Park Forest
Live Grow Discover

Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN

ADOPTED DECEMBER 8, 2014

Acknowledgements

Thank-you to the following groups, entities, residents, business owners, and elected officials who participated in the creation of this Plan:

Elected Officials

Mayor John A. Ostenburg
Trustee Mae Brandon
Trustee JeRome Brown
Trustee Gary Kopycinski
Trustee Robert McCray
Trustee Georgia O'Neill
Trustee Theresa Settles

Project Steering Committee

Al Sturges
Bonita Dillard
Claudette Hall
Craig Oberman
Danielle Gladstone
David Atkins
Peter Green
Erica Walker
Hildy Kingma
Kevin Headley
Larry Howard
Leslie Phemister
Margaret Lewis
Nick Christie
Patty Mangano
Rob Gunther
Sandra Zoellner
Sandy Isaac
Sarah Coulter
Shanna Mitchell

Partner Organizations

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
Active Transportation Alliance (ATA)

Funding Acknowledgement

This project was supported through CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Chicago Community Trust. Park Forest and CMAP would like to thank these funders for their support for this project.

Cover photo provided by CMAP staff.

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 Park Forest
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Adopted December 8, 2014

Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	**1**
Purpose of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	1
Guidance from Previous Plans	1
Regional Context	2
Chapter 2: Summary of Existing Conditions	**7**
Community Context and Travel Behavior	7
Transportation Infrastructure	9
Chapter 3: Community Outreach	**25**
Outreach Activities	25
Chapter 4: Bicycle and Pedestrian Network	**29**
Recommended Network	29
Chapter 5: Policies, Programs, and Implementation	**61**
Appendix	**67**

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Purpose of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Park Forest will continue to move the Village forward in its sustainability goals by identifying concrete actions that the Village can take to improve and enhance active transportation networks, creating safe and enjoyable bicycle and pedestrian routes and encouraging sustainable local transportation. Specifically, this plan will seek to increase bicycling, walking and transit use, improve traffic safety, enhance local businesses and foster a healthier, more environmentally friendly community. The main goal of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to develop a comprehensive non-motorized transportation network that will serve the needs of all Park Forest residents, allow for safe travel at all ages, and connect neighborhoods to jobs, shopping, regional bikeways, cultural facilities, recreational amenities and activity areas.

Guidance from Previous Plans

The Village of Park Forest has a history of creating long-range planning documents that have been used successfully to help guide growth and redevelopment. Most recently, in 2012, the Village adopted "Growing Green," the sustainability element of its Comprehensive Plan, which called for improvement of the bicycle and pedestrian environment, among other recommendations. Other elements of the Comprehensive Plan that support walking and biking include the 211th Street TOD Plan, the Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development, the DownTown Master Plan, and the Homes for a Changing Region Report. In addition, the RTA is conducting a study of pedestrian and bicycle access to the 211th Street Station, in line with the previous TOD plan. Recommendations from this planning process are not yet available, but are expected to support and complement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The Village is in the process of updating its development regulations, with assistance from CMAP. The development regulations are being updated in order to better align the Village's zoning and subdivision ordinances with the Sustainability Plan, other recent planning documents, and current land use practices. The development regulations update will also be a key way to implement the recommendations of this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Also, guidance for this Plan was provided by GO TO 2040, which promotes investment in public transportation, walking, and biking as a key strategy to achieve the goals of Livable Communities and Regional Mobility. The plan recognizes that improvements to walking and biking are necessary to help improve safety, increase access and mobility, and reduce air pollution and congestion on the region's roadways.

Regional Context

The Village of Park Forest, incorporated on February 1, 1949, was designed by Philip Klutznick and American Community Builders as one of the largest planned communities in the country (second only to Levittown, New York). Park Forest was intended to accommodate veterans returning home from World War II. The Village was planned cohesively with both automobiles and pedestrians in mind. Neighborhoods were organized around open space, schools, churches, and commercial nodes to ensure that residents could easily meet their daily needs on foot.

Park Forest lies on the southern edge of the Chicago metropolitan area, approximately 35 miles south of the Chicago loop, and is situated in southern Cook County and northern Will County. The Village is bordered by Olympia Fields to the north, Chicago Heights to the east, University Park to the south, and Richton Park and Matteson to the west. There are also unincorporated lands around the Village's boundary (**Figures 1.1 and 1.2**).

Park Forest is located about five miles east of I-57, adjacent to commuter rail. U.S. Highway 30 (Lincoln Highway) runs along the northern boundary of Park Forest and links the Village with I-57 as well as Chicago Heights, Matteson, and Olympia Fields. The Metra Electric District line runs to the west of Park Forest, with the 211th Street station located within the Village and the Matteson and Richton Park stations just outside of its boundary.

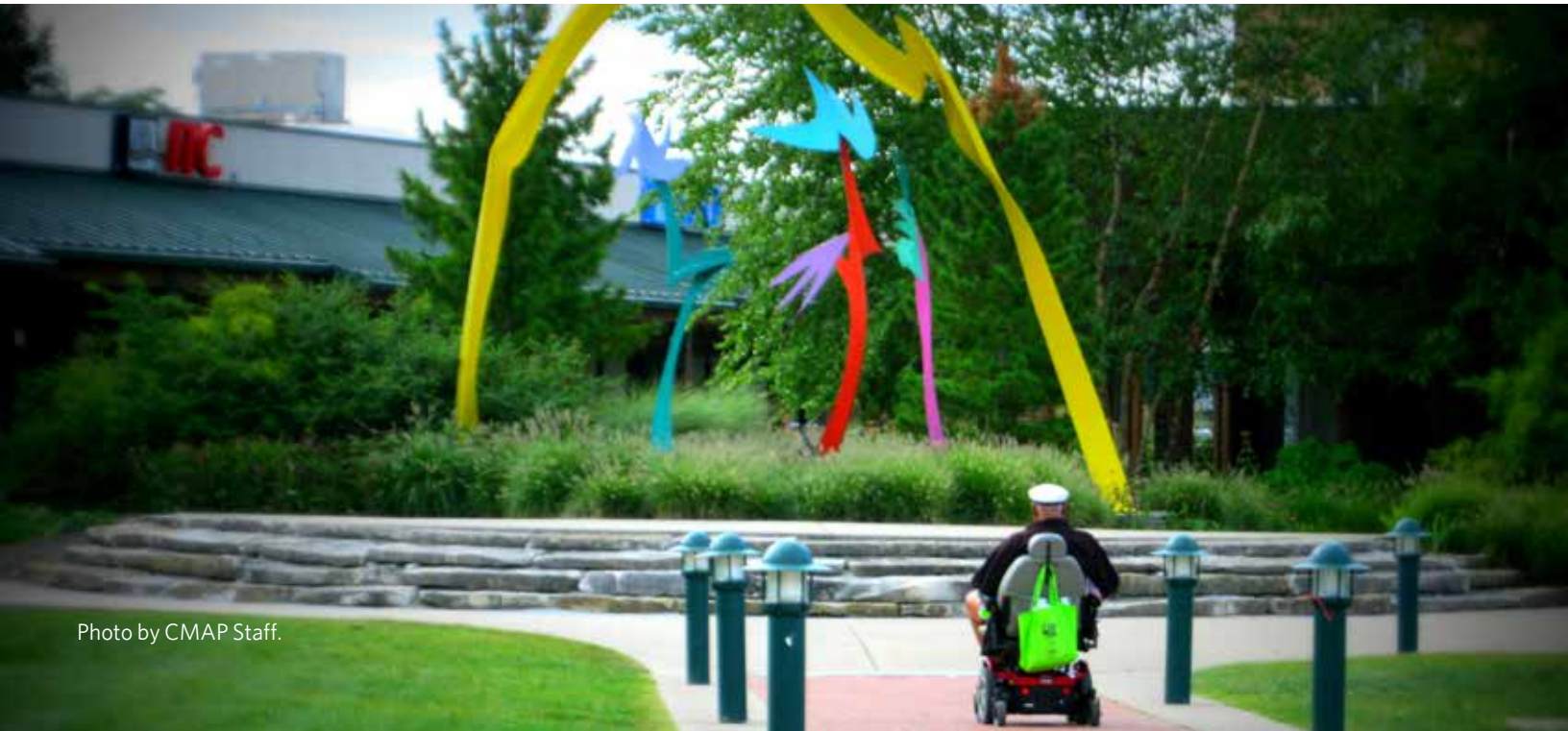
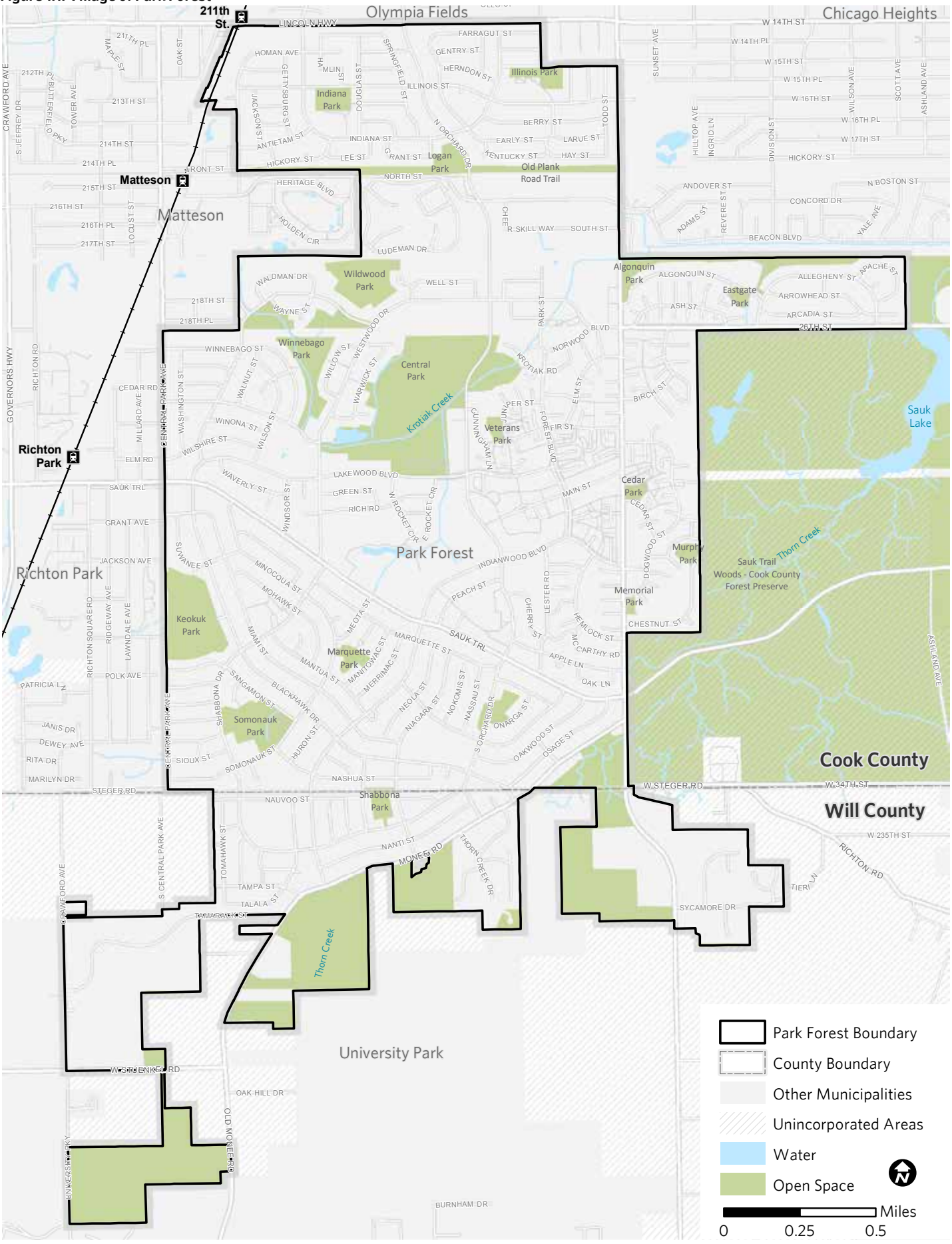


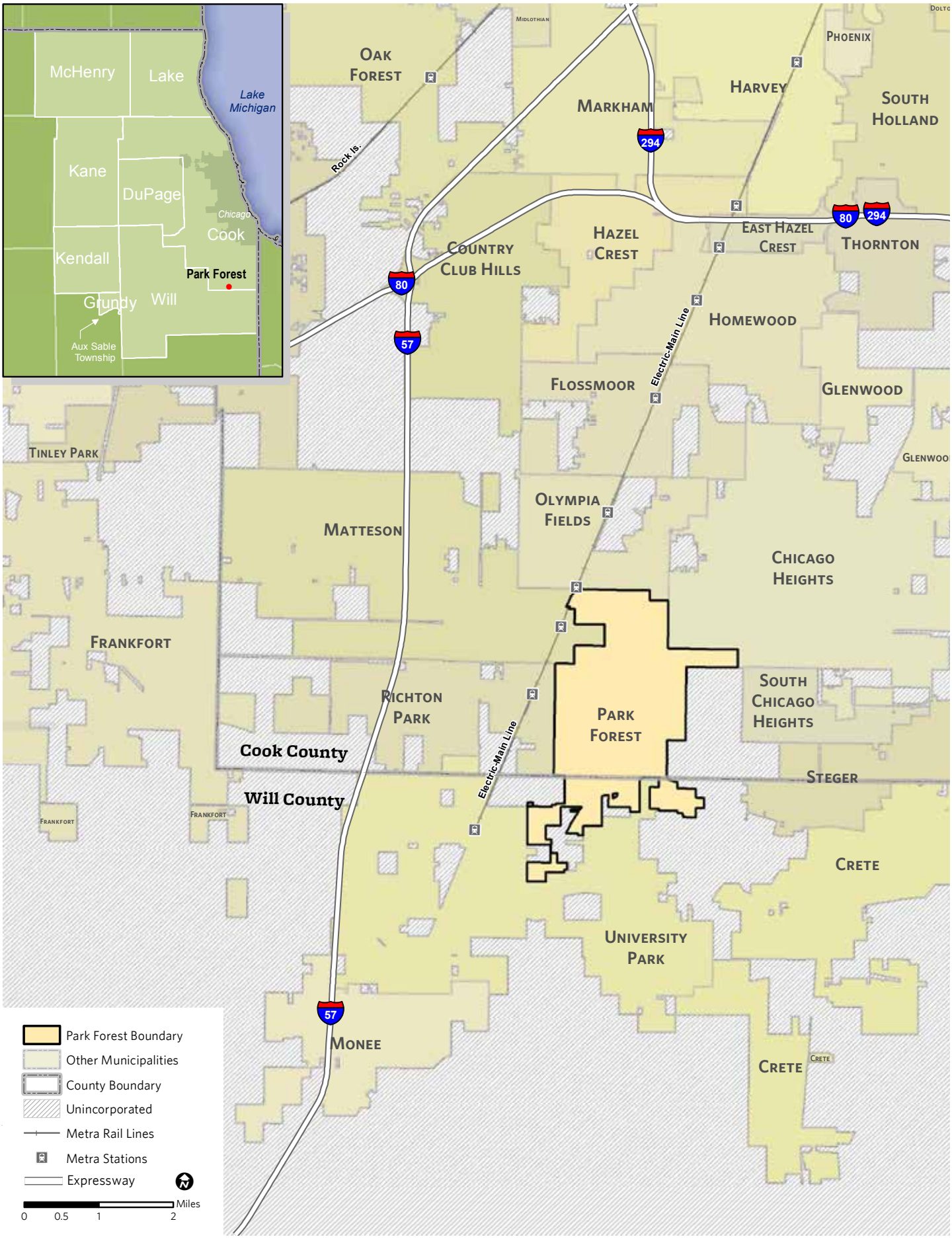
Photo by CMAP Staff.

Figure 1.1. Village of Park Forest



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 1.2. Regional and subregional context



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Chapter 2
Summary of Existing Conditions

This chapter summarizes the existing conditions within Park Forest that help to form the Plan's recommendations. For a more detailed analysis and discussion please refer to the Existing Conditions Report that was created as part of this planning process. This chapter includes a summary of community context, travel behavior, and transportation infrastructure.

Community Context and Travel Behavior

Existing Land Use

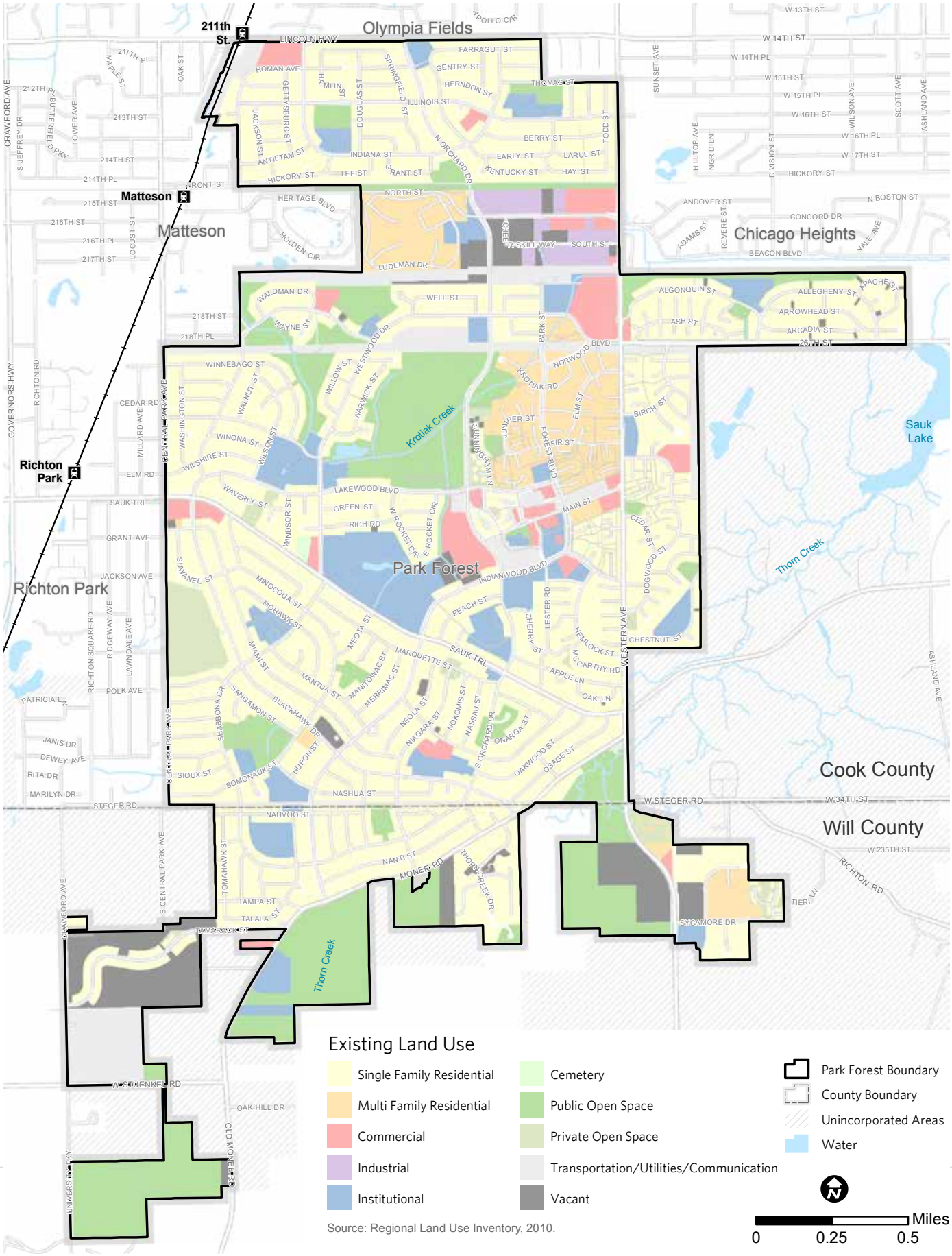
Residential areas account for the majority of Park Forest land uses, with single-family and multi-family residences making up nearly 50 percent and 7 percent, respectively. The Village's multi-family uses are primarily located on the east side of the Village on parcels zoned as R-2A: Multiple Family Residential District, which allows for a maximum density of 17 dwelling units per acre. As a planned community, Park Forest was designed with excellent access to open space. Nearly 20 percent of land in Park Forest consists of parks or nature preserve lands, making open space the second most common use of land in the Village.

DownTown Park Forest, which was developed at the site of the historic Park Forest Plaza is a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use shopping and entertainment district. The presence of DownTown is a unique feature of the community that could contribute greatly to neighborhood walkability in terms of meeting daily needs on foot.

Mode Share

Compared to Cook County and the region, a higher percentage of Park Forest residents drive alone to work, while fewer walk or bike. When compared to Will County, Park Forest has a significantly higher proportion of transit users, and is similar to regional averages. Notably, the percentage of Park Forest residents who walk or bike to work (0.8%) is lower than the averages for Cook County (5.5%), Will County (1.1%), and the region (4.1%). While these figures only capture work trips, they demonstrate serious shortcomings in the existing bicycle and pedestrian system, which this plan seeks to address.

Figure 2.1 Existing Land Use



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Table 2.3 Mode Share, as Percentage of Work Trips

	Park Forest		Cook County		Will County		Region	
	Count	Percent	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Work at Home*	202	N/A	93,836	N/A	12,842	N/A	171,635	N/A
Drive Alone	7,019	75.03%	1,485,736	65.21%	261,269	85.70%	2,731,969	72.50%
Carpool	1,039	11.11%	221,832	9.74%	23,699	7.77%	348,682	9.25%
Public Transit	1,175	12.56%	420,010	18.43%	13,117	4.30%	489,131	12.98%
Walk or Bike	79	0.84%	124,078	5.45%	3,221	1.06%	154,848	4.11%
Other	43	0.46%	26,844	1.18%	3,555	1.17%	43,476	1.15%
Total Commuters	9,355	100.00%	2,278,500	100.00%	304,861	100.00%	3,768,106	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census 2010

Transportation Infrastructure

This subsection provides an overview of Park Forest's existing transportation infrastructure – including walking, biking, vehicular, and transit systems.

Walkability

The website WalkScore.com estimates the average walkscore for the Village of Park Forest is 32 / 100, classifying it a "Car-Dependent City." However, the area along Park Forest's "Main Street" scores 66 / 100, or "Somewhat Walkable." These ratings mostly rely on the number of points of interest (**Figure 2.2**), but also include factors such as access to transit, intersection density, block length, and population density. Points of interest include grocery stores, parks, restaurants, coffee shops, transit locations, farmer's markets, and other nearby businesses. It is worth noting, that at the time of this report, a new grocery store is set to open at Orchard Park Plaza. This would likely improve the walkscore, however, at this time it is unclear by how much.

Sidewalks & Paths

There are approximately 103 miles of sidewalk throughout Park Forest, allowing residents and visitors to walk between homes, places of employment, and other amenities. While the curvilinear street grid in the Village creates long blocks in some residential areas (making it more difficult for some pedestrians to find a direct route), there are 36 pedestrian cut-throughs scattered throughout Park Forest to facilitate walkability, making it easier and faster to get from one block to another. Twenty-eight cut-through paths run between residential properties while several others connect residential neighborhoods to open space or school properties in the Village.

To assess walkability in terms of accessible and convenient routes to local destinations, **Figure 2.3** illustrates the areas that are within 5- and 10-minute walks to and from local schools and points of interest (i.e. stores, restaurants, businesses, and Metra stations). The "walkshed" that emanates from each of these points, and the highlighted pedestrian-accessible roadways, trails, and paths, visualize the connectivity of the local pedestrian network, highlighting the somewhat limited coverage afforded by the curvilinear street network and its arrangement of long blocks.

While the vast majority of schools and mapped destinations are located along the pedestrian network, it is important to note that the destination clusters along Lincoln Highway, which lacks pedestrian amenities, are inaccessible to pedestrians. These clusters include the 211th Street Metra station, which despite having dedicated parking within Park Forest, lacks clear and safe pedestrian paths or routes to residential areas in north Park Forest. This will be important for RTA to take note of in their pedestrian access study of the 211th St. station. The residential neighborhood located northwest of DownTown Park Forest and southeast of the Matteson Metra Station does not have good pedestrian access to local schools or amenities, as shown in **Figure 2.3**. This is also the case for the residential neighborhood west of Somonauk Park and the neighborhood south of Monee Road.

