



Village of Riverside Central Business District Plan

Adopted April 15, 2013

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all of the groups, entities, residents, and business owners who participated in the planning process. In addition, thanks to the following elected and appointed officials who contributed greatly to the creation of this Central Business District Plan for the Village of Riverside.

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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.

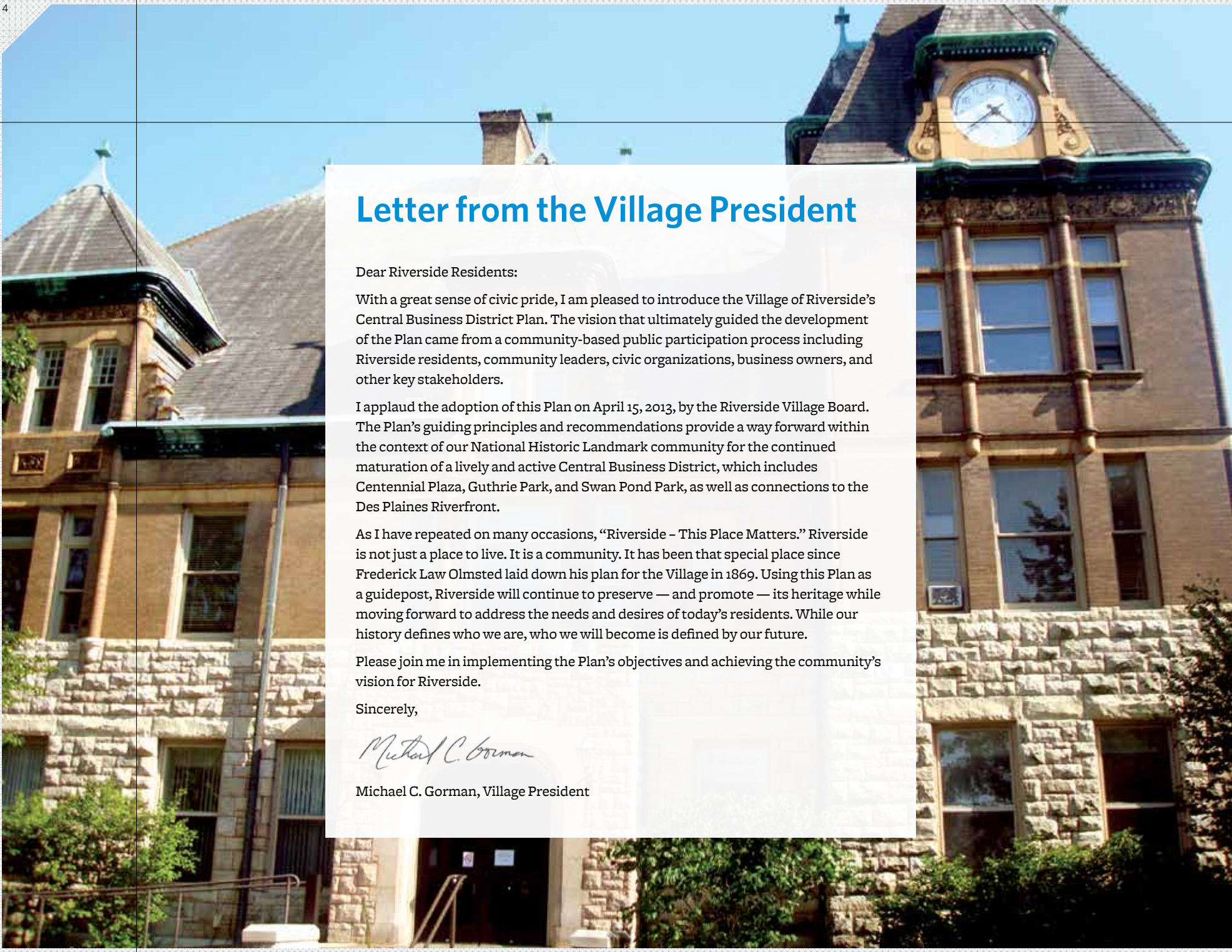


Village of Riverside Central Business District Plan



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

Adopted April 15, 2013



Letter from the Village President

Dear Riverside Residents:

With a great sense of civic pride, I am pleased to introduce the Village of Riverside's Central Business District Plan. The vision that ultimately guided the development of the Plan came from a community-based public participation process including Riverside residents, community leaders, civic organizations, business owners, and other key stakeholders.

I applaud the adoption of this Plan on April 15, 2013, by the Riverside Village Board. The Plan's guiding principles and recommendations provide a way forward within the context of our National Historic Landmark community for the continued maturation of a lively and active Central Business District, which includes Centennial Plaza, Guthrie Park, and Swan Pond Park, as well as connections to the Des Plaines Riverfront.

As I have repeated on many occasions, "Riverside – This Place Matters." Riverside is not just a place to live. It is a community. It has been that special place since Frederick Law Olmsted laid down his plan for the Village in 1869. Using this Plan as a guidepost, Riverside will continue to preserve — and promote — its heritage while moving forward to address the needs and desires of today's residents. While our history defines who we are, who we will become is defined by our future.

Please join me in implementing the Plan's objectives and achieving the community's vision for Riverside.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Gorman, Village President

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Why Does Riverside Need a Plan for the Central Business District?

Since the last plan for Riverside's Central Business District (CBD) was adopted in 2006, changes in the economy, as well as community reaction to the scope of the plan's redevelopment scenarios and potential funding options have led the Village to embark on creating a new plan for this area. Riverside's original designers, Frederic Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, did not envision a CBD. However, one gradually sprung up around the train station to accommodate the needs of nearby residents. The result is a very attractive Village center, with a beautiful mix of historic and pre-World War II buildings, a walkable street grid with easy access to the Metra Station, and access to large open spaces along the Des Plaines River.

Over the years, as retail trends changed and other communities built up nearby, the role of the Village's CBD has also evolved. Today, service businesses, rather than retail and restaurants, occupy much of the ground floor spaces. While there is no vacant land, there are several vacant or underutilized storefronts. Residents are traveling outside of the Village for most purchases. Compared with similar communities, retail sales in Riverside are quite low, especially in light of the high household sales potential. Nestled in the middle of the Village, the CBD is not visible from major arterials. Lower through-traffic volumes and a relatively small population base can make it difficult to attract businesses typically found in nearby downtown or commercial areas.

However, residents frequently visit the CBD. As the civic and cultural center of the Village, residents visit the Village Hall, public library, historic museum, established businesses, and nearby schools. Some visits are short, such as taking the train to work. Riverside's strong sidewalk network and calm streets provide many connections to the CBD, as reflected in the high percentage of Metra commuters who walk or bike to the train station. New bicycle routes throughout the Village all wind their way through this central area and provide connections to the regional trail network. There is also a large overall amount of off-street and on-street parking spaces to accommodate existing and additional users.

Throughout the planning process, residents clearly articulated a desire to share the historical significance of their community with others and welcome visitors to spend time in the CBD. They would like to see the Water Tower better utilized to play an expanded role in architectural and design tourism. Concerned with how their community looks to Metra and Amtrak riders as they pass through the Village, residents would like the aesthetics of the railroad corridor improved. In addition to increased economic activity from out-of-town visitors, residents would like to spend more time and money in the Village. They would like to patronize more retail and dining options, especially those catered to younger families. Expanding recreational opportunities is also very important to residents. They envision better connections to the Des Plaines River, as well as reactivating the former public works building as a recreation and community center.

Figure 1.1. Regional location and study area



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

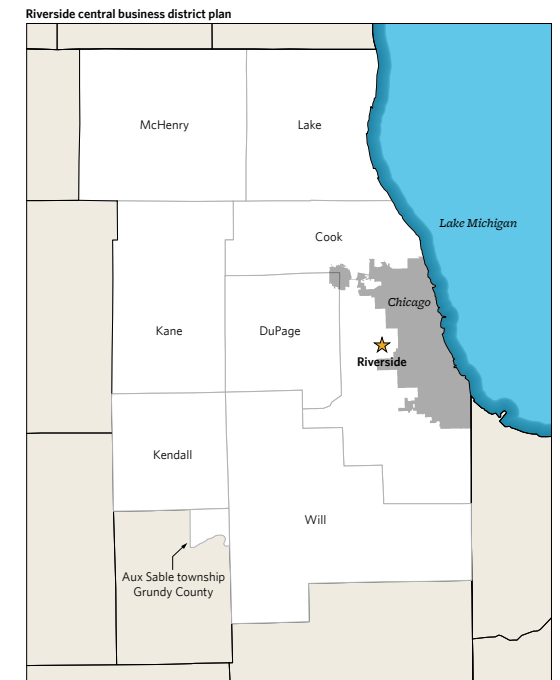


Figure 1.2. Central Business District study area



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Historic view of the Riverside Central Business District from the Water Tower

Source: Riverside Historical Commission.

Planning Process

The process to create the Village’s CBD Plan lasted approximately one year and included multiple steps. The process was crafted with assistance from Village staff and designed to include the input of Village residents, business owners, community organizations, and others. The key steps in the planning process are illustrated in **Figure 1.3**.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Public Participation and Community Outreach

A plan is only as good as the commitment to implementing it by the public and their elected representatives. Therefore, it was crucial that public participation be a major component of plan development. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) worked with a Riverside Steering Committee to develop a project outreach strategy that clearly stated the methods for engaging the public at each stage of the planning process. The steering committee was composed of representatives from several of the Village commissions, as well as the Riverside Chamber of Commerce:

Peter Boutsikakis, <i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	Charles Pipal, <i>Preservation Commission</i>
Susan Casey, <i>Parks and Recreation Commission</i>	Peter Scalera, <i>Village Manager</i>
Judith Cizek, <i>Historical Commission</i>	Paul Sterner, <i>Plan Commission</i>
Katie Leander, <i>Parks and Recreation Commission</i>	Eric Sundstrom, <i>Riverside Chamber of Commerce</i>
Mark Mieczkowski, <i>Economic Development Commission</i>	Dianna LaMantia, <i>Landscape Advisory Commission</i>

Public participation was accomplished through public workshops, one-on-one interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, steering committee meetings, and on-going communication with Village residents. The goals of the participatory process were:

- Ensure that all issues, concerns, and needs are identified.
- Clearly define community values and priorities.
- Incorporate the community vision and appropriate policies into the plan.

The vision that ultimately guided the development of this Plan came from the community-based public participation process of collaboration between Riverside residents, business owners, and other key stakeholders. In total, over 300 participants helped to shape this Plan. A number of other participants and organizations have been involved throughout the process, including the Regional Transit Authority, Metra, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad, and CMAP. The public outreach strategy and the accompanying public input received can be found in the Public Engagement Appendix.

Relationship with the GO TO 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan

As part of the larger Chicago metropolitan economic region, the Village both influences and is influenced by the region. CMAP is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of , metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. To address anticipated population growth of more than 2 million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that will help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. The plan contains four themes and 12 major recommendation areas:

Livable Communities

1. Achieve Greater Livability through Land Use and Housing
2. Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources
3. Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space
4. Promote Sustainable Local Food

Human Capital

5. Improve Education and Workforce Development
6. Support Economic Innovation

Efficient Governance

7. Reform State and Local Tax Policy
8. Improve Access to Information
9. Pursue Coordinated Investments

Regional Mobility

10. Invest Strategically in Transportation
11. Increase Commitment to Public Transit
12. Create a More Efficient Freight Network

Recommendations in the Livable Communities, Efficient Governance, and Regional Mobility chapters are most relevant to Riverside’s CBD, particularly those that relate to:

- Building on transit oriented development opportunities
- Collaborative planning and interjurisdictional communication
- Water and natural resource protection and enhancement
- Green infrastructure protection and enhancement
- Water and energy conservation and efficiency
- Open space and trails enhancement

GO TO 2040 states, “municipalities are critical to the success of GO TO 2040 because of their responsibility for land use decisions, which create the built environment of the region and determine the livability of its communities. The most important thing that a municipality can do to implement GO TO 2040 is to take this responsibility very seriously.” By undertaking a planning process to create a new CBD Plan, Riverside has taken responsibility for guiding its future and demonstrated its commitment to helping shape the future of the region as well.

Organization of the Plan

The Riverside CBD Plan is organized into four chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction:

This chapter provides an overview of the Plan and the planning process utilized to create the CBD Plan.

Chapter 2: Guiding Principles and Framework Plan:

This chapter provides an overview of the principles that reflect the community’s values and priorities as expressed through the planning process. The principles and policies are foundational statements that guided the creation of the Plan and should be used to guide decision-making by Riverside’s elected officials, plan commissioners, and committees. This chapter also contains the Framework Plan along with descriptions of the land uses within the CBD.

Chapter 3: Plan Recommendations:

This chapter contains a series of recommendations and strategies for achieving the vision of Riverside’s CBD Plan. The recommendations are categorized into six sections based on the principles outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4: Implementation:

This chapter contains a list of priority strategies that the Village should focus on in the next two years to implement the Plan. A strategy reference guide, potential funding sources, partners, and reference guides are also included.



Chapter 2:

Guiding Principles and Framework Plan

Riverside's CBD is rich in historic, cultural, and natural resources, which are highly valued and contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. Enhancing these qualities is the central priority of the CBD Plan. The following six guiding principles emerged as priority recommendation areas to be addressed by the Plan and form the structure of this document.

Guiding Principles

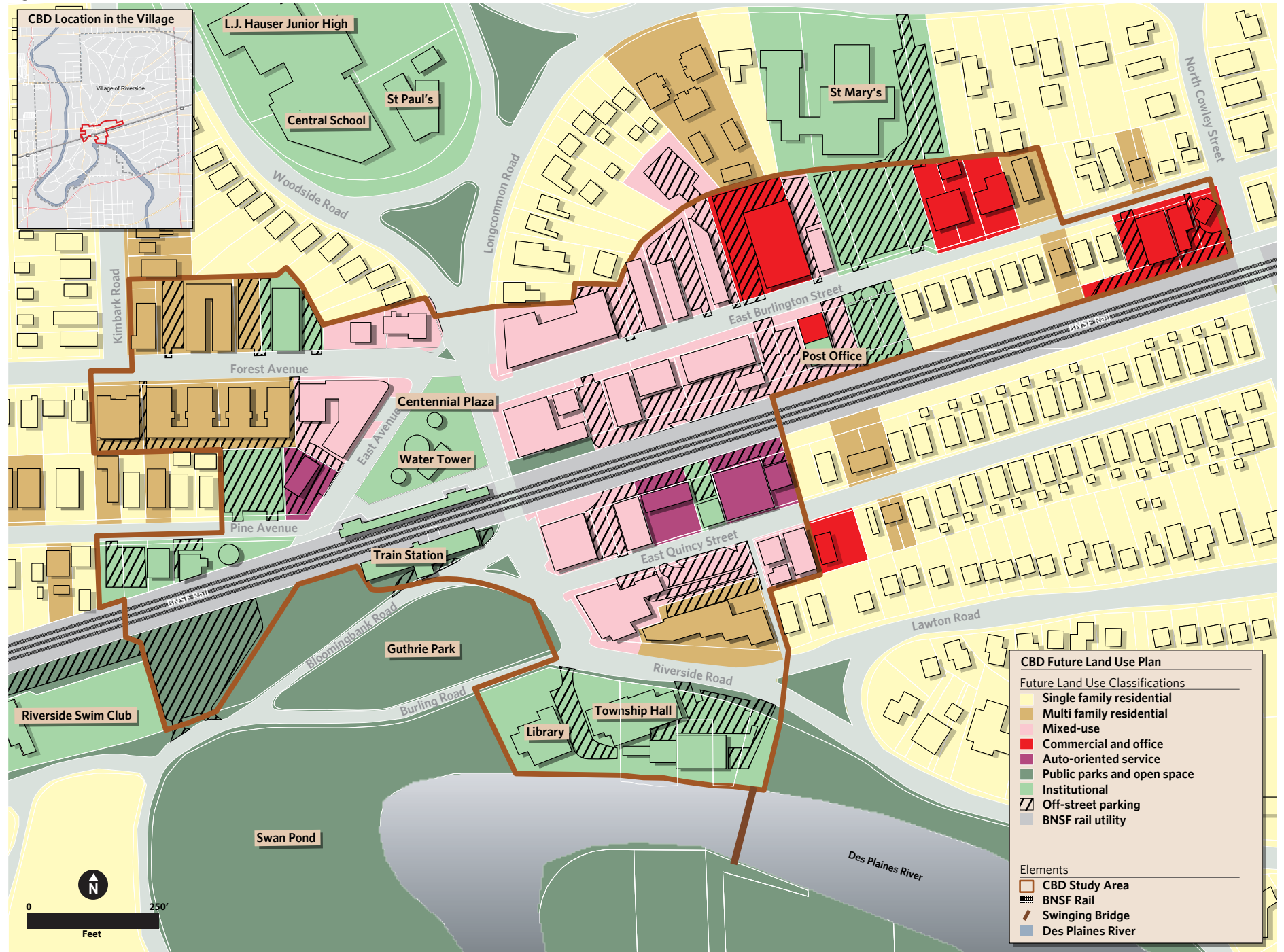
- 1. Riverside's CBD should be a lively, active place that provides a mix of retail, restaurants, services, and amenities for residents and visitors.**
- 2. Connections to Riverside's CBD should be clear and welcoming from streets, bicycle routes, and rail corridors.**
- 3. The streets and sidewalks of Riverside's CBD should be inviting, comfortable places that help sustain economic activity.**
- 4. The connection to the Des Plaines riverfront is a key asset of Riverside's CBD and should be strengthened.**
- 5. Riverside's CBD should showcase the unique legacy of this landmark community.**
- 6. Traveling to and within Riverside's CBD via foot, bike, train, or car should be safe and convenient.**

Framework Plan

Riverside's CBD already has a strong urban fabric and the Plan recognizes that vast changes in land use are not necessary to achieving a lively and active place. Riverside's zoning ordinance, which was recently updated in 2009, provides the main framework for the future land use vision, see **Figure 2.1**. Much of the Riverside CBD Plan focuses on the strategies that the Village, community organizations, and residents can engage in to help strengthen the district without significant land use changes.

The Framework Plan, as shown in **Figure 2.2**, is one of the central elements of this Plan and summarizes the recommendations. Not all of the plan's recommendations can be included in a physical map. Further detail on the strategies is provided in the following section. **Figure 2.3** highlights the existing land uses in the CBD today.

Figure 2.1. Central Business District future land uses



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Land Use Descriptions

Mixed-Use

The areas around Centennial Plaza, much of Burlington and Quincy Streets, and sections of Longcommon south of the railroad have been designated mixed-use, largely reflecting their existing mix of residential, commercial, and office uses. Many of the landmark buildings, as well as those contributing to the traditional feel of the CBD, are two to three stories in height with the ground floor designed for retail and restaurant activities. However, this land use designation has also been applied to single-use buildings, particularly on the north side of Burlington Street. As redevelopment opportunities arise, these buildings should be replaced with new buildings that accommodate a mix of uses, as designated in the existing zoning ordinance.

Commercial and Office

This land use designation applies to sections of Burlington Street where retail, office, and commercial services occur in stand-alone buildings. Current uses include a grocery store and funeral home, as well as medical, dental, insurance, and law offices. As redevelopment opportunities arise, some of these buildings should be replaced with buildings that have a mix of uses, as designated in the existing zoning ordinance.

Auto-Oriented Service

This land use designation applies to parcels currently associated with auto-oriented businesses. Currently, one auto-maintenance provider is located on East Avenue and two auto body repair shops are located on Quincy Street. As redevelopment opportunities arise, these spaces should transition to provide a mix of uses, as designated in the existing zoning ordinance.

Single-Family Residential

Within the study area, this land use designation applies only to a small section along Burlington Street. It denotes residential uses that are composed of single-family detached housing.

Multi-Family Residential

This land use designation includes a variety of multi-family residential uses, from two-unit buildings to four-story multi-family apartment buildings and condominiums. The majority of the multi-family residential buildings are located along Forest Avenue, Pine Avenue, and Riverside Road. Multi-family housing is also present in the mixed-use buildings, but those are included in the mixed-use designation.

