of shared use in the evenings and on weekends, allowing the Village to reduce parking requirements for the Downtown and also serve Yunker Park. Commuter parking fees for any new parking spaces must remain comparable and competitive with commuter parking fees within the Metra system. Shared funding of new replacement parking areas should be pursued with both public (i.e. Park District) and private partners.

Private Resources

Private sources of funding can often be secured for specific community improvement projects. These resources can include grants or loans from philanthropic organizations, the local Chamber of Commerce or local banks. Some projects that may meet the standards for these funding sources include Metra station facility enhancements, additional streetscape enhancements or urban design elements as depicted in the Concept Plans.

Since banks have to meet federal requirements for local community investment, the Village should discuss its goals with local banks to determine if certain

projects could receive grant or loan funding. Like the existing *Facade Improvements Assistance Program for the Traditional Business District*, the Village may be able to establish a low-interest loan program through a local bank for the purposes of encouraging new commercial and mixed use development and reinvestment in existing historic structures, expanding on the current facade program.

Strategy 6: Implement Major Capital Improvements

The Village should implement key public improvement projects to make the station area a more pedestrian-oriented and aesthetically-pleasing environment. The Village should expand on Front Street streetscape improvements by improving the appearance of Wolf Road and McGovney Street to attract new businesses and developers, attract customers and improve the overall tax base. The Village should work to implement the following public initiatives:

Shared Parking Facilities

The Village should construct shared parking facilities for uses that have complimentary operating days and hours. Shared parking facilities will increase walkability and reduce parking lot acreage to increase taxable development areas. Shared parking is effective in mixed use developments or when sites with different uses are located suitably close together, where destinations might share patrons or have different periods of peak parking demand. For example, an office building sharing parking with a restaurant reduces necessary Downtown parking because most of the office workers (and their cars) will be gone in the evenings when there is the most demand for parking for the restaurant. Commuter parking spaces should be available to shoppers, restaurant patrons and park users in the evenings and on weekends. Shared parking facilities can either be funded through a TIF district or through a joint public/private partnership. An SSA should be established to fund ongoing maintenance of shared parking facilities, with costs shared among businesses that benefit from the public parking.

Streetscape Improvement

The Village should extend its streetscape program east of Division Street to provide uniformity in aesthetics throughout the Downtown area at McGovney

and Willow Streets (extended) and north and south along Wolf Road. This program could include new streetlights, banners, sidewalks, crosswalks, gateways, street trees, street furniture and wayfinding signage. Wayfinding signage and gateway monuments are essential to directing visitors off the main thoroughfares (i.e. Wolf Road) and into the Downtown area, as well as promoting a Downtown “brand”. A more detailed design study and preliminary engineering will be required to provide specific locations and costs. The objective is to create a station area identity with a consistent image through the use of recurring visual elements.

New Open Spaces

The *Station Area Plan* highlights additional open spaces within the Downtown area – a small parcel north of the outbound station platform and a larger area west of the commuter parking located to the south of the railroad tracks. These areas provide a buffer between the station facility, commuter parking, Downtown development and proposed Yunker Park. Any buffer treatments and improvements ought to be located outside the Metra Rock Island District right-of-way, at a minimum of nine feet from the centerline of the track. The Village should consider a joint public/private partnership for these key redevelopments, with the partnership amassing the necessary funds for public open spaces, pedestrian and transit improvements. Even if the Mokena-Front Street Station is not relocated, several new open spaces are an integral component of the Downtown “vision”.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The Village should complete its station area sidewalk network to increase walkability in the area, allowing pedestrians to walk from their homes to Downtown activities and the train station. This will allow for a more compact development pattern and community-oriented atmosphere. Additionally, the Village should designate bicycle routes and bicycle parking areas outside of Metra’s Rock Island District right-of-way throughout and within the Downtown to foster an alternate and more sustainable mode of transportation for residents of the Village.

Strategy 7: Focus on Key Redevelopment Project Priorities

The Village should act as a development partner and take a more direct role in key redevelopment projects to overcome development finance hurdles. The Village should prioritize elements of the *Station Area Plan* that are highly visible and most conducive for immediate implementation, such as projects where property owners are ready and willing to redevelop and site assembly issues are minimal.

As an overall “catalyst” for attracting private development within the Downtown area, the Village should begin to expand the streetscape program and make other infrastructure improvements as recommended above. By adding street trees, benches, decorative streetlights, banners and gateway features, the Village is signifying to developers that there is a firm public commitment to attracting private investment to the station area and creating an overall Downtown “brand” that benefits all businesses.