Comparing Park Forest's dendritic walksheds and routes to the nearly symmetrical diamond-shaped walkshed around the Matteson Metra station shows the different degree of walkability and route density present within Matteson's fairly grid-like street network and that of Park Forest. To a degree, the presence of pedestrian cut-throughs and trails helps to fill the gaps in Park Forest's pedestrian network. These pedestrian cut-throughs are owned by the Village but neighboring residents are responsible for their maintenance. This sometimes poses an issue when residents fail to maintain the pathways. However, the cut-throughs have the potential for anchoring a Safe Routes to School proposal, for which Park Forest

Figure 2.2. Walking Amenities

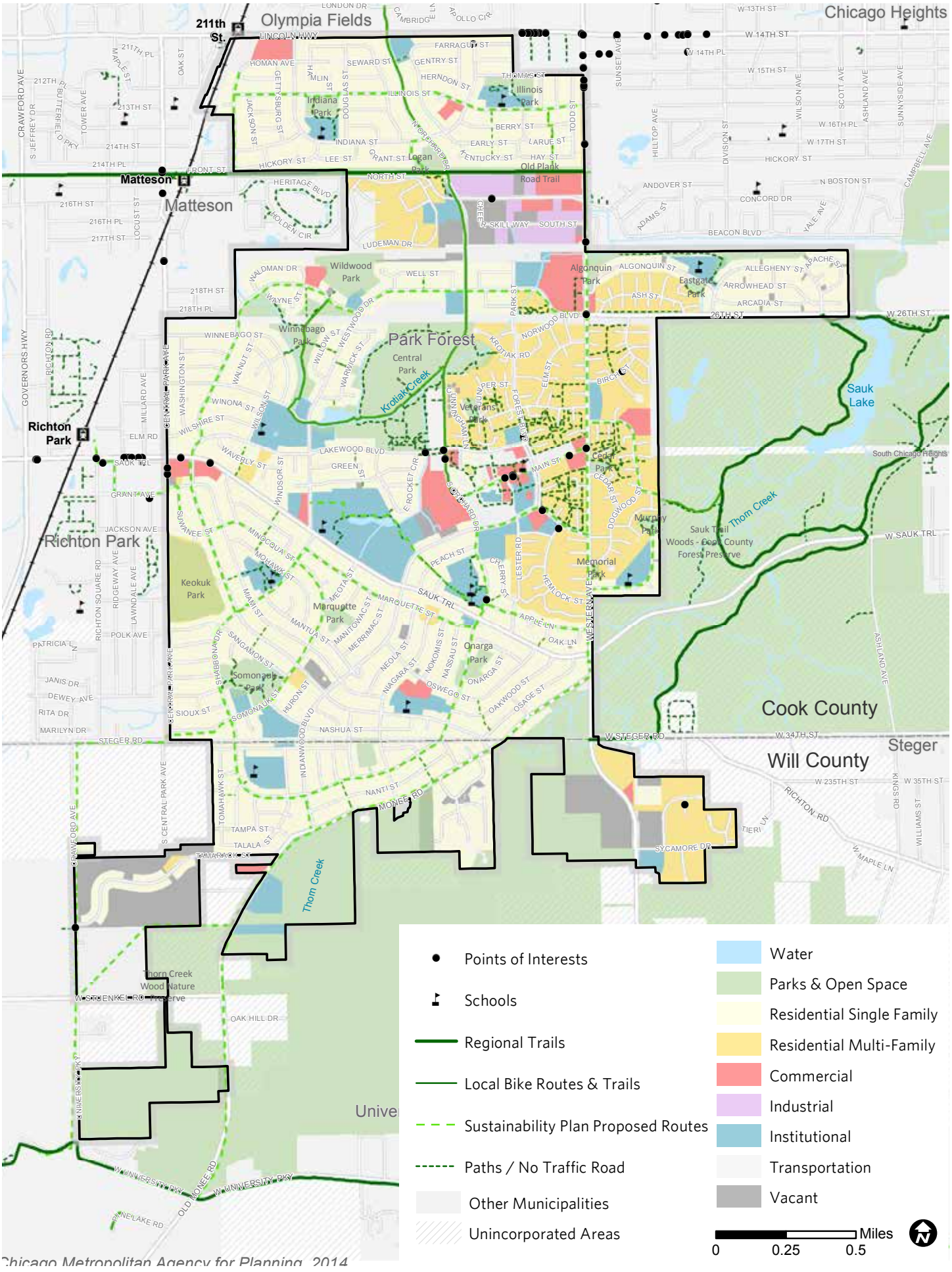
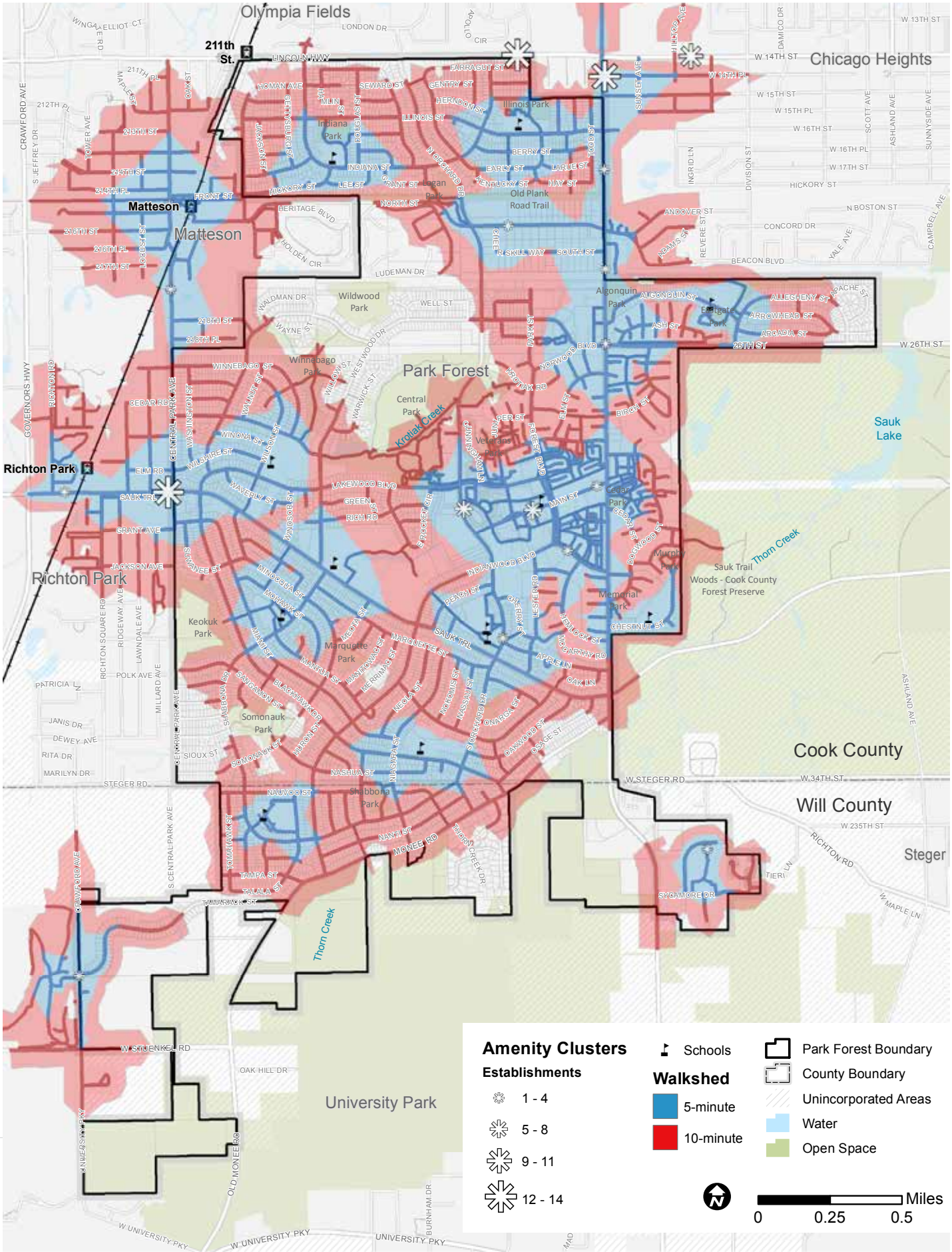


Figure2.3. Pedestrian Walkshed



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

schools have previously attempted to secure grant money.

Intersections and Streetscaping

While most of Park Forest's intersections are controlled by stop signs, there are 20 signalized intersections in the Village. Pedestrian safety at these intersections ranges from very safe (with ladder-stripe painted crosswalks, accessible curb cuts, audible signals, and flashing-hand pedestrian warnings) to very unsafe (lacking sidewalks, pedestrian signals, painted crosswalks, and/or accessible curb cuts, sometimes across 5 lanes of traffic).

Park Forest has exemplary streetscaping along Main Street in DownTown, with brick pavers for crosswalks, planters, benches, on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Most streets in the Village have sidewalks and street trees. Western Avenue has an inconsistent sidewalk with missing sections on the east side of the street between Algonquin Street and 15th Street, as well as the segment south of Chestnut Street. It also does not have sidewalks on the west side of the street from Lincoln Highway / 211th Street south to Illinois Street / W. 16th Street, and from Cedar Street south to Hemlock Street. Also, there are no sidewalks on the south side of Lincoln Highway/211th Street from Indiana Street to the east edge of the Village.

Pedestrian Safety

Western Avenue appears to be the most dangerous road for pedestrians in Park Forest; all three of the nearby pedestrian fatalities in the past 5 years have occurred along Western Avenue. Of specific concern are the segments lacking sidewalks and the crossings that are not controlled by traffic signals. There are long stretches of Western Avenue with residential multi-family properties on both sides of the street and no signalized intersections. In the one-mile stretch between Sauk Trail Road and 26th Street, there is only one traffic signal. Sauk Trail Road is also a concern for pedestrian safety due to high traffic volume. Lincoln Highway / 211th Street has no pedestrian accommodations and has seen a high number of pedestrian crashes, most of which are in Chicago Heights (including a fatality at Western Avenue). Most of the roads in Park Forest, however, have not seen many pedestrian crashes, and are generally regarded as safe and pleasant to walk along due to sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian cut-throughs, and the presence of other pedestrians.

Bicycling

Routes and Trails

Park Forest is linked to a larger regional network of trailways in several areas of the Village (see **Figure 2.5**). Both Old Plank Road Trail and Thorn Creek Trail are as classified as Primary Regional Trails, and serve as part of the backbone of trailways around northeastern Illinois that connect to smaller community trails and paths. These trails are heavily traveled for recreational purposes, particularly over the weekends.

Most of the parks in the Village have paved pathways, though many are quite narrow. Also, Orchard Drive, with new bike lanes, offers a north-south connection between Old Plank Road Trail and DownTown Park Forest. A "green-stripe" bicycle route used to exist throughout the Village and onto the Thorn Creek trail, guiding cyclists throughout Park Forest. While there are separate trails as well as bike signage along this former route, this reconfiguration of Orchard Drive is the first dedicated bike lane to be integrated with the roadway.

Bicycle Parking

There are currently bike racks at locations throughout the Village, including at schools, the Aqua Center/Central Park, the Public Library, Village Hall, Thorn Creek Nature Center, and the Tennis and Health Club, and there are new bike locker facilities at the Matteson Metra station. Many of the bicycle racks located at municipal buildings are "fence" style racks, consisting of vertical bars between two rows of horizontal bars. These racks do not allow both the wheel and the frame to be locked, which increases the potential for bicycle theft. The Matteson Metra station and the library have "wave" racks, with increased security potential similar to a U-Rack, while accommodating more bicycles than a single rack.

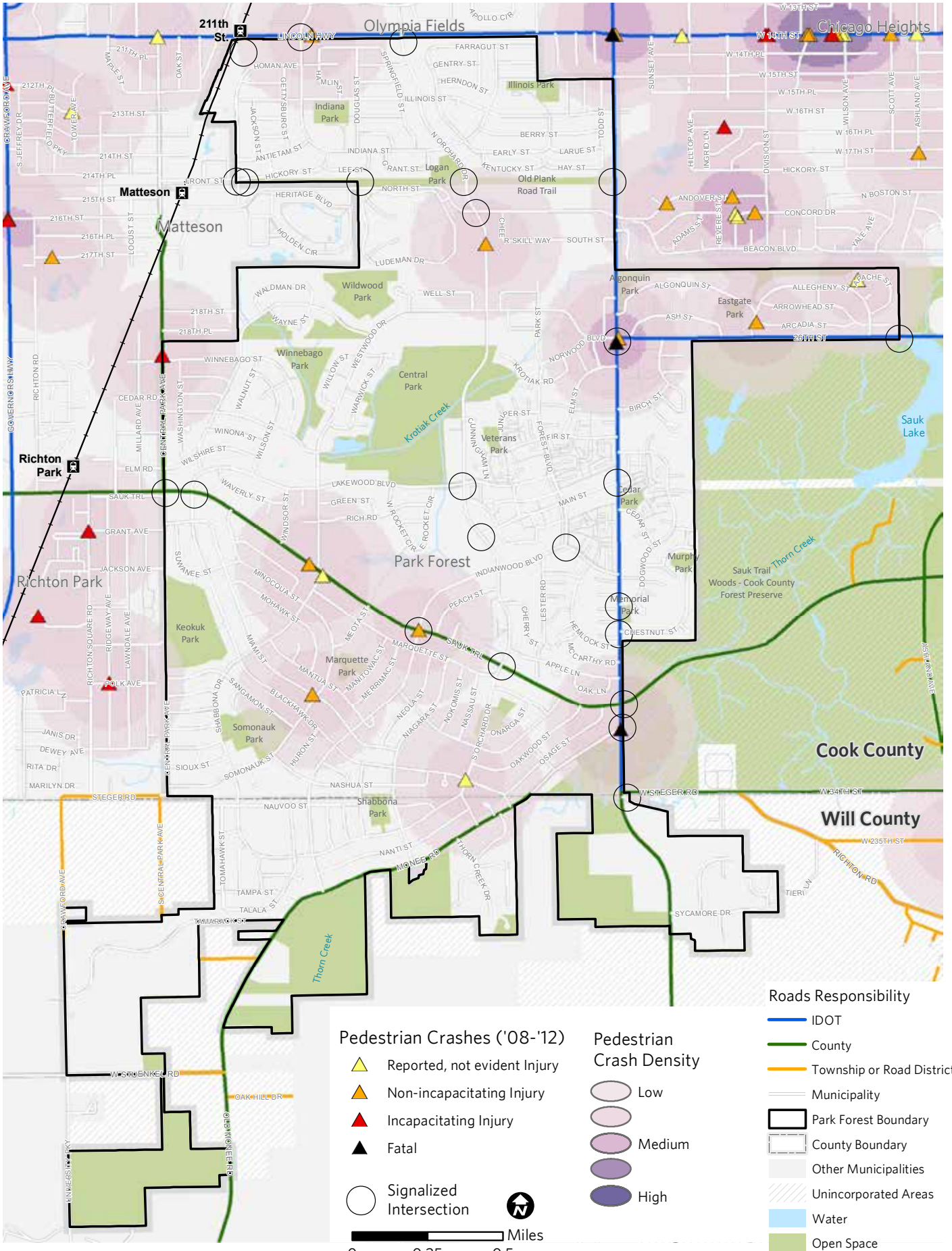
Bike Safety

When bicyclists and drivers share the road, many factors affect safety, including the speed and volume of traffic and the width of the road. The perception of safety is very important to developing a robust cycling community; most people will not ride a bicycle if they don't think that the route is safe. And the mere presence of regular bicyclists on the roadway can significantly increase overall safety, as drivers come to expect and anticipate bicyclists. When it is not feasible to create off-street or barrier-protected bike lanes, certain road treatments can help improve the safety of the road. **Figure 2.7** shows where recent bicycle crashes have occurred within Park Forest and just outside of the Village. The crashes may indicate dangerous conditions, preferred routes of cyclists, or perhaps both.

Level of Traffic Stress

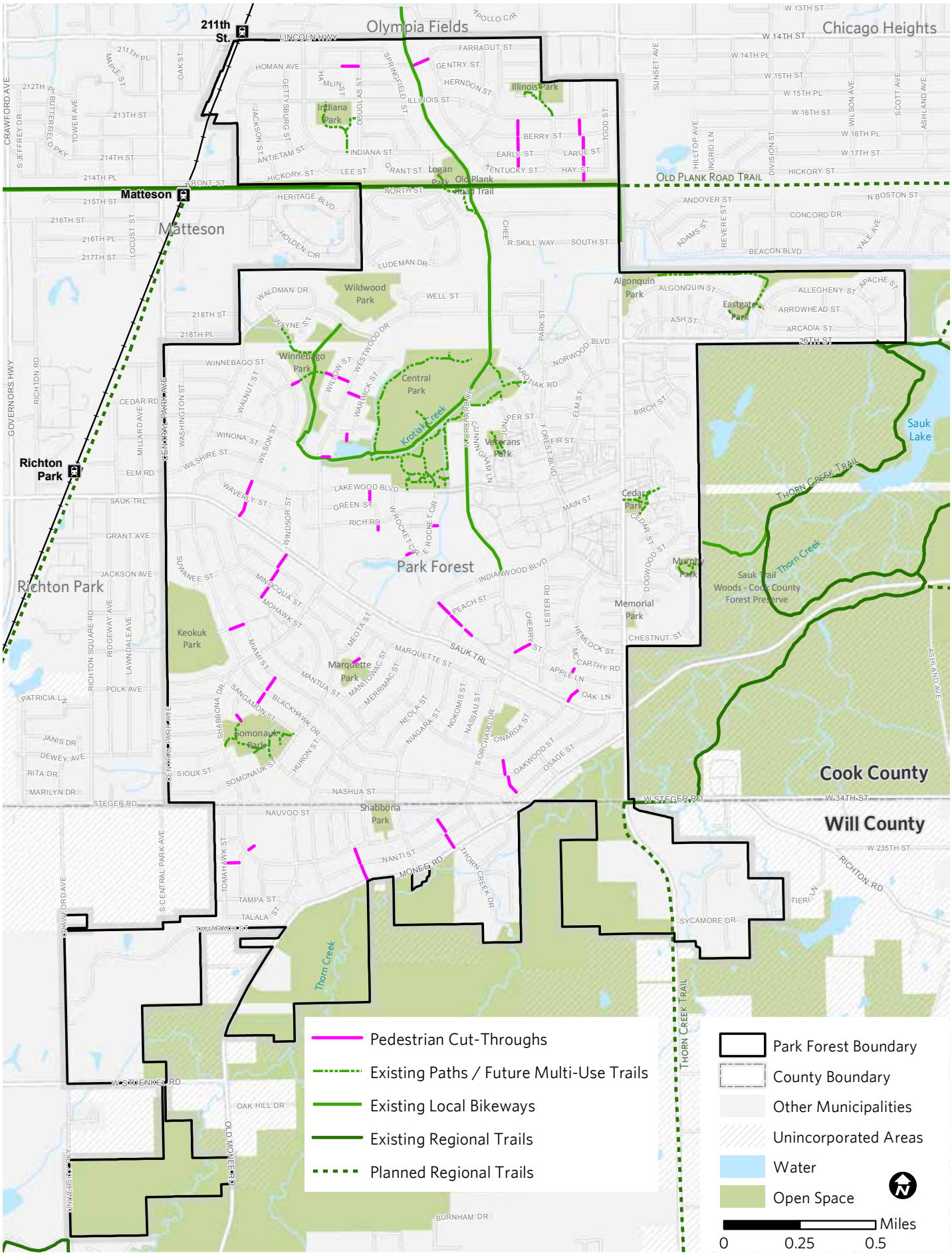
According to a recent report from the Mineta Transportation Institute, a highly connected, low-stress network is fundamental to attract the highest numbers of bicyclists to the network. The method developed to measure traffic stress considers a number of factors, including the average daily traffic (ADT), the number of travel lanes, posted speed limits, and location of the center line. For

Figure 2.4. Pedestrian Crashes



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 2.5. Existing Village Trail System



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 2.6. Existing Regional Trail System

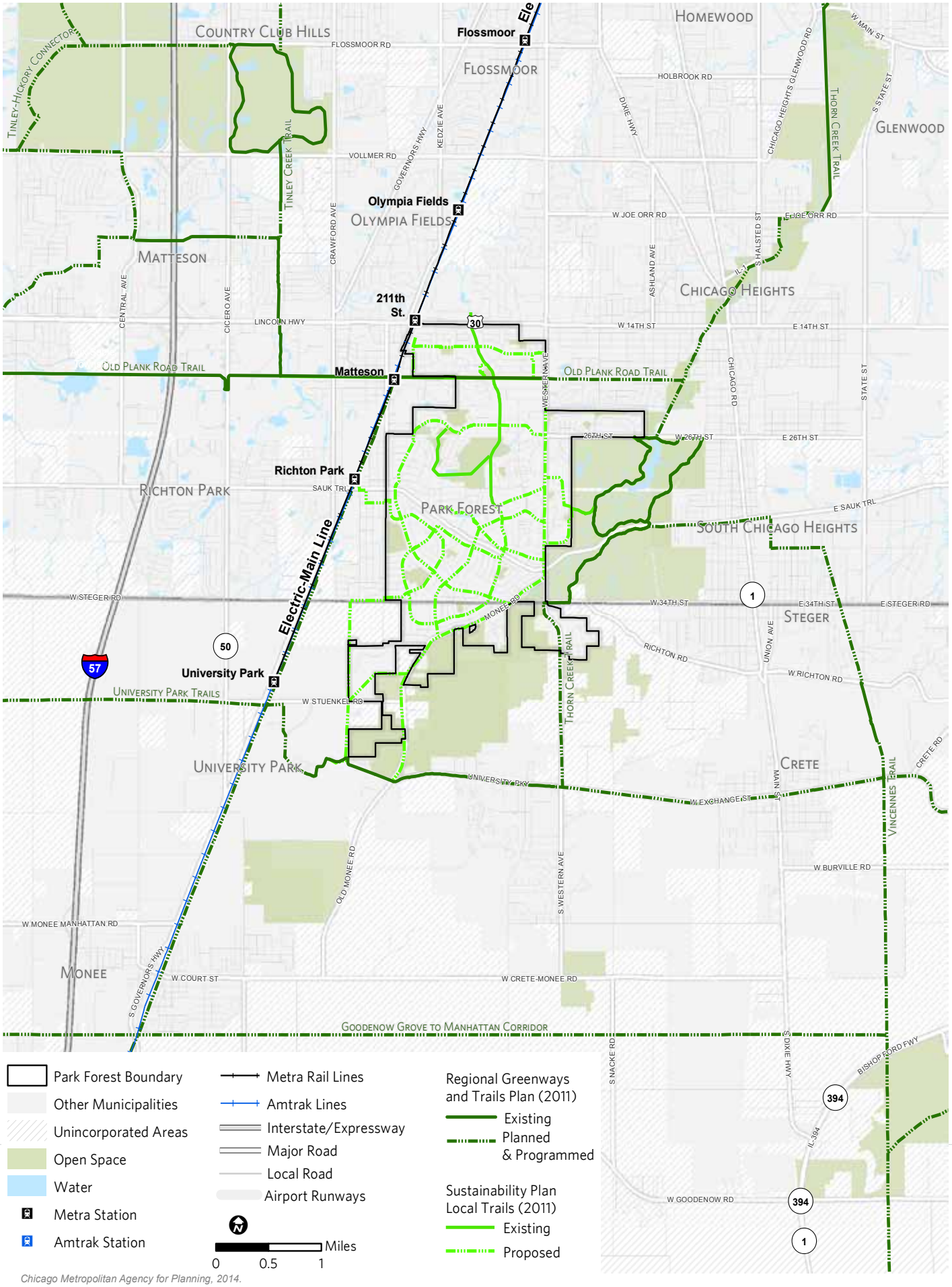
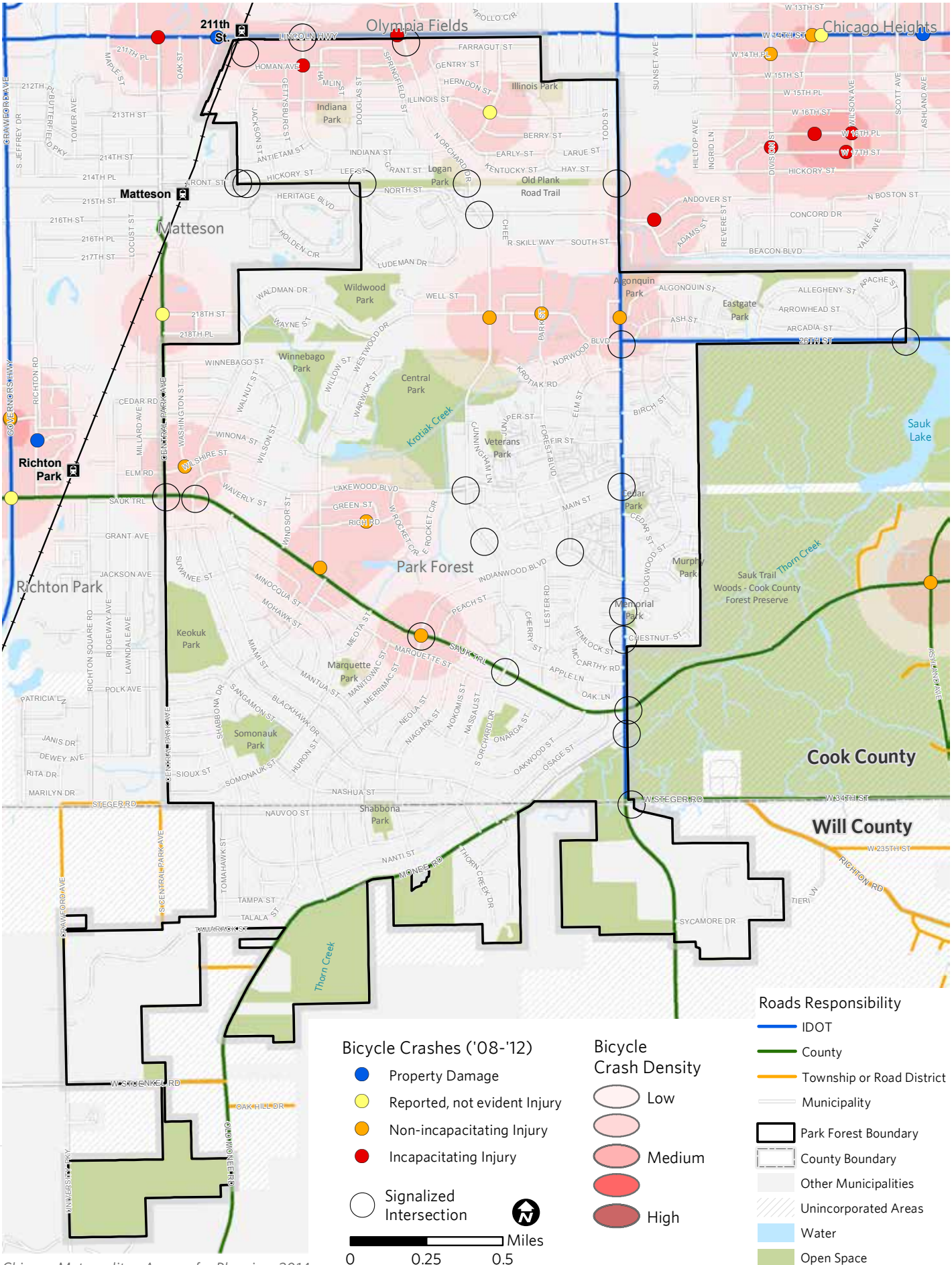
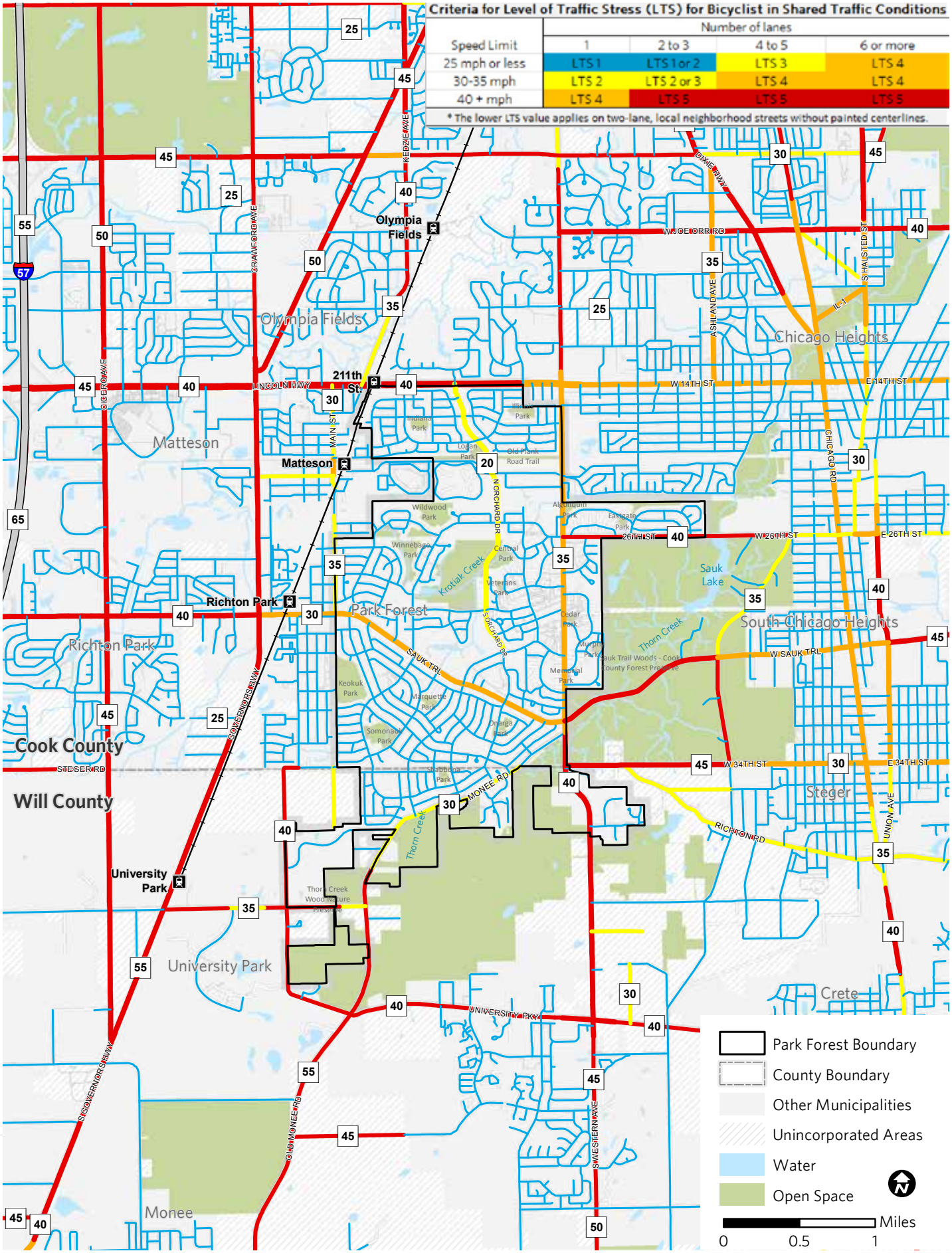


Figure 2.7. Bicycle Crashes



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 2.8. Level of Traffic Stress



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

streets where bicyclists and cars share the road, street width and speed limit are the primary factors affecting traffic stress. These ratings aim to estimate the level of stress that a bicyclist would feel while riding along different routes, without the need to survey every road in the study area. Using available data, Figure 2.8 measures the Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) on the roadways in Park Forest.