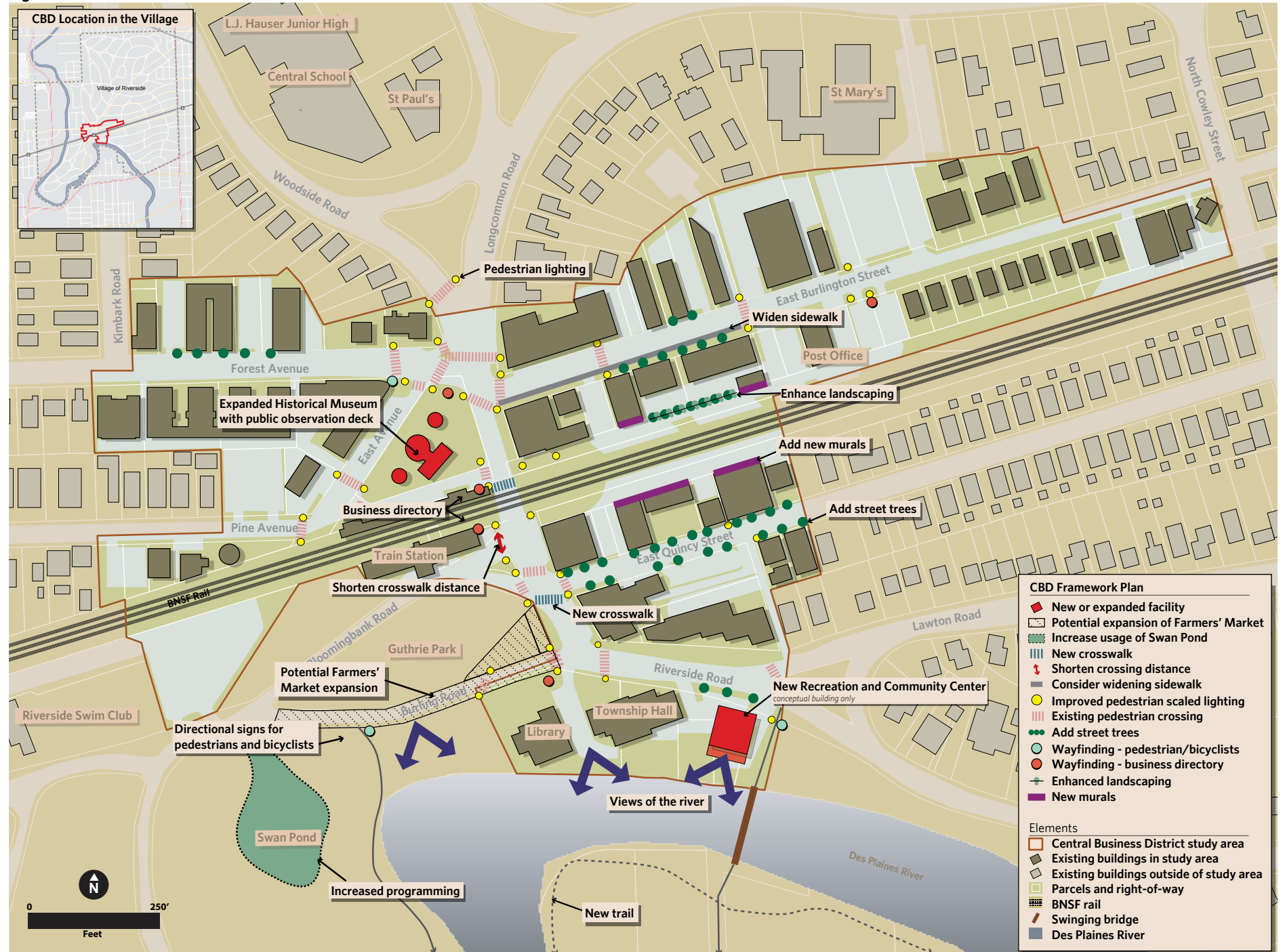
Institutional

This land use designation applies to the major institutions within or near Riverside's CBD, including the religious buildings, the post office, schools, and municipal buildings. The municipal buildings include the Riverside Township Hall, Village Police Station, two Village fire stations, and the Water Tower and Well Houses, which are home to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Riverside Historic Museum. The Riverside Train Station is also included here.

Open Space

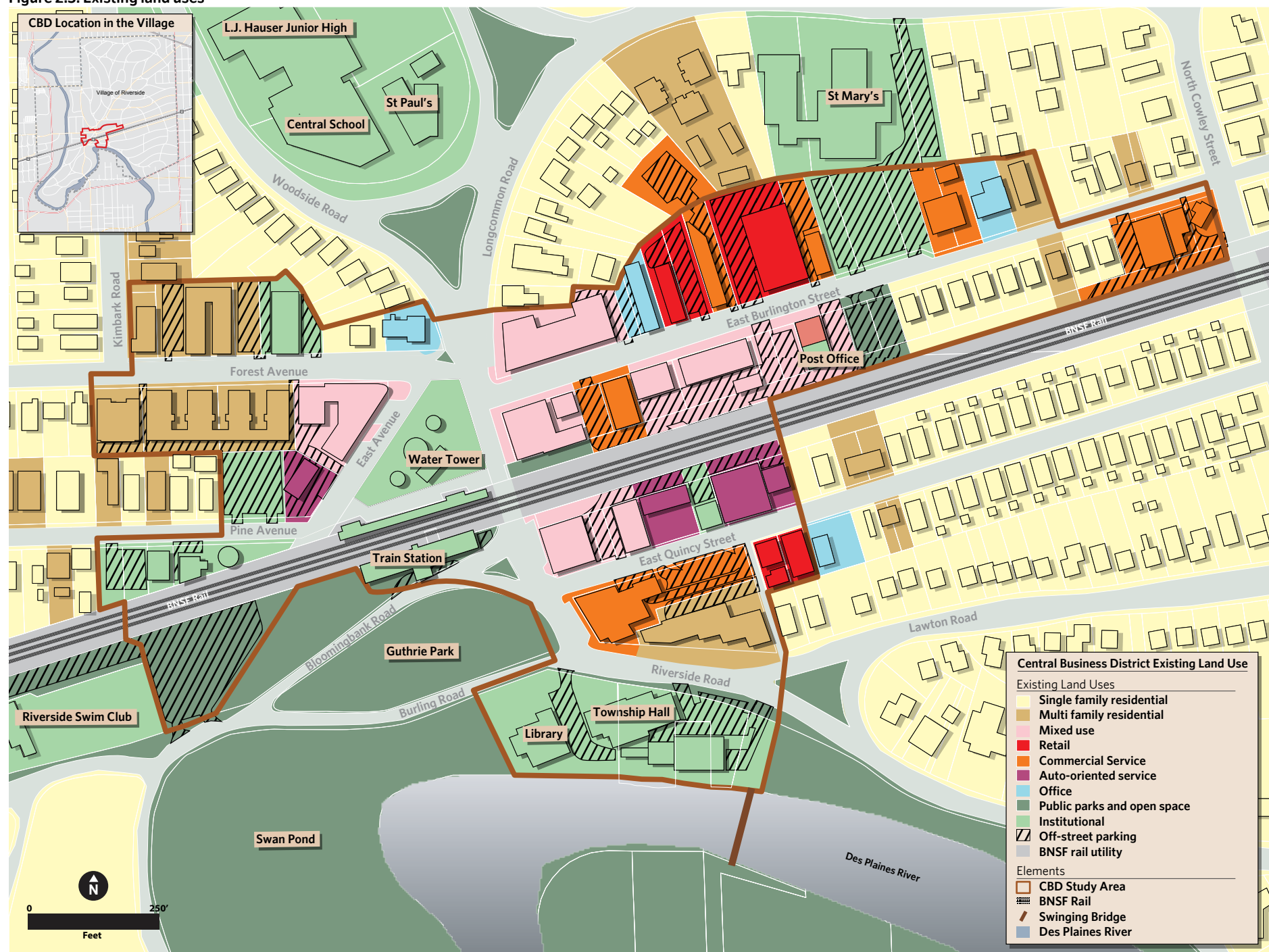
Open space owned and managed by the Village and protected in perpetuity is designated as Open Space. This designation applies to the public parks, including Centennial Plaza, Guthrie Park, and Swan Pond Park, and follows the open space components of Olmsted and Vaux's original plan for Riverside.

Figure 2.2. Central Business District Framework Plan



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 2.3. Existing land uses





Chapter 3:

Plan Recommendations

This chapter of the Plan presents the recommended strategies for achieving the vision of Riverside's CBD. The recommendations are categorized into six sections corresponding with the six principles of the plan.

The sections are:

- 1. Diversify Riverside's CBD**
- 2. Increase the Visibility of Riverside's CBD**
- 3. Enhance Street Appeal**
- 4. Build Connections to the Riverfront**
- 5. Preserve and Promote Riverside's Legacy**
- 6. Make the CBD Easy to Visit**

Each section includes the following information:

- The principle identified through the public outreach process.
 - A summary of the existing conditions that relate to the principle.
 - Proposed strategies for implementing the vision.
-

1. Diversify Riverside's CBD

Principle: Riverside's CBD should be a lively, active place that provides a mix of retail, restaurants, services, and amenities for residents and visitors.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Riverside's CBD is home to 61 businesses and has approximately 96,000 square feet of ground floor retail and service space. It has a relatively small retail and restaurant base, centered on Burlington Street, East Avenue, Longcommon Road, and Quincy Street. Service businesses, rather than retail and restaurants, occupy much of the ground floor spaces, see **Table 3.1**. Many of the retail businesses within the CBD have been in the community for a long time. The largest retailer is Riverside Foods, a long-standing full service grocery store. Several businesses, such as Higgins Glass Studio and Aunt Diana's, serve unique niches and attract patrons from an area considerably larger than the Village. Riverside's office market is very localized with most offices requiring less than 2,500 square feet.

Table 3.1. Business mix within the Central Business District

BUSINESS TYPE	NUMBER
Retail Stores	9
Restaurants	8
Banks	3
Personal and Consumer Services	19
Offices	22
Total	61

Source: Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, 2012.

From an assessment of the market, it is clear that Riverside residents are spending most of their restaurant, grocery, and other entertainment dollars outside of the Village. Compared to other similar communities, Riverside's total retail sales are very low and are also low on a per household basis. With low total retail sales yet high retail sales potential per household, there is room for moderate growth.

Despite these conditions, residents frequently visit the CBD. According to a recent survey conducted by graduate students at the University of Illinois at Chicago, 78 percent of residents reported that they visit the CBD at least once a week. This is a very high share considering the limited number of businesses. Residents would like to see more retail and restaurant options in Riverside's CBD, allowing them to spend more time and money in the Village. Business owners also reported that they would like to see the Village's business image improve.

New residential construction is not likely to occur in the near or medium term in Riverside's CBD. Several new residential projects came on the market as the recession was underway, making it difficult to sell or lease units. Riverside is not alone in this situation, as many communities have buildings that came on the market too late and have unsold or vacant units. While there is not a market for new condominiums at the moment, there is a market for higher quality rental buildings for younger and older individuals.

Recommended Strategies

1.1 Develop a shop local campaign.

The shopping habits of Riverside residents play a significant role in the economic health of the CBD. Residents frequently visit the district and are potentially the easiest group of people to attract to patronize local businesses. They also have a vested interest in a thriving CBD because it will not only mean that they have amenities and services nearby, but could also increase their residential property values and help diversify the Village's tax base.

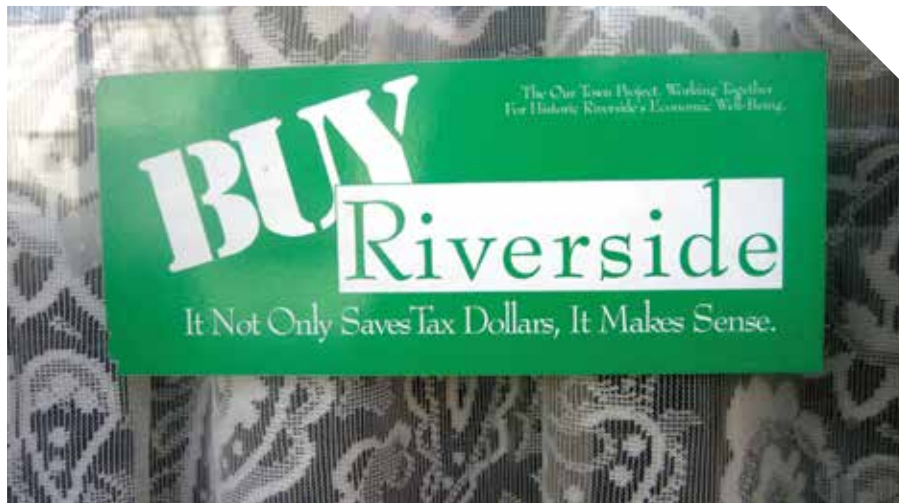
Given that Riverside residents are currently doing most of their shopping outside of the Village, shifting just a portion of their spending habits could have a dramatic positive impact on local businesses. This will help existing businesses stay and prosper in the community, as well as show potential new businesses that residents are interested in supporting them in their community. The benefits of shopping locally have been documented from a number of different organizations and research groups. Several studies have shown that money spent at a locally-owned business stays in the local economy and continues to strengthen the economic base of the community.¹

In the mid-1990s, Riverside launched a shop local campaign, Buy Riverside, as part of the Our Town Project. At that time, the shop local movement was a relatively new phenomenon and has subsequently been gaining steam in recent years. Since Riverside's

¹ Civic Economics, "Economic Impact Case Study: Local Merchants and Chain Retailers" 2002, accessed Feb.1, 2013, <http://www.civiceconomics.com/app/download/5841748704/Lamar+Retail+Analysis.pdf>.

last campaign, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) has compiled best practices on successful campaigns and offers a number of resources for local groups. The Village should partner with the Riverside Chamber of Commerce to re-establish a shop local campaign that is based on the best practices used in other campaigns regionally and nationally. The campaign should inform residents of the benefits associated with supporting local businesses and aim to change purchasing behavior. While the CBD is the focus of this plan, all of Riverside's businesses should be included in this effort.

This long term initiative will have a number of components, including establishing a shop local brand, promoting local businesses through advertising and promotions, and hosting community events. In the short term, the Village should establish a steering committee composed of the community's most successful and visible retailers as well as residents who have expertise in this matter. Local First Chicago, which is a non-profit network of locally-owned, independent businesses, organizations, and residents, could be a valuable resource given their experience launching shop local campaigns. The Economic Development Commission could take the lead on starting this project.



In the mid-1990s, Riverside launched a shop local campaign, Buy Riverside.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

1.2 Promote local procurement among Village institutions.

A natural extension of a shop local campaign targeted to residents is a concerted effort for Village institutions to shop locally as well.² Through increased local procurement of local goods and services, Village institutions, such as the municipal and township governments, the Riverside Public Library, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, and schools and churches within Riverside, can further support the local business economy.

The Village should first work to establish a goal of using local services or products where financially feasible and available for their own purchasing practices. The Village should identify its procurement needs and prioritize local sources where possible. This could be incorporated as a general guideline within the Village's existing procurement practices. The Village should then encourage other institutions to develop similar practices.

1.3 Streamline development review process for CBD proposals.

Studies have shown that local government's economic development efforts are often most effective when they are providing regulatory assistance and helping to create a supportive culture between the local public and private sectors versus direct financial incentives.³ A community's regulatory environment directly impacts the ease of doing business in the Village. It can be hard on a small or new business, which typically does not have a lot of resources, to navigate the process, especially if a municipality's regulatory policies are riddled with delays, confusing and redundant steps, and multiple approval processes.

In Riverside, residents and business owners often cited concerns with the number of steps and the length of time it takes projects to get through the Village's approval process. For projects within the CBD, the Landscape Advisory Commission, the Preservation Commission, and the Plan Commission each need to approve a project before it moves on to the Village Board. In other communities, this process simply requires the approval of the Plan Commission before the Village Board. Riverside should work to create a better balance between the steps of the regulatory process while still preserving the integrity of the community's vision for the CBD.

It is important to first make sure that local officials and commissioners have a solid understanding of the current regulatory system. The Village, working with the Chamber, could host a workshop for elected officials and commissioners that walks them through the process as if they were an existing business making a change or a new business interested in moving into the Village. This perspective may be new to some of the

2 Civic Economics, "Procurement Matters" 2012, accessed Feb.1, 2013, <http://www.civiceconomics.com/app/download/6893229004/Wist+2012+Final+120402.pdf>.

3 Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, "Growing Local Living Economies: A Grassroots Approach to Economic Development," 2009, accessed Feb. 1, 2013, <http://bealocalist.org/grassroots-approach-economic-development>.

community leaders and can provide them with information on the time and costs of the existing process. In preparation for the workshop, the organizers should gather existing businesses' perspectives on the current regulatory processes to provide further insight.

Based on the workshop discussion, the Village should work to improve the regulatory environment by ensuring that the review process and other policies are streamlined and transparent. A successful system is one in which there is consistency and clarity about expectations, timelines, regulations, and costs. Reducing uncertainty about the process will help businesses plan accordingly. The Village should consider consolidating the commission review process for projects located within the CBD and allowing the Plan Commission, which has representatives from each of the other commissions, to take the primary review role. This has the potential of saving time while still maintaining the review needed. Instead of the review process, the Landscape Advisory Commission and Preservation Commission, as well as the Economic Development Commission, could take a more active role in establishing guidelines and communicating clear expectations before projects are submitted to the approval process, see strategies 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 3.4, 3.6, 4.5, 5.5, and 6.6. Potential partners for this project include the Chamber of Commerce and the Village's Economic Development Commission, whose mission is focused on helping to create successful business districts within Riverside.



Riverside Foods released a line of beverages called Refreshing Riverside. The soda is created and bottled by Filbert's Chicago

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Key Questions to Ask About your Regulatory Process

- Are your local agencies charged with regulatory processes attuned to the needs of businesses, particularly efficiency and transparency concerns?
- Are there one-stop approvals or other ways to expedite review processes?
- How long does it take to get a new development proposal in front of a local planning board?
- Do businesses have access to clear information about local regulations from one source?
- Is there a designated city staff person who helps facilitate the process to ensure that things go smoothly?

Source: National League of Cities, Center for Innovation and Research, "The Role of Local Elected Officials in Economic Development: 10 Things You Should Know," 2010, accessed Feb. 1, 2013, <http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/center-for-research-and-innovation/economic-development/the-role-of-local-elected-officials-in-economic-development>.

1.4 Create a supportive culture between business owners and policymakers.

The health of Riverside's CBD is dependent on retaining and supporting the existing businesses. In addition, best practices indicate that local government economic development efforts should spend the majority of their time supporting local small businesses and entrepreneurs in order to grow their economies. It has been shown to be more effective than providing incentives to lure nonresident companies to their communities.

Riverside should continue to work on efforts to create a supportive business culture in the Village. There are a number of strategies that the Village can take to reach this goal. A key ingredient is to provide opportunities for small business owners and policymakers to engage with each other, either through social events or specific projects. Many of the strategies throughout this plan will require cooperation between these two groups; by working together, each group will hopefully build a better understanding of what the needs and pressures are of their counterparts. This will also help the Village communicate the services they can offer to local business owners, such as assistance in the license process and GIS Business Analyst software, and provide the Village with more information on the recent achievement of local companies. The Village can then celebrate local business accomplishments in their weekly communication strategies and other outlets, which will in turn build the Village's reputation as a business-friendly community. The Economic Development Commission could take a lead role in connecting business owners, local elected leaders, and commissioners.

1.5 Market vacant storefront opportunities.

In addition to creating a supportive environment for existing business, Riverside should continue to take an active role in attracting new businesses to the CBD. In order to provide a more compelling retail mix, several of the underutilized ground floor storefronts within the district should convert from vacant or service businesses to include retail and restaurants whenever possible. The Village should develop a comprehensive list of available spaces and focus on those with the highest potential for success. In the short term, the Village should focus business development around the Water Tower and along Burlington Street to create a critical mass of activity within sight of the train station and Longcommon Road, the most heavily traveled street in the CBD.

The Village should create an inventory of vacant storefronts with information on their basic attributes. The resulting list will help the Village and the Chamber of Commerce identify potential sites for redevelopment, as well as market them effectively to potential developers and existing businesses looking to expand their facilities. The Village and Chamber could organize tours with potential lenders to showcase the assets of the CBD building stock. The Village of Oak Park's Business Services team has experience with conducting tours and could be a potential resource. This activity could be funded by the Village within its annual budget or through volunteer efforts of the Economic Development Commission or Chamber of Commerce.

In order to effectively market available sites, Riverside should promote the characteristics in the CBD that can support retail sales, including high daily pedestrian counts, sufficient nearby population and employment bases, and business owner experiences. The consistent use and promotion of a Village graphic and tagline provides a visual hook to uniquely identify those businesses, programs, events, products, people, and the physical environment that define Riverside's CBD. The Village may also consider developing a set of materials to help support the message. The materials could include specific data about the CBD and could be used by local elected officials, Village staff, the Riverside Chamber, and individual businesses or landowners.

Figure 3.1. Art in vacant storefront windows in Seattle



Source: Eliza Rankin.

1.6 Activate vacant storefronts with public art.

Like Riverside, many municipalities struggle with how to reactivate vacant storefronts in between tenants. Installing art in storefront spaces has proven to be a great way to draw positive attention to an empty retail space and allow an artist to exhibit their work, see **Figure 3.1**. This allows a property owner to reinvigorate a space and spark interest in how a space may be used. It also allows local artists and art organizations to increase the opportunities to experience art in the community. Riverside should consider creating a public art program to enliven the windows of vacant spaces throughout the CBD.