The Chamber of Commerce could also partner with the Village to promote the new Downtown “brand”. Hosting festivals Downtown or at the future Yunker Park site would encourage the community to envision this extension of the Downtown as an important piece of the community.

Besides investments in the Metra station and any other track/signal work required by moving the station itself, redevelopment should be encouraged throughout the Downtown. The Village can also encourage property owners to partner with developers in the redevelopment of their property, or the Village could directly participate in this effort by purchasing property from willing sellers and assembling key parcels in order to help spur redevelopment projects through the issuance of RFPs. As redevelopment takes place, the Village should offer assistance to business owners by helping them relocate within the Village. TIF funds, if available, should be used for this purpose to the extent feasible.

C. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS MATRIX

The following matrix provides a tabular summary of major actions to be undertaken by the Village in implementation of the *Station Area Plan*, describing the action, potential participants and necessary planning resources. Ongoing actions will start immediately and continue throughout the implementation process. Short-term actions should be initiated within the first

two years after the Plan is adopted. Long-term actions should be initiated in years three through five after adoption.

Table 5. Implementation Actions Matrix

Project or Action	Participants/ Initiators	Potential Resources	Timeframe
Administrative Actions			
Establish a Station Area Task Force	Village Staff Planning Commission Property Owners Residents	N/A	Ongoing (Optional)
Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, Business Improvement District (BID) and/or Special Service Area (SSA)	Village Staff Planning Commission Economic Development Commission Village Board	General Village Revenues	Short-Term
Establish a new transit-oriented overlay district/Amend development regulations	Village Staff Planning Commission Village Board	General Village Revenues	Short-Term
Update <i>Architectural and Site Plan Review Guide</i> to include <i>Downtown Area Design Guidelines</i>	Village Staff Planning Commission Site Plan/Architectural Review Committee	General Village Revenues	Short-Term
Land Use			
Assess potential to relocate train station to Division Street location that would necessitate the relocation of Metra's maintenance-of-way siding	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Metra Property Owners	General Village Revenues; Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning Grant Program	Short-Term
Acquire land from willing sellers; assemble development parcels	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Planning Commission Village Board	TIF Funds	Ongoing

Project or Action	Participants/ Initiators	Potential Resources	Timeframe
Issue RFPs for key development projects	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Planning Commission Village Board	General Village Revenues	Long-Term
Support Park District efforts to develop Yunker Park	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Planning Commission Community Affairs Commission Chamber of Commerce	TIF Funds; Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program, private sources	Ongoing
Access, Parking and Infrastructure			
Provide additional commuter parking to meet future needs and replacement needs as redevelopment occurs	Station Area Task Force Metra Developers/Property Owners Village Staff Planning Commission	Metra (for net new spaces only); TIF Funds; CMAQ (for net new spaces only)	Ongoing
Explore public/private parking alternatives in order to meet business and commuter needs	Station Area Task Force Developers/Property Owners Village Staff Planning Commission Chamber of Commerce	TIF Funds, SSA, private sources	Short-Term
Create a complete sidewalk network	Village Staff Planning Commission Developers/Property Owners	TIF Funds; ITEP; CMAQ; STP	Short-Term
Create bicycle connections throughout Downtown	Village Staff Planning Commission Developers/Property Owners	TIF Funds; ITEP; CMAQ; Safe Routes to Schools	Long-Term
Reduce curb cuts and consolidate access to parking areas as opportunities arise	Village Staff Planning Commission Developers/Property Owners	TIF Funds; ITEP	Ongoing
Urban Design			
Encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings in order to retain Downtown's historical character	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Planning Commission Site Plan/Architectural Review Committee Property Owners	TIF Funds; private sources	Ongoing

Project or Action	Participants/ Initiators	Potential Resources	Timeframe
Expand streetscaping, including: streetlights, banners, gateways, street trees, street furniture and wayfinding signage	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Planning Commission Chamber of Commerce Developers/Property Owners	TIF Funds; Illinois Green Streets Initiative; ITEP	Short-Term
Encourage development of parking behind buildings with landscaping and screening	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Planning Commission Chamber of Commerce Developers/Property Owners	TIF Funds, private sources	Ongoing
Develop a common signage theme to be used to identify public parking areas, pedestrian pathways, and Downtown gateways	Station Area Task Force Village Staff Chamber of Commerce	TIF Funds; ITEP, private sources	Short-Term