Most of the roads in Park Forest are low-stress (LTS 1 or 2), with exceptions along arterial roadways and collectors. Orchard Drive is rated LTS 3, but the presence of an on-street bicycle lane helps reduce the stress level. The main problem streets are 211th Street / Lincoln Highway (LTS 5), Western Avenue (LTS 4 and 5), 26th Street (LTS 5), Sauk Trail Road (LTS 4 and 5), and Monee Road (LTS 3 and 5). A well-connected, low-stress network will need to address these important links.

Transit

Regional public transit options that serve the Village include Metra commuter train service and Pace suburban bus service (see **Figure 2.9**). As shown earlier in Table 2.3, 13 percent of Park Forest residents commuted to work via public transit, similar to the regional average.

Metra

Metra's Electric District (ME) main line serves Park Forest, connecting the Village to Downtown Chicago and other south suburbs along its 31.5 mile extent. The 211th Street station of the ME is located where Park Forest's municipal boundaries intersect with those of Matteson and Olympia Fields. Figure 2.9 shows the locations of the 211th Street station and the Matteson and Richton Park stations that serve Park Forest residents. As can be seen, the residential areas along the Village's western border have the most convenient access to the nearby Metra stations.

Both the 211th Street station and the Richton Park station are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards (although the 211th Street station is a long walk from the parking lot), and a limited number of bicycles are allowed on ME trains during peak and off-hour trips. Many Park Forest bicyclists prefer the Matteson station for its easy access via the Orchard Drive bike lane and the available bike lockers and bicycle rack. Due to security concerns, Metra recommends covered bicycle parking at stations rather than bike lockers.

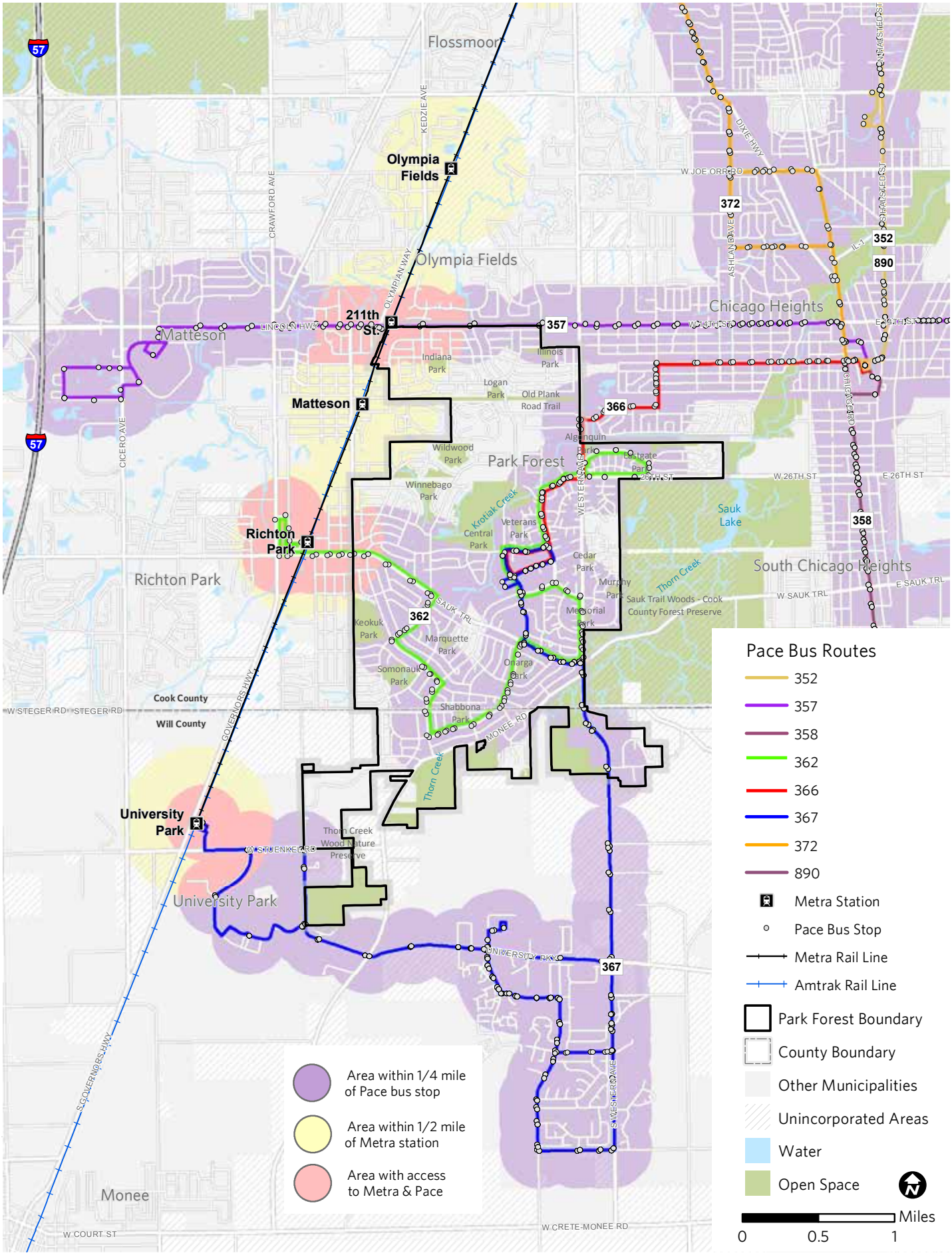
Pace Bus

As shown in Figure 2.9, four Pace suburban bus routes (357, 362, 366, and 367) directly serve Park Forest, with connections to other Pace routes that run beyond the Village as well as to Metra train stations. **Figure 2.9** also shows that much of the Village is within 0.25 mile of a Pace bus stop, with the exception of some northern residential areas surrounding Wildwood and Logan Park. All of the Pace vehicle fleet is ADA compliant, and there are numerous "dial-a-ride" services to supplement their accessible fixed routes. Furthermore, all buses are equipped with front-loading bike carriers so that Pace users can access the bus via bicycle.

"Jolly Trolley" Connector Bus Service

The "Jolly Trolley" is a Village-run connector bus service that links Park Forest residents to community amenities and other public transit services. This demand-responsive bus service is administered by Rich Township for the Park Forest community, providing door-to-door transit for seniors, students, and adults of all ages. The Jolly Trolley operates a fleet of three vehicles – originally Pace short buses – that make pre-reserved trips and also pick up customers every hour on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at two pre-determined stops in DownTown Park Forest.

Figure 2.9. Public Transit



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Roadways

Functional Classification

Roads provide space for vital functions within a community – mobility, access, commerce, and civic life. Park Forest street network, shown in **Figure 2.10**, consists mainly of local roadways that accommodate the Village's residential character. The functional classification of a road describes the character of the road in terms of vehicular mobility and the level of service it is intended to provide.

Understanding the functional classification for streets in the community is important to create a pedestrian and bicycle plan. The existing design and vehicular traffic of a roadway directly impacts the pedestrian and bicyclists comfort, safety, and overall use of the roadway.

Table 2.4 Roadway Details

Primary Service	Functional Classification	Roadway	Average Daily Traffic*	Lanes	Jurisdiction
Through traffic movement	Principal Arterial	Lincoln Highway	28,900	6	IDOT
	Minor Arterial	Sauk Trail Road	20,400	4	Cook County
		Western Avenue	15,300	4	IDOT
		Monee Road	4,600	2	Will County
	Collector	N. Orchard Drive	4,500-5,000	4	Park Forest
		Lakewood Blvd.	2,000	2	Park Forest
		Blackhawk Dr.	1,900	2	Park Forest
		Central Park Ave.	4,000	2	Cook County
		Indianwood Blvd.	500-1,000	2-4	Park Forest
Local trips and property access	Local	All other streets			Park Forest

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) 2014

*Note: IDOT's Average Daily Traffic in this table does not include truck traffic.

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are intended to serve high volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds, providing limited access in order to maintain a higher level of service. As a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) and Class II truck route, U.S. Route 30, or Lincoln Highway, is the only principal arterial serving Park Forest, running along the Village's northern border and carrying approximately 28,900 vehicles and 3,250 trucks per day. This route provides the Village with east-west regional connectivity and access to the regional highway system at I-57 to the west and Illinois Route 394 to the east. IDOT is responsible for the maintenance of the 6 lane roadway.

Minor Arterials

Park Forest is crossed by three minor arterials, Sauk Trail Road, Western Avenue, and Monee Road. These roadways serve both regional and local trips, providing a higher degree of access and designed for moderate speeds. With the exception of Monee Road, the Village's minor arterials have two lanes of traffic running in each direction with no on-street parking available. In Park Forest, these roadways accommodate the highest volumes of local traffic and run along a range of land uses including single and multi-family residential districts, as well as commercial and industrial areas. Sauk Trail Road is the Village's primary east-west roadway, carrying 5,000 more vehicles than any of the village's roadways with the exception of U.S. Route 30.

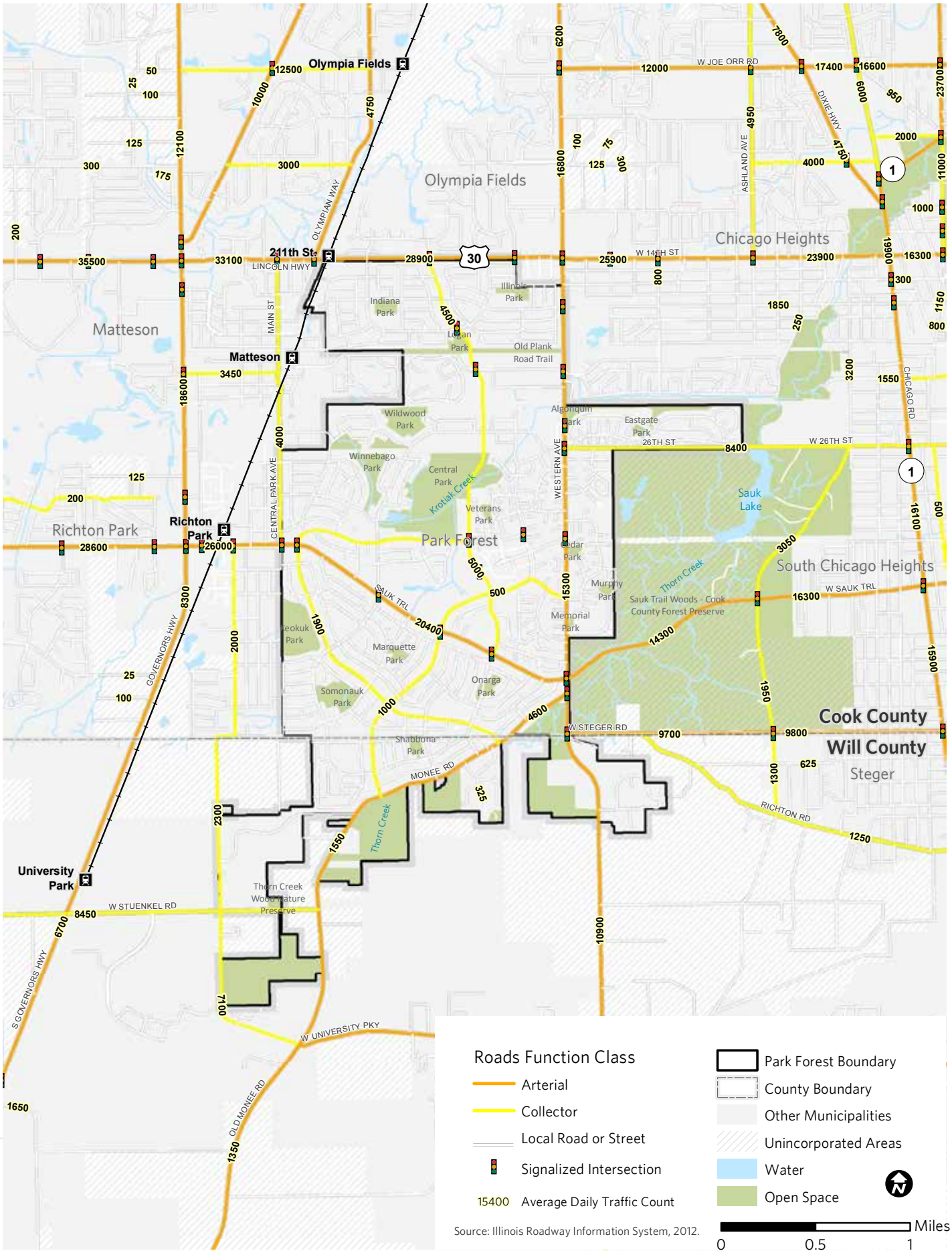
Collectors

Collectors serve to move traffic from local streets to arterials and other major roads, providing a high degree of access for local traffic at moderate speeds. With the exception of Central Park Avenue along the Village's western border, each of these roadways is under Park Forest municipal jurisdiction. Of particular importance are North Orchard Drive and Indianwood Boulevard, which serve as main north-south thoroughfares in the Village, connecting local and major roadways to DownTown Park Forest. Similarly, Lakewood Boulevard provides east-west connectivity to DownTown.

Local Roads

All remaining roadways are classified as local roads, which primarily serve residential areas and offer the highest levels of access.

Figure 2.10. Functional Classification and ADT



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Connectivity

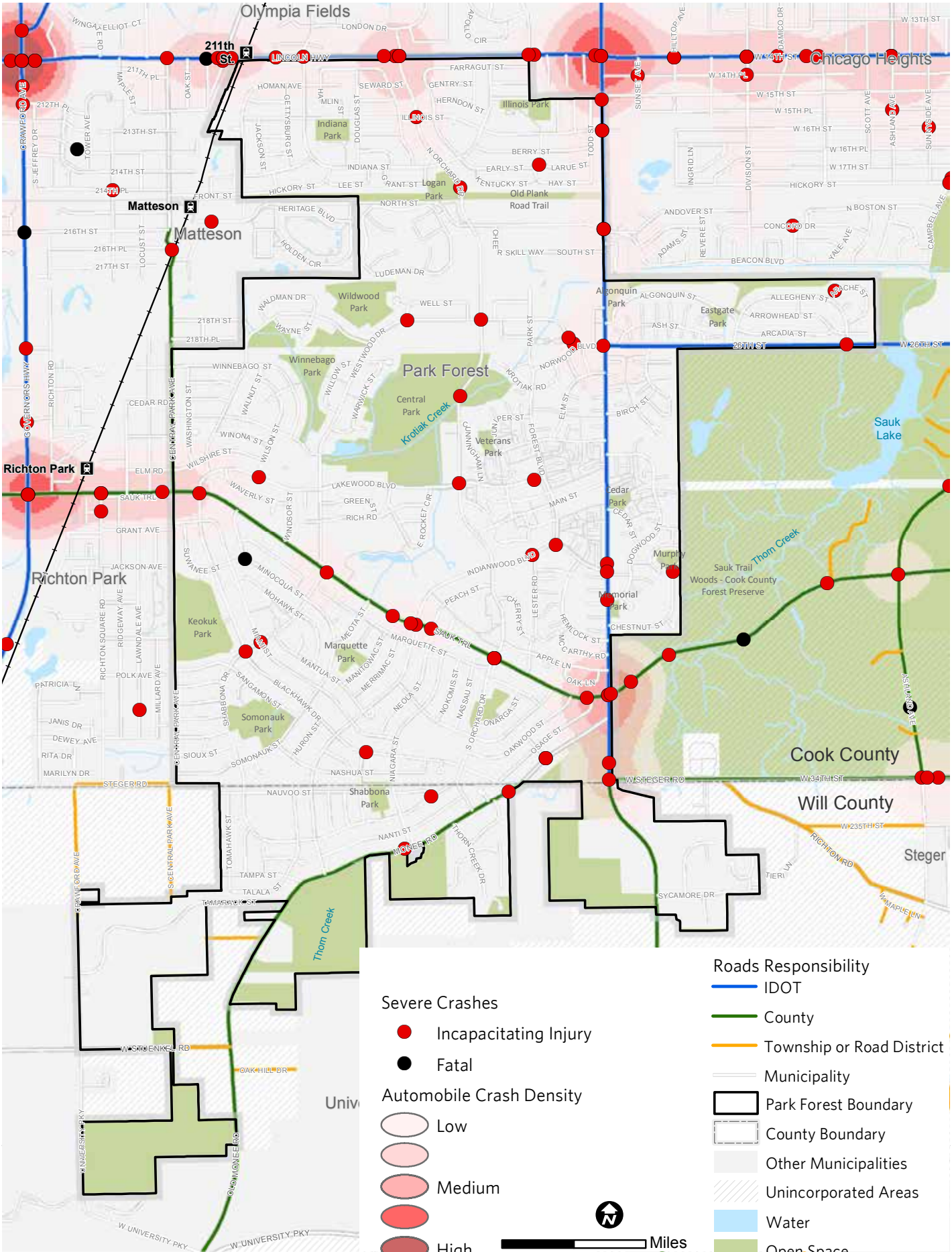
Street connectivity is a way of assessing the ease of travelling between destinations within a local street network. As a whole, Park Forest's street network consists of long blocks and winding/curvilinear roads that provide links to major roadways and community destinations. While the residential areas south of Sauk Trail Road have a limited number of cul-de-sacs, the central and eastern portions of the village have high concentrations of dead-ends. In these instances, the unconnected street network only allows for a limited number of route options, resulting in longer and less direct trips between destinations. This can lead to high volumes of traffic being concentrated on limited infrastructure, as is the case with Sauk Trail Road, Park Forest's primary east-west link. This type of network arrangement typically negatively affects walkability, encouraging automobile use for many trips that could potentially be accomplished by walking in a more connected network. However, the presence of internal pedestrian pathways in many of Park Forest's multi-family and cooperative residential areas helps to mitigate these impacts by linking residences into a more connected pedestrian network.

Safety

Figure 2.11 illustrates the locations of the most severe automobile crashes occurring in Park Forest and the surrounding communities between 2008 and 2012. The map also shows the areas with the highest overall density of crashes, weighted by severity. As can be seen, intersections of major roadways along or just outside of Park Forest's borders have the highest concentrations of crashes. These areas include the intersections of Lincoln Highway and Western Avenue as well as Sauk Trail Road and Western Avenue, which carry the heaviest volumes of daily traffic at the highest speeds in the Village and the surrounding area.

While there is not a concentration of severe crashes at any one point along Sauk Trail similar in magnitude to the aforementioned intersections, there is a distinctive pattern of crashes involving serious injury spread along the roadway's extent. Specifically, the area surrounding the intersection of Sauk Trail Road and Indianwood Boulevard stands out. This area was also identified in both the bike and pedestrian analysis.

Figure 2.11. Automobile Crashes



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Chapter 3
Community Outreach

The development of the Park Forest Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan included broad community engagement. The engagement process included numerous opportunities for public input, including community events such as a Folks on Spokes Bicycle Club meeting, the Tall Grass Arts Association Art Fair, and the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast. Public engagement activities occurred throughout the planning process, engaging local residents and stakeholders and documenting the Village's unique strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Outreach Activities

Outreach opportunities were designed to help answer the following questions:

- What were Park Forest's strengths as they relate to non-motorized transportation?
- What were the main challenges to being a pedestrian in Park Forest? A cyclist?
- Aside from the work already planned what projects or actions should the Village pursue to make Park Forest more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly?
- How do you envision Park Forest's non-motorized transportation network in 2025?

Project Steering Committee Meeting

On May 15, 2014 the first Project Steering Committee meeting was held at Village Hall. The Project Steering Committee was responsible for providing guidance and feedback on existing issues and opportunities, revising project goals, reviewing plan documents and identifying stakeholders who should be involved in the planning process. The committee was composed of a diverse subset of community stakeholders including members from the local school districts, residents, bicyclists, Village departments, and representatives from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and Active Transportation Alliance (ATA).

The first meeting objective was to introduce the committee to the project and begin to catalog issues and opportunities in the Village as they relate to walking and biking. The steering committee identified a number of key strengths that made Park Forest bicycle-friendly including the recently developed bike lanes on Orchard Drive, the Thorn Creek and Old Plank paved park trails, and the number of residential streets that supplement and connect most of the infrastructure already in place. The committee also identified recent updates to bike parking at key locations, in particular the addition of bike lockers at the Matteson Metra stop.

The committee identified pedestrian-friendly strengths, most notably the network of "cut-through" paths which allow residents to walk between housing subdivisions. This system supports walkability throughout the Village by providing a more direct travel route to destinations, especially for school-bound children. The Committee noted that the extensive sidewalk system in the Village is well maintained, provides direct access to green space, and is considered to be relatively safe with mostly updated crossing signals. Additional related strengths included a strong perception of safety community-wide, a high level of pride for the amount of parks and support for green space, and a system of infrastructure and governance that supports the elements listed above.

While the committee felt overall the bicycle and pedestrian system within Park Forest was adequate, they identified specific areas for improvement. The committee identified a number of major roadways that need improvements in order to better connect the bicycle and pedestrian networks that exist between them. They identified difficulties traveling along or across Western Avenue, Sauk Trail Road, U.S. Route 30, Monee Road, and Crawford Avenue. The committee also recommended the Village make additional safety and streetscaping improvements to existing systems such as better lighting, more benches and improved accessibility for all users.

The Steering Committee expressed support for community education around bicycle and pedestrian safety and rules of the road, engaging youth in projects that support ongoing development of new and expanded projects, and continuing to increase and improve the network within the community and its connections to nearby assets such as the Governors State University and Cook County Forest Preserves.

Focus Group: Folks on Spokes Bicycle Club

On May 22, 2014 representatives from CMAP held a meeting with the Folks on Spokes bicycling group. The Folks on Spokes club meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 7:30 pm at the Flossmoor Village Hall. The purpose of this meeting was to learn from bicyclists in the area about their experience regarding bicycling in Park Forest.

Bicycle club members value the wide residential streets, the bike lane along Orchard Avenue, Old Plank Road Trail, and the bike lockers at the Matteson Metra Station. However, they identified a number of challenges including inconsistent trail conditions, inadequate bike infrastructure along Western Avenue, and difficulties with snow plowing. Members expressed support for expanding the bike network to improve connections and infrastructure, specifically improving access to Governors State and Prairie State Colleges, improving bicycle and pedestrian crossings along Western Avenue, and the creation of a bike bulletin board.

Bike Audit

On July 5, 2014 CMAP staff conducted a bike audit of the existing conditions with two steering committee members. The audit reviewed the existing trail and road bike network and the areas identified for improvement from prior meetings. Staff also visited a number of additional assets in the community – the Farmers Market, different shopping districts, the 211th Street Metra Station, and some key parks.

Key Person Interviews

In August and September 2014, CMAP staff completed interviews with several key stakeholders. The list of key persons was compiled by Village Staff and members of the Steering Committee. Through key person interviews, CMAP staff gathered a stronger and more-nuanced understanding of the community.

Art Fair Tabling Event

On September 29, 2014 outreach and village staff attended the Tall Grass Arts Association Art Fair in DownTown Park Forest. Staff used the art theme to design an interactive poster for residents to engage with while sharing information about the plan.

Staff gave residents the option to select from two statements: 1) I Would Bike More If and 2) I Would Walk More If. The reasons given were separated by themes – safety, infrastructure, support, family, and general. Residents then connected separate colored yarn affixed to each "If" statement, green for walking and blue for biking to the reason. The intent of the poster was threefold: 1) facilitate engagement of residents about the plan itself, 2) create a community-based art piece for the Village to display at future events, and 3) identify the most common reasons preventing people from being more active and use that information to help inform the priorities and recommendations in the plan. The event garnered around 40-50 responses over a 3 hour period.

Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast Poster Display

On October 4, 2014 Park Forest and CMAP staff attended a poster display at the Kiwanis Pancake breakfast with a simplified poster version of the Art Fair concept, using color coded stickers – blue with bicycle outlines and green with pedestrian outlines. The posters were popular and succeeded in drawing people's attention, commentary and participation. Staff interacted with roughly 150 individuals and received around 170 survey responses. Participants also include a wide demographic make-up. Most residents approached the poster boards without prompting and responded very positively to the plan's development.

Residents stated that they would walk or bike more if safety was improved. Other common responses included a desire to have better connected trails (mostly bikers) and the creation of a Health Challenge (mostly walkers).

Public Open House

On November 19, 2014 a public open house was held after the Steering Committee meeting to present the key recommendations of the Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Approximately twenty residents attended the open house.

The majority of the comments received were supportive of the project and for the Village's efforts in providign walking and biking opportunities throughout the community. Some comments provided at the open house included: the Village should look into creating trails of mulch as a first step; the Village should create a looped trail in Central Park that includes outdoor exercise equipment; the Village should not allow motorized vehicles on the multi-use trails; an attended noted that the striped option for creating shared use routes within the Village was preferred; the Village should take over maintenance of the cut-throughs; and more bicycle racks should be installed throughout the Village especially at locl businesses.

Photo credit: CMAP staff.

Chapter 4
Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

This chapter focuses on ways to build upon the Village's existing bicycle and pedestrian network to create a more interconnected and robust system. The recommended network consists of a variety of facility types with corresponding improvements to improve circulation and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Important goals for the network are to improve walkability and bicycling within the DownTown, to community destinations, to the Metra stations, and the regional trail system.

Recommended Network

The proposed bicycle and pedestrian network aims to create a safe and efficient system that connects residents with key community destinations. Destinations include schools, shopping, employment, public transit, parks, and Village services. The recommended network has been created based upon public input received during the planning process and previous planning documents including: the Village's Sustainability Plan (2012); the 211th Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development Plan (2007); the Strategic Land Use Plan for Economic Development (2009); and the Village's DownTown Plan (2002).

An overarching goal of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to improve safety for all pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists within the Village. To improve safety a variety of recommendations are provided to improve visibility and awareness along routes and at intersections. In addition, recommendations for education and awareness programs are discussed in **Chapter 5**.