The application of a program in Riverside could include a variety of partners, such as the Riverside Art Center, Riverside's school districts, and the Riverside Public Library, and could be incorporated into community events such as the Riverside Arts Weekend. In addition, the Riverside Historical Commission could also use this opportunity to extend the exhibition space of the museum to other areas of the CBD. With the extensive archival materials at its disposal, the Commission could use historic photos and design educational boards to add life to existing vacant storefronts and promote the legacy of the community.

The Village should identify and work with storefront owners to set basic parameters for how window displays could be designed. The program should be established as a collaborative effort with an understanding that the storefront space will be donated and the participating artists or organizations will be donating their time and materials. Potential partners include the Economic Development Commission and the Riverside Chamber of Commerce.

1.7 Support current and additional community events.

Riverside has a number of community events throughout the year that bring residents and visitors into the CBD. These events, like the Farmers' Market, Cruise Nights and Car Show, Riverside Arts Weekend, and Holiday Stroll, help to activate the CBD and bring potential customers past existing businesses. The Village should continue to work with partners to support community events and investigate ways to expand or add more events to the community calendar. The CBD has several areas that are conducive to hosting events, including Swan Pond Park, see **Figure 3.2**. The Village and partners should look for ways to strengthen the connection between the community events and the district's businesses, whether through local procurement practices or direct engagement during events.

During the planning process, residents envisioned creating additional community events that highlight the landmark status of the Village, like 'Olmsted Days' or a 'Wright Weekend.' The events could help promote the design legacy of the Village and potentially draw in more visitors from the region. There are a number of potential partners and lead implementers based on the event theme, see strategy 5.4. The Village should continue to work to harness volunteer energy.

1.8 Support Riverside Farmers' Market.

Now in its fourth year, the Riverside Farmers' Market is a volunteer-coordinated weekly gathering on Wednesdays from 2:30 to 7:00 p.m. during the summer months. The market offers produce, meats, baked goods, confections, locally prepared foods, and other specialty goods and services. Often working with the Riverside Public Library, the market also offers live music, crafts, and activities for children, as well as education on a variety of topics related to food.

Originally within the off-street parking lot between Township Hall and the Riverside Public Library, the Farmers' Market is extending out towards Guthrie Park. Looking ahead, the growing Farmers' Market may need a larger footprint to accommodate the number of vendors and customers attracted to the weekly event. The Village should continue to assist the Farmers' Market and look for ways to strengthen its support. If the market needs to expand, the Village should help the market find space and areas that meet their criteria of flat surfaces, electricity connections, and vendor parking. Smaller infrastructure changes, such as an electrical connection, may help expand the market along Burling or Bloomingbank Roads. The Village could seek funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers' Market Promotion Program, which offers grants to improve and expand direct producer-to-consumer marketing opportunities. Grant funds can be used for promotion as well as capital investments.

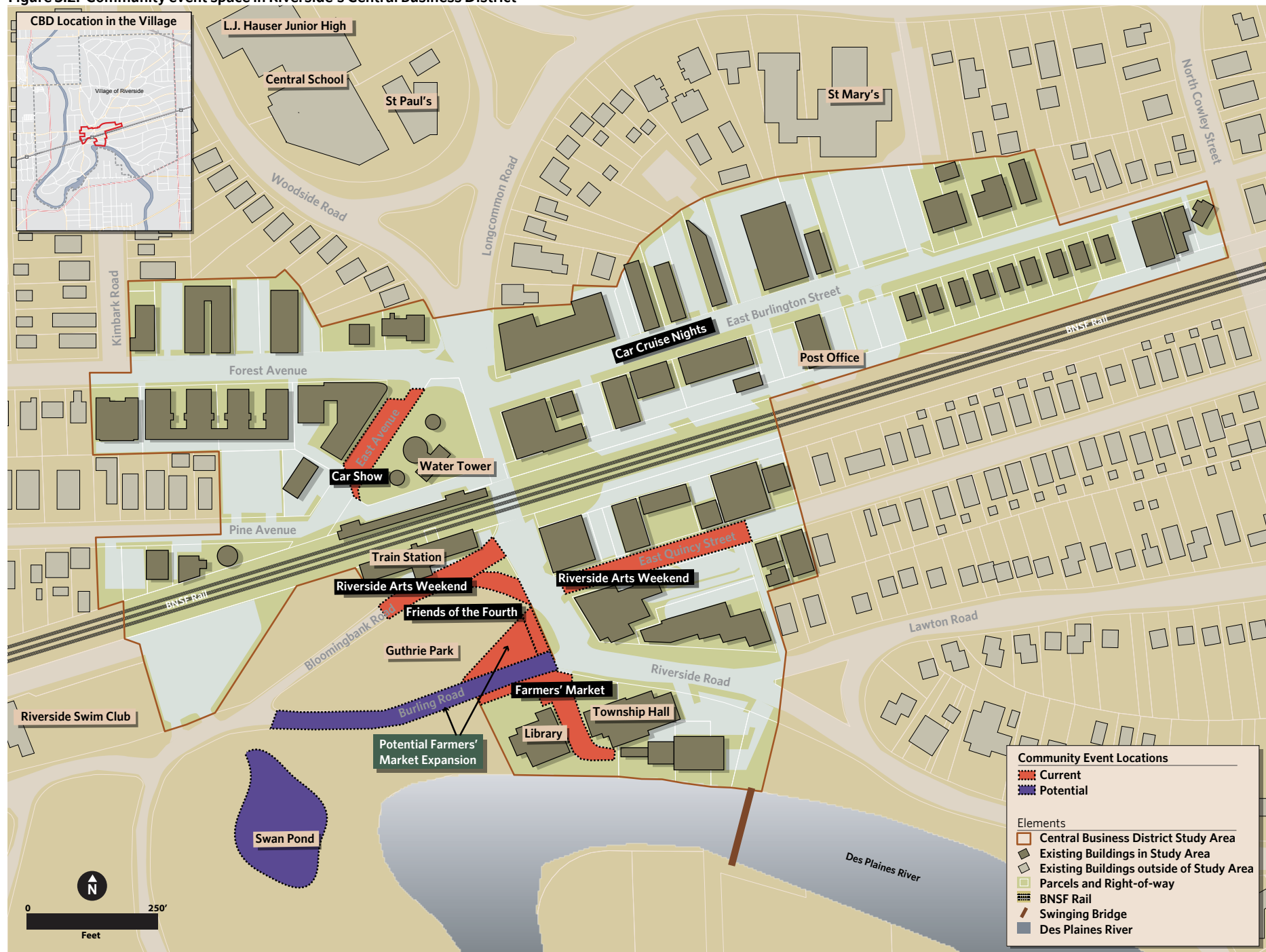


Stands from Lyons Fruit Farm and Montalbano Farms.
Source: Riverside Farmers' Market.

1.9 Continue support of multi-family buildings.

Riverside's CBD is home to several large multi-family buildings as well as smaller two-unit homes. These units provide valuable housing options for the community and allow people to live within close walking distance of the CBD and Metra Station. Riverside should continue to support multi-family housing within this area. While new residential construction is unlikely in the short term, there is a market for higher quality rental buildings. Renovation or upgrades to the existing housing should be supported. Over the long term, the Village should continue its support of new residential construction in the form of mixed-use buildings or multi-family apartments and condominiums.

Figure 3.2. Community event space in Riverside's Central Business District



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

2. Increase the Visibility of Riverside's CBD

Principle: Connections to Riverside's CBD should be clear and welcoming from streets, bicycle routes, and rail corridors.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Riverside's CBD is located within the Village and not along the major roads that border the village. People traveling on Harlem Avenue, Ogden Avenue, First Avenue, and 26th Street may be unaware of the CBD's presence less than half a mile away. As expected, the volume of vehicles on Riverside's CBD streets is much lower than the volumes on nearby arterials. Longcommon Road is the most heavily traveled street within the CBD. With an average of 11,600 vehicles a day, Longcommon has approximately one-third the amount of traffic on Harlem Avenue and a quarter of the amount on First Avenue.

Riverside's unique, contemplative streetscapes may also deter people from entering the Village. There are no visual cues from the heavily traveled corridors that a commercial district is located within the Village. The curvilinear streets do not provide a clear, intuitive route to and from the CBD, leading to the perception that traveling within the Village can be confusing. There are no signs directing travelers to Riverside's CBD along Harlem Avenue and First Avenue. The sign at First Avenue and Forest Avenue indicates to travelers that they are entering the Village of Riverside but does not promote the district directly.

However, the presence of Riverside's CBD is immediately apparent to those traveling by train. To Metra train riders, the William Le Baron Jenney-designed Water Tower and associated Well Houses provide an impressive landmark announcing the presence of the Village and the CBD. The historic Riverside Train Station and Arcade Building also draw attention to this area. The uniqueness of the station area is eye-catching and attracts visitors to the CBD.

Most of the other communities along this rail line have a frontage road adjacent to the railroad, which allows businesses to face the street and the railroad. Riverside was designed with half blocks lining either side of the railroad and no frontage road system. While this ultimately creates quieter, more human-scaled streets within Riverside's CBD, the backs of businesses on Burlington and Quincy Streets face the train. This diminishes the advertising potential of business storefronts and also reduces the attractiveness of the rail corridor itself. Residents have expressed concern that the view of the Village from the train does not communicate to riders that they have arrived at a special commercial district. Many have stated that from this vantage point, the Village is not living up to its motto of the "Village in a forest."

Business signs are an important part of the character of any downtown. Some business owners expressed concern that the Village's sign ordinance is hindering basic awareness of existing businesses to potential customers already in the CBD. With requirements that place signs parallel to the street, a pedestrian can have difficulty seeing what businesses are located ahead of them on the sidewalk.

Recommended Strategies

2.1 Expand gateway signage at key intersections.

With multiple routes into the area from Harlem Avenue, Ogden Avenue, and First Avenue, signs highlighting the presence of Riverside's CBD on these heavily traveled corridors will help draw potential customers into the district and help support local businesses. As part of the Frederic Law Olmsted in Riverside Education and Design (FRED) event, the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside recently held a design competition for an enhanced gateway sign on First Avenue. The winning entry, see **Figure 3.3**, was chosen by a panel of experts and a public vote. This community-approved design can be adapted for other prime locations, see **Figure 3.4**. The new gateway signage should communicate the presence of Riverside's CBD, not simply the Village. It could also include a directory of key businesses at locations with pedestrian traffic. With a business directory, the Village may be able to find partial funding for the new signs from leaders within the business community. Potential partners include the Riverside Chamber of Commerce.



In 2012, a directional sign to Historic Riverside was installed along Interstate-55.
Source: Village of Riverside.

Figure 3.3. Enhanced gateway sign on First Avenue

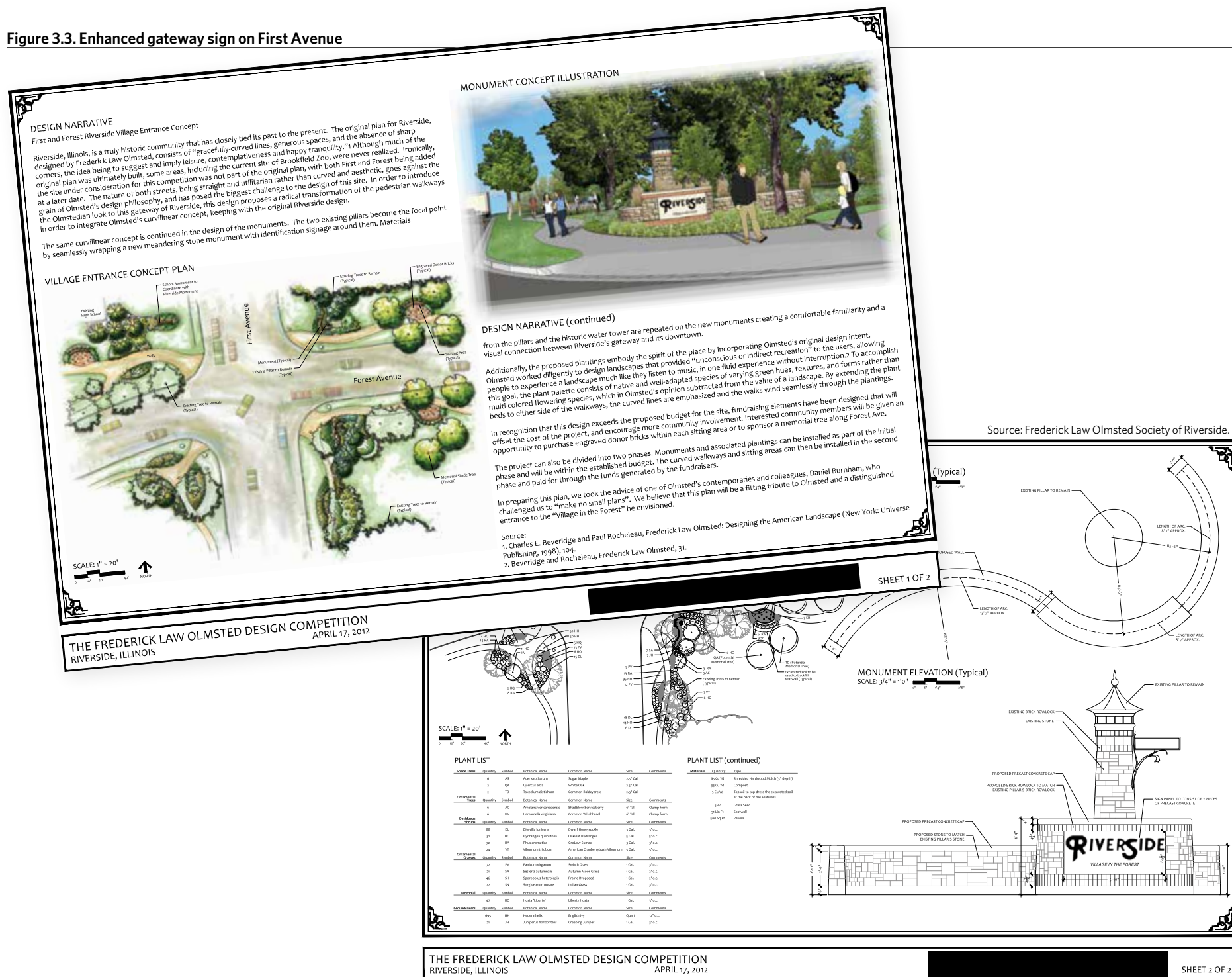


Figure 3.4. Village gateway sign locations



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Current Village of Riverside Gateway Sign at 1st Avenue. The gateway sign should be improved to include a mention of the CBD.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

- Map Features
- Gateway Sign Locations
 - Central Business District
 - Village of Riverside Boundary
 - BNSF Rail
 - Metra Station
 - Adjacent Municipal Boundaries
 - Major Roads
 - Des Plaines River



2.2 Add wayfinding techniques to the main streets leading into the CBD.

Once visitors enter the Village off of the main arterials, they could have difficulty finding the commercial district if they do not already know the way. To combat the perception that Riverside streets can be confusing to navigate, the Village should consider the addition of visual clues that subtly give drivers confidence that they are headed in the right direction. This is particularly important at key intersections where the “main” road may not always be clear.

Large or directional signs on posts are unlikely to meet the historic vision of the Village streets, which should retain the open views. However, standard lane striping on a few of the main roads that lead into the district could provide enough distinction to drivers. Sharrows, or shared bike lane markings, could provide both bicyclists and drivers clues that they are going towards the CBD. Directional pavement markings or directional arrows on curbs could also help travelers with minimal disruption of the scenic views. Known as “breadcrumbs” in the urban design profession, the goal is to give subtle directional clues to someone who needs them. There are many different options that have been used in other communities, see **Figure 3.5**. The Village should investigate potential approaches for specific areas and work to implement them. Potential partners include the Preservation and Landscape Advisory Commissions.

2.3 Add directional signage from Riverside Train Station.

After disembarking the Metra train, a new visitor may not realize where the different civic, commercial, or natural amenities are located within the CBD. The main commercial activity on Burlington Street is not visible from the train station and the presence of the recreational amenities along the Des Plaines River may also not be immediately obvious to someone who is new to the area.

The Village should add signage at the train station to direct people to the different destinations, see **Figure 3.6**. Signs should be located on both the north and south station platforms and feature destinations most relevant to visitors, such as the Riverside Historical Museum, Riverside Public Library, and the Des Plaines River. There are several design options that the Village could pursue, see **Figure 3.7** for examples. The signs should reflect the historic context of the Village, correspond well with the train station, and be designed for pedestrians. If successful, similar signage may be appropriate at other key entry points that direct pedestrians to these different destinations, see strategy 2.4. The location of the signage should be coordinated with the BNSF and Metra. Potential partners include the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Preservation Commission.

Figure 3.5. Examples of wayfinding techniques for bicycles



Bike route indicator on the pavement. Riverside could color code these markings to mark the Village's three bicycle routes.

Source: Seattle Department of Transportation.



An example of a bike trail sign in Montreal.

Source: Alanah Heffez.

Figure 3.6. Gateway sign locations within the Central Business District



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.7. Examples of business directories for pedestrians



Directional sign in Central Park.
Source: Simon Music.



CBD directional sign in Franklin, Tennessee.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



A directory sign in Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario, Canada. Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

2.4 Add directional signage on regional bicycle routes.

Riverside's Wright Bicycle Route connects to the Salt Creek Bicycle Trail at Des Plaines Avenue and 26th Street and at Millbridge Road and 39th Street. The connection to the regional bicycle network is an asset for the Village, as well as the CBD. Directing bicyclists to the amenities within the CBD could help attract people to the business district and support local businesses.

The Village should consider adding directional signs at these key gateways to the regional bicycle trail system that inform bicyclists of the CBD's amenities, see **Figure 3.6**. The wayfinding signs could display destinations, distances, and "riding time." There are many different options that have been used in other communities, see **Figure 3.8**. The Village should investigate approaches that are sensitive to the context of Des Plaines Avenue and 26th Street and Millbridge Road and 39th Street locations. The Riverside Cycling Club could be a potential partner. The West Central Municipal Conference (WCMC) is committed to improving bicycling opportunities in the area and may assist Riverside in finding grant funding. Potential grant funding sources include the Illinois Trails Grant Program, Transportation Alternatives, Surface Transportation Program, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program.

Figure 3.8. Examples of directional signage for bicyclists



Far left:
Existing bike trail sign
in Riverside.
Source: Chicago
Metropolitan Agency for
Planning.

Top Right:
Example of
directional signage
outside of London.
Source: Pesky Library.

Bottom Right:
Existing bike trail
signage in Central
Park's "The Ramble."
Source: Phil Whitehouse.

2.5 Update business sign ordinance.

In addition to directional signs, business signs help pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers understand the different commercial opportunities available in the CBD. Signs are an integral part of the character of any commercial district. To be effective, signs must call attention to the business and create an identity for the store. They also contribute to the overall image of the district and should add variety and liveliness to both the building facades and the streetscape. Given the vision for Riverside's CBD, the signs should reflect the historic character while still balancing the needs of the individual businesses.

While the ordinance does not allow pole signs or lighted signs that would be in direct conflict with the historic and pedestrian-oriented streets, it may be overly restrictive in the type, size, and location of business signage. Of particular concern to business owners is the existing prohibition on signs that are perpendicular to the building façade.

Given business concerns, the Village should work to achieve a better balance between preservation of the historic design of the commercial streets and promoting local businesses. The Village should create a new set of design guidelines that strike this balance and clearly outline expectations. Currently, there are two historic signs at the Riverside Public Library and the Water Tower that could provide a model for future business signs. The guidelines should also contemplate lighting options, see strategy 3.5. **Figure 3.9** provides a number of potential options that the Village should consider.

In addition, the Village should also consider updating the ordinance to allow signs on the backs of buildings specifically those located on the south side of Burlington Street and the north side of Quincy Street adjacent to the railroad. These signs would be located in view of Metra train riders as they pass through the community. Potential partners for this strategy include the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Plan, Economic Development, and Preservation Commissions.

Figure 3.9. Examples of business signs



Business signs in Downtown Franklin, Tenn.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



The library sign in Riverside that may be used as a model for business sign designs.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Business signs in Downtown Galena, Illinois.
Source: Dennis Carr.



Example of business signs used along a downtown street.
Source: LaCitta Vita.