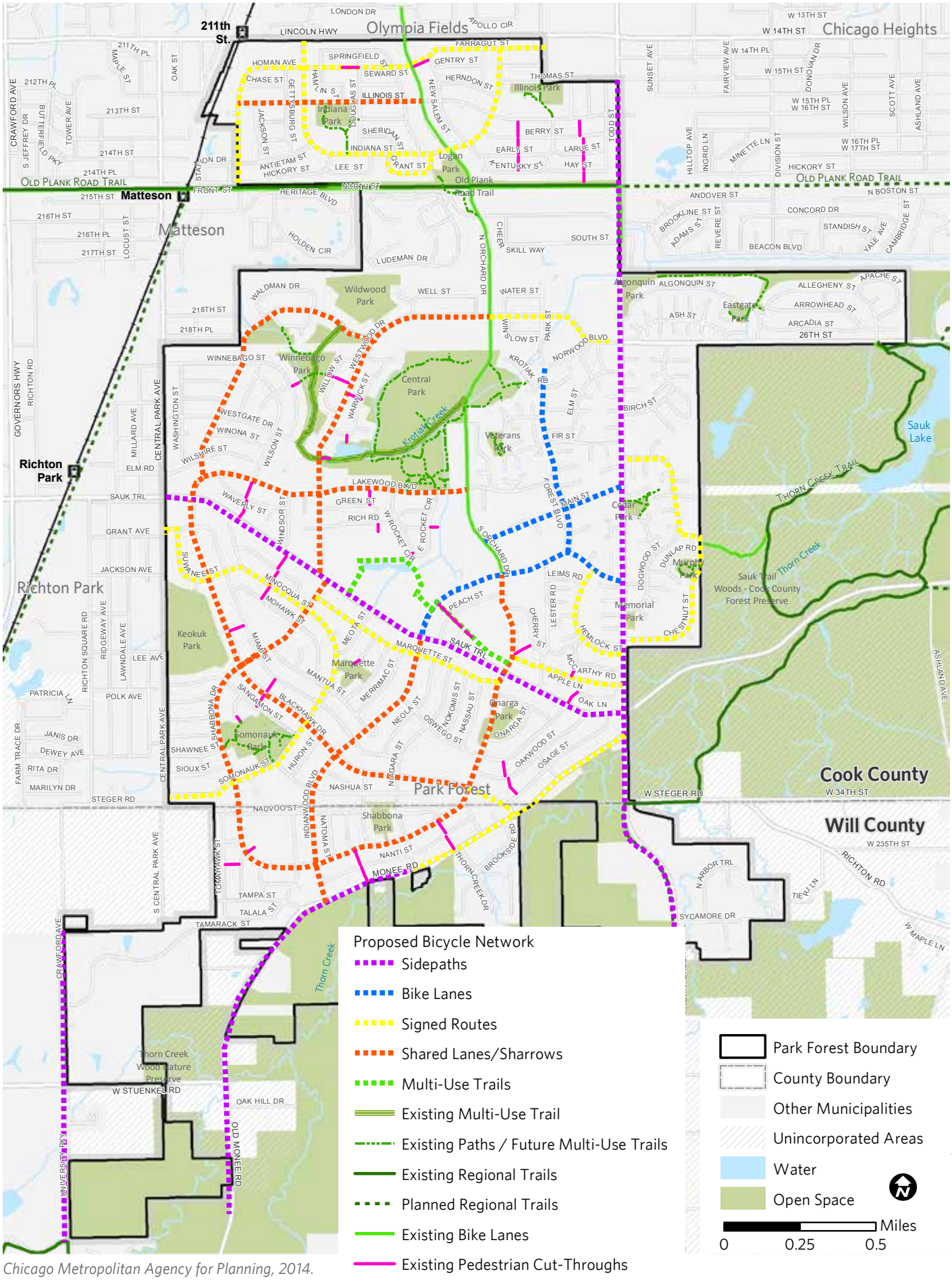
Facility Types

The recommended network includes different facility types to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. The nine different facility types recommended for different routes and locations within the Village are listed below and illustrated on **Figure 4.1**.

1. Multi-use trails
2. Sidepaths
3. Bike lanes
4. Shared lanes/sharrows
5. Signed routes
6. Sidewalks
7. Cut-throughs
8. Intersection treatments
9. Wayfinding and directional signage

Recommended facility types are based upon such factors as adjacent land uses, traffic volumes, traffic speeds, and width of right-of-way. The following subsection discusses key elements for each type of facility including: a definition, design guidelines, typical cross sections or examples, and a map of recommended locations (including priorities).

Figure 4.1 Future Bicycle and Pedestrian Network by Type



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

1. Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails are off-street facilities that can enhance network connectivity, filling in gaps where the street network is not complete or cannot accommodate bike facilities. Multi-use trails are often associated with open space and recreational use, though they can and do serve transportation purposes.

Design Guidelines. Multi-use trails should be at least 10 feet wide and include a 2 foot graded area (on each side) for clearance from lateral obstructions such as bushes and poles. Trails should be paved asphalt to accommodate a variety of users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, inline skaters, skateboarders, or other users. Multi-use trails should be designed to accommodate two-way travel. Depending on trail usage a painted stripe can be used to demark two-way travel; however, this is not a requirement.

Typical Cross-section. **Figure 4.2** illustrates a typical cross-section for a multi-use trail. The cross-section provides a set of standards to use as a guide for retrofitting existing sidewalks to be new multi-use trails (discussed later in this section) or for creating new multi-use trails.

Recommended Routes by Priority. As shown on **Figure 4.3** a number of multi-use trails already exist within the community on either Village-owned parks, School District property, the Cook County Forest Preserves' Thorn Creek Trail (just east of Park Forest), or the Old Plank Road Trail which is managed by the Old Plank Road Trail Commission. The multi-use trails that exist in the Village (on Village parks) are narrower than the recommended 10 feet (most are approximately 5-6 feet).

A long-term goal for the Village Parks Department should be to improve and widen existing interior sidewalks within parks to be part of the multi-use trail system. Whenever feasible existing sidewalks and/or multi-use trails within Village parks should be widened to be 10 feet wide. It is important to note that the Village also widen existing pedestrian bridges along the recommended routes to also be 10 feet wide. For example, a number of pedestrian bridges exist along the recommended multi-use trail route within Central Park.

In addition, connections should be made with the existing multi-use trails at key points as illustrated on **Figure 4.3.**

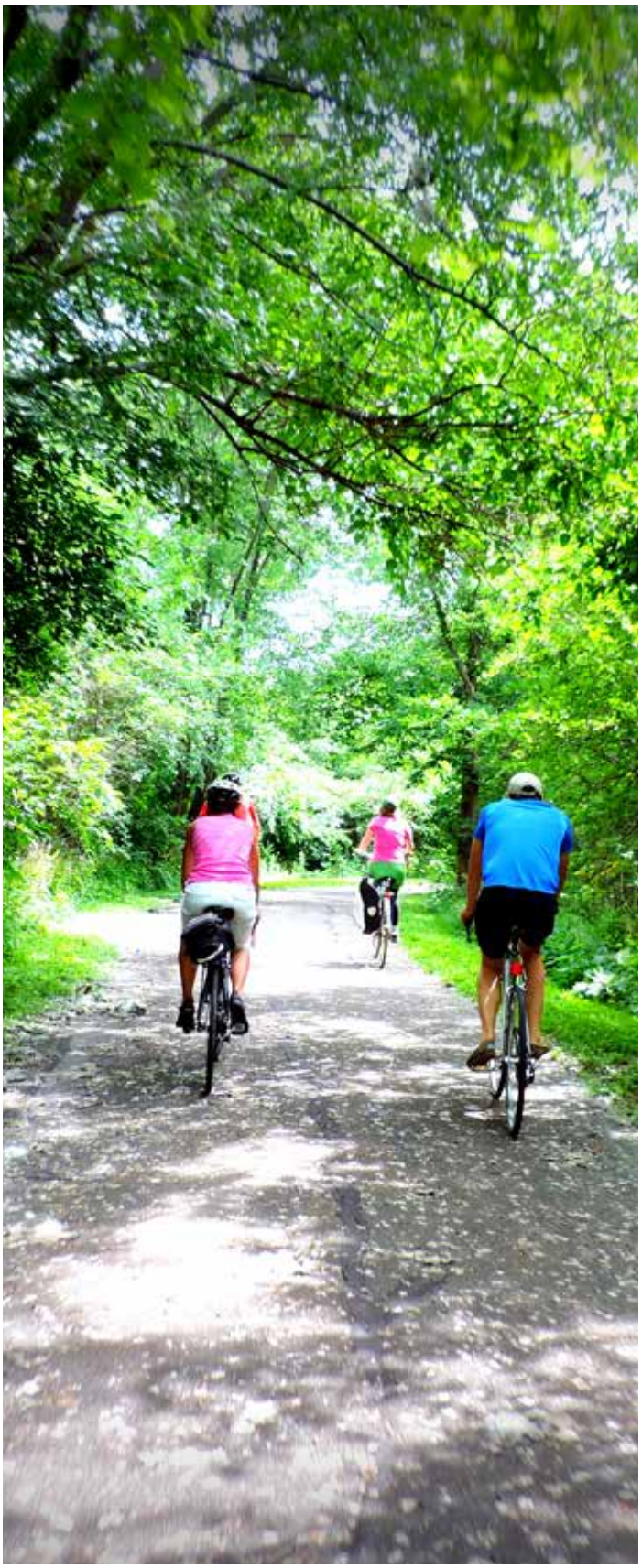
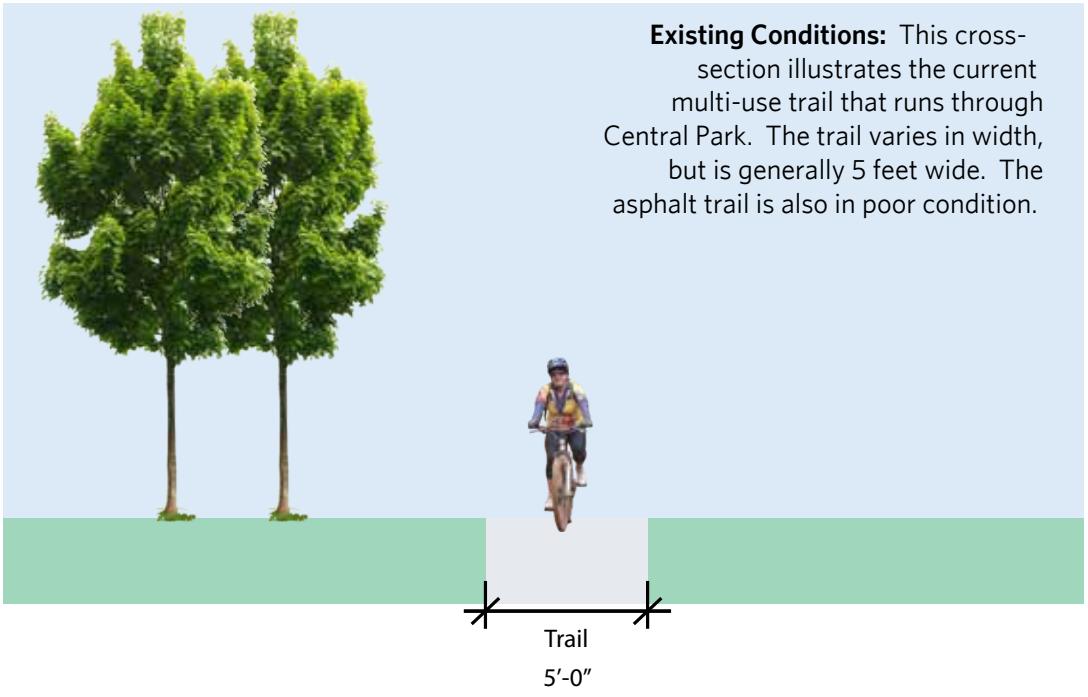
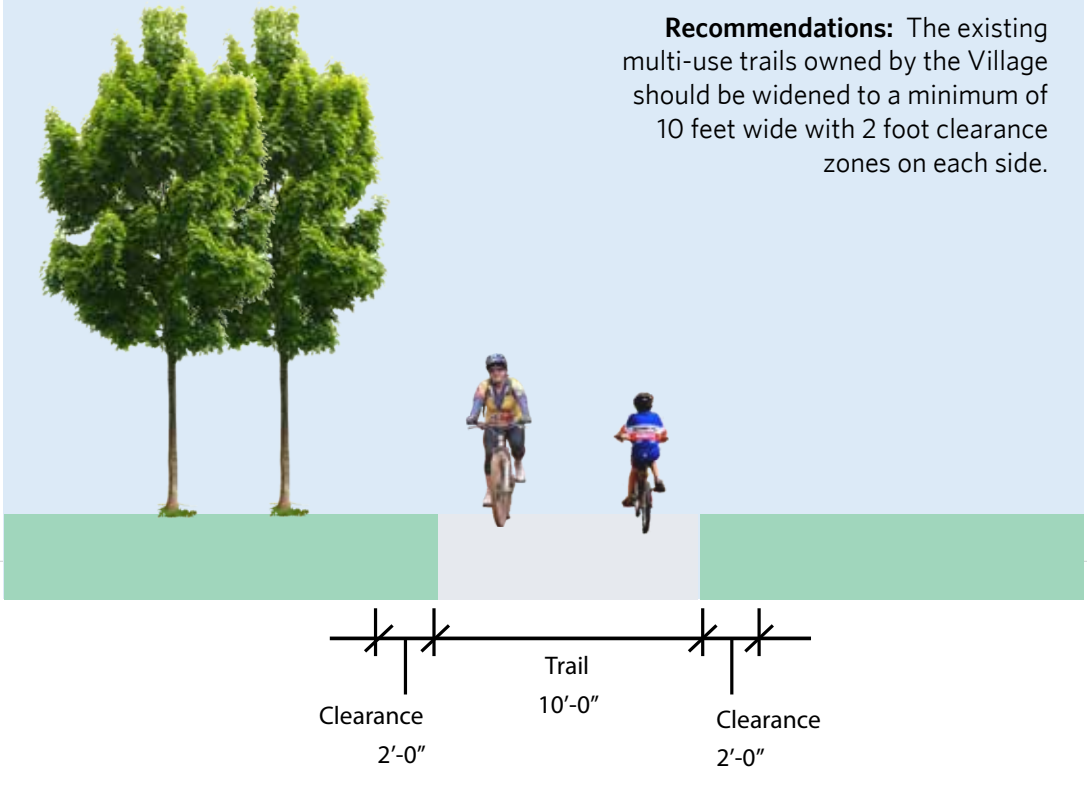


Figure 4.2 Multi-Use Trail Cross-section

Existing Multi-Use Trail in Central Park

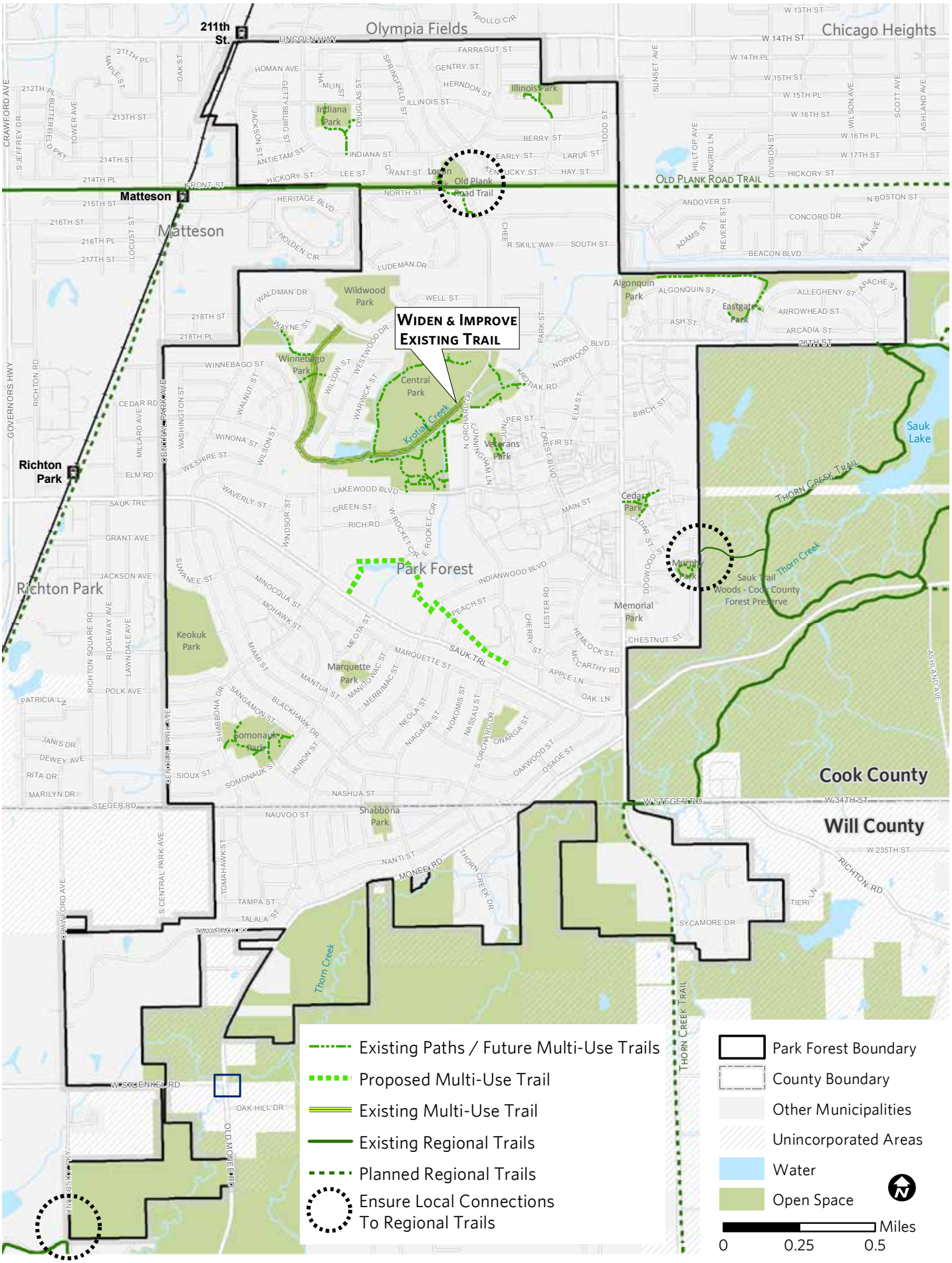


Existing Conditions: This cross-section illustrates the current multi-use trail that runs through Central Park. The trail varies in width, but is generally 5 feet wide. The asphalt trail is also in poor condition.



Recommendations: The existing multi-use trails owned by the Village should be widened to a minimum of 10 feet wide with 2 foot clearance zones on each side.

Figure 4.3 Multi-Use Trail Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

2. Sidepaths

Sidepaths are off-street facilities shared by pedestrians and recreational users. When closely connected with a roadway corridor, they look and function like a sidewalk but are wide enough to accommodate bicyclists and other users simultaneously. Sidepaths are good options for high-speed, high-volume corridors with wider block spacing, and provide access for users who are not comfortable bicycling in heavy traffic.

Design Guidelines. Sidepaths should be designed to accommodate two-way travel. Sidepaths should be a minimum of 8 feet wide; however, 10 feet is typical. Paths should be paved asphalt to accommodate a variety of user types. If a shared-use path is on one side of the street only, adequate crossing accommodations must be provided to access land uses on the other side of the roadway. Special care should be taken to design driveway and intersection crossings to reduce potential conflicts. Adequate separation from the curb face can be created by a tree row, planting strip, shoulder, or parking lane.

Typical Cross-section. **Figure 4.4** illustrates a typical cross-section for a sidepaths. The cross-section provides a set of standards to use as a guide for retrofitting existing sidewalks or for creating new sidepaths.

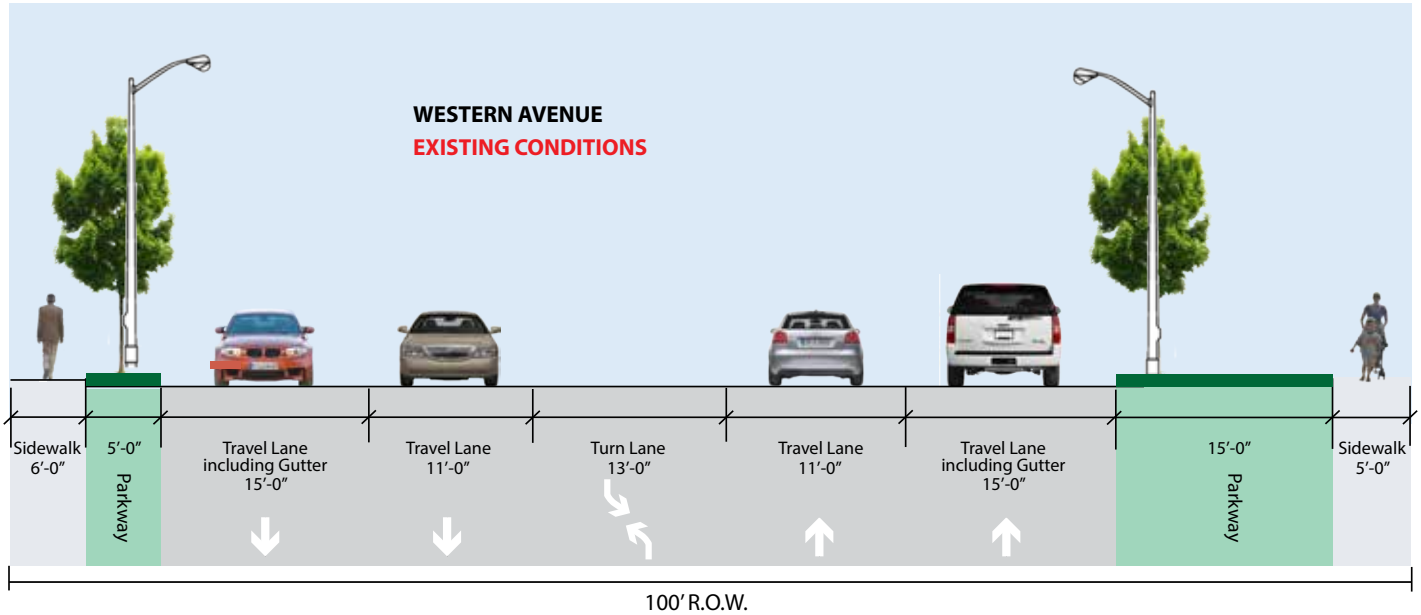
Recommended Routes by Priority. Sidepaths are recommended along Western Avenue and Sauk Trail. These two routes are recommended primarily for the purposes of improving pedestrian and bicyclist circulation along these key arterial/collectors while also providing connections to adjoining facility types. Prioritizing sidepath construction along IDOT and Cook County controlled street right-of-way is difficult since the routes are not within the Village's jurisdiction.

Because Western Avenue is within IDOT's jurisdiction, the Village should work with closely with IDOT to ensure that sidepaths are installed whenever feasible. Sidepaths and associated intersection improvements would improve pedestrian/bicyclist safety by breaking up the current long stretches of Western Avenue that have multi-family residences on both sides of the street and no existing signalized intersections. In addition to meeting with IDOT regarding Western Avenue, the Village should also meet with Cook County representatives to discuss the installation of sidepaths along Sauk Trail. As part of that effort, the Village should work with Cook County to have more highly visible pedestrian crossings as part of existing signalized intersections.

Photo: Sidepath in Portland, OR. http://www.thewashcycle.com

Figure 4.4 Sidepath Cross-section

Existing Sidepath on Western Avenue



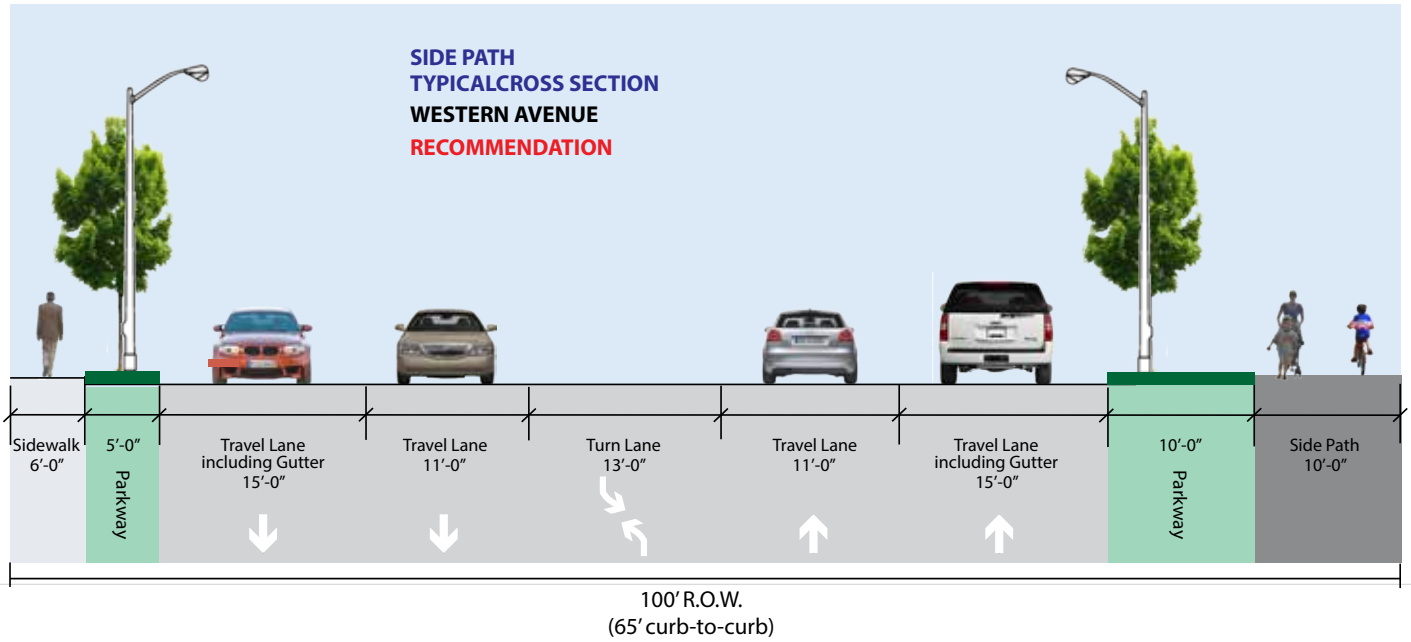
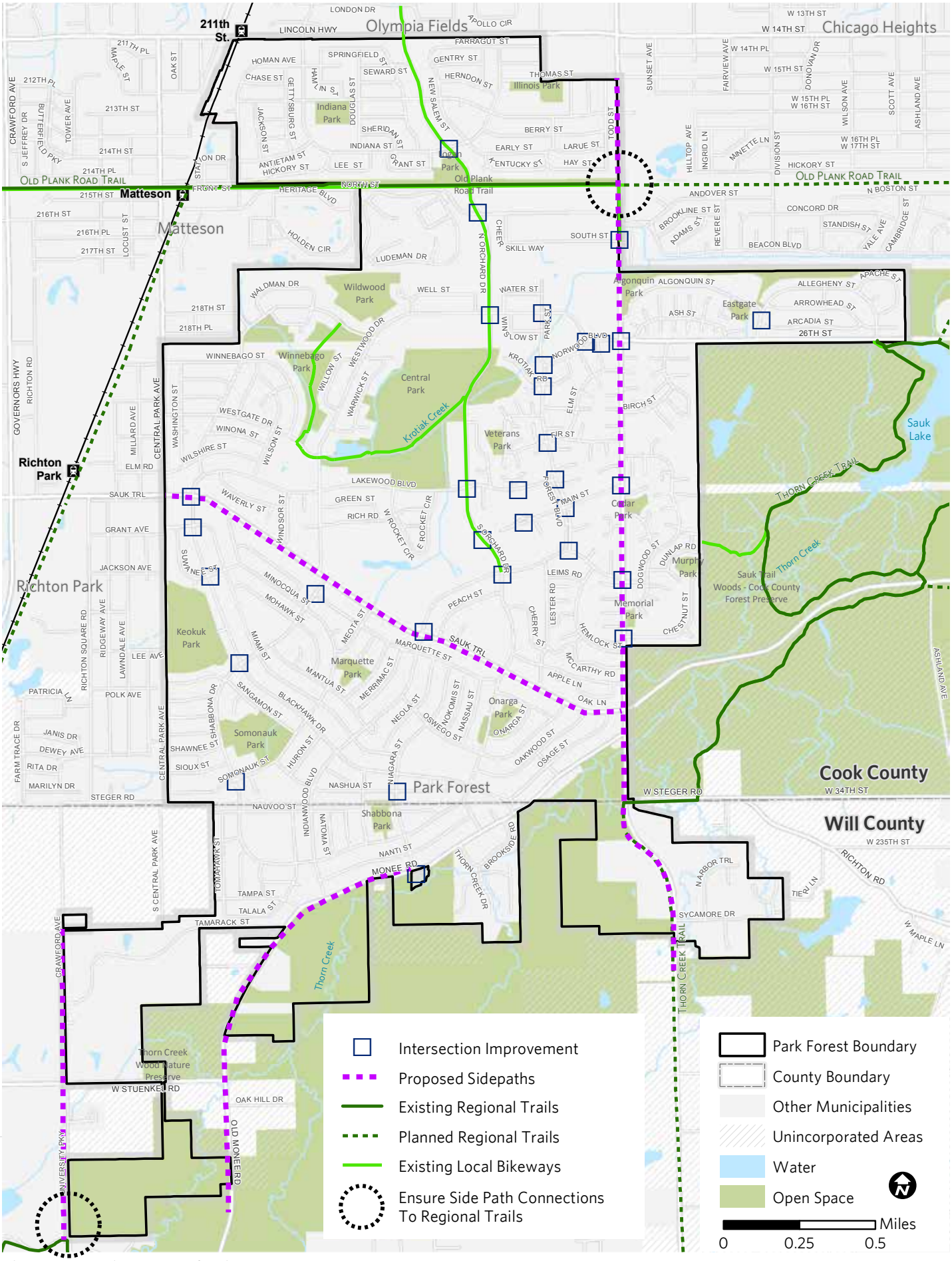