2.6 Establish sign improvement grant program.

As previously discussed, signs contribute to the overall image of the district. Several of the existing signs, while they may meet Village ordinance, do not positively contribute to the historic character. With design guidelines in place, see **Strategy 2.5**, the Village should investigate ways to establish a sign improvement grant program. While several facades in Riverside's CBD could benefit from larger scale architectural enhancements, a sign improvement program could significantly enhance the overall aesthetics of street through application to several buildings while keeping costs low for the Village government. Similar to Riverside's Tree Cooperative Program, the sign improvement grant program could provide matching funds under a certain amount for business sign improvements that correspond with the updated sign guidelines. Potential partners include the Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Commission.

2.7 Work with property owners to improve landscaping along the railroad.

Unlike most of the other communities along the BNSF rail line, Riverside's commercial buildings face away from the railroad. Train riders have a mostly unobstructed view of the back of commercial buildings, off-street parking spaces, and ancillary structures that are needed for local business operations. Improvements to the landscaping can help create a more unified appearance for this area and hide some of the features that detract from the overall feel of the CBD.

Safe train operation requires that land within 30 feet of the center line of the outside railroad tracks be kept clear to preserve sightlines. However, there is an additional 15 feet of land between the railroad right-of-way and the commercial parcels that is owned by a variety of landowners, including the BNSF, the Village of Riverside, and private citizens. This area, along with the commercial parcels themselves, could be landscaped to improve the view and is the focus of this strategy.

The addition of trees and shrubs can help hide the necessary, but sometimes unattractive, components of the backs of commercial buildings. **Figure 3.10** identifies areas where small changes in landscaping could go a long way to improving the feel of the corridor. Groupings of trees could fill in some of the existing gaps. Trees and shrubs could also be planted to screen any service areas not already surrounded by a masonry enclosure. The Village maintains landscaping guidelines that should be utilized here, but with the recognition that the constraints and objectives of the plantings are not the same in this

context as those of the parkways and other Village open spaces. This project depends on the willingness of private landowners to participate; the Village should work with community organizations and residents to build support and assistance.

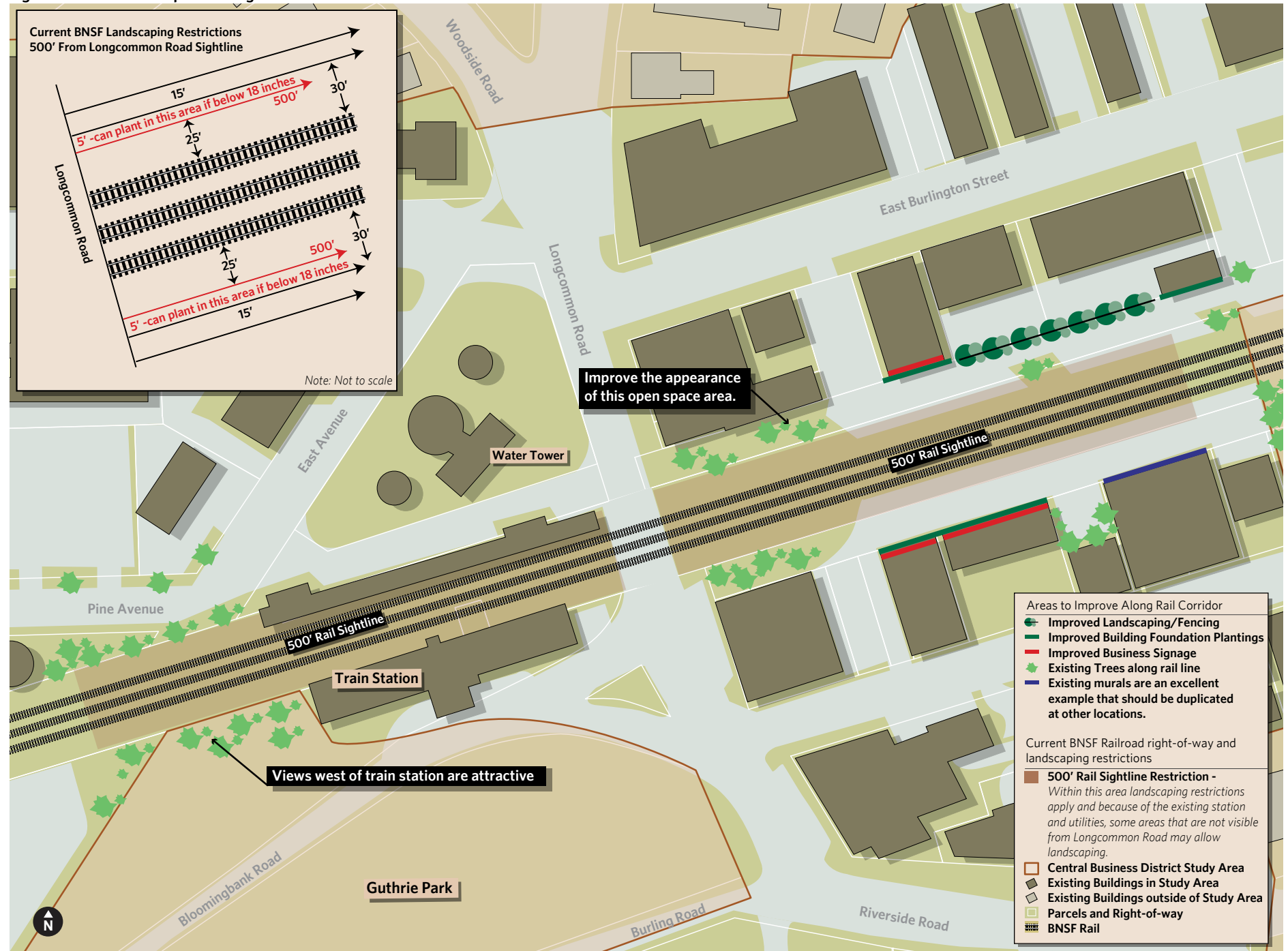
Currently, Village ordinance requires sites within the B-2 district that are adjacent to residential properties provide a visual barrier buffer (Section 10-9-7), see **Figure 3.11**. The Village should consider updating this ordinance to also be applicable to sites within the B-2 district that are adjacent to the railroad. As some of these sites are redeveloped over time, the railscape can be incrementally improved. Fencing along the commercial property lines could help give the area a more formalized character as well as keep pedestrian traffic away from railroad operations. A wrought-iron fence has the potential of corresponding well with the more historically-appropriate street furniture items already present in Riverside's CBD.

Overhead utility wires and poles, running parallel on both the north and south sides of the railroad tracks, detract from the corridor. The Village should consider burying these wires to improve the overall appearance. This project will involve coordination with ComEd and the landowners along the line. Given the high expense of this project, burying the utility wires is a lower priority than the other items in this strategy.

2.8 Encourage art along the railroad in the CBD.

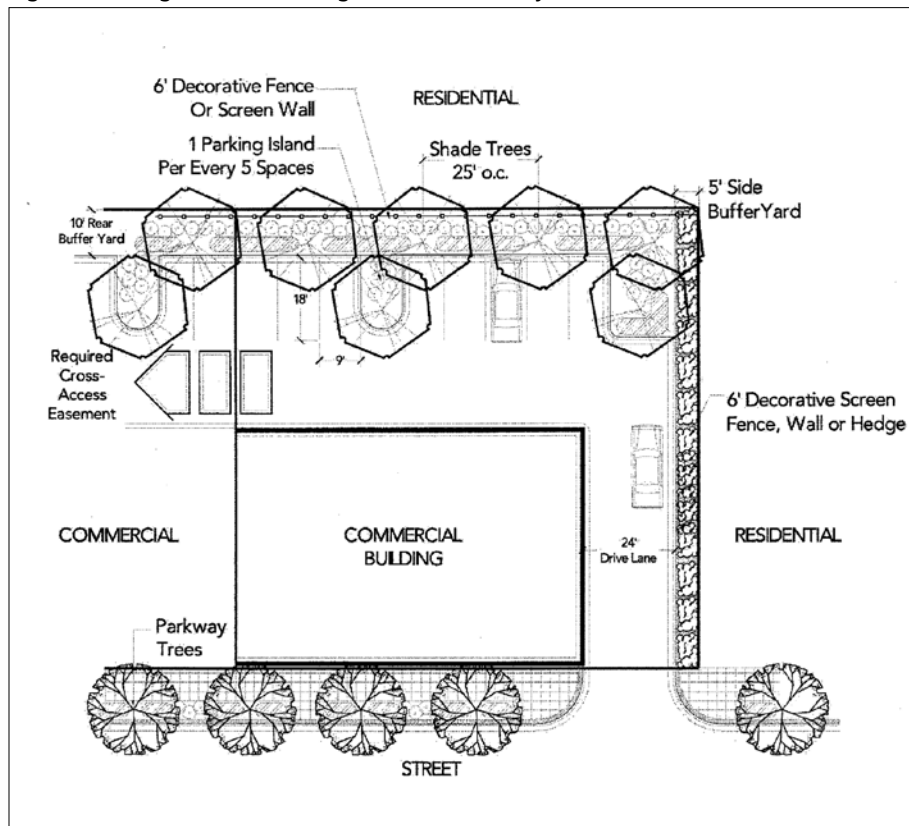
Riverside residents expressed an appreciation for the current efforts of local building owners to improve the aesthetics of the railroad corridor, specifically the public artwork decorating the back of Metal Mites. Additional murals could help improve the aesthetics of this area, see **Figure 3.12**. The Village should consider establishing basic design guidelines for art and murals on the backs of district buildings and encourage private property owners to participate. The design guidelines should set clear expectations for the artwork, allowing people to feel like they can easily participate. Potential partners include the Riverside Arts Center, Riverside's school districts, and private residents and business owners. The Riverside Public Library and the Riverside Historical Commission, with its collection of archival materials, could be a resource.

Figure 3.10. Areas to improve along rail corridor



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.11. Diagram from existing ordinance on rear yard buffers



Source: Riverside municipal ordinance.

Figure 3.12. Existing murals decorating Metal Mites



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

3. Enhance Street Appeal

Principle: The streets and sidewalks of Riverside's CBD should be inviting, comfortable places that help sustain economic activity.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Riverside's CBD is a distinct and attractive area that is defined by the landmark buildings as well as the public open spaces: Centennial Plaza, Guthrie Park, and Swan Pond Park. Architecturally significant buildings can be seen in all directions when one disembarks from the Metra train. Burlington Street, the major business thoroughfare, is terminated at the west by Centennial Plaza, which is home to the Water Tower and Well Houses. This triangular public space is intersected with curvilinear paths, lined with public benches, and provides visitors with views of landmark structures and people watching opportunities. Another terminated vista, Longcommon Road, provides a direct view to Riverside Township Hall.

The CBD's historic building stock, along with more contemporary structures, house a mix of civic, business, and residential uses within the historic structure of Olmsted and Vaux's plan. They frame the streets and sidewalks and provide visitors and residents with beautiful views as they walk through the area. The combination of this urban form visually defines the business district as distinct from the other areas of the Village.

However, there are some areas where the views, landscaping, and sense of enclosure could be improved within the CBD. Along Burlington and Quincy Streets, sidewalks are often interrupted by driveways to several off-street parking lots. This reduces that sense of enclosure that makes pedestrians feel more comfortable. Several areas along Burlington and Quincy Streets lack street trees, which provide beauty and shade.

While appreciative of the volunteer planting efforts, some residents expressed concern with the amount and quality of the landscaping throughout the district, citing that many of the planting beds do not reflect a business district context. Landscaping efforts and irrigation are dependent of the volunteer efforts of Riverside Springs Ahead, the Landscape Advisory Commission, and private businesses. Ongoing maintenance and watering is a challenge.

Riverside's historic gas streetlights are an attractive feature that contributes to the village's identity. However, many residents stated that the low levels of light coming from the historic streetlights, as well as businesses, in the CBD contribute to the perception that there is little reason to visit the area in the evening.

Recommended Strategies

3.1 Complete street tree canopy.

Attractive street trees can enhance the atmosphere of the streetscape and entice people to walk. By helping to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, street trees have been shown to produce economic benefits for properties nearby. Studies have shown that business districts with plentiful street trees draw shoppers to travel further, stay longer, and spend nine to twelve percent more for products.⁴ Street trees can also increase nearby property values and reduce building energy costs.

There are specific areas within the CBD that lack street trees and the Village should work to fill these gaps, see **Figure 3.13**. Riverside is well known for its natural-like groups of trees within the residential areas and open spaces. However the context of the CBD, and more specifically Burlington and Quincy Streets, is quite different from the famous parkways. In this context, street trees should be regularly spaced on both sides of streets. Trees should be planted every 25 - 30 feet, with spacing varied as needed to correspond with other pedestrian features in the sidewalk. Ideally, the average distance between trees should be no more than 40 feet.

Quincy Street has narrow sidewalks, which could make the planting of street trees difficult. When resurfaced, the Village should consider reducing the travel lane width so that the sidewalk can be widened to include tree beds while also preserving on-street parking. If that is deemed unfeasible in the short term, the Village could create curb extensions within the parking lane where trees can be planted, as shown in **Figure 3.14**. This step should be informed by the annual parking survey, see **Strategy 6.6**.

Trees can be expensive to install and maintain, but they are an important investment. Often business owners argue against street trees because of concerns that it may hamper business visibility. But the benefits of street trees have been shown to outweigh visibility issues by creating a pedestrian-friendly environment for customers. The strategies outlined in section 2 should help address the larger visibility issues. In addition, street trees can help make sidewalk cafés more attractive and comfortable places for customers, see **Strategy 3.6**.

The Village should continue its dedication to using native species, which tend to be adapted to the climate and require less irrigation. Potential partners include the Landscape Advisory Commission, Riverside Springs Ahead, the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, and regional partners such as the Morton Arboretum.

4 Kathleen L. Wolf, "Roadside Urban Trees, Balancing Safety and Community Values," *Arborist News*, Dec. 2006, 56-57. Accessed Feb. 1, 2013, http://www.naturewithin.info/Roadside/ArbNews_TreeSafety.pdf.

3.2 Enhance sidewalk landscaping.

Riverside's unique sidewalk planting beds distinguish it from other downtowns. More level with the sidewalk than traditional main street planters, the planting beds feature a mix of native and more drought-resistant species. In coordination with the Riverside Public Works department, the volunteer effort of the Riverside Springs Ahead Initiative has helped to maintain the planting beds along major sections of the CBD with donations from community organizations and businesses. The Landscape Advisory Commission has also created an Adopt-a-Bed program for the CBD, where residents, businesses, and community organizations volunteer to water and perform other maintenance work for specific planting beds.

Riverside should continue to support improvements in sidewalk landscaping. Quincy Street, which lacks the planting bed infrastructure, is largely devoid of any landscaping

Figure 3.13. Examples of street trees in curb extensions



Source: Dan Burden.



Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers.

within the public right of way. As suggested in **Strategy 3.1**, the Village should investigate ways to increase landscaping opportunities on this street. There are some areas along Burlington Street where the plantings struggle to survive, potentially due to high foot traffic or lack of irrigation. Over time, the Village may need to utilize different planting methods for these locations. In addition, the beds, some of which are similar to bioswales, could function as part of the green infrastructure system if properly configured, see **Strategy 4.5**. Funding to improve sidewalk landscaping may be available through green infrastructure grants, such as the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management.

3.3 Improve landscaping and screening of parking lots.

Places are considered walkable when the walk is useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting.⁵ Walking next to an off-street parking lot is not particularly comfortable or interesting for a pedestrian. Driveways also cut across sidewalks to access parking and present hazards for people on foot. There are several areas within the CBD where a pedestrian has to walk alongside parking lots or across driveways to get to their destination. These breaks in the street wall detract from the historic, downtown feel of the area.

Riverside's zoning ordinance, specifically the building scale and design guidelines established for the B-1 and B-2 districts, is already attentive to the needs of pedestrians. When redevelopment occurs, the ordinance will help ensure that future buildings create a safe and interesting journey for the pedestrian, including moving off-street parking behind buildings and minimizing driveway cuts in the sidewalk. Many of the landmark buildings within the CBD follow these established design techniques.

In the meantime, the Village should work with owners of off-street parking lots to improve screening of these areas from the sidewalks. The goal is to extend the pedestrian-friendly environment to more sections of the street. Village ordinance can be used as a guideline, which requires off-street parking lots to be landscaped with shrubs between 18 inches and 3.5 feet high every three feet or a low pedestrian wall of the same height (Section 10-9-5). In addition, there are several parking lots that do not currently meet the interior landscaping requirements (Section 10-9-6). Dependent on private action, the Village should identify landowners and begin discussions with how to improve these areas.

⁵ Jeff Speck, *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step At A Time* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).

Figure 3.14. Areas in need of street trees



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

3.4 Develop consistent street furniture.

Street furniture — the benches, lights, waste receptacles, and water fountains — contribute to the identity of a downtown. When coordinated, the street furniture can communicate a brand that is unique to the area, see **Figure 3.15**. Riverside should develop a unified look that respects the landmark status of the community. This will reinforce the CBD's identity and signal to visitors and potential investors how much the community values its business district. Within the recent past, the Village has worked to add historically appropriate street furniture wherever possible, including the renovations to Centennial Plaza, the off-street parking lot on Burlington Street, and new drinking water fountains.

The Village should create a set of street furniture guidelines that communicates this vision. Design guidelines will allow all of the furniture pieces to be evaluated together in a coordinated fashion and give the Village authorization to replace components without having to go through the review process for individual items. The guidelines should continue the Village's commitment to items that are reminiscent of Olmsted-era street furniture.

Currently, there are several street furniture items that do not match this theme, such as the existing waste receptacles, see **Figure 3.16**. Once the guidelines are complete, the Village should work to replace inconsistent items wherever possible, with priority given to items that are the greatest departure from the design palette. The Preservation Commission can be potential partners in developing the street furniture design guidelines.

Figure 3.15. Coordinated street furniture in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.16. Existing street furniture



Existing park benches in Riverside do not match other benches in the CBD.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



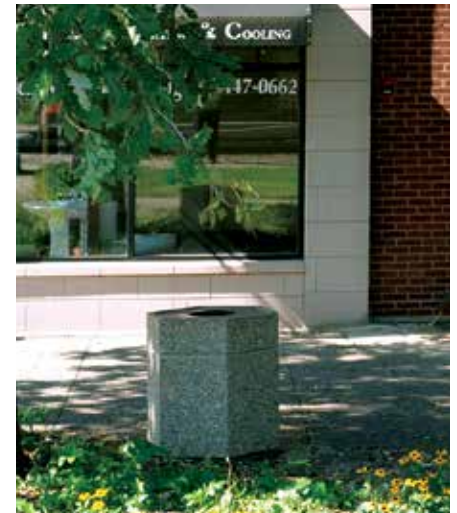
Historically appropriate bench at the train station in Riverside, with Village of Riverside designed into the side.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Current bike racks.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Existing waste receptacles.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

3.5 Improve lighting conditions.

Riverside's street lights are an important part of the Village's identity. At the same time, residents have concerns with the low level of light in the CBD at night. Some pedestrians feel unsafe given how dark the streets and sidewalks are in this area. Residents also stated that the CBD "looks shut down" after 7:00 p.m., when many, but not all, of the businesses turn off their lights at closing time. At the same time, residents are pleased with the new lights that showcase the Water Tower.

The Village should investigate methods for creating safer lighting conditions. The Village should consider replacing the existing street lights with ones that meet the historic character of the community while also improving the ambience. A new system should be designed based on an analysis of existing light levels. Supplementing the existing lighting system with lights that are focused on providing pedestrians with adequate lighting in specific areas should be the priority, see **Figure 3.18**. These additional lights have the potential to make the area appear livelier and more active. Bollard-lighting, as shown in **Figure 3.17**, could light the path of pedestrians in a subtle way that doesn't conflict with the historic street lights and minimizes light pollution. In addition, the Village could allow businesses to use lighting to illuminate signs on their facades, which could contribute to the overall light levels, see **Strategy 2.5**. The design of pedestrian-oriented lighting should be considered in conjunction with street furniture design guidelines discussed in **Strategy 3.4**. Potential partners include the Economic Development and Preservation Commissions.

Figure 3.17. Examples of supplemental lighting



Existing bollard light in the CBD.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Historic styled bollard light.
Source: Anne Hornyak.



Bollard light flush with the sidewalk.
Source: Lynae Zebest.

3.6 Establish a sidewalk café style guide.

Sidewalk cafés add life to a street, increase sales potential for restaurants, and enhance public safety with additional eyes on the public space. Sidewalk cafés also offer people an opportunity to withdraw from the movement of the street and become an observer of the people going by. Many factors contribute to the success of a sidewalk café, including its location, orientation and exposure, and furnishings. Riverside recently approved a sidewalk café on Burlington Street associated with the Chew Chew Restaurant. Additional outdoor seating already exists with Molly's Pub, Grumpy's Café and Ice Cream, and Urban Leaf and Bean. Continuing to build successful sidewalk café spaces will help enliven the streets of the CBD and contribute to the overall historic character of the street.

Village ordinance already establishes requirements for outdoor cafés (Section 7-4-14), which includes a minimum requirement for keeping an unobstructed path for pedestrians. In addition, the Village should supplement this ordinance with a voluntary style guide that provides illustrative examples of furniture options. The style guide will help establish a consistent design that integrates well with the historic character of the Village. For example, it could communicate a preference for metal furniture or that all umbrellas used by an individual business be of the same solid color. The style guide should be advisory in nature and offer several low-cost yet elegant options for chairs, tables, umbrellas, and separation barriers. The Economic Development Commission, working with business owners and the Chamber of Commerce given their solid understanding of the needs of their businesses, should lead this effort. Other partners include the Preservation and Economic Development Commissions.

Figure 3.18. Locations in need of improved lighting



4. Build Connections to the Riverfront

Principle: The connection to the Des Plaines riverfront is a key asset of Riverside’s CBD and should be strengthened.

Summary of Existing Conditions

The Des Plaines River has played an important role in the development of Riverside. On their trip to the Mississippi River, French explorers Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet learned from Native Americans of a quicker return route. In 1673, they traveled up the Illinois River to the Des Plaines River via canoe and came to a place midway between present day Summit and Riverside. Now known as the Chicago Portage, the explorers used a little creek and then carried — or portaged — their canoes one and one half miles to the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River. Using this route, Marquette and Joliet were able to shorten their traveling distance back to Green Bay, Wisconsin considerably.

The significance of this connection between the Mississippi and Great Lakes watersheds was not lost on European settlers and greatly advanced the settlement of the Chicago region. Among the first European settlers to venture west of Chicago were the Laughton brothers, Bernardus and David. In 1828, they established a trading post near a crossing in the Des Plaines River along a trail established by Native Americans. The trail, soon to be called South West Plank Road, would eventually become Ogden Avenue. By 1831, the brothers had established a dam and sawmill, near the current intersection of Millbridge and Barrypoint Roads. It served the first stagecoach route between Chicago and St. Louis, which began its run in 1834.

The Des Plaines River also played a prominent role in Olmsted and Vaux’s plan for Riverside. The landscape architects recommended reserving some of the best property for public grounds and that these grounds maintain an open, common character. Public drives and walks were envisioned along the riverfront, connecting “pretty boat landings, terraces, balconies overhanging the water, and pavilions at points desirable for observing regattas...”⁶ Within the CBD, Guthrie Park leads to Swan Pond Park, a large, low-lying common adjacent to the Des Plaines River. Buildings responded to their riverfront context; for example, the Riverside Public Library was designed to take in the panoramic views of the river bend. In 1934, the Works Progress Administration redesigned the riverbanks in Swan Pond Park and regraded the site to assist drainage during flooding. Combined with the swinging bridge, which connects to Cook County’s Forest Preserve District lands, Riverside’s CBD has several ways visitors can connect to public open space.

Today, the Des Plaines River poses excellent recreational opportunities. The Forest Preserve Districts of Cook County and Lake County have preserved hundreds of acres along much of the river and have created a multi-use trail running through these open spaces. After years of damming the river, the State of Illinois and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have been working to restore the Des Plaines back to a free flowing state. In 2012, a section of the Hofmann Dam was removed and Swan Pond Park was regraded with a restored river wall and walking trail. The improvements to Swan Pond Park are designed to drain this area after flooding events more quickly; potentially increasing the number of days the park is accessible to the public. The recent removal of the Hofmann Dam has made 15 miles of river accessible to waterway users as well as aquatic species. In the coming years, additional dam removals are planned along the Des Plaines River and will open up another 50 miles of accessible waterways. During the planning process, residents identified the Des Plaines River as the hidden gem of the Village and envisioned enhanced connections to the waterway.

⁶ Olmsted, Vaux, & Co., Landscape Architects, Preliminary Report upon the Proposed Suburban Village at Riverside, Near Chicago, 1868. New York: Sutton, Bowne, 1982.

Recommended Strategies

4.1 Construct Recreation and Community Center on former Public Works site.

Three buildings within the study area — the Riverside Public Library, the Riverside Township Hall, and the former Riverside Public Works building — are situated on prime locations along the Des Plaines Riverfront. In addition to public works operations, the former Riverside Public Works building was also home to the Youth Center. From 1956 to 1983, the Youth Center provided recreational activities for teenage residents, including plays and dances. The building is currently serving as a storage facility for the Village and many residents consider it underutilized. The building is not part of the Village's collection of landmark buildings. Redevelopment of this site into a more active use could provide a stronger connection to the Des Plaines River for residents.

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Commission operates out of the base of the Water Tower and uses a number of off-site facilities to accommodate programming. The Village should review the operational needs of this department, as well as the Village's storage needs, and potentially renovate the former Riverside Public Works Building or construct a new building in its place along the Des Plaines River to accommodate this department. A Recreation and Community Center could not only accommodate the Parks and Recreation operations, but could be designed to accommodate other spaces for community events, including luncheons, wedding receptions, and senior citizen gatherings.

The Village will need to look into a variety of funding options. Typically, municipalities use general obligation bonds and general funds to build recreation centers and can cover some operating expenses using user fees. If the renovation or redevelopment of the site includes green building components, the Village may be eligible for grants. The Village may also need to look into public-private partnerships; for instance, the Riverside-Brookfield School District may need additional recreational space and could be a partner in the project.

Ideally, the design of a new recreation center should face the Des Plaines River and take advantage of the vistas available at this location. Residents envision a community room with a balcony or patio that could be reserved for public or private events. The building should also face Riverside Drive and present a pedestrian-friendly design along the sidewalk, see **Figure 3.19**. As recommended in **Strategy 5.6**, the design of a new building should reflect the historic character of the district as well as the immediate context of Riverside Township Hall and the Riverside Public Library. Provision of additional parking may need to take place if shared parking arrangements are not adequate, see **Strategy 6.6**. The design of the parking will need to balance the pedestrian features of this constrained site.

4.2 Create a canoe and kayak livery.

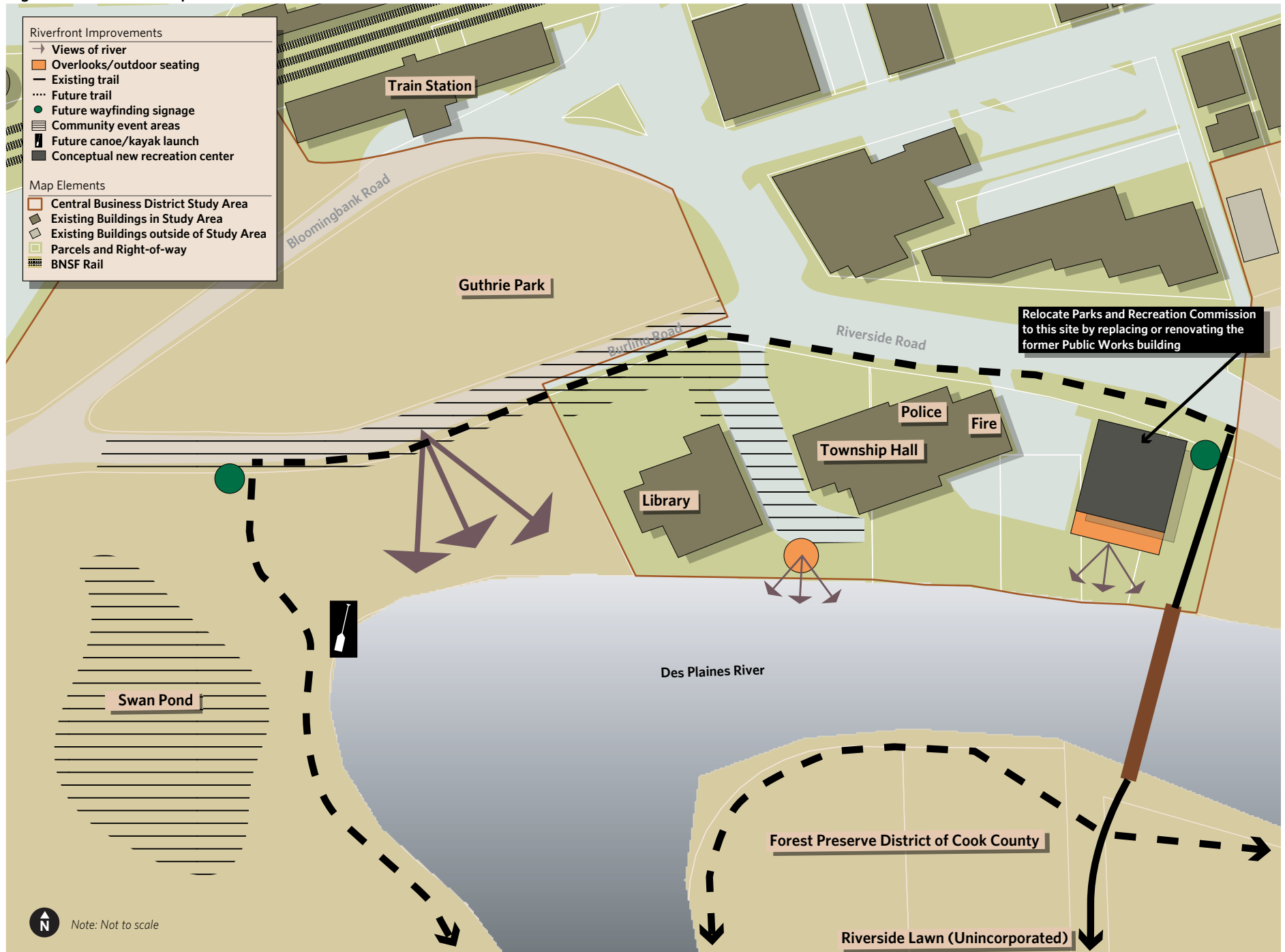
The Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenway and Trails Plan recognizes waterways as a vital component of the region's greenway network as they offer valuable opportunities for recreation as well as environmental education and stewardship. With the notching of Hofmann Dam, the Des Plaines River is now navigable north of Riverside, opening up miles of waterways for users up and downstream.

With more of the Des Plaines River accessible to Riverside residents, the Village should investigate the feasibility of constructing a canoe and kayak launch and potentially operating a canoe and kayak livery (rental program) as part of the Parks and Recreation Commission's programming. If a canoe and kayak livery is deemed feasible, the Village should consider the potential location and storage requirements of the program when considering the future use of the former Riverside Public Works building site (strategy 4.1).

Currently, there are two boat launches near Riverside — the Plank Road Meadow Boat Ramp and Stony Ford Canoe Landing — the closest of which is located 1.5 miles away by car. While these boat landings are relatively close to Riverside, neither is located close to a Metra Station or a significant cluster of commercial businesses. A canoe and kayak livery in Riverside has the potential of catering to Metra day trippers looking for an outdoor adventure. The livery could also allow non-motorized boaters who put in elsewhere along the river to stop and rest in Riverside's CBD for lunch or a snack. In addition, the two existing boat landings could be utilized as part of the Riverside livery system.

Other municipalities operate canoe and kayak liveries for residents and visitors, see **Figure 3.20**. In 2011, the City of Lake Forest launched a watercraft rental program at Forest Park Beach. While focused on Lake Michigan recreation, the Lake Forest program could be a potential model for Riverside. The City of Ann Arbor, Michigan has been running a canoe and kayak livery for decades on the Huron River. With the recent construction of a bypass channel and a series of drops and pools around the Argo Dam, Ann Arbor has seen their canoe and kayak rentals skyrocket. They offer rentals by the hour, group trips, and summer camp programming for middle school students. Potential partners include the Illinois Paddling Council, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and the Riverside school districts.

Figure 3.19. Riverfront improvements



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

4.3 Create more connections to Swan Pond Park.

Recent improvements to Swan Pond Park, in connection with the notching of Hofmann Dam, have the potential to make the park more user-friendly. Regrading of the park is designed to move floodwaters off the site more quickly after major storm events. Previously, slow drainage left standing water obstructing the use of areas of the park. The project also trimmed riverbank vegetation and opened up views of the river that had long since been obscured. The smoother, more permanent walking trail will allow more people to take advantage of the walk along the riverfront. With these large-scale improvements in place, the Village should investigate strategies for activating the park programmatically and connecting the park to activities within the CBD.

As outlined in strategy 2.3, providing signage that highlights the presence of a walking trail along the Des Plaines River will help more people connect with Swan Pond Park. In addition, signage should connect the trail within Swan Pond Park to the Swinging Bridge, which provides access to additional acres of open space south of the river. Ideally, the Swan Pond walking trail and the Swinging Bridge would be connected by a trail immediately adjacent to the shoreline. Given the grade changes, the cost would likely be prohibitive. Instead, signage at the existing sidewalk along Burling and Riverside Roads can help connect these two assets. The renovated or newly constructed Recreation and Community Center should be designed to create a pedestrian-friendly environment along this connection.

Future community events and Parks and Recreation programming should consider Swan Pond Park as a potential location. During the winter, Swan Pond Park is home to the sledding hill and could potentially host a second skating rink if resources allow. In the warmer months, residents envision theater or music programming bringing people out to enjoy this spot. Swan Pond Park may become the preferred location for the canoe and kayak livery, as discussed in **Strategy 4.2**. Partners to activate the park will include many potential community organizations.

Figure 3.20. Municipal canoe and kayak liveries



Ann Arbor Canoe Livery.
Source: Cheryl Saam.



Village of Oswego Canoe Launch
and Waterway map.
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Walking trail within Swan Pond park.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

4.4 Support shoreline habitat restoration.

Shoreline habitat is an essential component of a healthy river system. Improving the quality of shoreline vegetation can help reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff, stabilize site hydrology, and provide habitat, recreation, and aesthetic benefits. Recent improvements to Swan Pond Park have helped restore views of the Des Plaines River. The improved views have re-emphasized the need to improve river habitat on both sides of the river.

Riverside has a history of volunteer restoration efforts and the community should continue to support this work. The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside has partnered with the Riverside Public Works Department on beautifying the parks and parkways within the Village, including the park along Riverside Road between the Swinging Bridge and Miller Woods. Riverside could continue this partnership and support future work within Swan Pond Park.

The land south of the river is maintained by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and is a valuable component of the larger open space network. It is currently in need of restoration and maintenance. Riverside should investigate ways to partner with the Forest Preserve District and Riverside Township, as well as residents of the unincorporated area and the Village of Lyons, to work together on habitat restoration projects. In addition, the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside has partnered with the Salt Creek Greenway Association, who may be able to participate. Potential regional partners include the Friends of the Forest Preserves and the Forest Preserve Volunteers.

A riverfront trail system through this land could help provide residents with a closer connection to the Salt Creek Greenway Trail. The WCMC Bicycle Plan also recommends a trail in this area (see Figure 6.2). In order to fund trail construction, Riverside should work with the township and Forest Preserve District of Cook County and pursue funding through Transportation Alternatives, CMAQ, Recreational Trails, and the Illinois Trails Grant programs.

4.5 Encourage green infrastructure practices.

The Des Plaines River is not meeting State standards for water quality. The river near Riverside is impaired for three designated uses: aquatic life, fish consumption, and primary contact. The impairments are connected to a range of potential sources, including combined sewer overflows and urban stormwater runoff. Riverside has a combined sewer system that collects both sanitary sewage and stormwater runoff. During significant storm events, flows can exceed the capacity of the Village's sewer system as well as the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District system. When this happens, stormwater and sewage is discharged directly into the Des Plaines River at six outfall locations within the Village.

Using green infrastructure techniques can help improve the health of the Des Plaines River. Practices that filter, infiltrate, transpire, and clean water runoff, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavements, can help reduce the quantity and improve the quality of runoff. Riverside has already taken a proactive approach and has included green infrastructure techniques in the new off-street parking lot on Burlington Street. Designed to capture and hold 97 percent of the rainwater onsite, this lot is permanently diverting runoff from the Village sewer system. The Village should encourage further application of these techniques not only within Village-owned lots but also within the public right-of-way and when sites are redeveloped within the CBD. The B-2 and B-1 Central Business zoning districts could be updated to encourage application of green infrastructure practices. In addition, green infrastructure practices could help improve the sidewalk landscaping, see **Strategy 3.2**. Potential partners include the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside, given their commitment and public education on sustainable landscapes. Funding sources include the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management. The City of Chicago is developing Sustainable Infrastructure Design Guidelines, based on techniques tested within this climate, and could be a valuable reference guide for Riverside.



Trail within the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, south of the Swinging Bridge.
Source: Flickr user named "reallyboring."



Plantings along Longcommon Road.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

5. Preserve and Promote Riverside's Legacy

Principle: Riverside's CBD should showcase the unique legacy of this landmark community.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Olmsted and Vaux's plan for Riverside was one of the earliest examples of a comprehensive development plan in the U.S. and was striking in its departure from standard urban form. With early contributions from William Le Baron Jenney, who designed the signature Riverside Water Tower, the stage was set for Riverside to be home to significant architectural works as well. Olmsted and Vaux's vision attracted many of the era's most accomplished architects to Riverside, leading to several homes and other buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, and Frederick Clark Withers. Throughout its history, Riverside has worked to stay true to its original vision and retain a timeless appeal. The unique place that both Riverside and Frederick Law Olmsted hold in the annals of community planning and landscape architecture was recognized in 1970, when the entire Village was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

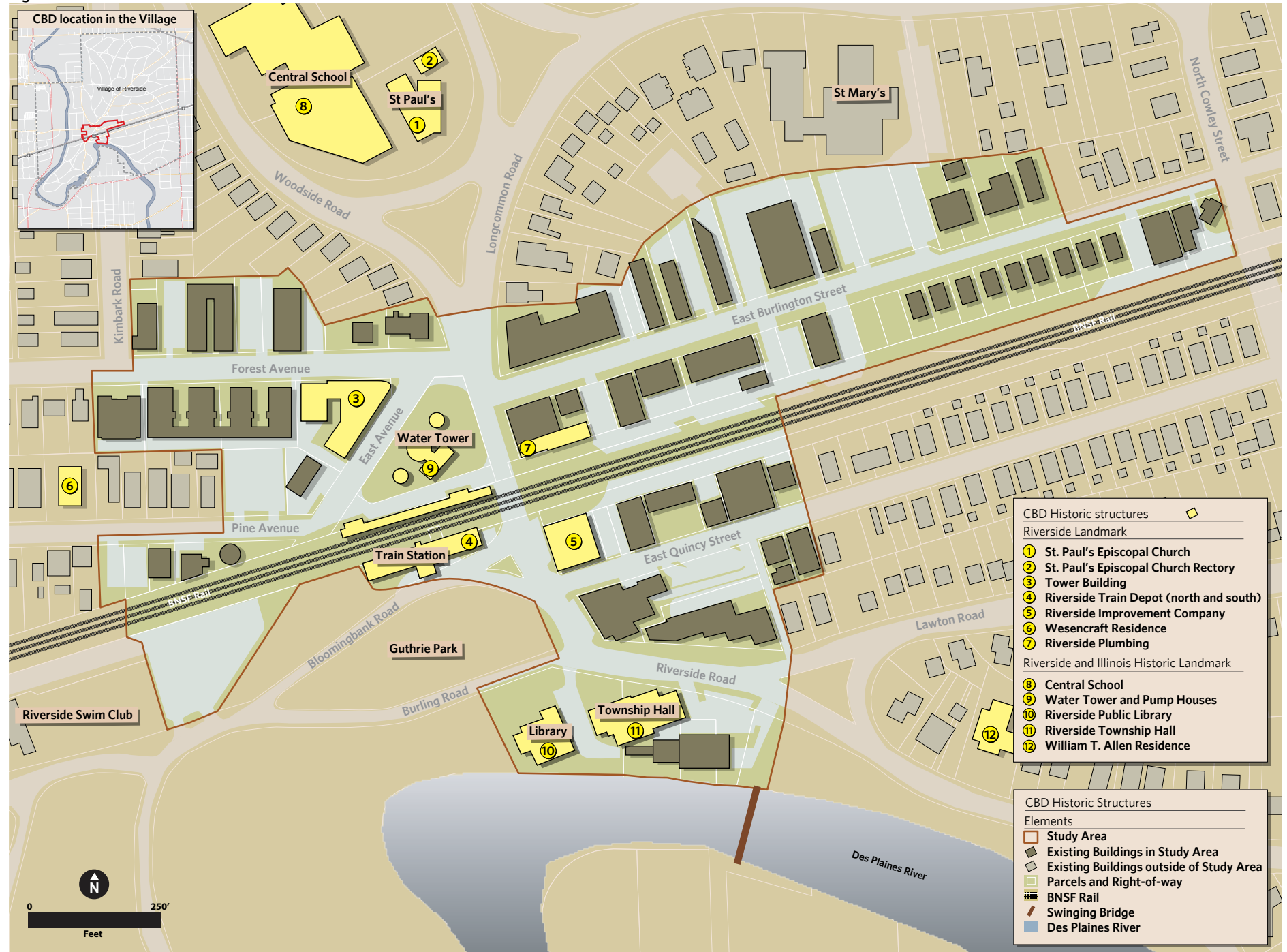
The Riverside community has worked to preserve the legacy of both the plan and the significant architectural gems embedded within it. In addition to the buildings identified on the National Register of Historic Places, Riverside has its own local historic preservation ordinance, see **Figure 3.21**. From landscape design guidelines that help protect the parkways to the recently updated zoning ordinance which strives to maintain the intent of the original plan and subsequent building design, Riverside has proudly accepted the role of caretaker.