Figure 4.5 Sidepath Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

3. Bike Lanes

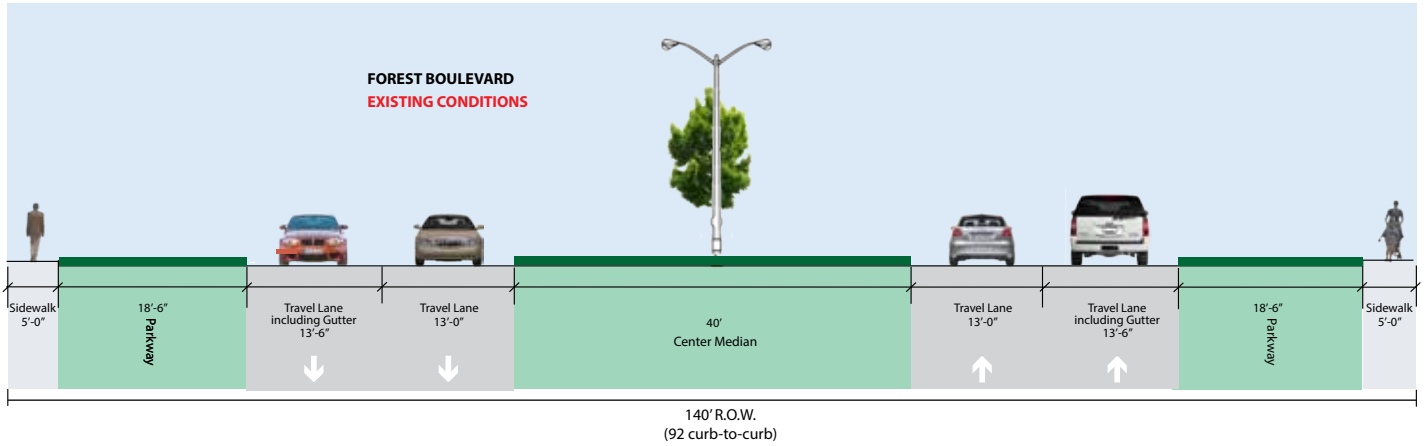
These are striped separate lanes for bicyclists alongside cars. Bike lanes are appropriate on streets with moderate traffic and along major bikeway corridors. Generally, bike lanes reinforce proper roadway etiquette, raise the visibility of bicyclists, and help both bicyclists and drivers behave predictably when sharing road space. Lanes can also increase the sense of safety for wary cyclists, encouraging them to bicycle or to bicycle more.

Design Guidelines. The minimum width of a bike lane should be 5 feet against a curb or adjacent to a parking lane. On streets where the bike lane is adjacent to the curb and the curb includes a 1-foot to 2-foot gutter pan, bike lanes should be a minimum of 4 feet wide (width does not include the gutter pan, since bicyclists are typically unable to use this space). Bike lanes are marked by a solid line separating the bike lane from the motor vehicle travel lane. In some environments, buffered or protected bike lanes (which provide more separation from traffic) are used, but in Park Forest, these treatments are not recommended in the short term. Various designs and treatments exist for bike lanes as they approach an intersection (discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

Typical Cross-section. **Figure 4.6** illustrates a typical cross-section for a bike lane. The cross-sections provide a set of standards to use as a guide for retrofitting existing streets in Park Forest to include bike lanes.

Recommended Routes by Priority. With the recent capital improvements along Orchard Drive, the Village installed its first dedicated bike lane. The Village should prioritize extending the Orchard Drive bike lane south and connecting that lane with a new Main Street bike lane through the heart of DownTown. The extension of a bike lane along Orchard Drive will likely require a "road diet" similar to the newly reconstructed segment of Orchard Drive. Although the addition of a bike lane along Main Street will require additional study to ensure that the bike lane will still allow on-street parking and accommodate existing pedestrian crossings, it will be an important lane in the recommended network. A lane along Main Street would help to build the image of Park Forest as a "bicycle friendly". It is important to note, however, that the goal should not be to eliminate on-street parking along Main Street. Therefore, the Village should be open to exploring other alternatives if a bike lane along Main Street cannot be accommodated. For example, after conducting for detailed analysis a shared lane/sharrow along Main Street may be the most appropriate option.

Figure 4.6 Bike Lane Cross-section



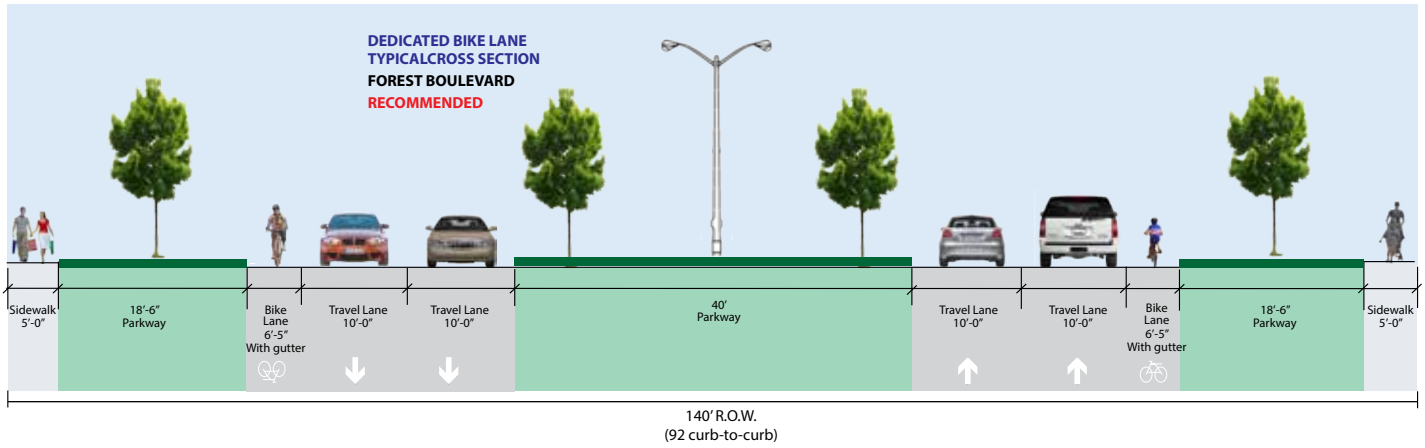
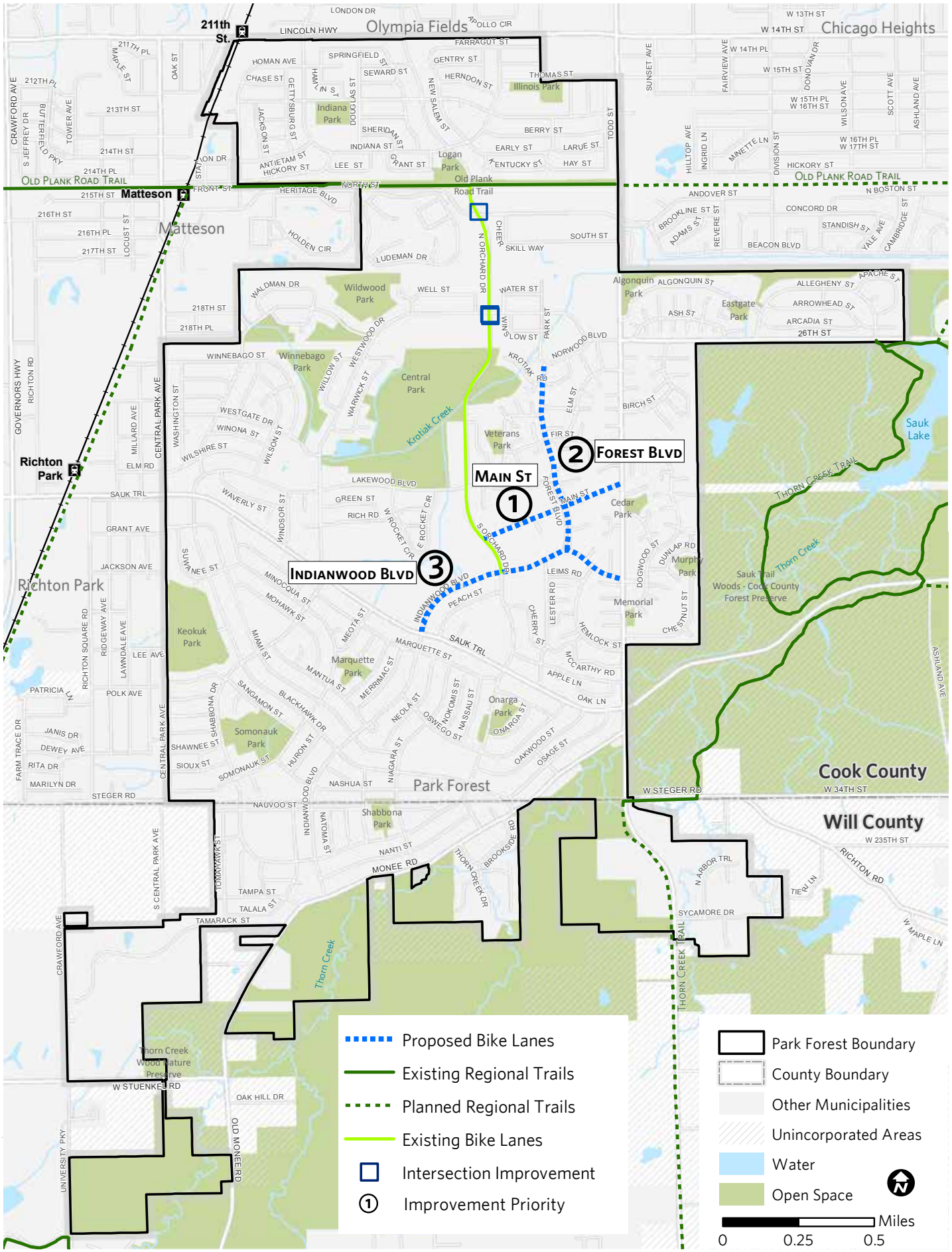


Figure 4.7 Bike Lane Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

4. Shared Lanes/Sharrows

Shared lanes, or "sharrows," are road markings used to indicate a shared lane environment for bicycles and vehicles. Shared lane markings reinforce the legitimacy of bicycle use on the street, recommend proper bicyclist positioning, and may be configured to offer directional and wayfinding guidance.

Design Guidelines. No specific accommodation is necessary for roadways with average daily traffic (ADT) of less than 2,000 ADT and a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour (mph) or less. However, for roads with an ADT between 2,000 and 10,000 and a posted speed limit of 30 mph or more IDOT recommends that the shared lane width be 14 feet minimum measured from edge of the gutter pan to the centerline. On streets with posted speeds of 25 mph or slower, preferred placement is in the center of the travel lane. Shared lanes/sharrows are appropriate on roads where the lanes are too narrow for a bicyclist and motorist to travel side-by-side in the lane.

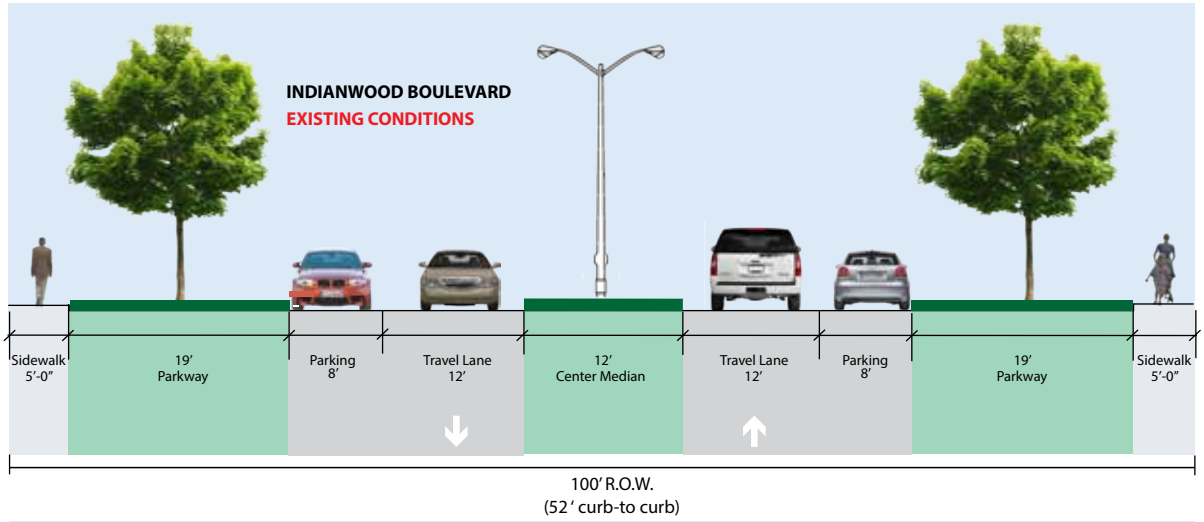
Shared lanes may be unmarked; however, the use of the "sharrow" is preferred, using MUTCD standards. Shared lane markings should not be used on shoulders, in designated bike lanes, or to designate bicycle detection at signalized intersections. Markings used to bridge discontinuous bicycle facilities or along busier streets should be placed more frequently (50 to 100 feet) than along low traffic bicycle routes (up to 250 feet or more).

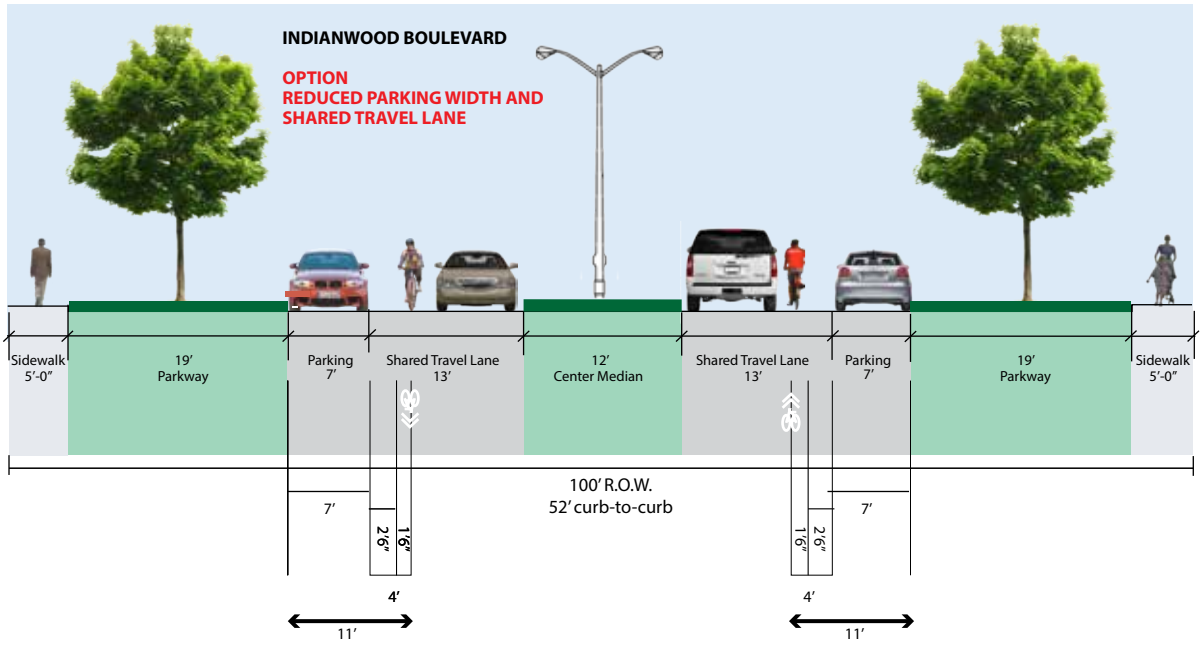
Typical Cross-section. **Figure 4.8** illustrates a typical cross-section for a shared lane/sharrow. The cross-section provides a set of standards to use as a guide for retrofitting existing streets in Park Forest.

Recommended Routes by Priority. The Village should focus on installing shared lanes/sharrows along key collector streets that provide connectivity between residential neighborhoods and DownTown. A shared lane/sharrow extending from Orchard Drive (near DownTown) to Sauk Trail would complete a north-south network through the center of the Village. Other priority routes would travel along Indianwood Boulevard (south of Sauk Trail), around the southern portion of the Village following Shabbona Drive, and from Rich East High School around Central Park along Westwood Drive.

Source: Richmond, Virginia. http://www.richmond.com

Figure 4.8 Shared Lane/Sharrow Cross-section





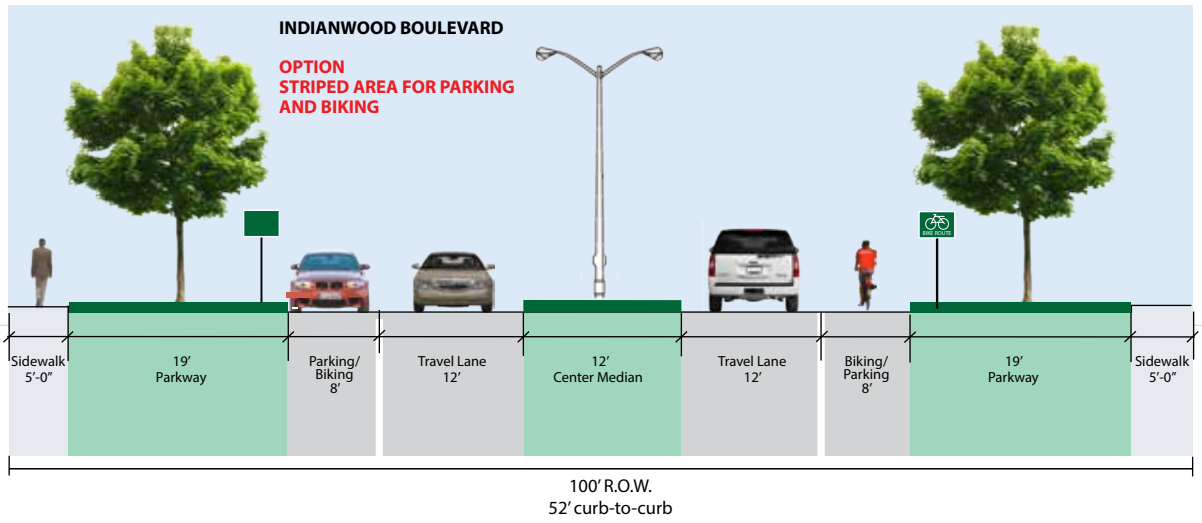
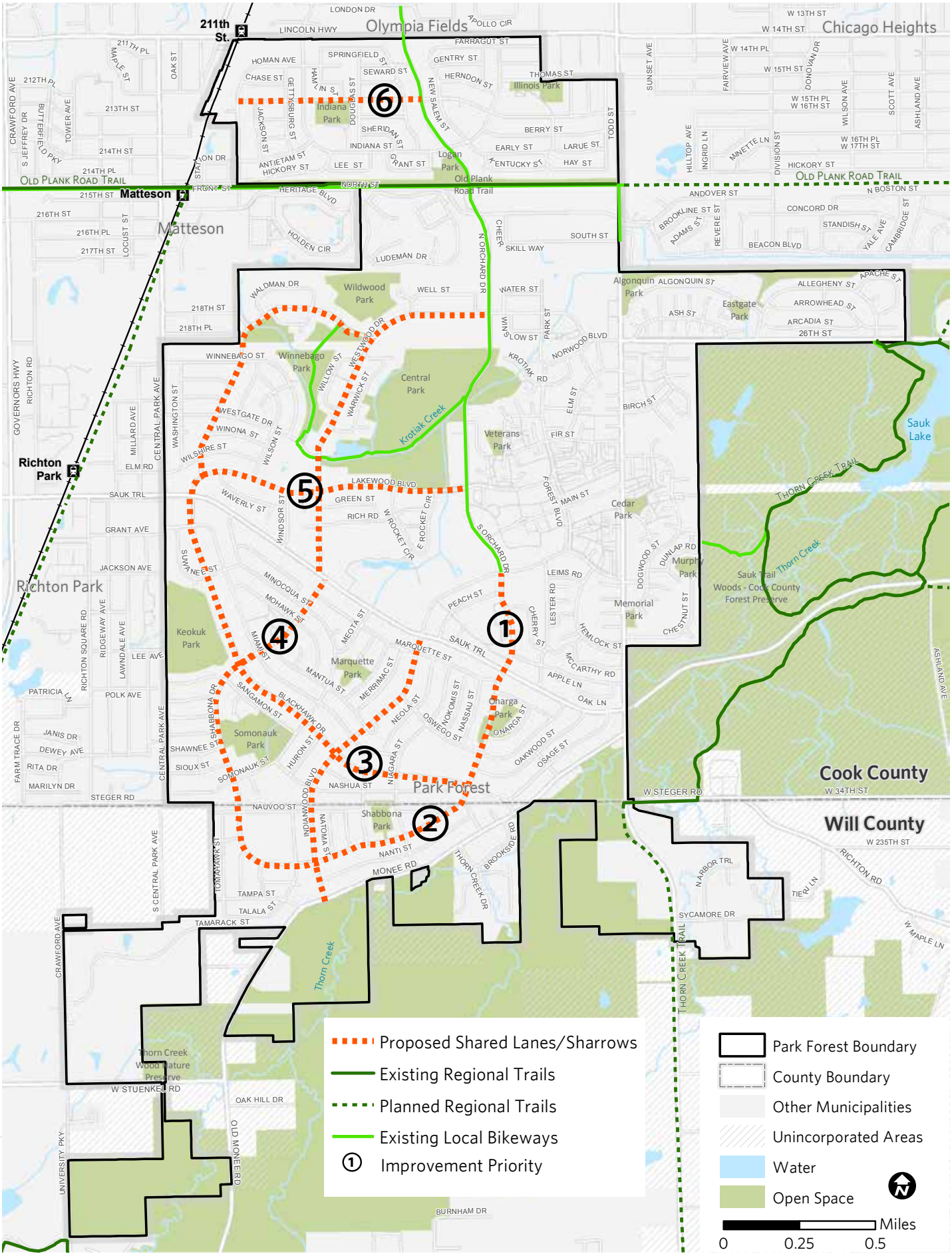


Figure 4.9 Shared Lane/Sharrow Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

5. Signed Routes

Signed bike routes are appropriate for any roadway that provides an essential link to the bicycle system. These types of bike routes only need to be signed to be created. In addition to route identification, wayfinding signs should be used to provide directions and distances to specific destinations and route cyclists to streets with bicycle infrastructure.

Design Guidelines. A road does not require a specific geometry to be signed as a bike route which provides flexibility. Signage helps cyclists navigate the local bicycle network. Neighborhood routes with low traffic volumes and speeds are ideal for this type of bicycle facility. The Village should follow the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to design and install appropriate signage (not only for this type of facility, but for all other bicycle and pedestrian facilities discussed in this chapter). Signs should inform bicyclists of direction changes and to confirm route, distance, and nearby destinations. MUTCD also recommends that these signs be repeated at regular intervals so that bicyclists entering from side streets will have an opportunity to know that they are on a bicycle route. These signs are also beneficial for motorists so they are also aware that they are sharing the road with bicycles.

Typical Cross-section. No typical cross-section is illustrated since only bike signage is necessary to create this type of facility.

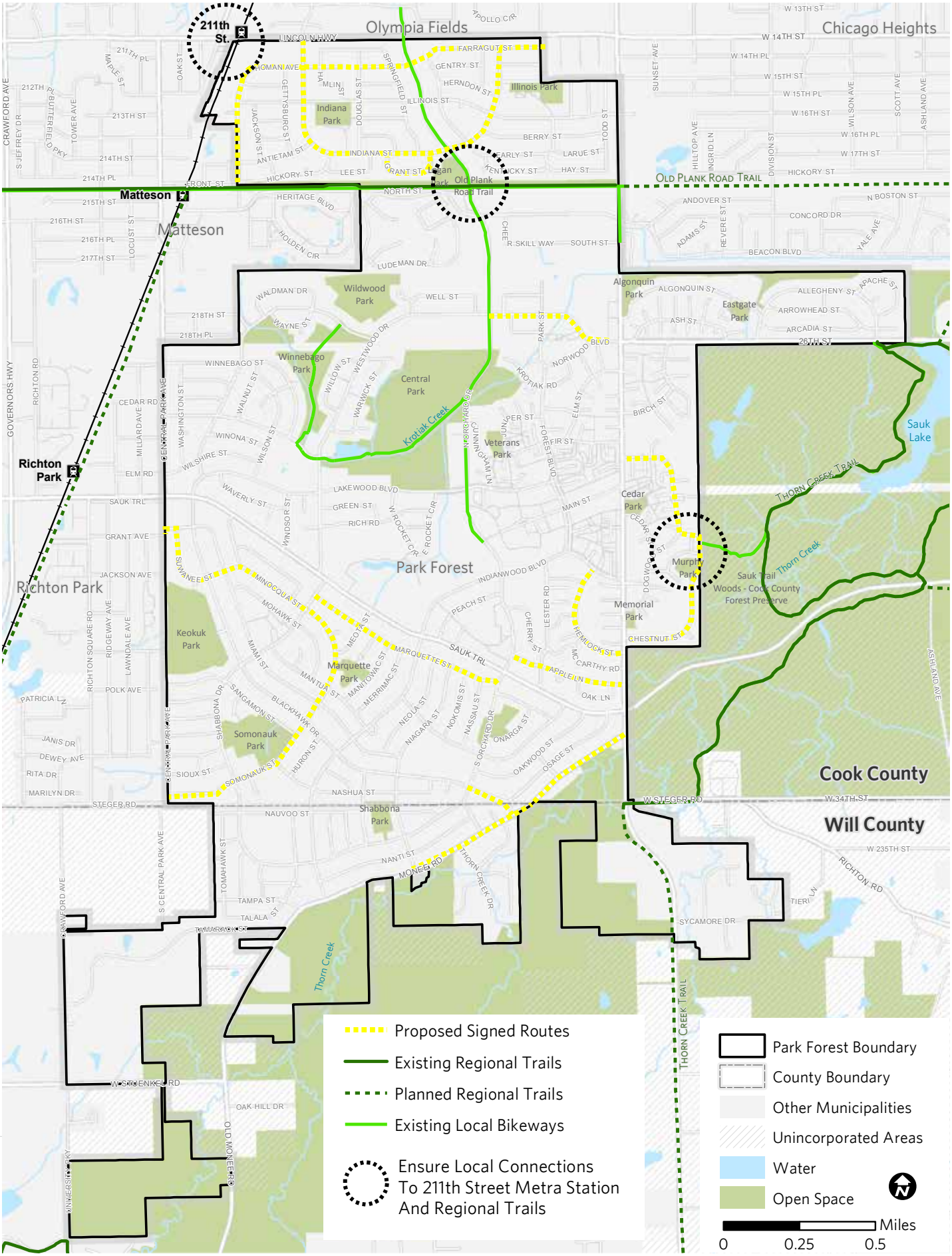
Recommended Routes by Priority. The Village should prioritize signed routes that connect to the DownTown/Orchard Road Lane, and to the 211th Street Metra station. In order to improve connectivity with the 211th Metra station the Village should create a signed bike route from the Lincolnwood Shopping Center to Farragut Street with a new cut-through easement from the shopping center. This would open a route that would extend from Western Avenue, along Farragut Street, through an existing cut through, onto Seward Street, then Homan Street, and into the 211th Street Metra station. More detail on these cut-throughs is discussed in a later section.

To improve pedestrain and bicycle crossings of Western Avenue, the Village should work with IDOT to determine if a new pedestrian crossing would be warranted near the intersection of Western Avenue and Chestnut Street. A crossing in this location would help to fill the void of crossings in that area of the community.

In addition to creating linkages, the Village should also continue to work with public transit agencies to strengthen the pedestrian and bicycle environment at the station itself. At this time, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is creating a study that will identify strategies to improve the walking and biking environment at the station. Representatives from the Village have been included in the study and should continue to provide input in its ultimate recommendations. Preliminary issues that have been identified

Source: City of Redmond, Washington. http://www.redmond.gov

Figure 4.10 Signed Route Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

6. Sidewalks

Sidewalks can be defined as facilities that provide pedestrian access to adjacent areas. There are approximately 103 miles of sidewalks throughout Park Forest, allowing residents and visitors to walk between homes, places of employment, and other amenities. In general, sidewalks have been constructed within the street right-of-way on both sides of the street in most areas of the Village.

Design Guidelines. According to the Village's Code of Ordinances, sidewalks are to be constructed in conformance with the provisions of IDOT's Section 87 of the Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. The ordinance continues to state that sidewalks should be a minimum of 5 feet wide and include a cross slope of one-fourth inch per foot. Sidewalks should consist of concrete poured at least 5 inches in depth.

Typical Cross-section. **Figure 4.11** illustrates a typical sidewalk cross-section within the Village of Park Forest.

Recommended Routes by Priority. Sidewalk priorities are based upon connectivity to community facilities and if the project would fill in a sidewalk "gap" along an arterial or collector street.

A priority is to ensure that no "gaps" exist in the DownTown and that the existing sidewalks in the DownTown are in good condition. North of the DownTown the Village should also prioritize the addition of new sidewalks to fill in the "gaps" along Orchard Drive; within residential neighborhoods, along Western Avenue (this could possibly be with sidepaths), and along North Street.

The Village should also work with IDOT to install sidewalks along the southern portion of Lincoln Highway. The recommended sidewalk should connect the 211th Street Metra station with Western Avenue. Although Lincoln Highway is not recommended for the creation of a designated bicycle route, due to its unfriendly bicycle environment, there still should be pedestrian sidewalks along the highway.

Figure 4.11 Sidewalk Cross-section

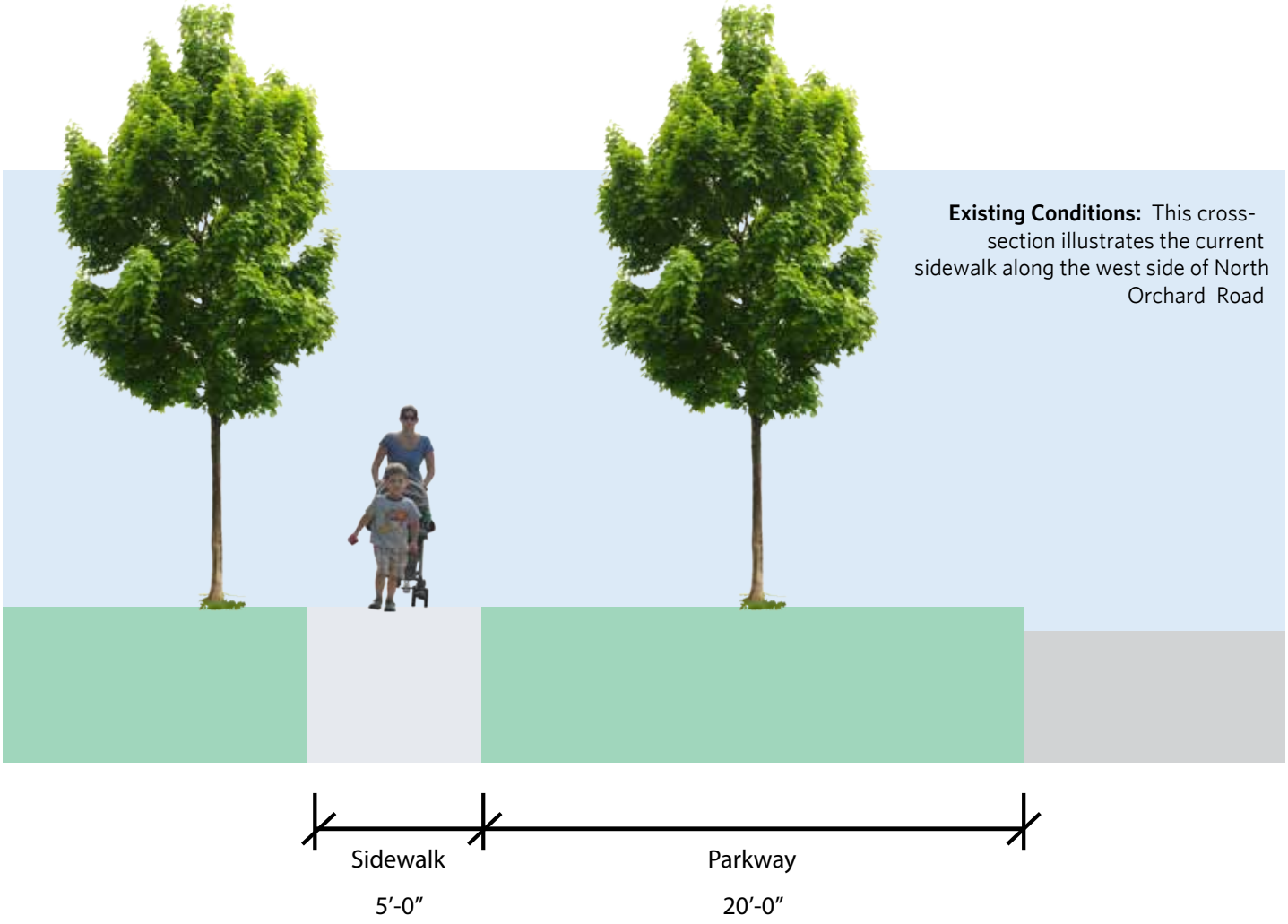
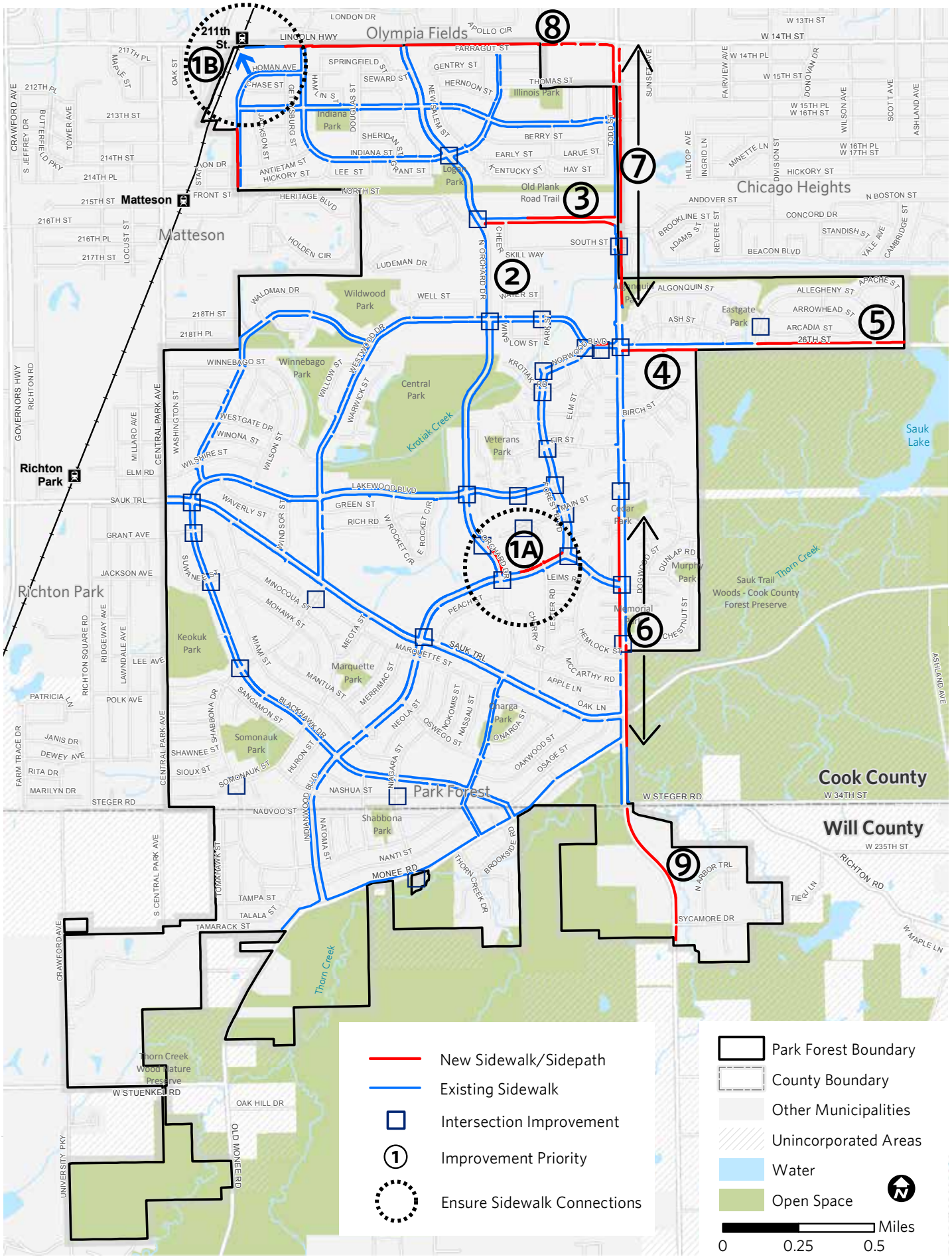


Figure 4.12 Sidewalk Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

7. Cut-throughs

The number of cut-throughs within Park Forest is unique. There are approximately thirty-six pedestrian cut-throughs within the Village. Approximately twenty-eight of those cut-through paths run between residential properties – making it easier and faster to get from one block to another – while several others connect residential neighborhoods to open space or school properties in the Village. Cut-throughs are either concrete or asphalt and are owned by the Village but neighboring residents are responsible for their maintenance. This sometimes poses an issue with residents who fail to maintain the pathways.

Design Guidelines. Cut-throughs are primarily 5 foot wide concrete sidewalks within approximately 15 foot wide easements. Similar to sidewalks, cut-throughs should be at least 5' wide, with poured concrete at least 5 inches deep. There is an exception for the cut-throughs recommended to become part of the signed bike route system. Those cut-throughs are recommended to be renovated to be 8 feet wide asphalt multi-use trails.

Typical Cross-section. **Figure 4.13** illustrates a typical cut-through cross-section between two residential properties.

Recommended Routes by Priority. The prioritization of upgrading cut-throughs should be based upon current condition, its connectivity to community destinations, and if it is part of the signed network. When cut-throughs are improved the Village should consider extending the paths to connect with the street to improve connectivity. As part of the improvement, the Village should ensure that the trails are accessible for all users. For example, if the cut-throughs are extended to the street, they should include ADA curb ramps.

As shown on **Figures 4.14 and 4.15,** there are four cut-through that should be upgraded to improve connectivity to the 211th Metra Station and to Rich East High School. The Village should improve these cut-throughs from the existing 5 feet wide concrete sidewalks to 8 feet wide multi-use asphalt trails. The Village should also consider the installation of traffic control bollards to stop motorized vehicles from entering the widened cut-throughs. If new 8 feet wide multi-use trails are not feasible (based upon grade change or available parcel width), the cut-throughs should be resurfaced, extended to the street, and improved with ADA curb ramps.

The Village has recently communicated to residents owning property adjacent to a cut-through that it is their responsibility for maintenance of the cut-throughs. The Village should continue to communicate this to new residents that purchase homes adjacent to cut-throughs.

Another priority for the Village should be to ensure that cut-throughs with access to schools are well-maintained and of good quality. The Village should work with the School District to pursue safe routes to school grants to assist with funding improvements to strengthen walking/biking connections to local schools.

The Village should also make a policy decision on how to monitor and enforce cut-through maintenance.

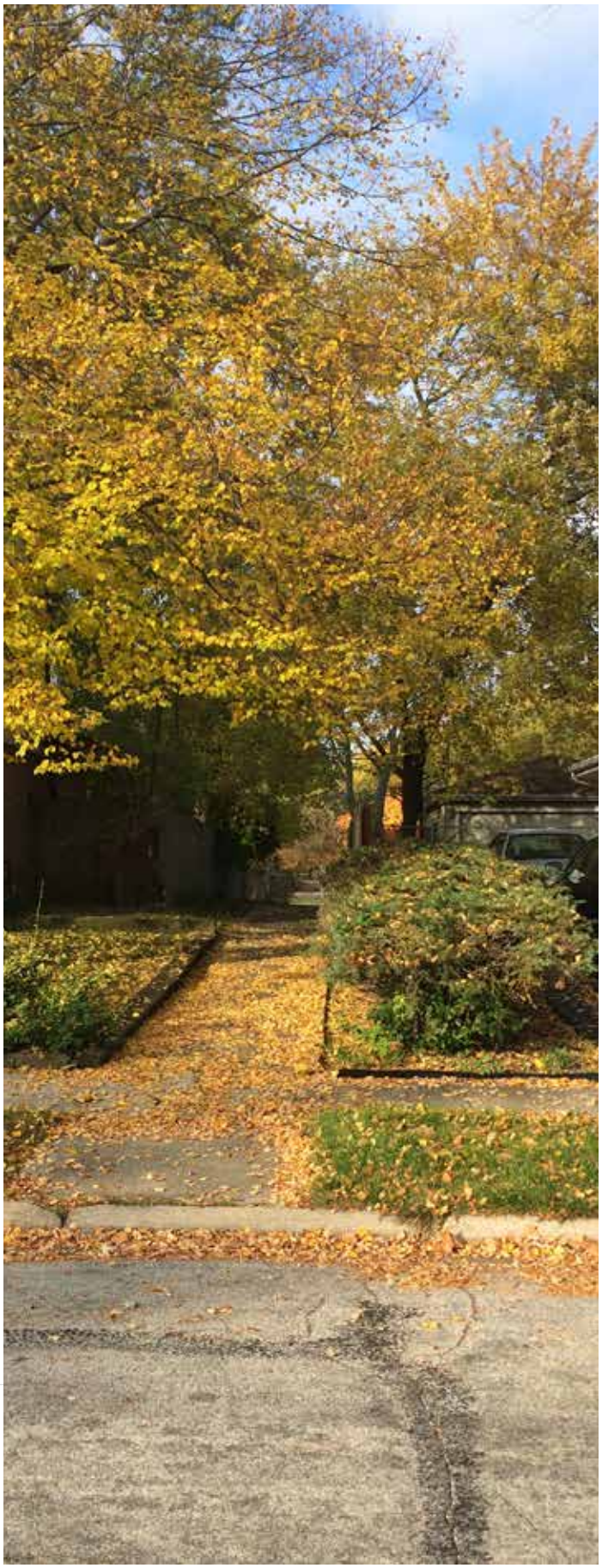
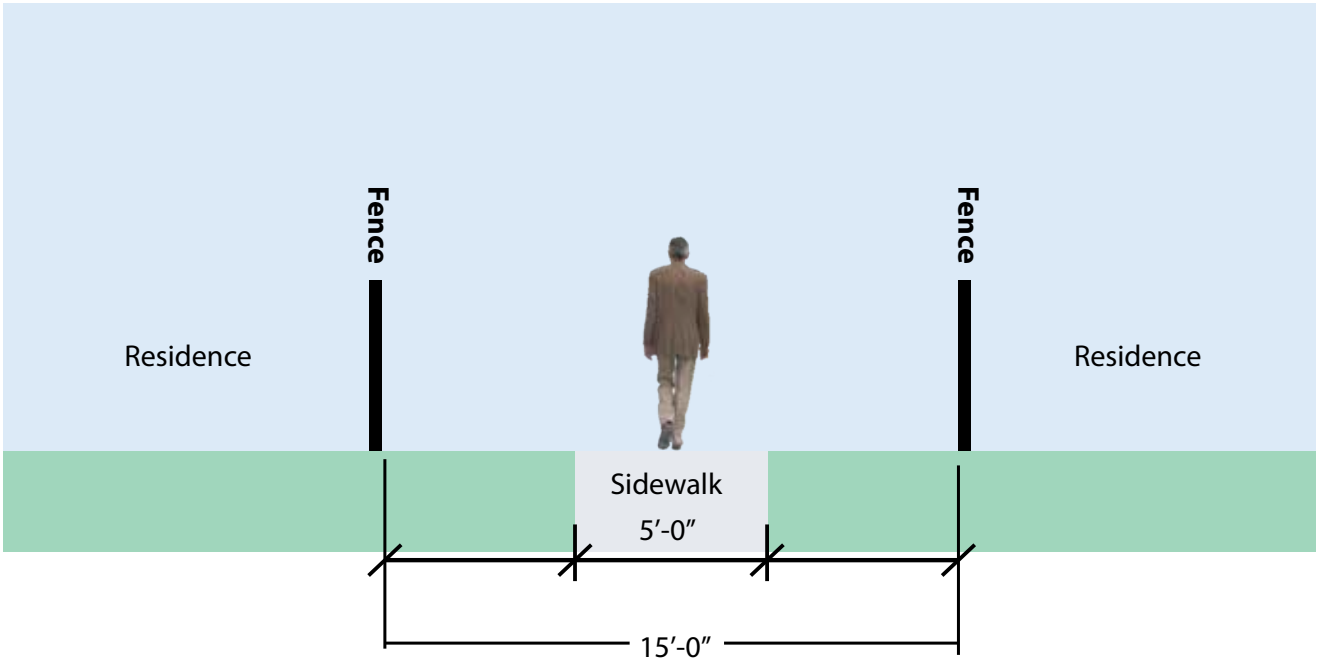


Figure 4.13 Cut-through Cross-section



Existing Conditions

Unfortunately, many of the Village's existing cut-throughs are in poor condition. As shown in this photo, many suffer from poor condition that has led to sidewalks in bad condition. No cut-throughs extend to the street.

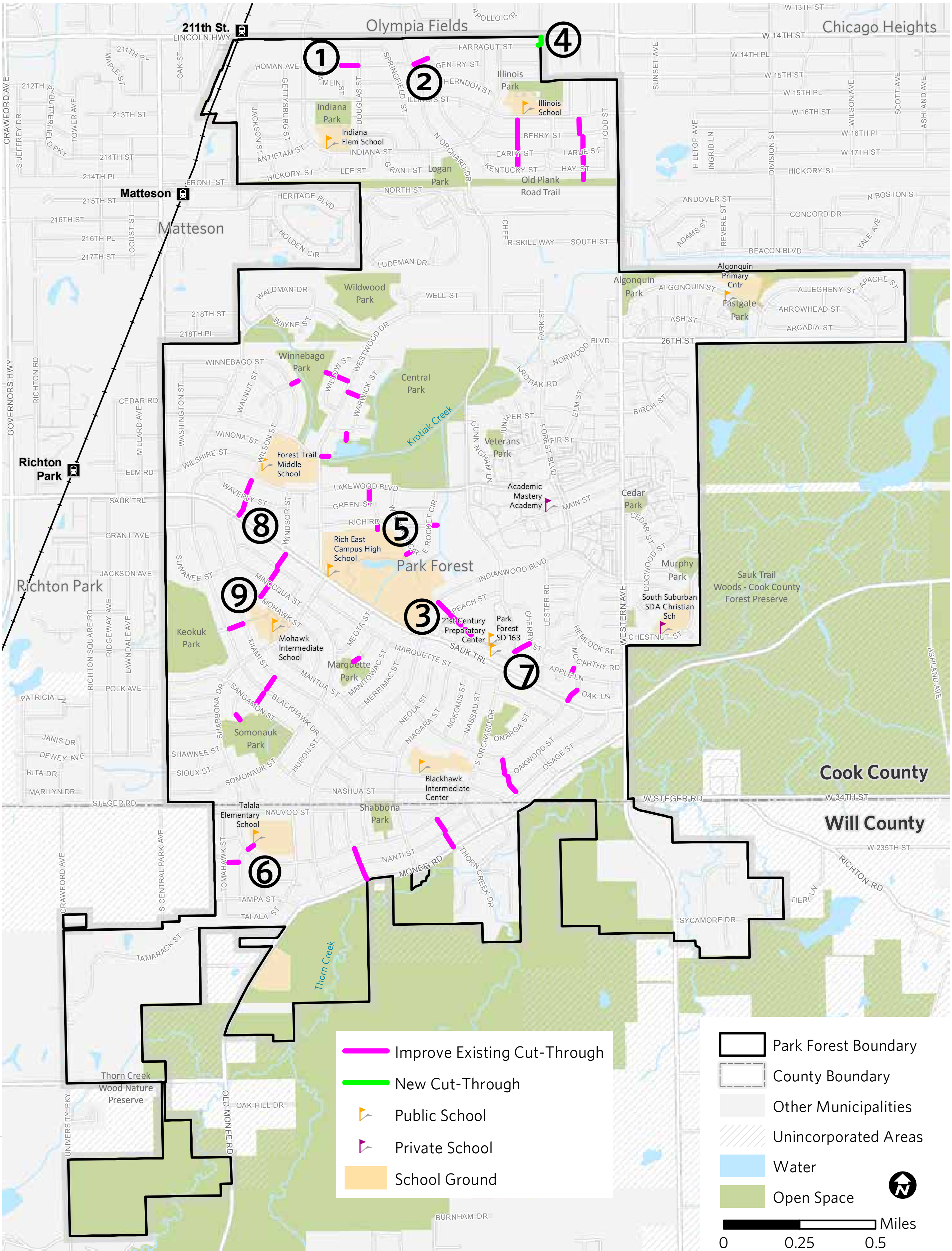
Recommended Sidewalk Improvements

The Village should improve existing pedestrian cut-throughs, especially those that are identified as key routes. The Village should continue to educate residents living next to cut-throughs that it is their maintenance responsibility. Cut-through sidewalks should be renovated and improved with ADA curb ramps and textured surfaces. The Village should also work with adjacent property owners to ensure that trees and vegetation does not impact mobility through the sidewalk.

Recommended Renovation to Multi-Use Trails at Key Locations

For those cut-throughs that are identified as becoming key bicycle routes the Village should widen the existing 5 feet wide sidewalks to be 8 feet wide asphalt multi-use trails. As part of the renovation the Village should extend the trails to the street and install ADA curb ramps and bollards.

Figure 4.14 Cut-through Recommendations

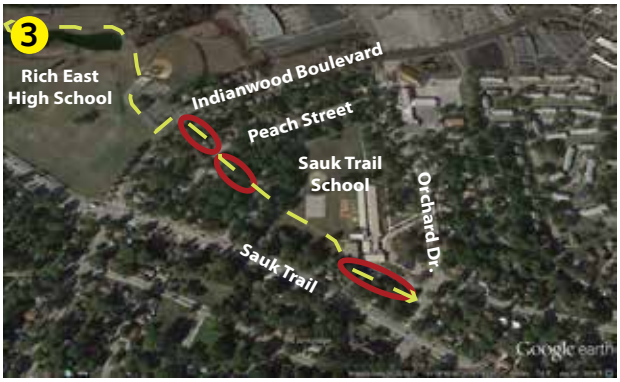


Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 4.15 Cut-through Priorities

Priority Cut-Through #1:
The Village should work to improve the existing pedestrian cut-through which is part of the larger recommended route connecting to the 211th Street Metra Station. The existing sidewalk should be renovated as an 8' wide asphalt trail with ADA curb ramps and bollards. If this is not feasible, at a minimum new sidewalks should be constructed.

Priority Cut-Through #2:
The Village should work to improve the existing pedestrian cut-through, located south of Calvary United Protestant Church, which is part of the larger recommended route connecting to the 211th Street Metra Station. The existing sidewalk should be renovated as an 8' wide asphalt trail with ADA curb ramps and bollards. If this is not feasible, at a minimum new sidewalks should be constructed.



Priority Cut-Through #3:
The Village should work to improve the existing pedestrian cut-throughs along this recommended bike route connecting Sauk Trail School with Rich East High School. The existing sidewalk should be renovated as an 8' wide asphalt trail with ADA curb ramps and bollards. If this is not feasible, at a minimum new sidewalks should be constructed.

Priority Cut-Through #4:
The Village should work with the owners of Lincolnwood Shopping Center to obtain an easement to construct an 8' wide asphalt trail with ADA curb ramps and bollards. The easement would be part of the larger east-west route -- south of Lincoln Highway -- that would connect the northern segment of Park Forest with the 211th Street Metra Station.

Legend
- Recommend Bike Route
- Cut-Through Enhancement

8. Intersection Treatments

Designs for intersections with bicycle and pedestrian facilities should reduce conflict between facility users and vehicles by heightening visibility, indicating a clear right-of-way, and facilitating eye contact and awareness with competing modes. Intersection treatments can resolve both queuing and merging maneuvers for bicyclists, and are often coordinated with timed or specialized signals.

Design Guidelines. The design of an intersection may include elements such as color, signage, medians, signal detection, and pavement markings. Intersection design should take into consideration existing and anticipated movements. In all cases, the degree of mixing or separation between bicyclists and other modes is intended to reduce the risk of crashes and increase bicyclist comfort. The level of treatment required at an intersection depends on the facility type, whether facilities are intersecting streets and driveways, traffic volumes and speeds, and adjacent land uses. Although general design guidelines are highlighted below, a list of intersection treatment techniques is included in the **Appendix**.

Intersection treatments should be designed to assist slower pedestrians and bicyclists. Some techniques to assist slower users include: installing a center median to provide a refuge; installing accessible pedestrian signals to assist in providing people with vision impairments; increasing crossing times; restricting right turns on red; enhancing the visibility of the crosswalk markings; raising crosswalks with detectable warnings at both ends; reducing crossing distances; and reducing traffic speed.