The Village government has established two commissions that regularly advance preservation and educational efforts. The Preservation Commission approves building projects for local historic structures and is tasked to be an advocate for preservation efforts. The Riverside Historical Commission operates and maintains the Riverside Historical Museum. The museum is currently located in the Well Houses associated with the Water Tower. The Historical Commission is working to open the observation deck of the Water Tower to restore the historic purpose of the deck and offer an aerial view of the Olmsted and Vaux plan. The commission's strategic plan also envisions a more robust program of exhibitions, educational activities, and tourism marketing campaigns.

The involvement of residents and community groups in Riverside is also quite unique. The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside works to preserve and promote awareness of the Village's cultural and physical heritage. Other groups, like the Riverside Cycling Club, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, and individual businesses, like Riverside Foods and Quincy Street Distillery, incorporate the history and character of the community within their regular activities.

Throughout the planning process, residents communicated a strong desire to share the historical significance of their community with others and welcome visitors to spend time in the CBD. This willingness was remarked upon as a significant and welcome departure from previous community attitudes. Riverside residents are proud of their landmark community and believe its history of development is a valuable story for not only architectural and planning enthusiasts but others interested in the history of the Chicago region or simply experiencing a beautiful place. Expanded tourism is also seen as a way to help support district businesses; though increasing local support will ultimately be the biggest determinant of the CBD's success.

Figure 3.21. Historic structures in the Central Business District



Recommended Strategies

5.1 Strengthen the Riverside Historical Museum.

The Riverside Historical Museum is home to a collection of archival materials about the history of the Village. Housed in the Well Houses associated with the Water Tower, the museum has a visitor's center and exhibit space. The Riverside Historical Commission operates the museum and its strategic plan envisions enhanced facilities, see **Strategy 5.4**, as well as additional programming. In terms of programming, the commission seeks to increase the number of exhibitions, expand online resources available to visitors, and attract visitors to the CBD. Currently, the Historical Commission is funded with the support of their annual members and donations and the Village of Riverside maintains the museum space.

Dependent on volunteers, the museum is open one day a week, Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. With limited capacity, the Riverside Historical Commission has created and maintained a valuable asset for the community. However, further resources will be needed for the museum to function as a regional educational destination. Lengthening the operating hours and increasing the number of exhibits will be an essential first step in attracting people to the museum and luring them back for repeat visits.

Working with the Riverside Historical Commission, the Village should investigate ways to increase the operational capacity and may conclude that additional coordination is required. In the short term, the Village may want to consider assigning museum-related responsibilities to a staff person as a component of their existing position. This position could increase volunteer coordination so that the museum is open more frequently. The staff person could focus on securing donations and grant funding to further expand museum operations. The National Trust for Historic Preservation could be a possible funding source to help increase the number of exhibits in the museum.

Over the long term, however, the Village should consider creating the position of Museum Coordinator to work on implementation of the Commission's strategic plan. The Museum Coordinator could be the primary staff person working on expanding museum facilities, which will put additional programming requirements on the museum. The Museum Coordinator could also create a partnership campaign to work with regional design- and history-focused organizations, such as the Chicago Architectural Foundation (CAF) and the Chicago History Museum. Potential funding sources for further improvements to the preservation and care of the museum collection include the National Endowment for the Humanities' Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions. Landmarks Illinois could be instrumental in connecting Riverside with additional resources.

5.2 Increase walking and bicycling tours.

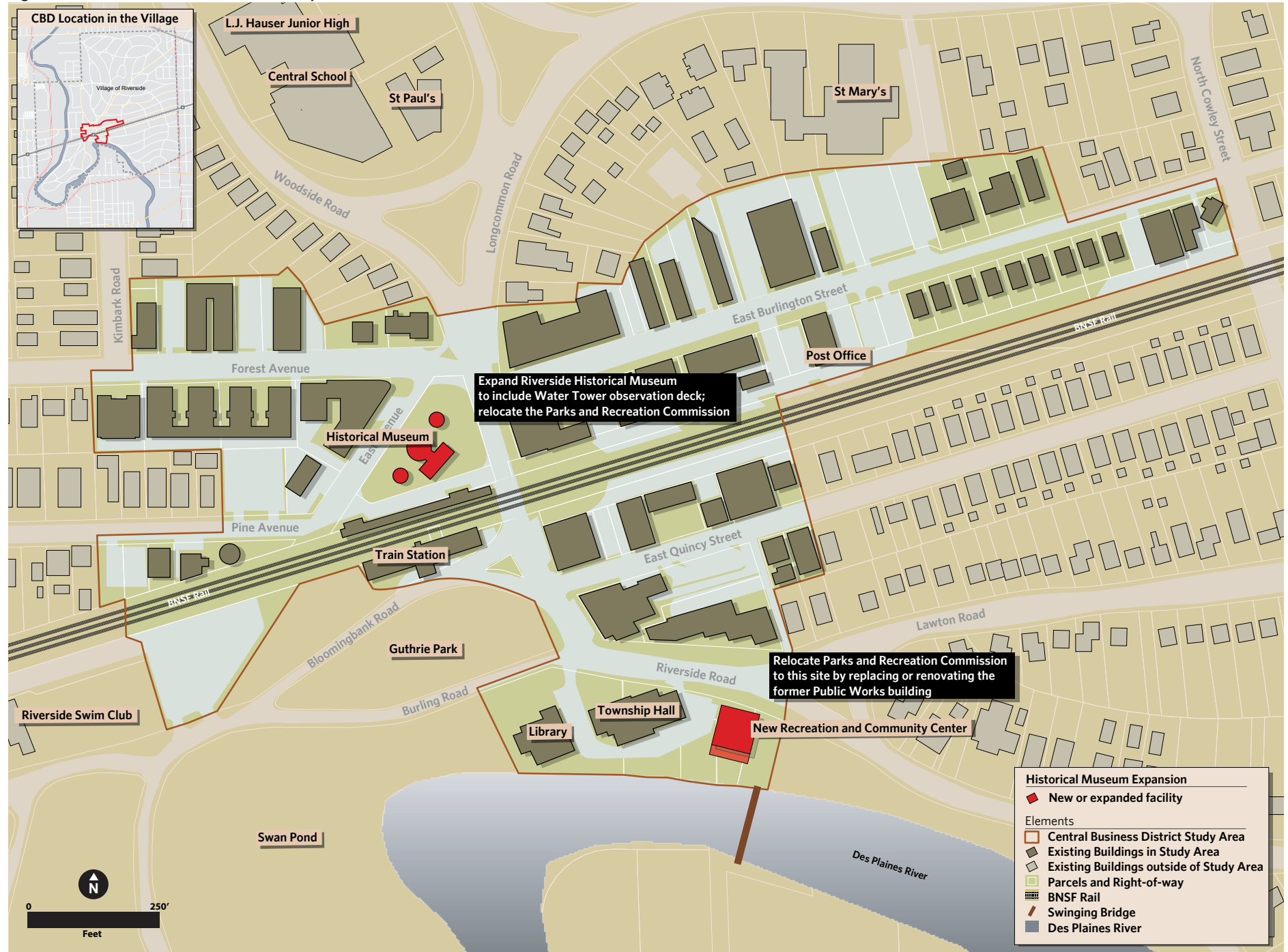
Tours, by allowing participants to experience the community first hand, are an excellent way to learn about the history and design of Riverside. The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside currently provides two-hour walking tours once a month during warm weather for a nominal fee and can accommodate special group tours upon request. The Society's volunteer tour guides are highly knowledgeable on a variety of topics and often adapt the tour content based on the interest of the group. Several organizations, including the Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Riverside Historical Commission, recently produced a new self-guided walking and bicycling map of the community that includes historic landmarks, civic, and commercial destinations.

The Riverside community, especially the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside and the Riverside Historical Commission, should work to expand promotion of the existing walking tours and consider adding additional tours to the schedule. To avoid overtaxing existing volunteers, community organizations should consider developing a tour guide mentoring program to increase the number of tour guides and help maintain the institutional knowledge of the existing volunteers.

The Riverside community should also reach out to the CAF as a potential partner. CAF currently offers only one tour in the Chicago suburbs and it features the homes of Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park and River Forest. Riverside should begin conversations with CAF to see if the Village could be added to the existing schedule or if it warrants a separate tour. The Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust also offers tours and Riverside should investigate potential collaboration.

In addition, Riverside should consider adding bicycling tours to reach out to new audiences. Using the recently adopted bicycle routes, the bicycling tours could also highlight the bicycle amenities of the community, including the connections to the regional trail network. Architectural tourism by bicycle is gaining steam; last spring, Berwyn hosted a Berwyn, Bikes & Bungalows tour that featured the vintage homes of the community. Potential partners include the Riverside Cycling Club.

Figure 3.22. Riverside Historical Museum expansion

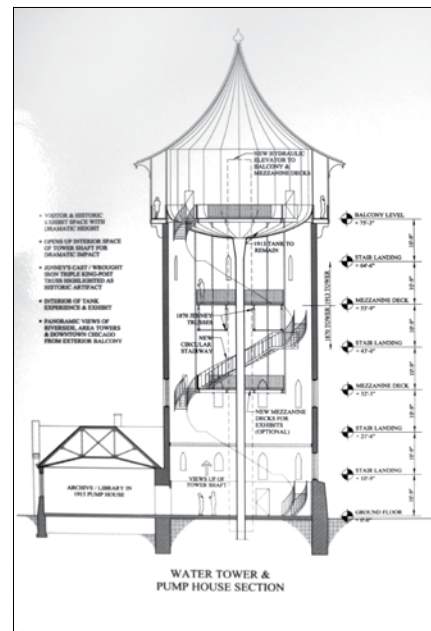


Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

5.3 Investigate opening the Water Tower Observation Deck.

Residents would like to see the Water Tower play a larger role in the experience of Riverside's CBD. In addition to providing water for their new community, the Riverside Improvement Company envisioned the Water Tower's observation deck being used to help sell residential lots. Today, with a view of the community as well as the Chicago skyline, access to the observation deck could be a potential tourism opportunity.

The Riverside Historical Commission recently commissioned an engineering study to review the feasibility of renovating the Water Tower to include public access to the observation deck. The study concluded that it is feasible from an engineering standpoint and the commission is now moving ahead to ascertain the potential construction costs of the project, see **Figure 3.22**. The project could proceed with the Parks and Recreation Commission remaining in the base of the Water Tower or could be expanded if the Parks and Recreation Commission can be relocated to the former Riverside Public Works Building site, see **Strategy 4.1**. In addition to engineering costs, the Village will need to evaluate the market and long-term operational costs. If the project is deemed financially sound, the Village should proceed with fundraising efforts to cover the cost of the renovation. Potential funding sources include the Public Museums Grants Program through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. This grant program provides operating funds as well as capital project funding to museums that have professional staff, see **Strategy 5.1**.



5.4 Build partnerships to strengthen educational efforts.

The Chicago region is home to a wide variety of architecture and design institutions that promote preservation and design education. In addition, there are a corresponding number of organizations that focus on the history of the Chicago region. Riverside has played an important role in both of these arenas and is a valuable participant in furthering education on the role of design and the history of the Chicago area settlement. Riverside should work to develop and enhance partnerships with these institutions. The partnerships can help Riverside strengthen the community's ability to reach and educate more people. The partnerships could involve tours, events, technical expertise, grant resources, lecture series, exhibits, and marketing.

This strategy will involve the participation of both the Village government and key Riverside organizations. The Riverside Historical Commission's strategic plan includes an emphasis on building partners, and identifies potential targets such as the Chicago Architecture Foundation and the Oak Park Visitors Bureau. The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside could continue to strengthen its connections with Morton Arboretum, Chicago Wilderness, and the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. Riverside's Chamber of Commerce also has an important role to play in building partners. The Riverside community should also consider working with local professional organizations, like American Institute of Architecture Chicago, American Society of Landscape Architects Illinois Chapter, and the Chicago Metro Section of the American Planning Association.

In addition, Riverside should work on building connections with national organizations focused on promoting the work of Frederick Law Olmsted as well as the number of significant architects who contributed to the development of the Village. Working together, the community should get Riverside included in national publications or feature projects. For example, the National Trust for Historic Preservation publishes Preservation Magazine and features specific sites within their online resources.

A proposed restoration and adaptive reuse plan created for the Water Tower by a private consultant and the Riverside Historical Commission.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

5.5 Support bed and breakfast establishments.

Throughout the planning process, some residents envisioned a hotel on the former Riverside Public Works Building site along the Des Plaines River. This site was previously home to William Le Baron Jenney's Riverside Hotel which was constructed in 1871 and destroyed by fire in 1887. A typical hotel depends on both leisure and business travel markets. Over the short term, the market study concluded that a hotel is unlikely to generate enough revenue from the business travel market during the week. A bed and breakfast, on the other hand, could serve the leisure market on the weekends.

A bed and breakfast could provide an expanded way for architecture and design tourists to experience the community. It could also help residents host out of town guests within the village. Currently, the Village ordinance does not allow bed and breakfast establishments in the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts. The Village should consider updating the ordinance to allow for such establishments within the CBD.⁷

5.6 Support context-sensitive redevelopment.

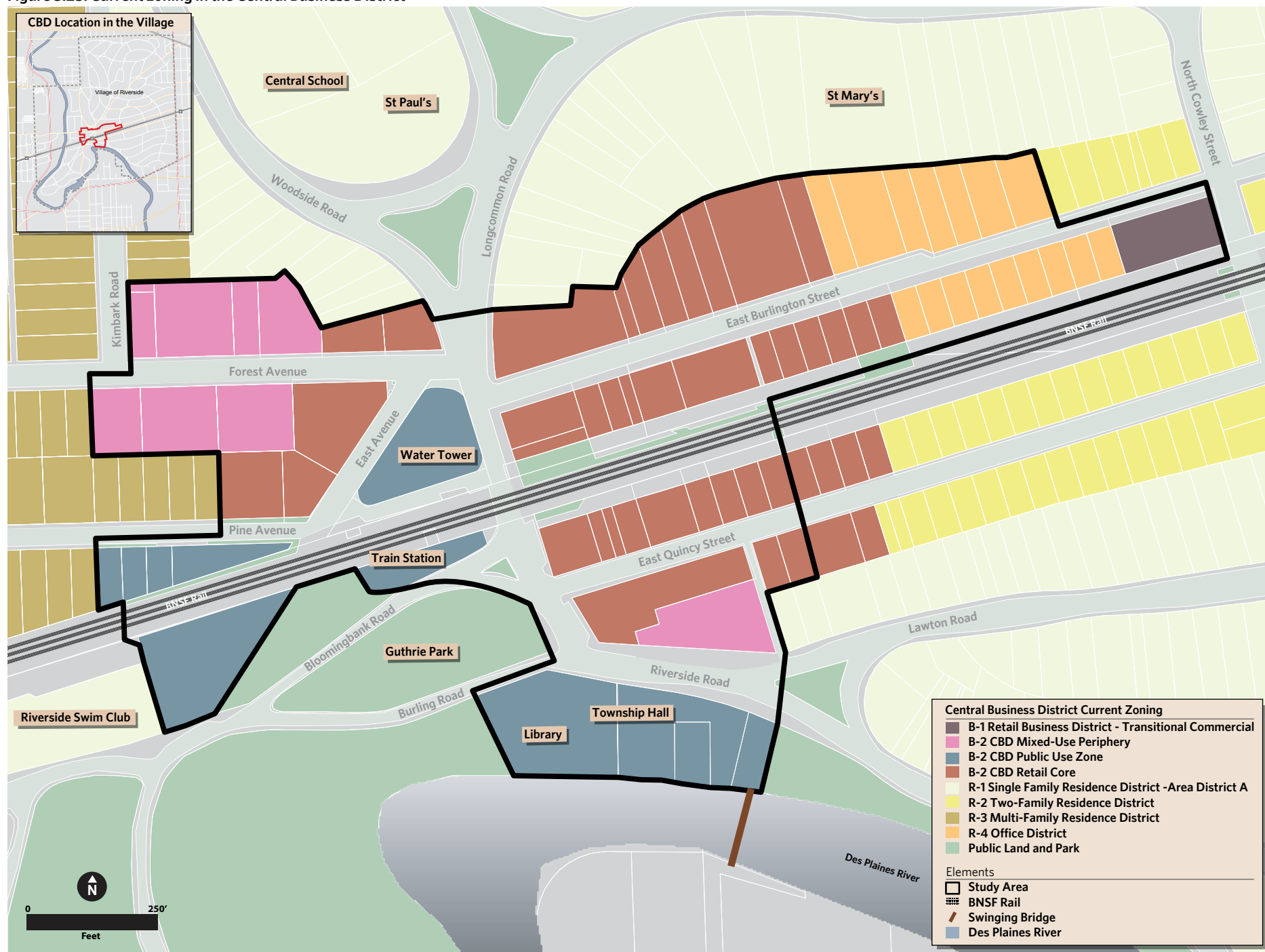
Given the current national economy and the existing capacity of the district's buildings to accommodate additional businesses and residents, new commercial or residential construction is not likely to come to Riverside's CBD in the short term. However, additional development could come to the CBD over the long term. When new development occurs, it should respect and complement the existing historic character of the CBD and Village.

The Village is already well prepared to handle new development when it is proposed. In 2009, the Village updated its zoning ordinance and design guidelines which pertain to the CBD. These changes work to ensure that new construction respects the character and context of the CBD (see **Figure 3.23**). For example, the purpose of the B-2 Central Business zoning district is to preserve the historic character and allow for compatible infill development. This district emphasizes mixed-use development and the building scale and design guidelines reinforce the historic design techniques that the landmark commercial buildings in Riverside exhibit. The Village should continue to adhere to this ordinance to make sure that new development contributes to the overall vision of the CBD.

In the meantime, the Village should consider minor adjustments to the ordinance as suggested in this plan. These include streamlining the development review process for the business districts (**Strategy 1.3**), updating the business sign requirements (**Strategy 2.5**), expanding landscape screening requirements to properties adjacent to the railroad (**Strategy 2.7**), incorporating green infrastructure (**Strategy 4.5**), allowing bed and breakfast establishments in the business districts (**Strategy 5.5**), creating bicycle parking requirements (**Strategy 6.2**), and lowering off-street parking requirements for new development (**Strategy 6.6**).

7 Valerie S. Kretchmer Associates, 2012.

Figure 3.23. Current zoning in the Central Business District



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

6. Make the CBD Easy to Visit

Principle: Traveling to and within Riverside's CBD via foot, bike, train, or car should be safe and convenient.

Summary of Existing Conditions

The streets of Riverside are one of its most distinctive features. As Olmsted and Vaux set out to blend the countryside with the urban environment, they ended up establishing a new system of street design that would later influence suburban development for decades. Designing the streets to flow with the topography,⁸ Olmsted and Vaux created a more contemplative streetscape with curved lines, absence of sharp corners, and opening views, yet they retained the connectivity of a traditional rectangular street grid system.⁹ At the heart of the community, Riverside's CBD is easy to access by foot, bike, car, or train, and has a solid percentage of visitors traveling by foot and bicycle. The CBD has a complete sidewalk network, with sidewalks on both sides of the street and crosswalks at most intersections. In addition, the Village has installed two mid-block crosswalks along Burlington Avenue, which is a particularly long block, to help facilitate pedestrian movement. Pedestrians are seen walking all around the CBD, particularly near the train station and along Burlington Street. Recently, the Village designated three on-street bicycle routes within Riverside; all of which run through the district and connect with the regional trail system. There is bicycle traffic throughout the study area and bicycle racks in front of some businesses as well as at the Riverside Metra Station.

The presence of the Riverside Metra Station attracts a number of residents and visitors to the CBD. There are 42 inbound and outbound Metra trains per weekday. Approximately 500 people access the train at the Riverside Station each day and almost half walk to and from the train station. In addition, 17 percent of Riverside's working population uses transit to travel to and from work. The Riverside Metra Station offers 172 parking spaces close to the station and these spaces are well utilized.