Various designs and treatments exist for bike lanes as they approach an intersection. The transition into intersections is an important part of the installation of dedicated bike lanes within DownTown Park Forest. For bicyclists traveling in a bike lane the approach to an intersection with vehicular turn lanes can present a significant challenge. Most conflicts between bicyclists and motorists occur at intersections. For this reason it is important that bicyclists are provided an opportunity to correctly position themselves to avoid conflicts with turning vehicles. This treatment specifically covers the application of a through bicycle lane or 'bicycle pocket' at the intersection. Some design principles to be considered include: designing the bicycle route through the intersection to be direct, logical, and similar to the path of vehicles; providing lighting; using signals that detect the presence of bicyclists; and ensuring appropriate signal timing.

- Right turns are relatively easy for bicyclists because they usually ride on the right hand side of the road. At intersection approaches that do not have right-turn only lanes, bike lanes should be marked with either a striped or dashed line (based upon factors such as traffic volumes and speeds). For streets with right turn only lanes, bike lanes should be installed on the left of the right-turn lane. The through bike lane should be a minimum of 4 feet wide.
- To make left turns intersections can be designed so that bicyclists can either merge left in advance of the intersection to turn from the same location as other left-turning vehicles, or bicyclists may proceed straight through the intersection – to the corner – and then turns left to cross the side street (similar to a pedestrian). Within DownTown where bike lanes are recommended, separate bike left-turn lanes are recommended.
- For intersections that have right turning lanes for vehicles through bike lanes for bicycles should be clearly marked. For interesections that have sufficient width, through bike lanes for bicycles should be created between the right turning lane and the vehicular through lane.

Intersection treatments are also important to the success of off-street facilities (sidewalks, sidepaths, and multi-use trails). Designs should not only address motorists but also turning movements of cyclists and pedestrians using the off-street facility. Street crossings can be designed as mid-block, sidepath, or grade separated crossings. Mid-block crossings are those crossings that are not located at an existing intersection. Examples of design guidelines that should be used when creating off-street facilities include: reducing the number of driveway crossings; reducing driver speeds; and by heightening trail user awareness at intersections and driveways. Strategies to raise awareness include installing signage, ensuring adequate sight lines, and creating highly visible crossings through the use of striping or different surfacing.

Intersection Treatment Examples. The following examples illustrate typical intersection treatments that can be used by the Village to create safe and efficient intersections.

Recommended Locations by Priority. Currently, major roadway corridors such as Sauk Trail, U.S. Route 30/Lincoln Highway, Monee Road, Crawford Avenue, and Western Avenue are difficult to cross. **Figure 4.17** identifies existing intersections that should be improved to be more visible. These intersections are either along arterial or collector streets and are along the recommended bicycle network. Although the Village should first focus on repainting/restriping the intersections shown on **Figure 4.17**, in the long-term, when intersections are upgraded they should include pedestrian/bicycle design solutions (see the Appendix). However, many of the intersections that are recommended to be improved are within IDOT or the County's jurisdiction. The Village should meet with agency representatives to ensure pedestrian/bicycle elements are included in any future intersection improvements.

Figure 4.16 a Intersection Treatments

Intersection Treatments: **Bike Lane Approaches**

Through Bike Lane Option A

For intersections that have sufficient physical width, seperate through lanes for bicycles should be created. Dashed lines are used to signify the merge area. Lines should start a minimum of 50 feet from the intersection. Markings are also used to clarify bicycle positioning. On-street parking is shown in this example.

Through Bike Lane Option B

This example illustrates a through bicycle lane at an intersection from a street with no on-street parking. Dashed lines are used to signify the merge area. Lines should start a minimum of 50 feet from the intersection. Markings are also used to clarify bicycle positioning.

Through Bike Lane Option C

In this example the merge area is painted green to increase awareness. Both the painted area and the dashed lines should start a minimum of 50' from the intersection.

Combined Right Turn Lane Option A

For intersections that lack the pysical width, a combined bike turn lane may be used. In this example a dashed line is used to clarify bicyle positioning at the intersection. Bike lane markings are also used to show bicycle positioning.

Combined Right Turn Lane Option B

In this example "sharrows" are used instead of a dashed line to signify bicycle positioning. Approaching the intersection, a minimum of 50 feet before the intersection a dashed line is used. No on-street parking is shown in this example.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials (NATCO)

Figure 4.16 b Intersection Treatments

Intersection Treatments: Crossing Markings

Intersection crossing markings should be installed to indicate the intended path of bicyclists. They guide bicyclists on a safe and direct path through intersections. The examples shown below illustrate different crossing markings for both pedestrians and bicyclists; however, their focus is on showing different intersection crossing markings for accommodating bicycle movement. The options can be used on their own or combined based upon unique intersection characteristics.

Intersection Markings Option A

This example illustrates a crossing that uses dashed white lines that extend through the intersection to mark the bicycle lanes.

Intersection Markings Option B

This example shows dashed white lines and chevrons to designate bicycle lanes through the intersection. The intent of the chevrons is to show bicycle direction as well as increase awareness and visibility.

Intersection Markings Option C

Colored pavement can be used with the dashed white lanes to increase awareness and visibility through the intersection.

Intersection Markings Option D

Thicker white dashed lines, called "elephants feet" can be used to show bicyle lanes through intersections. The dashed lines are recommended to be 14-20 inch squares. The purpose of using this technique is to increase visibility.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials (NATCO)

Figure 4.16 c Intersection Treatments

Intersection Treatments: **Refuge Islands**

Median refuge islands are protected spaces placed in the center of the street to assist both bicycle and pedestrian crossings. Crossings of two-way streets are facilitated by allowing bicyclists and pedestrians to navigate only one direction of traffic at a time. Refuge islands are particularly useful for those that make slower street crossings. The preferred width of a median refuge island is 10 feet. The approach edge of the median should be outlined in retroreflective white or yellow paint to increase visibility. ADA ramps should be installed through the raised median.

Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials (NATCO)

Refuge Islands Option

This example shows a median refuge island for pedestrians with a shared bicycle lane running parrallel through the intersection. Striped crosswalk markings are used to designate the pedestrian area. ADA curb ramps should be installed through the raised median.

Figure 4.16 d Intersection Treatments

Intersection Treatments: Pedestrian Crossings

A pedestrian crossing is defined as any location where the pedestrian leaves the sidewalk and enters the street. Pedestrian crossings can include midblock crossings and street intersections. Crosswalks are implied at all intersections whether or not they are marked. Midblock crossings include all marked crosswalks that do not occur at intersections. Midblock crossings are only created if a marked crosswalk is provided. All marked and unmarked crosswalks and midblock crossings should be designed for the safety and accessibility of all pedestrians. Crosswalk markings, if provided, are used to define the pedestrian path of travel across the roadway and alert drivers to the crosswalk location. Marked crosswalks should be designed in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Pedestrian Crossing Option A

This example illustrates a pedestrian crossing that is identified by two parallel solid white lines through the intersection. Although crosswalks with parallel markings are permitted by the MUTCD, they are less visible to motorists than crosswalks with ladder striping.

Pedestrian Crossing Option B

This example, called the "ladder" design is striped white lines that run through the intersection signifying pedestrian routes. The ladder design is created with white longitudinal lines at a 90 degree angle to the line of the crosswalk. The lines should be 12 in to 24 inches wide.

Pedestrian Crossing Option C

Different surface materials can be used such as brick, concrete pavers, and stamped asphalt. Different materials help to increase awareness and visibility of pedestrian crossings.

Pedestrian Crossing Option D

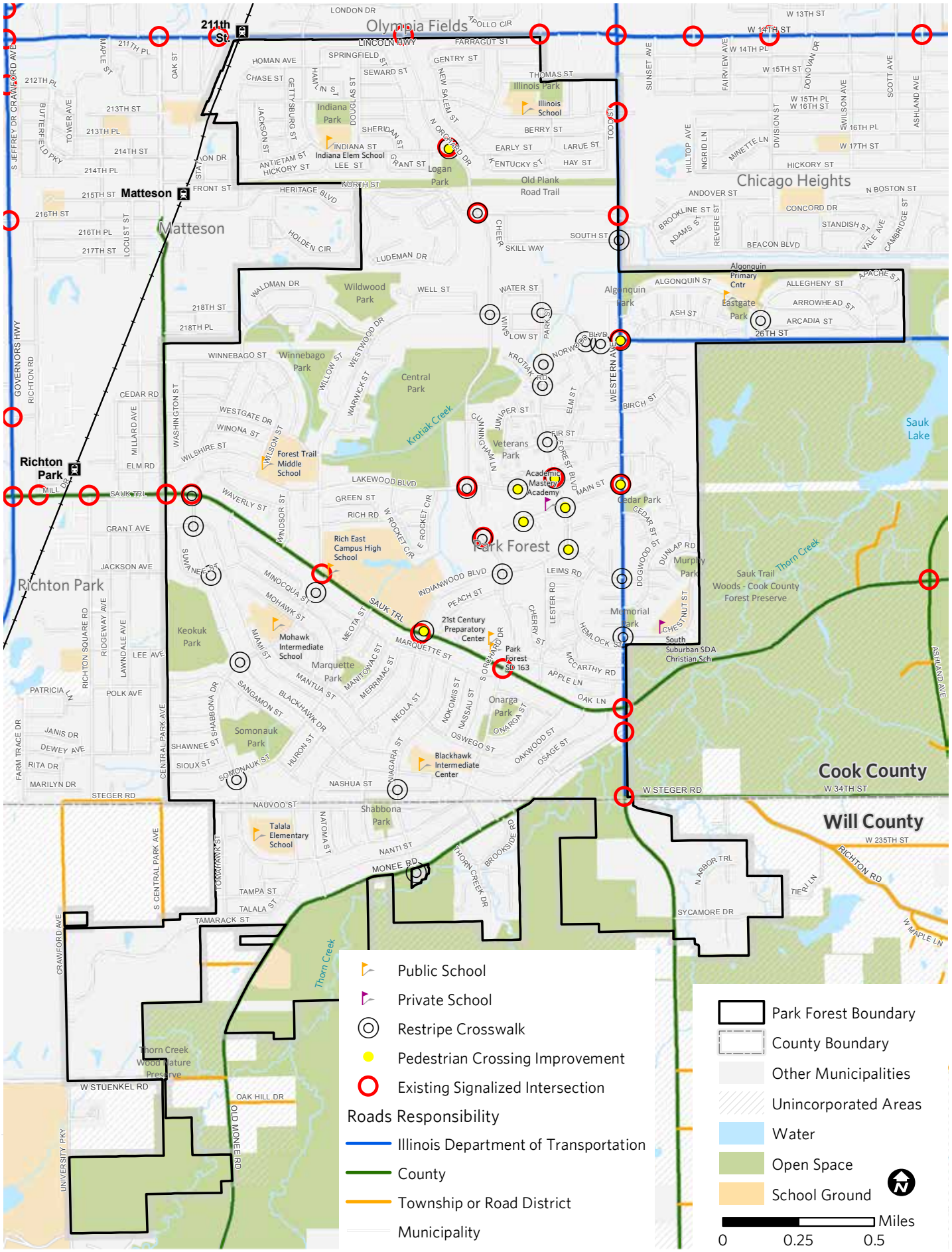
In addition to on street markings, pedestrian crossing signs can be installed as an additional technique to alert drivers to use caution. Motorists must yield for pedestrians.

Pedestrian Crossing Option E

Medians help people with slow walking speeds to cross wide intersections during a short signal cycle. Whenever possible, medians should be raised to separate pedestrians and motorists. Raised medians make the pedestrian more visible to motorists and they are easier for people with vision impairments to detect. They should be designed with a cut-through at street level or a ramp that provides access to individuals who cannot travel over a curb.

Source: CMAP staff

Figure 4.17 Intersection Treatment Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

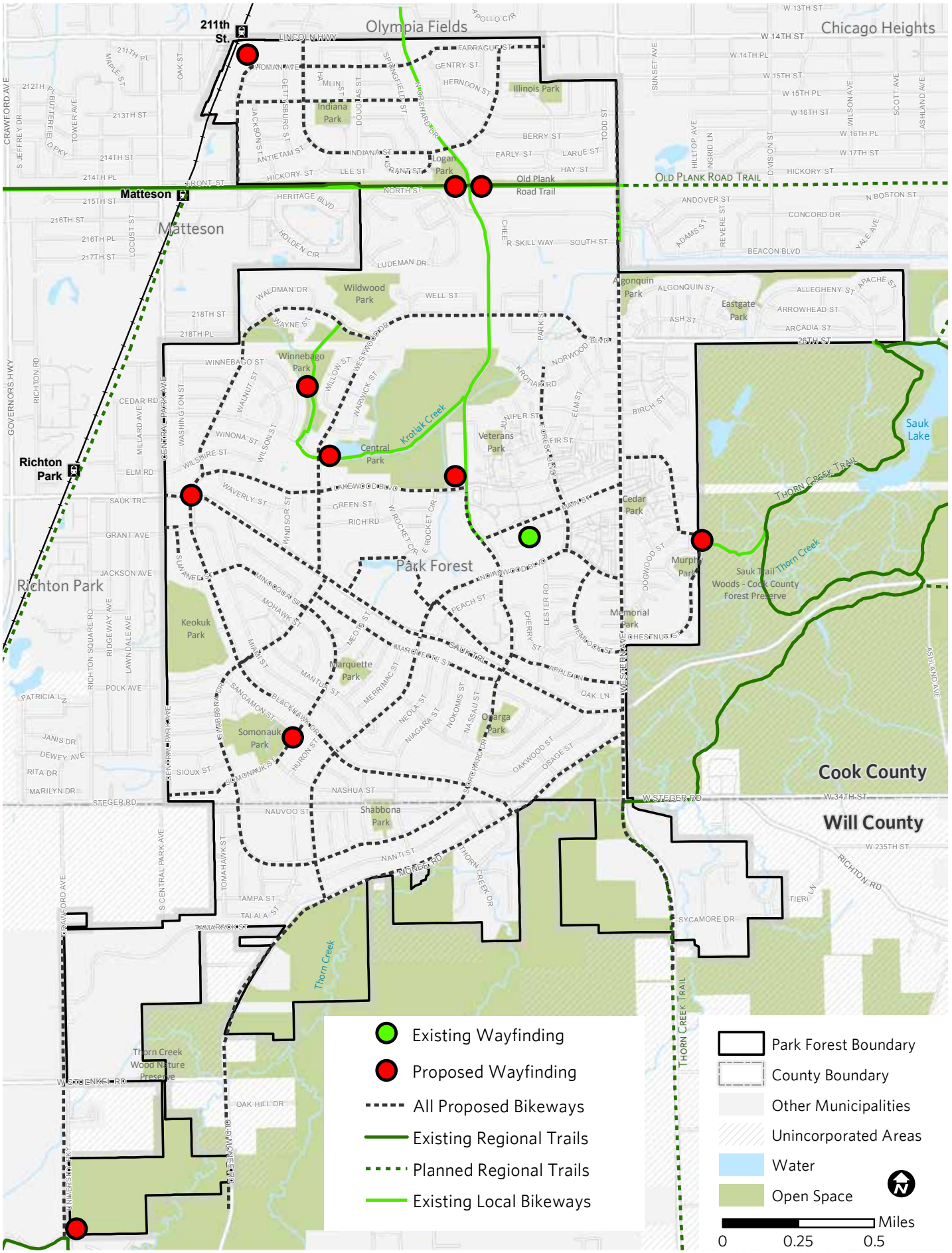
9. Directional and wayfinding Signage

Signage not only serves bicyclists and pedestrians, but motorists as well, who can use the signs to identify where community facilities are. Signing the bicycle network encourages ridership and also raises users' awareness and acceptance of bicycling.

Design Guidelines. The Village should follow MUTCD standards when designing and installing signage directional and wayfinding signage. Signs should be repeated at regular intervals so that bicyclists entering from side streets will have an opportunity to know that they are on a bicycle route. A variety of wayfinding signage formats should be considered including kiosks (similar to the existing DownTown kiosk), decorative signs, and art installations. If kiosks are used, they should be attractive and include lockable glass panels showing a variety of information such as maps, rules and regulations, community events, regional trail connections, Pace bus routes and Metra Stations, and local businesses. Decorative signs and art installations may take a variety of forms, and their purpose should be to identify the community as being "bicycle-friendly".

Recommended Locations by Priority. Currently, only limited bicycle signage exists along the Orchard Drive bike lane. The Village should install new route signs as new routes are created. In addition, the Village should also include wayfinding signage at key locations (see **Figure 4.18**). It is important to note that the wayfinding signage locations on **Figure 4.18** are not exhaustive. An interrelated wayfinding program would assist bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians in identifying not only bicycle routes and intersection crossings, but also to community destinations. Signs should include directions and mileage to community facilities, parks and forest preserves (and regional trails), schools (including Governors State University), shopping areas, and Metra stations.

Figure 4.18 Wayfinding Signage Recommendations



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

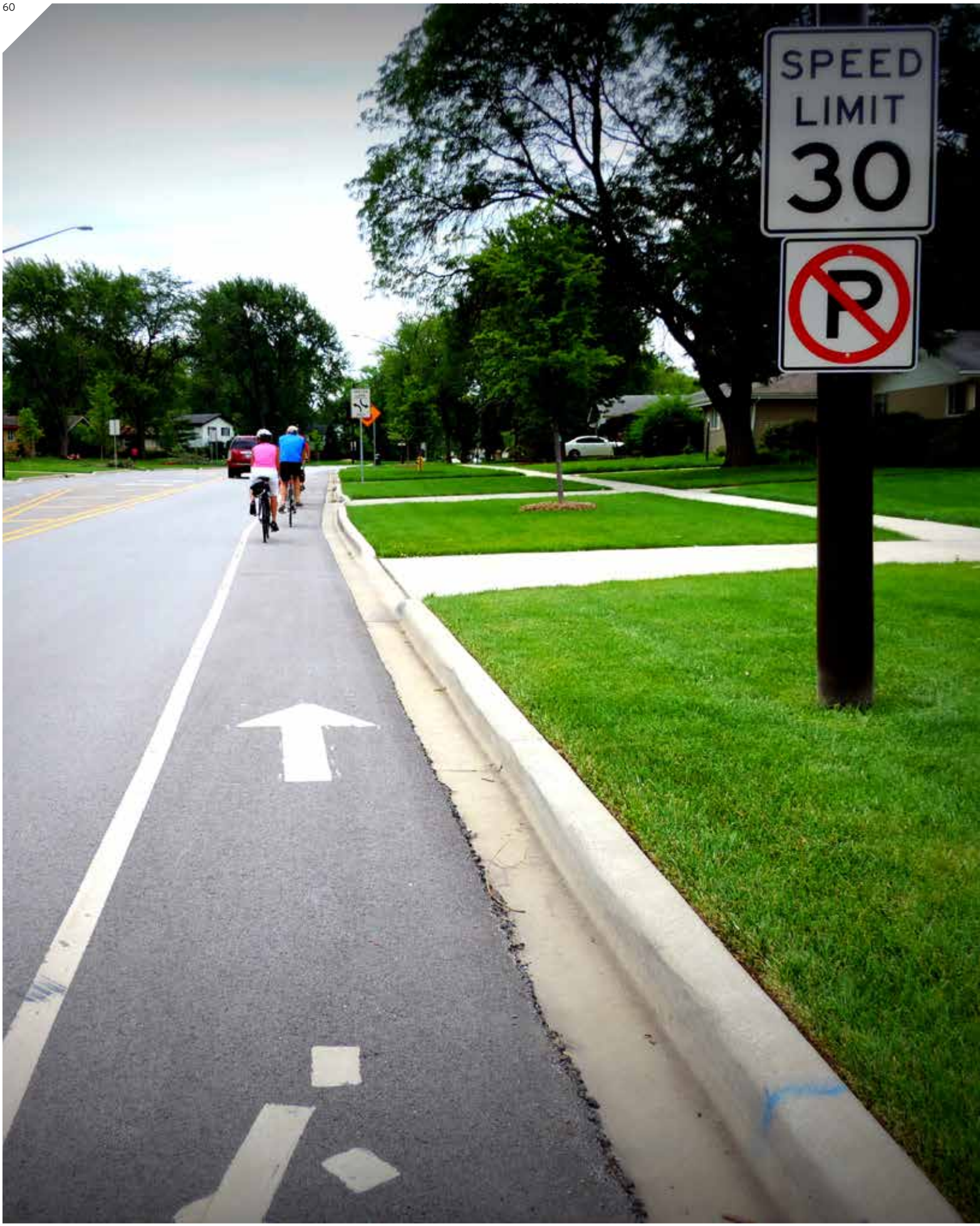


Photo credit: CMAP staff.

Chapter 5
Policies, Programs, and Implementation

The Park Forest Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan has focused primarily on planning and prioritization of physical facilities. This is a critical and central part of a bicycle plan, but other elements – policy changes by the Village and others; education, encouragement, and enforcement programs; and implementation details – are also important. A supplementary document covering policies, programs, and implementation will be prepared in early 2015. This supplementary document will be adopted by the Village as an addendum to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. However, there are two immediate policy actions that the Village should adopt as part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. These are:

1. Create a formal Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

The committee that was formed to lead the creation of this plan should remain together, and should turn its focus from plan development to implementation. The Village should transition the steering committee for this project into a formal committee that would advise the Village and help to lead implementation efforts. The new committee should meet quarterly to discuss strategies, successes, and priorities to implement the plan's recommendations, as well as to provide a consistent voice to the Village on bicycle and pedestrian issues.

2. Adopt a Complete Streets policy.

A Complete Streets policy formalizes the commitment of the Village to include consideration for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users within all street design activities. The Village should, as part of the adoption of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, also adopt a Complete Streets policy that references the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and indicates the intent of the Village to use Complete Streets principles whenever relevant. CMAP recommends that the Complete Streets policy itself be relatively simple, using references to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan rather than newly developed language to express the Village's priorities.

Beyond these immediate actions, there are many other policy and program recommendations that can help to promote bicycling in Park Forest. These will be detailed in a plan addendum developed and adopted in early 2015. The contents of the addendum will cover the following:

- ***Coordination with the Village's development regulations.*** The Unified Development Ordinance currently being prepared should be consistent with and reinforce the recommendations of the

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

- ***Incorporation into the Five Year Capital Plan.*** Many of the recommendations of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan require infrastructure investment to be implemented. The Village should reflect the priorities of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as part of its five-year capital planning.
- ***Consistency with other ordinances.*** Other issues identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, such as maintenance of cut-throughs by adjacent residents, may need to be clarified through changes or additions to the Village's Code of Ordinances.
- ***Community education about active transportation.*** The formal bicycle and pedestrian committee will be a first step toward this, but municipalities can take many other actions to educate residents about bicycling, walking, and using transit in the community.
- ***Encouragement of bicycling and walking.*** There is significant overlap between education and encouragement, but more aggressive programming of events and activities, particularly in coordination with schools or other institutions, can help to drive increased use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- ***Enforcement focusing on safe travel behaviors.*** The Village's Police Department will have a significant role to play in enforcing compliance with traffic laws for all users of the transportation system.
- ***Details of implementation.*** Finally, the addendum will include a detailed matrix of implementation actions, with timelines and responsibilities clearly identified.

Short-Term Capital Improvement Strategies

The following identifies a prioritized list of capital improvements to undertake in the short term (0-2 years). The purpose for compiling this list is to identify key capital improvements that are recommended in the plan that should be included in the Village's Capital Improvement Plan. The timeframe was dictated by the complexity and impact of implementation, as well as current and anticipated resources. Each strategy includes a brief description, priority, approximate distance or quantity, and lead implementers/or possible partaner(s).