Closed in 2009 due to structural problems, a pedestrian tunnel at the Riverside Train Station formally provided pedestrians with access to the north and south sides of the CBD without having to wait for trains to pass. Residents mentioned the need for an additional at-grade crossing or underpass on the east end of the CBD. Additional at-grade crossings are very unlikely given the demands on the commuter and freight rail system and a pedestrian tunnel is a more viable, yet very expensive alternative.¹⁰

Riverside has almost 1,000 on-street and off-street parking spaces within the CBD. There is no fee associated with the roughly 225 on-street parking spaces and the Village recently created a free, off-street parking lot on Burlington Street. The Village also maintains 32 spaces for employee parking, located north of the rail line and east of Longcommon Road. The majority of the remaining parking spaces are reserved for customers visiting private businesses. These lots are of various sizes and, given the lack of alleys, often have driveways that interrupt the sidewalk.

8 National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Nomination Form for Riverside Historic District, 1969. Accessed on Feb. 1, 2013, <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/69000055.pdf>.

9 Sarah Faiks, et al, "Revisiting Riverside: A Frederic Law Olmsted Community" (Master's thesis, University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources & Environment, 2001) Accessed on Feb. 1, 2013, <http://www.snre.umich.edu/ecomgt/pubs/riverside.htm>.

10 The Village of Winfield on the Union Pacific West railroad recently constructed a pedestrian tunnel for \$6 million. Rempe-Sharpe & Associates, Inc. Consulting Engineers, Pedestrian Underpass, Winfield, Illinois, Accessed on Feb. 1, 2013, <http://www.rsaengr.com/untitled/Transportation%20PedestrianUnderpass.pdf>.

Figure 3.24. Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements for Riverside's Central Business District



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Recommended Strategies

6.1 Improve specific sidewalk and crosswalks.

The presence of pedestrians and cyclists in Riverside's CBD immediately distinguishes the Village from other suburban communities. People of all ages appear to feel comfortable walking around the CBD and destinations are close by. However, there are some opportunities for improvement and the Village should make further sidewalk and crosswalk updates to encourage even more residents and visitors to travel to and within the CBD using these modes (**Figure 3.24**). Transportation Alternatives and the CMAQ program can provide assistance with these four improvements.

1. Add crosswalk on Longcommon Road, north of BNSF railroad:

While there is a crosswalk just south of the BNSF railroad across Longcommon Road, there is no crosswalk on the north side of the tracks. Pedestrians are crossing here anyway and a crosswalk could help clarify where pedestrians should be as they are crossing the street.

2. Add crosswalk on Longcommon Road, near Burling and Riverside Roads:

Currently, traffic traveling south from Longcommon Road to Riverside Road does not stop. There is a crosswalk on Riverside Road in front of the Riverside Township Hall yet it can be hard for pedestrians to navigate given the southbound traffic flow. In addition, there is no direct crosswalk from the block south of Quincy Street to Guthrie Park. Pedestrians on this block have to cross either Riverside Road or Quincy Street to make their way to the park. An additional crosswalk on Longcommon Road north of Burling Road will help to slow down traffic and provide better connections to the park.

3. Widen sidewalk on south side of Burlington Street:

Currently, the sidewalk on the south side of Burlington Street is narrower in some sections than the sidewalk width on the north side. The majority of existing businesses that could benefit from outdoor seating (**Strategy 3.6**) are located on the south side. Wider sidewalk on the south side could provide more space for restaurant cafés while also meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Currently, Burlington Street is designated for funding within the Transportation Improvement Program for resurfacing. If opportunities arise, the Village should consider reducing the travel lane width on Burlington Street in order to create more room for pedestrians.



Crosswalk at Bloomingbank Road.

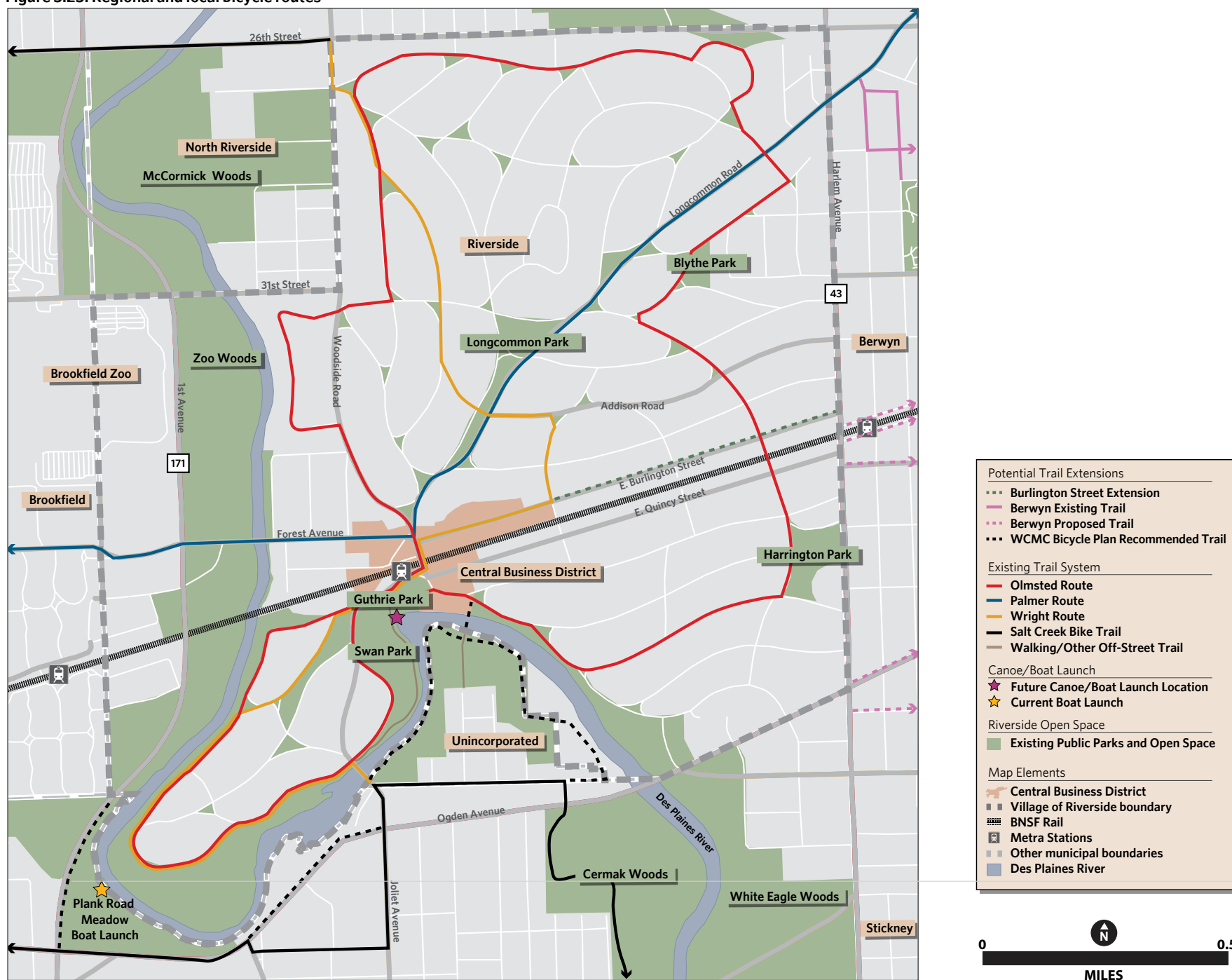
Source: Flickr user Joseph A.

4. Shorten crossing distance at Bloomingbank Road near Longcommon Road:

The existing pedestrian crossing at Bloomingbank Road, along Longcommon Road and immediately south of the BNSF railroad, is one of the longest crossing distances within the district. In addition, the effective turning radius for cars headed south and turning right onto Bloomingbank is quite large, which promotes higher vehicle speeds. Combined with the slight elevation change due to the railroad that reduces visibility, this crosswalk can leave a pedestrian feeling exposed to oncoming traffic. Tightening the turning radius will encourage vehicles to take the turn more slowly and shorten the distance a pedestrian is in the travel lane. Ideally, a curb return radius of 5–15 feet should be used given the high pedestrian counts in this area.¹¹ Updating this corner could be accompanied by additional changes that make this high pedestrian traffic area more attractive, including increased landscaping and more pedestrian or bicycle amenities.

11 Institute of Transportation Engineers, Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach (Washington D.C.: Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2010), 184-187. Accessed on Feb. 1, 2013, <http://www.ite.org/emodules/scriptcontent/Orders/ProductDetail.cfm?pc=RP-036A-E>

Figure 3.25. Regional and local bicycle routes



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

6.2 Strengthen local bicycle facilities.

In early 2012, Riverside formally established three bicycle routes within the Village. The Olmsted, Wright, and Palmer routes are marked with posted signs along the curb. The Wright Route connects to the Salt Creek Bicycle Trail at Des Plaines Avenue and 26th Street and runs south through the Village to connect back up again with the Salt Creek Bicycle Trail at Millbridge Road and 39th Street. The Village should continue to strengthen local bicycling facilities by taking the following steps:

1. Connect to regional bicycle routes:

In 2012, the WCMC updated their Bicycle Plan, which is designed to promote and facilitate safe bicycling within the 40 municipalities of the Council of Governments. While the plan does not offer design recommendations or final corridor alignments, they do recommend advancing 17 regional corridors in order to make connections between regional destinations. Six of the regional corridors have the potential of building better connections between Riverside's CBD and other regional destinations, such as the Brookfield Zoo. They are the Des Plaines River Trail, 31st Street, Ogden Avenue, Cermak Road, Harlem Avenue, and Washington Avenue. The Washington Avenue project have the potential of impacting the streets within Riverside's CBD. Both of these corridors largely follow Riverside's existing bicycle network, combining portions of the Palmer and Olmsted Routes. Given the inclusion of these routes within the WCMC plan, the Village should work with WCMC in order to obtain funding for further upgrades to these facilities, including regional signage.

In addition, Riverside should work on building connections to other bicycle routes and lanes within neighboring municipalities (see **Figure 3.25**). The Village of Berwyn has proposed bicycle lanes on Stanley, Windsor, and Ogden Avenues, and bicycle routes on 34th and 38th Avenues. Extending a segment of the Wright Route further east along Burlington Street could connect to the proposed bicycle lane on Stanley Avenue. The Village should work with Berwyn to strengthen the bicycle connections between their two communities.

2. Consider road markings on higher volume streets:

Low volume streets, such as those with fewer than 3,000 cars a day typically do not need bicycle lanes or shared lane markings (or sharrows) as they are relatively safe for bicyclists. However, some of the streets within the CBD, such as Longcommon Road, Burlington Street, Forest Avenue, and Bloomingbank Road, have traffic volumes that exceed this amount. Studies have shown that major streets with painted bicycle lanes or sharrows are safer.¹² In addition, road markings recommend proper bicyclist positions. The Village should consider installing sharrows on those streets with higher traffic volumes and available space.

3. Increase bicycle parking in Riverside's CBD:

Once cyclists have arrived in Riverside's CBD, the provision of adequate bicycle parking will help them visit commercial and civic amenities. Designated bicycle parking will also reduce the potential for bicycles to be left in inappropriate locations. The Village already has several bicycle racks throughout the CBD. However, bicycles were frequently seen locked to fencing instead of the nearby existing racks. In the future, the Village should consider updating the design of the racks to follow best practice. The WCMC Bicycle Plan, along with many other best practice guides, recommends installing the inverted-u, or functionally similar parking racks, which allow a bicycle to be secured in two locations on the frame. Other communities have combined this design with simple branding techniques, which for Riverside, could include reference to Frederick Law Olmsted or John Palmer.¹³

The Village should also consider increasing bicycle parking to ensure that there are available racks at key destinations within the CBD. The Village could also investigate temporary bicycle parking during special community events, such as the Farmers' Market or Riverside Arts Weekend (**Strategy 1.8**). There are many techniques used for temporary bicycle parking, including bike valet systems with volunteers or portable bike racks. The Riverside Cycling Club could be a potential partner.

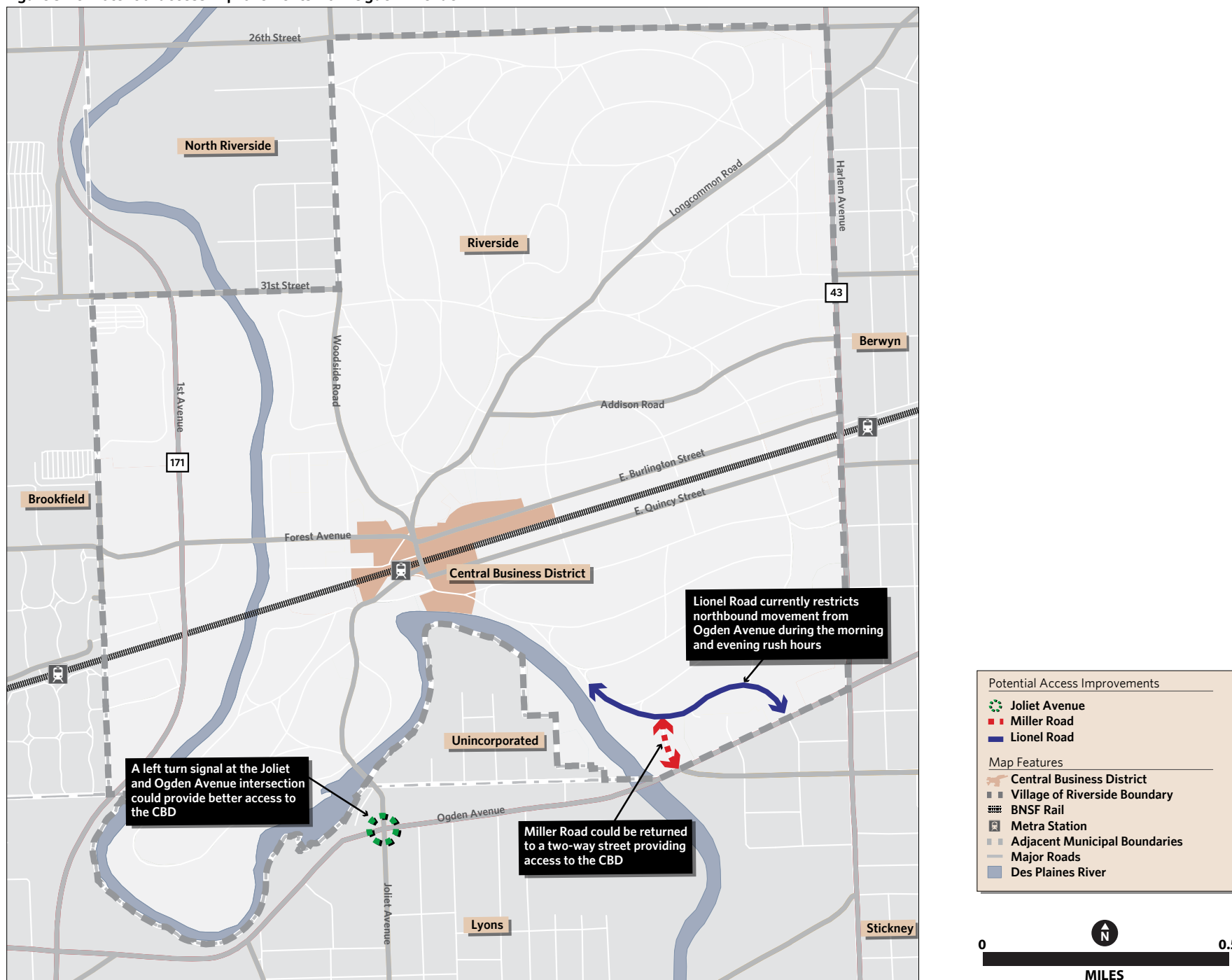
In addition, the Village should consider adding bicycle parking to parking requirements for new development. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), under their Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development rating system, provides guidelines based on the number of employees, square footage of retail space, and multi-unit residential projects.¹⁴

12 Kay Teschke, et al, "Route Infrastructure and the Risk of Injuries to Bicyclists," American Journal of Public Health 102, 12 (2012) Accessed Feb. 1, 2013, <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300762?journalCode=ajph&>

13 Former Riverside resident John Palmer invented a cord tire, which made bicycle tires more durable.

14 U.S. Green Building Council, Neighborhood Pattern and Design Credit 5: Reduced Parking Footprint, LEED Reference Guide for Neighborhood Development, Washington D.C.: 2009.

Figure 3.26. Potential access improvements from Ogden Avenue



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Children bicycling in Riverside.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

6.3 Promote walking and bicycling to Riverside schools.

Three of the largest employers and destinations near the CBD are Riverside's schools. St. Mary's, L.J. Hauser Junior High, and Central Elementary School bring a lot of people to the area on a regular basis. Increasing the number of students who walk or bicycle to school has the potential of not only promoting healthy behaviors among young residents, it also could lead to more activity within the CBD. Parents who walk their children to and from school are likely to become more familiar with the district's amenities and businesses.

The WCMC Bicycle Plan recommends the establishment of a Safe Routes to Schools program. Given the relatively good infrastructure within Riverside, the program should be more focused on encouraging walking and biking through education programs than actual physical improvements. The Active Transportation Alliance, identified as a potential partner in the WCMC Bicycling Plan, is experienced with developing programs and could be a valuable resource for this strategy.



Riverside's Metra Station.

Source: Flickr user AX.

6.4 Promote commuting by train.

Riverside was originally developed as a residential community with easy access to the City of Chicago via the train station. The promise of train access was a strong motivator for the original residents to purchase property in the Village. This advantage remains with the Village today. Given the train station's location, train commuters likely patronize the district's businesses more frequently than residents who don't travel through the area on a daily basis.

Currently, there are 500 boardings and alightings a day at the Riverside Metra Station, yet roughly 1500 Riverside residents work in the City of Chicago. A portion of those residents currently driving may work close to the Metra Stations in Chicago and could shift to using the train. Encouraging train commuting among Riverside residents could further increase the amount of foot traffic in the CBD. Like similar efforts that promote bicycling to work, the Village could promote a Transit to Work week with a special emphasis on using the train. The Village could establish goals to increase the number of train commuters and use the campaign to emphasize the history of the community. Potential partners include Metra, the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, and the Riverside Schools Districts.

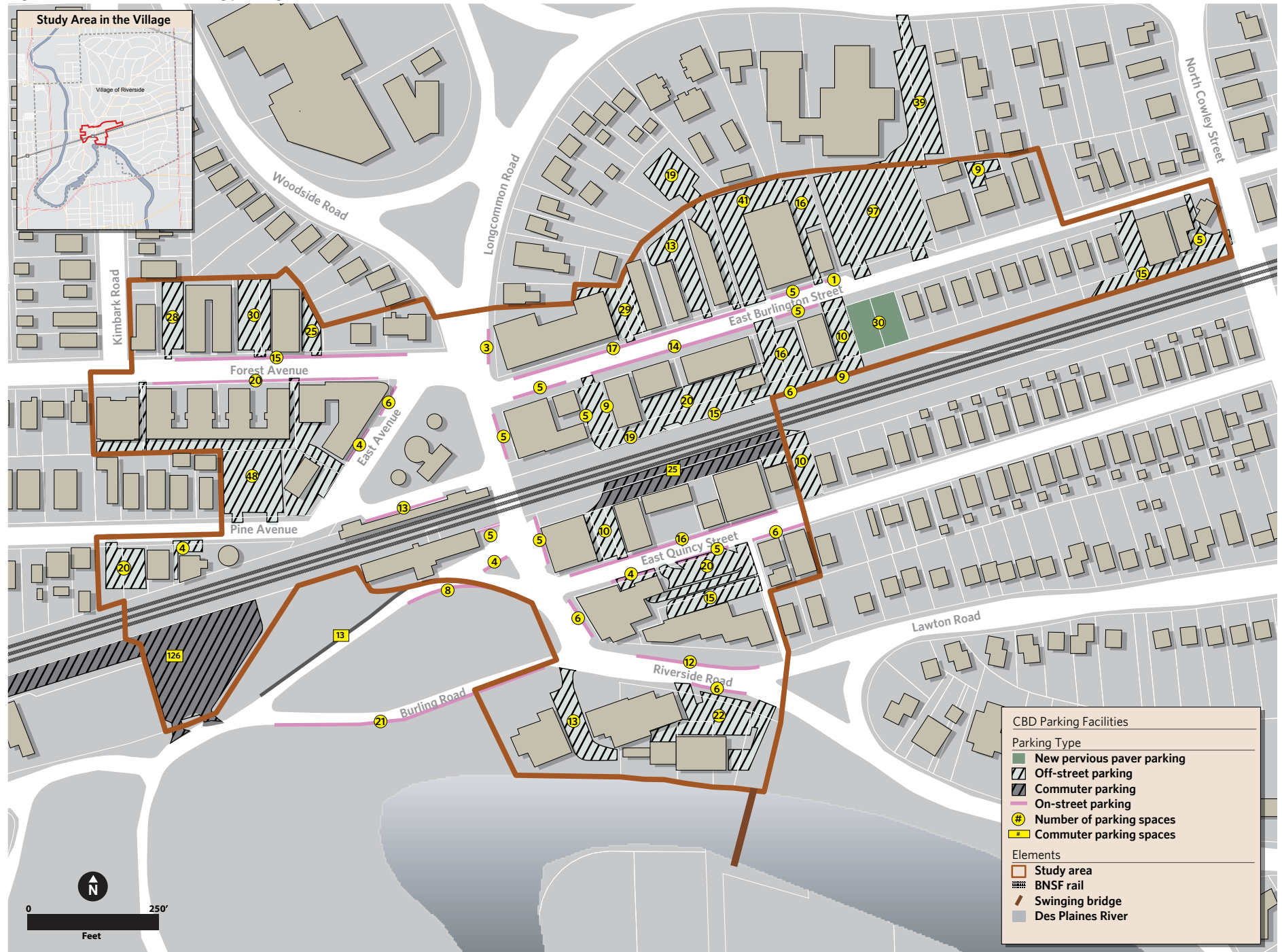
6.5 Improve access to the village from Ogden Avenue.

As discussed in section 2, many people perceive Riverside streets to be confusing to navigate. At the southern edge of the Village, there are limited opportunities to enter Riverside from Ogden Avenue. Currently, vehicles can turn onto Lionel Road from Ogden Avenue only during off-peak hours. Residents also report difficulty in making a left hand turn from Ogden Avenue heading north onto Joliet Avenue. Miller Road used to be a two-way street and connected to the intersection of Ogden Avenue and 39th Street. More recently, the Miller-Ogden-39th Street intersection was updated and Miller Road was converted to a one-way street going south out of the Village. Some drivers may find it difficult to enter Riverside from Ogden Avenue and this could deter them from visiting the CBD.

The Village should investigate the potential of improving access to the CBD from Ogden Avenue, see **Figure 3.26**. One option could include reconfiguring the Miller-Ogden-39th Street intersection and reestablishing Miller Road as a two-way street. A good portion of Miller Road is adjacent to public open space; diverting traffic to Miller Road could result in lower traffic volumes along the more residential Lionel Road. Another option could include updating the Joliet Avenue and Ogden Avenue intersection to include a left turn signal for vehicles heading north onto Joliet Avenue. Other techniques may be more appropriate and a traffic study should be used to determine the most feasible option. The final decision should reflect the concerns of nearby residents and Riverside should work in coordination with the Village of Lyons.

Riverside has limited control over the types of modifications that can be made along Ogden Avenue because the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) maintains this arterial, which is also known as U.S. Route 34. However, the Village can provide a vision for improved access and work with IDOT and the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways when roadway improvements are proposed.

Figure 3.27. Location of existing parking



6.6 Develop a parking management strategy.

For those that drive, knowing that they will likely find a parking space in Riverside's CBD can be a strong motivating factor for making the trip. However, too much parking can also make it hard to create lively, walkable places. Managing an adequate supply of parking is an essential ingredient to the success of any downtown. Before adding additional off-street parking spaces, the Village should look into different management approaches to fully utilize the existing supply of parking (**Figure 3.27**). A managed approach can also reduce the costs of constructing additional parking, since parking spaces can cost between \$3,000 for a surface space to \$20-35,000 for an above-ground or underground structure space. The following activities outline key steps in developing a managed approach to parking. CMAP's Parking Strategies to Support Livable Communities provides further information on each of these steps. The Economic Development Commission could be a potential partner in this ongoing strategy.

1. Conduct an annual parking survey:

Understanding how the existing parking is being used is an essential first step to developing a parking strategy. The Village should conduct an annual survey, which can identify underutilized parking, high demand areas, and opportunities for sharing parking. Parking demand will evolve over time as new activities and residents are attracted to Riverside's CBD, so it is important to conduct this survey on a regular basis.

2. Develop clear information about available parking spaces:

Discussions during the planning process revealed that some residents were not aware of the existing parking spaces available to them. The Village should highlight available parking and relevant time restrictions in a number of ways, including on-line and printed maps, wayfinding signage, and signage at the given parking locations.

3. Encourage shared parking between district businesses:

Riverside's CBD has more than 350 privately-owned off-street parking spaces associated with private businesses. Given the different types of businesses, it is likely that many of these spaces are utilized at different times of day. Establishing shared parking agreements between different businesses can help them meet their parking needs by using underutilized parking located off-site. The results of the annual parking survey can help identify which businesses could benefit from a shared parking agreement. The Village should work to connect the property owners and advise them on how to establish a shared parking agreement.

The Village and the Riverside Public Library may also want to enter into such agreements with private landowners and avoid the need to construct additional parking. While the annual parking survey will provide more accurate information, most parking supply concerns mentioned during the planning process were in connection with visiting the Township Hall or the Riverside Public Library. While promoting on-street parking on Quincy may address some of these concerns, shared parking agreements may improve residents' ability to access these key destinations.

Given that a business that may need additional parking may not be close to the underutilized parking spaces available at another property, valet parking may make a shared parking agreement a viable solution. Valet parking, which does require employees to manage the process, may make sense for a particularly successful business or high peak events.

4. Follow existing parking ordinance for new development:

For new development, the Village should continue following the current parking requirements in the zoning ordinance. The current ordinance does not require off-street parking spaces until a non-residential use has more than 3,000 square feet of gross floor area. This ordinance can help prevent new development from oversupplying parking spaces, which can then induce more driving and traffic congestion, as well as consume valuable land. The zoning ordinance also encourages shared and off-site parking arrangements. For shared parking, fewer parking spaces can be constructed if it can be shown that uses will be using the spaces at different times of day.

Based on the parking survey results over time, the Village may consider lowering off-street parking requirements or setting parking maximums to avoid the oversupply of parking. Reducing parking requirements may also help small local businesses who cannot afford to build the parking previously required. In mixed-use settings, the number of parking spaces can be significantly lowered because different uses tend to require parking at different times of the day.



Chapter 4:

Implementation

The success of Riverside's CBD is the combined responsibility of the Village staff, Village leadership, businesses, community organizations, and residents. This chapter provides a prioritized list of steps that should be undertaken within the next two years to begin implementation of the Plan. In recognition of the role different organizations play within the CBD, this chapter includes a quick reference guide of the Plan's strategies and identifies which groups could play a role in specific steps. Financing the Plan is an essential component and this chapter also includes a summary of currently available grant programs, as well as potential village and community organization contributions. A list of potential regional and national partners and reference guides are also included.

Priority Projects

The following steps are identified as priority projects that the Village should aim to complete within the next two years, see Table 4.1. Other strategies should also be pursued as opportunities arise. The strategies listed in Table 4.1 are those that can be significantly advanced in the next two years and should be prioritized by the Village for proactive implementation.

Table 4.1. First implementation steps of the Riverside Central Business District Plan

STRATEGY	FIRST STEPS	LEAD IMPLEMENTER	KEY PARTNERS
Diversify Riverside's CBD			
1.1 Develop a shop local campaign.	Form a steering committee to help guide the creation of a shop local campaign (also helps with strategy 1.4).	Economic Development Commission	Village, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, Individual Businesses, Residents
	Consult with BALLE and Local First Chicago to learn more about successful campaigns.		
	Develop campaign materials and host kick-off event.		
1.5 Market vacant storefront opportunities.	Work with property owners to create an inventory of vacant properties with information on their attributes.	Economic Development Commission	Village, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, Individual Landowners
	Organize a tour of available properties with lenders; consult with Oak Park Business Services Manager for tips on how to organize a successful event.		
	Attend business expositions and business conferences to market the vacant storefront opportunities.		
Increase the visibility of Riverside's CBD			
2.1 Expand gateway signage at key intersections.	Hire a consultant to use the winning FRED gateway sign design to develop a gateway sign theme that includes promotion of Riverside's CBD; construct sign in two prominent locations.	Village Staff	Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, Plan Commission, Landscape Advisory Commission, Preservation Commission
2.3 Add directional signage from Riverside Train Station.	Develop directional signage and construct two signs on either side of the railroad.	Village Staff	Preservation Commission
2.5 Update business sign ordinance.	Meet with current businesses to asses current signage issues and needs. Review historical precedents for business signs. Hire a consultant to provide recommendations and begin adoption process.	Village Staff	Riverside Chamber of Commerce, Plan Commission, Economic Development Commission, Preservation Commission
Enhance street appeal			
3.1 Complete street tree canopy.	Village staff to assess conditions of existing tree beds; prioritize trees in operational beds.	Village Staff	Landscape Advisory Commission, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Businesses
	Village staff develop grant applications for improvements to remaining landscaping beds (also helps with strategy 4.5)		
3.4 Develop consistent street furniture.	Develop current inventory, conduct research, and create guidelines. Begin adoption process.	Village Staff	Preservation Commission

STRATEGY	FIRST STEPS	LEAD IMPLEMENTER	KEY PARTNERS
Build connections to the riverfront			
4.1 Construct Recreation and Community Center on former Public Works site.	Hire a consultant to conduct an operational needs assessment of the Parks and Recreation department and Village's storage requirements to determine the amount of space needed; consider the canoe and kayak livery as part of the assessment (helps support strategy 4.2)	Village Staff	Parks and Recreation Commission
4.4 Support shoreline habitat restoration.	Work with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Village Public Works Department to organize volunteer restoration efforts with residents.	Landscape Advisory Commission, Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside	Residents, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, West Cook Municipal Conference
Preserve and promote Riverside's legacy			
5.1 Strengthen the Riverside Historical Museum.	Evaluate how to increase museum hours and the number of exhibits; dedicate staff time to expanding operations.	Riverside Historical Commission	Village Staff
	Write grant applications to help with museum operations.	Village Staff	Riverside Historical Commission
5.2 Increase walking and bicycling tours.	Connect with regional partners to add Riverside to a tour program; Increase promotion of Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside's walking tours.	Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside	Riverside Historical Commission, Chicago Architecture Foundation, Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust
	Organize at least one annual bicycling tour of the village.	Riverside Cycling Club	Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside
5.3 Investigate opening the Water Tower Observation Deck.	Complete engineering construction cost study.	Riverside Historical Commission	Village Staff
	Conduct a market study to determine the demand for the observation deck; Analyze the operational costs of running an expanded museum.	Village Staff	Riverside Historical Commission
Making the CBD easy to visit			
6.6 Develop a parking management strategy.	Create an annual parking survey using the CMAP Parking Strategies to Support Livable Communities; Conduct two annual surveys, potentially with the help of Riverside or university students.	Village Staff	Economic Development Commission, Riverside Schools
	Improve communication of available parking locations on village website, maps, and with signs at parking locations.		Riverside Chamber of Commerce

[illegible]

Lead Implementers

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the Riverside CBD Plan depends on the actions of the Village staff, Village leadership, community organizations, businesses, landowners, and residents. Table 4.2 helps each actor within the CBD understand their potential role in the implementation of the plan. Given that the Village staff is involved with almost every strategy within the plan, their role is not summarized here.

Financing the Plan

Grants

Riverside has a long history of utilizing grant funding to complete projects. The Village and community organizations should continue to look for these funding sources as they work to implement the plan. The following list of grant programs could potentially fund many of the projects outlined in the plan.

Transportation Alternatives, IDOT, and CMAP: Transportation Alternatives is a new funding source whose administration is still being determined. It could potentially fund bicycle and pedestrian facilities, traffic-calming strategies, bicycle education programs, and transportation-related beautification and restoration projects.

Program information: www.dot.il.gov and www.cmap.illinois.gov.

CMAQ Program: The biennial CMAQ program is administered by CMAP and funds transportation facilities and programs. CMAP considers the implementation of GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan in its program development process.

Program information: www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmaq.

Surface Transportation Program, WCMC: Assists municipalities with local surface transportation improvements. Programmed annually, STP can be used for constructing pedestrian facilities, off-street multi-use trails, and bicycle parking and typically funds up to 70 percent of the project costs. Program information: www.westcook.org/wcmc/programs-services/transportation/surface-transportation-program-stp.

Bike Path Grant Program, Illinois Department of Natural Resources:

Provides grants for the creation of bike paths. The program also prioritizes projects that involve land acquisition, tie into a trail network, provide a linear trail connection, are identified in bikeway plans, provide quality bike facilities, have minimal adverse impact, are new facilities, are scenic, demonstrate maintenance capacity, and have not received other federal/state funding. The program's matching funds are not to exceed 50 percent of the required local match or \$200,000, per successful application. The applications for the funding cycle are due on March 1st of each year.

Program information: dnr.state.il.us/ocd/newbike2.htm.

Farmers' Market Promotion Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture: Offers grants to help improve and expand domestic farmers' markets, including marketing, signage, vendor equipment. Local governments and nonprofit organizations are eligible. Program information: www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.o/FMPP.

Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency: Provides funding to local units of government and other organizations to implement green infrastructure best management practices to control stormwater runoff for water quality protection in Illinois. Projects must be located within a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) or Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) area. Funds are limited to the implementation of projects to install best management practices (BMPs). Under the Green Infrastructure Small Projects Category, projects require a local match of 25 percent. Program information: www.epa.state.il.us/water/financial-assistance/igig.html.

Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation: Supports nonprofit organizations and local governments in their efforts to reduce energy consumption in buildings. In 2013, the foundation will continue to support lighting upgrades in Community Centers. Historic buildings prioritized. Program information: www.IllinoisCleanEnergy.org.

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency: Offers a 20 percent tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of commercial, agricultural, industrial, or rental residential buildings that are certified as historic in the district and follow the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation. The credit may be subtracted directly from federal income taxes owed by the owner. Program information: www.illinoishistory.gov/PS/taxcredits.htm.

Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions, National Endowment for the Humanities: Funds libraries, museums, and archival repositories to improve their ability to preserve and care for their significant humanities collections. Covers preservation consultant fees, costs for preservation supplies, and environmental monitoring equipment. Applications are due May 1, 2013. Program information: www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-assistance-grants-smaller-institutions.

National Trust Preservation Funds, National Trust for Historic Preservation: Provides funding for planning activities and educational efforts focused on engaging new audiences in the preservation movement. Funding generally ranges from \$2,500–5,000, and all grants must be matched dollar-for-dollar. Grants are awarded annually in three competitive rounds. Program information: www.preservationnation.org.

Public Museums Grants Program, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs: Provides operating funds and capital project funding to museums that are operated by or located on land owned by a unit of government. The museum must be in existence for 2 years and have a professional staff. Requirements for matching funds are calculated using the level of visitation to the museum. Program information: www.museum.state.il.us/programs/musgrants/index.html?ID=145.

Our Town Grants, National Endowment for the Arts: Organizations may apply for creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. An organization may request a grant amount from \$25,000–200,000. Program information: www.arts.gov/grants/apply/OurTown/index.html.

America's Historical and Cultural Organizations: Implementation Grants, National Endowment for the Humanities: Provides support for museums, libraries, historic places, and other organizations that produce public programs in the humanities. Program information: www.neh.gov/grants/public/americas-historical-and-cultural-organizations-implementation-grants.

Community Grants Program, Illinois Humanities Council: Supports the work of nonprofit organizations that have a story to tell about Illinois or who have a way to use the humanities to enrich community life. Also accepts proposals from organization looking for technical assistance or general operating support. Applications are due April 15, 2013. Program information: www.prairie.org/programs/community-grants-program.

Certified Local Government Matching Grants, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency: Supports public education, survey, National Register listing, and planning projects. Riverside is one of 76 qualifying municipalities. Grants require a 30 percent match. Program information: www.illinoishistory.gov.

Village Contributions

Many of the Plan's strategies will depend on financial investments made by the Village. Even when grant funding may be available, many grants will require a local match. As the Village gains a better sense of the capital improvements costs of some of the major projects in the plan, specifically the renovation or construction of a Recreation and Community Center as well as opening public access to the Water Tower's observation deck, it may need to issue general obligation bonds or use general funds to accomplish these goals.

The village may wish to consider creating a special service area (SSA). SSAs are used in business district to provide funding for infrastructure, maintenance, programs, and other business-related activities. Within this plan, the SSA could fund projects such as the shop local campaign, the sign improvement grant program, planting street trees, improving sidewalk landscaping, upgrading street furniture, and hosting community events. An SSA is an extra property tax on a defined set of properties (called the service area) that reinvests 100 percent of that tax revenue back into the service area. Typically, the SSA budget is administered by a local organization, such as the Chamber of Commerce, or by the village. This arrangement could give local businesses a larger voice in the implementation of the Plan.

Community Contributions

The work of community organizations will play an integral role in implementing the plan. Whether it is through the work of volunteers or direct expenses, the community organizations can take on aspects of the plan that can utilize the expertise of residents and business owners. Organizations like the Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside have played a valuable role in the health of Riverside's CBD and the Plan encourages continued involvement.

The community may want to consider additional methods for implementing components of the Plan. The Village of Mariemont, Ohio, designed by John Nolen at the beginning of the 20th Century and recognized as a national historic landmark, has an active group, called the Mariemont Preservation Foundation. The Mariemont Preservation Foundation is a membership based organization working to continue the principles of town planning and protect the Village's unique qualities. As part of their programming, they have created a small grant program to help benefit historic properties and districts for projects that address the physical, cultural, and educational needs of residents. A similar grant program could be established in Riverside with a specific objective. For instance, the community grant program could supplement the sign improvement grant program (strategy 2.6) or provide funds for private landscaping improvements along the railroad (strategy 2.7).

Partners

Active Transportation Alliance

[**www.activetrans.org**](http://www.activetrans.org)

American Institute of Architecture
Chicago

[**www.aiachicago.org**](http://www.aiachicago.org)

American Society of Landscape
Architects Illinois

[**www.il-asla.org**](http://www.il-asla.org)

Bikes Belong

[**www.bikesbelong.org/grants**](http://www.bikesbelong.org/grants)

Business Alliance for
Local Living Economies

[**bealocalist.org**](http://bealocalist.org)

Chicago Architecture Foundation

[**www.architecture.org**](http://www.architecture.org)

Chicago History Museum

[**www.chicagohs.org**](http://www.chicagohs.org)

Chicago Metro Section of the American
Planning Association

[**www.ilapa.org/CMS.html**](http://www.ilapa.org/CMS.html)

Chicago Wilderness

[**www.chicagowilderness.org**](http://www.chicagowilderness.org)

Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust

[**www.gowright.org**](http://www.gowright.org)

Illinois Association of Museums

[**www.state.il.us/hpa/iam**](http://www.state.il.us/hpa/iam)

Illinois Main Street

[**www2.illinois.gov/dceo/mainstreet**](http://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/mainstreet)

Local First Chicago

[**www.localfirstchicago.org**](http://www.localfirstchicago.org)

Morton Arboretum

[**www.mortonarb.org**](http://www.mortonarb.org)

National Alliance of
Preservation Commissions

[**napc.uga.edu/home/about-us**](http://napc.uga.edu/home/about-us)

National Trust for Historic Preservation

[**www.preservationnation.org**](http://www.preservationnation.org)

Oak Park Area Visitors Bureau

[**www.visitoakpark.com**](http://www.visitoakpark.com)

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

[**www.chias.org**](http://www.chias.org)

Salt Creek Greenway Association

[**www.saltcreekgreenwayassociation.org**](http://www.saltcreekgreenwayassociation.org)

Smart Energy Design Assistance Center

[**smartenergy.arch.uiuc.edu**](http://smartenergy.arch.uiuc.edu)

West Central Municipal Conference

[**www.westcook.org**](http://www.westcook.org)

Reference Guide

Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares:

A Context Sensitive Approach, An ITE Recommended Practice

[**tinyurl.com/a6a6chg**](http://tinyurl.com/a6a6chg)

Light Imprint Handbook

[**lightimprint.org**](http://lightimprint.org)

Active Transportation Alliance's Complete Streets Resources

[**activetransportationpolicy.org/complete-streets-policy**](http://activetransportationpolicy.org/complete-streets-policy)

Complete Streets

[**www.completestreets.org**](http://www.completestreets.org)

Green Streets

[**www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/greenstreets**](http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/greenstreets)

Context Sensitive Solutions

[**contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/street-design**](http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/street-design)

National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban

Bikeway Design Guide

[**nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide**](http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide)

Safe Routes to Schools

[**www.saferoutesinfo.org**](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

USGBC LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System
and Reference Guide

[**www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148**](http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148)

List of Acronyms

BALLE	Business Alliance for Local Living Economies
BNSF	Burlington Northern-Santa Fe
CAF	Chicago Architectural Foundation
CBD	Central Business District
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program
FRED	Frederick Law Olmsted in Riverside Education and Design
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
SSA	Special Service Area
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council
WCMC	West Central Municipal Conference



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