Table 7.1 Short Term Capital Improvement Projects (0-2 years)

Facility Type	Priority	Description	Approximate Distance or quantity	Lead Implementers and possible partners
Multi-Use Trails	1	Extend Winnebago trail to connect with future dog park. Construct as 10' wide trail.	850'	Parks and Recreation Department
	2	Widen Central Park from 5' to be a 10' wide multi-use trail (includes widening 3 existing pedestrian bridges)	3,700'	Parks and Recreation Department
	3	Widen existing 5' wide Winnebago Park trail to 10 feet wide	3,150'	Parks and Recreation Department
Sidepaths	1	Fill in "gaps" along the west side of Western Avenue	660' (north of Illinois Street)	IDOT, Public Works
	2	Fill in "gaps" along the west side of Western Avenue	1,000' (Cedar to Indianwood)	IDOT, Public Works
	3	Fill in "gaps" along the west side of Western Avenue	1,200' (Hemlock to Indianwood)	IDOT, Public Works
Bike Lanes	1	Install a bike lane along Main Street from Orchard Drive to Western Avenue. If after more detailed engineering analysis if a bike lane is not preferred, a shared lane/sharrow should be considered.	2,500'	Public Works
	2	Install a bike lane along Forest Boulevard from Norwood Boulevard south to Indianwood Boulevard	3,200'	Public Works
	3	Install a bike lane along Indianwood Boulevard from Sauk Trail to Western Avenue	4,250'	Public Works
Shared Lanes/ Sharrows	1	Create a shared lane/sharrow on Orchard Drive south of Indianwood Boulevard to Sauk Trail	1,600' (paint sharrow symbol every 250')	Public Works
	2	Create a shared lane/sharrow on Shabbona Drive south of Sauk Trail to Indianwood Boulevard	5,000' (paint sharrow symbol every 250')	Public Works
	3	Create a shared lane/sharrow on Indianwood Boulevard from Sauk Trail to Monee Road	5,200' (paint sharrow symbol every 250')	Public Works
	4	Create a shared lane/sharrow on Shabbona Drive from Indianwood Boulevard north to Sauk Trail.	8,600' (paint sharrow symbol every 250')	Public Works
Signed Routes	1	Sign a route along Chestnut Street	NA	Public Works
	2	Sign a route along Hemlock Street	NA	Public Works
	3	Sign a route along Dogwood Street	NA	Public Works
Sidewalks	1	Indianwood Boulevard (north side) between Orchard Drive and Forest Boulevard	1,200'	Public Works
	2	Orchard Drive (east side) between Indianwood Boulevard and Main Street	600'	Public Works

Facility Type	Priority	Description	Approximate Distance or quantity	Lead Implementers and possible partners
Cut-Throughs	1	Improve (and possibly widen into 10 wide multi-use trail) between Seward Street and Homan Avenue	255′	Public Works
	2	Improve (and possibly widen into 10 wide multi-use trail) between Farragut Street and Seward Street	280′	Public Works
	3	Improve three cut-throughs (and possibly widen into 10 wide multi-use trail) between Orchard Drive to Rich East High School	320′ (cut-through from Indianwood to Peach Street), 300′ (cut-through from Peach Street to Sauk Court), 900′ (through Sauk Trail School)	Public Works, School District
Intersection Treatments	1	Restripe crosswalk at Forest Boulevard and Lakewood Street	North, South and West sides	Public Works
	2	Restripe crosswalk at Forest Boulevard and Main Street	All four sides	Public Works
	3	Restripe crosswalk at Forest Boulevard and Indianwood Boulevard	North side only	Public Works
	4	Restripe crosswalk at Main Street and Cunningham Drive	All four sides	Public Works
	5	Restripe crosswalk at Main Street and Orchard Boulevard	All four sides	Public Works
	6	Restripe crosswalk at Main Street and Victory Drive	North and south sides	Public Works
	7	Restripe crosswalk at Indianwood Boulevard and Sauk Trail	North side only	Public Works, County
	8	Restripe crosswalk at Western Avenue and Main Street	West and south sides	Public Works, IDOT
	9	Seek out grants to restripe pedestrian crosswalks near schools throughout the community	TBD	Public Works, School Districts
Wayfinding and directional signage	1	Install wayfinding/directional signage similar to the “kiosk” within DownTown at Old Plank Trail and Orchard Boulevard	One kiosk	Public Works, Parks and Recreation Department
	2	Install wayfinding/directional signage similar to the “kiosk” within DownTown at 211th Street Metra station	One kiosk	Public Works, Metra
	3	Install wayfinding/directional signage similar to the “kiosk” within DownTown at Thorn Creek Trail	One kiosk	Public Works, Cook County Forest Preserve District
	4	Install wayfinding/directional signage similar to the “kiosk” within DownTown at the Library	One kiosk	Public Works, Library
	5	Install wayfinding/directional signage similar to the “kiosk” within DownTown at Central Park	One kiosk	Public Works, Parks and Recreation Department

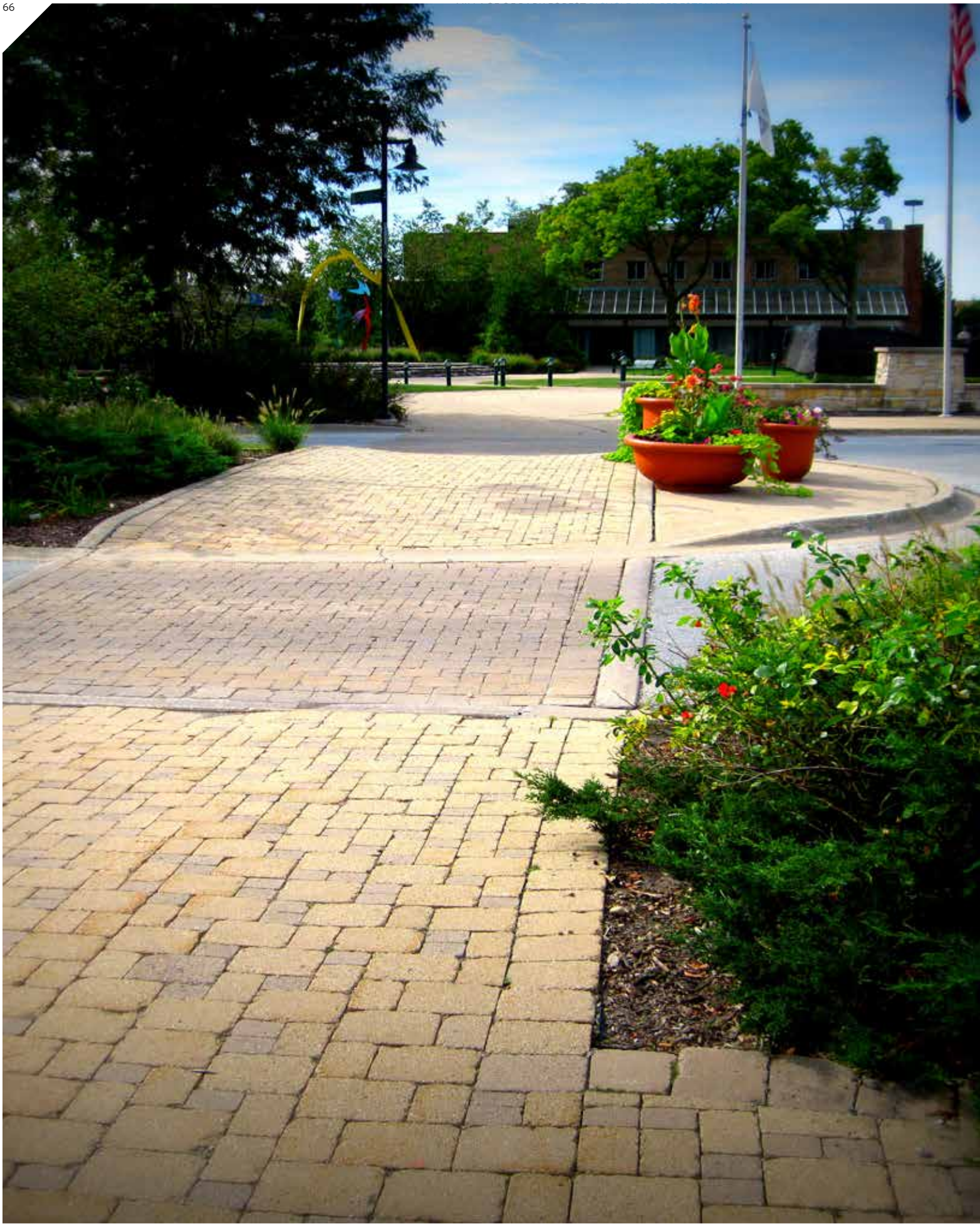


Photo credit: CMAP staff.

Appendix

A. Types of Intersection Improvements

B. Existing Conditions Report

Appendix A: Types of Intersection Improvements

The following provides examples of signalized crossing improvements that the Village should consider installing whenever feasible to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation. These improvements should be utilized by the Village on a case by case scenario – based upon such factors as bicycle/pedestrian usage, traffic counts, traffic speed, adjacent land uses, if the intersection is along the recommended bicycle network, cost, timing of intersection renovation, and available right-of-way.

Crosswalk Pavement Markings

A location indicated as an appropriate place for pedestrians to cross a street or vehicular way by marking the crossing location with high visibility crosswalk pavement markings. High visibility crosswalks typically make use of longitudinal or "continental," or "ladder" style pavement markings, which are highly visible to approaching traffic.

Pedestrian countdown signals

Pedestrian countdown signals consist of a standard pedestrian signal head, with an added display showing a countdown of the remaining crossing time. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) recommends that the countdown timer start at the onset of the flashing DON'T WALK. The timer continues counting down through the pedestrian clearance interval. Countdown signals are required by the MUTCD to be installed whenever pedestrian signal heads are warranted as part of intersection signalization or reconstruction. Signals may be supplemented with audible or other messages to make crossing information accessible for all pedestrians.

Time Signals for Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI)

LPI's reduce potential for pedestrian-automobile conflicts by providing pedestrians 3 to 5 seconds of time to cross the street before vehicles get a green signal. LPI help to increase visibility of pedestrians attempting to cross at busy intersections.

Loop Detectors Bicycle Signal Detection and Actuation at Signalized Intersections

These detectors should be installed at key intersections to reduce bicyclist wait time. Loop detectors are embedded in pavement and accurately detect bicyclists waiting for a signal. Loop detectors should include pavement markings that tell cyclists where to stop in order to be recognized by the traffic signal.

Advance Stop or Yield Lines

Advance stop or yield lines indicate the point behind which vehicles are required to stop or yield, but placed further back on the approach to an intersection or marked crossing. Advance stop/yield lines are typically placed between 4 and 50 feet in advance of crossing location, and are 12 to 24 inches wide.

Refuge islands

Refuge islands are placed within the center median to provide a place for pedestrians to wait safely to cross.

Pork chop islands

Pork chop islands are installed to channelize right-turning vehicles in a manner that keeps turning speeds low and to provide a safe refuge for pedestrians crossing the street. The islands are triangular and are placed between a right-turn slip lane and through-travel lanes.

Raised Crosswalk

This type of crosswalk is raised above the street pavement in the form of an elongated speed hump with a flat section in the middle and at grade with adjacent sidewalks.

Rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB)

An RRFB device is a pedestrian-activated beacon system located at the street that acts as a supplement to pedestrian warning signs at non-signalized intersections or mid-block crosswalks. RRFB devices must be used in conjunction with other treatments, such as warning and regulatory signage, advance stop/yield markings, marked and/or raised crosswalks.

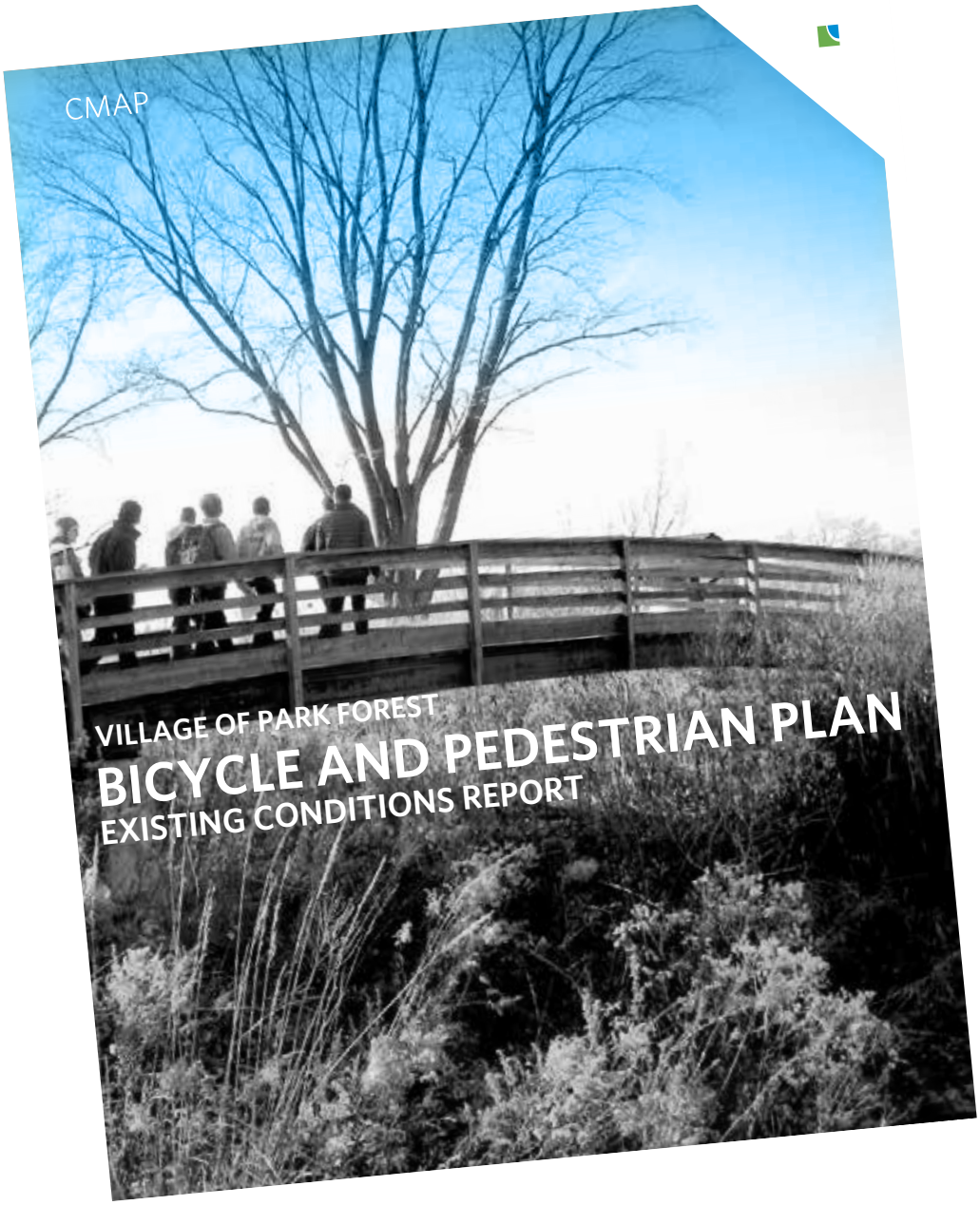
In-street stop/yield signs

A regulatory sign mounted in the center of relatively low speed streets at uncontrolled marked crossings, which reminds motorists of the law stating that they must stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

High-visibility signage—Warning signs

Signs that visually alert motorists of the potential for pedestrians and bicyclists. Warning signs are installed to improve pedestrian safety at crossings and along roadways by using high visibility warning signs indicating the presence of pedestrians and cyclists that are waiting to cross, or crossing the street.

Appendix B:
Existing Conditions Report



Funding Acknowledgement

This project was supported through CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Chicago Community Trust. Park Forest and CMAP would like to thank these funders for their support for this project.

Cover photo provided by CMAP staff.

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 Park Forest
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Existing Conditions Report

August 2014

Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Table of Contents

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION 2: PREVIOUS PLANS, STUDIES, AND REPORTS	9
SECTION 3: COMMUNITY OUTREACH	19
SECTION 4: COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND TRAVEL BEHAVIOR	23
SECTION 5: TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	39
SECTION 6: PLANNED AND PROGRAMMED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	67
SECTION 7: LOOKING FORWARD	71

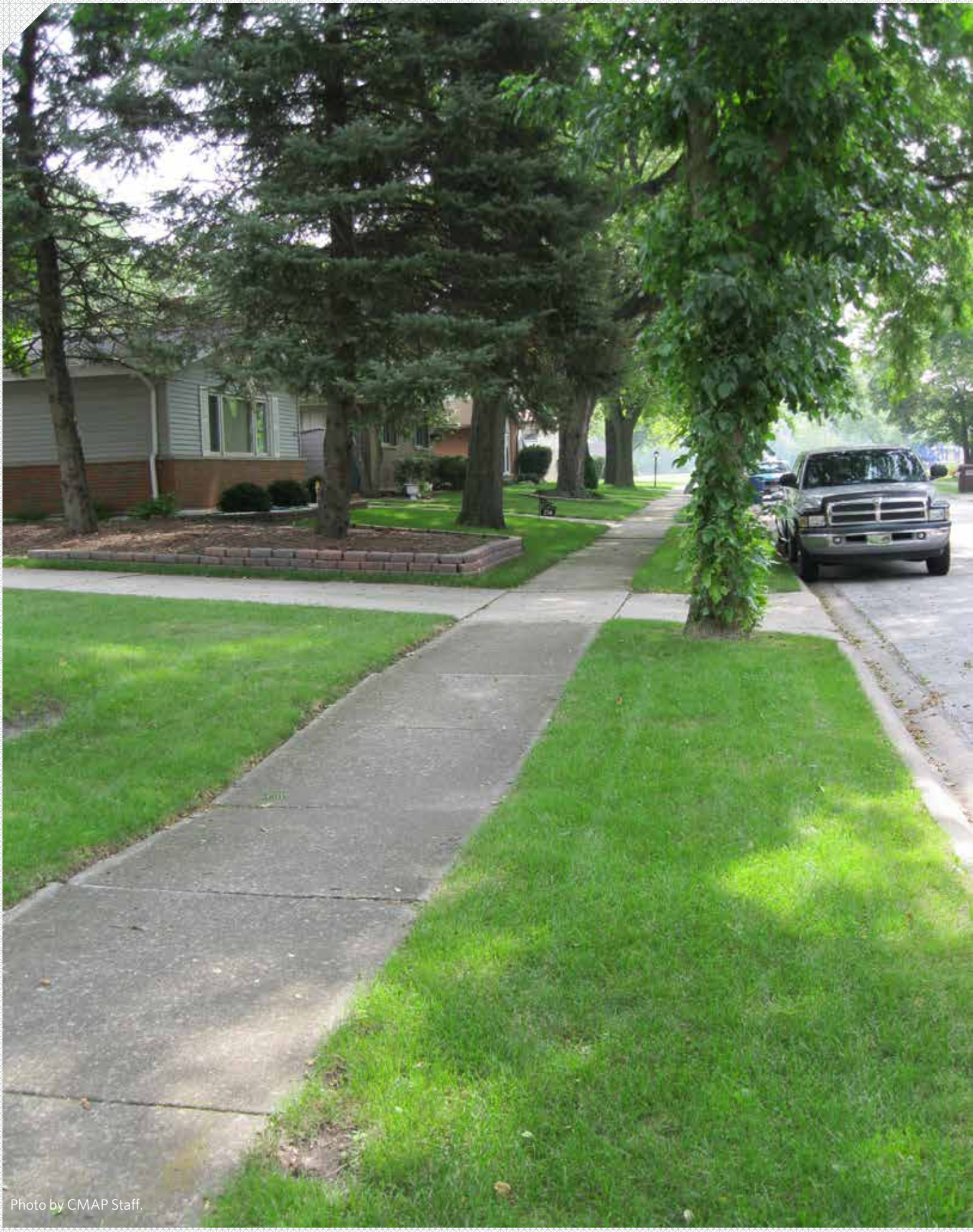


Photo by CMAP Staff.

Section 1
Introduction

In May of 2014, the Village of Park Forest and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning held the initial Steering Committee to launch the development of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The need for such a plan was identified in the 2012 Sustainability Plan. The existing conditions report is a critical first step in any planning process – laying the groundwork from which recommendations will ultimately be made. To properly address the active transportation needs and challenges for Park Forest, it is important to understand what is happening on the ground and what the ideal goals for non-motorized transportation are. When combined with thorough qualitative outreach, the findings in this existing conditions report will help the shape the final plan recommendations.

This report details the findings of the research, data gathered, and interviews conducted over a three-month period. The Existing Conditions Report is organized in the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction and Regional Context
- Section 2: Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports
- Section 3: Community Outreach
- Section 4: Community Context and Travel Behavior
- Section 5: Transportation Infrastructure
- Section 6: Planned and Programmed Roadway Improvements
- Section 8: Looking Forward

1.1 Purpose of a Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Park Forest will continue to move the Village forward in its sustainability goals by identifying concrete actions that the Village can take to improve and enhance active transportation networks, creating safe and enjoyable bicycle and pedestrian routes and encouraging sustainable local transportation. Specifically, this plan will seek to increase bicycling, walking and transit use, improve traffic safety, enhance local businesses and foster a healthier, more environmentally friendly community.

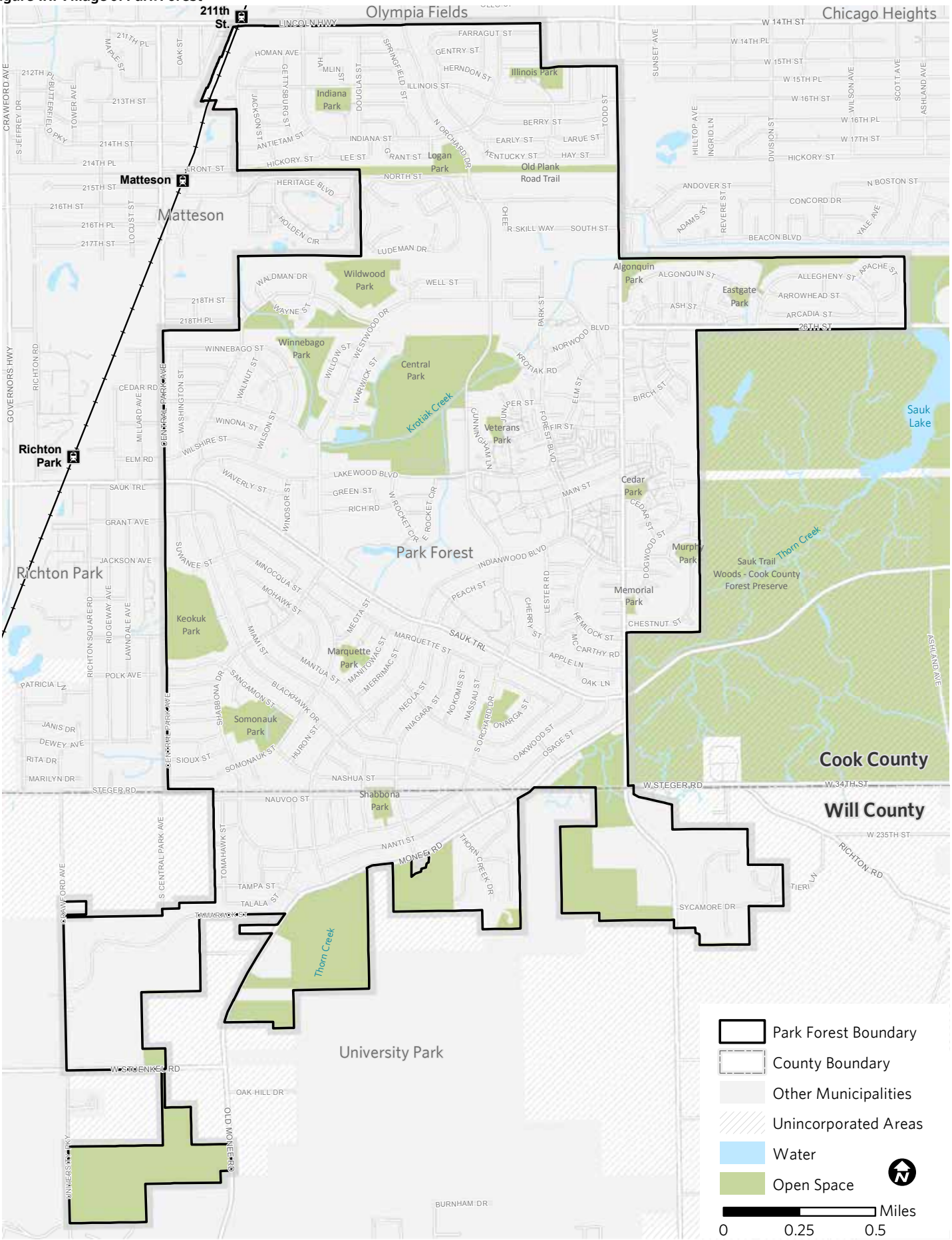
1.2 Goals & Objectives

The goals and objectives for this plan have evolved primarily out of the Sustainability Plan of 2012. The main goal of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to develop a comprehensive non-motorized transportation network that will serve the needs of all Park Forest residents, allowing for safe travel at all ages, connecting neighborhoods to jobs, shopping, regional bikeways, cultural facilities, recreational amenities and activity areas.

The objectives are to create a bicycle routes plan that establishes criteria for new bike lanes and trailways, identify programs to encourage more walking and biking, explore bicycle parking requirements for new developments, and to reduce crashes and improve safety throughout the community.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Figure 1.1. Village of Park Forest



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

1.3 Planning process and next steps

The planning process to create the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan includes multiple steps that will last approximately 8 months. The process has been designed to include input from residents, teachers, bicyclists, pedestrians, people with disabilities, and business owners. In March of 2014, CMAP staff and staff from the Village of Park Forest developed a Scope of Work for the project. The scope of work sets program tasks, a timeline for the program, and recommends participation by a steering committee to assist CMAP staff in developing the final plan and recommendations.

As indicated in Figure 1.2, phases one and two of the project involve a thorough analysis of the existing conditions within the community using information gathered through stakeholder interviews, steering committee meetings, review of previous studies, and collection of maps and data. The results of these steps are presented in this report. Phase three of this process will be to draft the plan and identify key steps for implementation, and the final phase will be to review and adopt the plan. 1.3 Planning process and next steps

Figure 1.2. Project Timeline

PARK FOREST BIKE-PED PLAN TIMELINE

- ● Meeting
- Ongoing
- Outreach

		2014							
Phase	Task	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Phase I: Community Visioning	Task Ia: Steering Committee Meeting		●						
	Task Ib: Key Person Interviews			●					
	Task Ic: Project Website								
Phase II: Existing Conditions Report	Task IIa: Review Existing Documents and Plans								
	Task IIb: Draft Existing Conditions Report								
	Task IIc: Steering Committee Meeting				●				
Phase III: Draft Plan	Task IIIa: Public Outreach Meeting					●			
	Task IIIb: Draft the Plan								
	Task IIIc: Steering Committee Meeting						●		
Phase IV: Review and Adopt Plan	Task IVa: Public Open House							●	
	Task IVb: Adoption Meetings							●	●
	Task IVc: Final Document								

1.4 Regional Context

History of Park Forest

The Village of Park Forest, incorporated on February 1, 1949, was designed by Philip Klutznick and American Community Builders as one of the largest planned communities in the country (second only to Levittown, New York). Park Forest was intended to accommodate veterans returning home from World War II. The Village was planned cohesively with both automobiles and pedestrians in mind. Neighborhoods were organized around open space, schools, churches, and commercial nodes to ensure that residents could easily meet their daily needs on foot.

Park Forest was also home to one of the nation's first regional shopping malls, known as Park Forest Plaza. The mall was developed in the early 1950s by the Klutznick and Manilow families, and was a successful commercial enterprise in the Village for 25 years. Anchors included Sears, Goldblatt's, and Marshall Fields. However, Park Forest Plaza encountered tough competition when Lincoln Mall opened in 1973 at a major intersection off the highway in neighboring Matteson. Park Forest Plaza's central location in the heart of the community was ideal from a local planning perspective, but its lack of proximity to major highways and arterial streets resulted in reduced visibility and, therefore, reduced patronage. The Plaza soon fell into disrepair.

The Village purchased the vacant mall in 1995 with the intention to turn it into a more traditional, mixed-use downtown. After the creation and adoption of a DownTown Master Plan in 1997, the Village moved quickly to make the plan a reality, with major activities including:

- Construction of Main Street to connect Orchard Drive with Western Avenue;
- Renovation of storefronts in a traditional style;
- Creation of a Village green;
- Reduction of the overall amount of commercial space; and
- Increase in the number of housing units and density near DownTown. (source: DownTown Plan)

Park Forest is also well known for its diverse housing stock. The majority of Park Forest's housing was built between its incorporation and 1960; this era primarily included the creation of ranch-style single-family homes and townhomes. Higher density housing was located near Park Forest Plaza. Although most of the townhomes were originally rental properties, in the 1960s, nearly 2,000 of those units were converted to owner-occupied, cooperative housing. The cooperative developments are one of the defining characteristics of the Village today. In addition, as part of the redevelopment of DownTown, 65 new single-family homes were built adjacent to DownTown in what is called Legacy Square. These homes are more modern in appearance than the vernacular architecture, and also offer slightly larger footprints than the smaller, post-war homes that comprise the majority of the Village's housing stock.

While pedestrian planning has always been a part of the history of Park Forest, more recently the Village has taken an active role in planning for bicycling in the Village, with new on-street bicycle lanes installed in 2013. The Village is also connected to two major regional greenway trails: the Old Plank Trail from the west and Thorn Creek Trail to the east of the Village.

1.5 Regional Setting

Park Forest lies on the southern edge of the Chicago metropolitan area, approximately 35 miles south of the Chicago loop, and is situated in southern Cook County and northern Will County. The Village is bordered by Olympia Fields to the north, Chicago Heights to the east, University Park to the south, and Richton Park and Matteson to the west. There are also unincorporated lands around the Village's boundary (Figure 1.3).

Park Forest is located about five miles east of Interstate 57, adjacent to commuter rail. U.S. Highway 30 (Lincoln Highway) runs along the northern boundary of Park Forest and links the Village with I-57 as well as Chicago Heights, Matteson, and Olympia Fields. The Metra Electric District line runs to the west of Park Forest, with the 211th Street station located within the Village and the Matteson and Richton Park stations just outside of its boundary.

Preliminary regional forecasts performed by CMAP indicate that Park Forest is projected to grow by approximately 30 percent by 2040.[1] By contrast, Park Forest's neighbors are projected to grow exponentially: University Park by 324 percent, Richton Park by 84 percent, Crete by 167 percent, and Matteson by 90 percent.[2] This reflects the fact that the majority of land in Park Forest is currently developed and will be unable to accommodate the kind of population growth occurring in adjacent communities. However, the Village can capitalize on development opportunities that come its way via the subregion's influx of population.

There are commercial and retail locations in town that serve some of the needs of residents, such as within DownTown, along Western Avenue, in the business park, and in nodal locations within residential neighborhoods. However, the Village has experienced high vacancy rates among these properties, with about 38 percent of all commercial properties standing vacant. This has led many residents to shop in neighboring communities like Olympia Fields and Matteson, increasing residents' dependence on automobiles for accomplishing daily errands or tasks.

1.6 Park Forest and GO TO 2040

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning 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 GO TO 2040, 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 help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. The plan contains 4 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

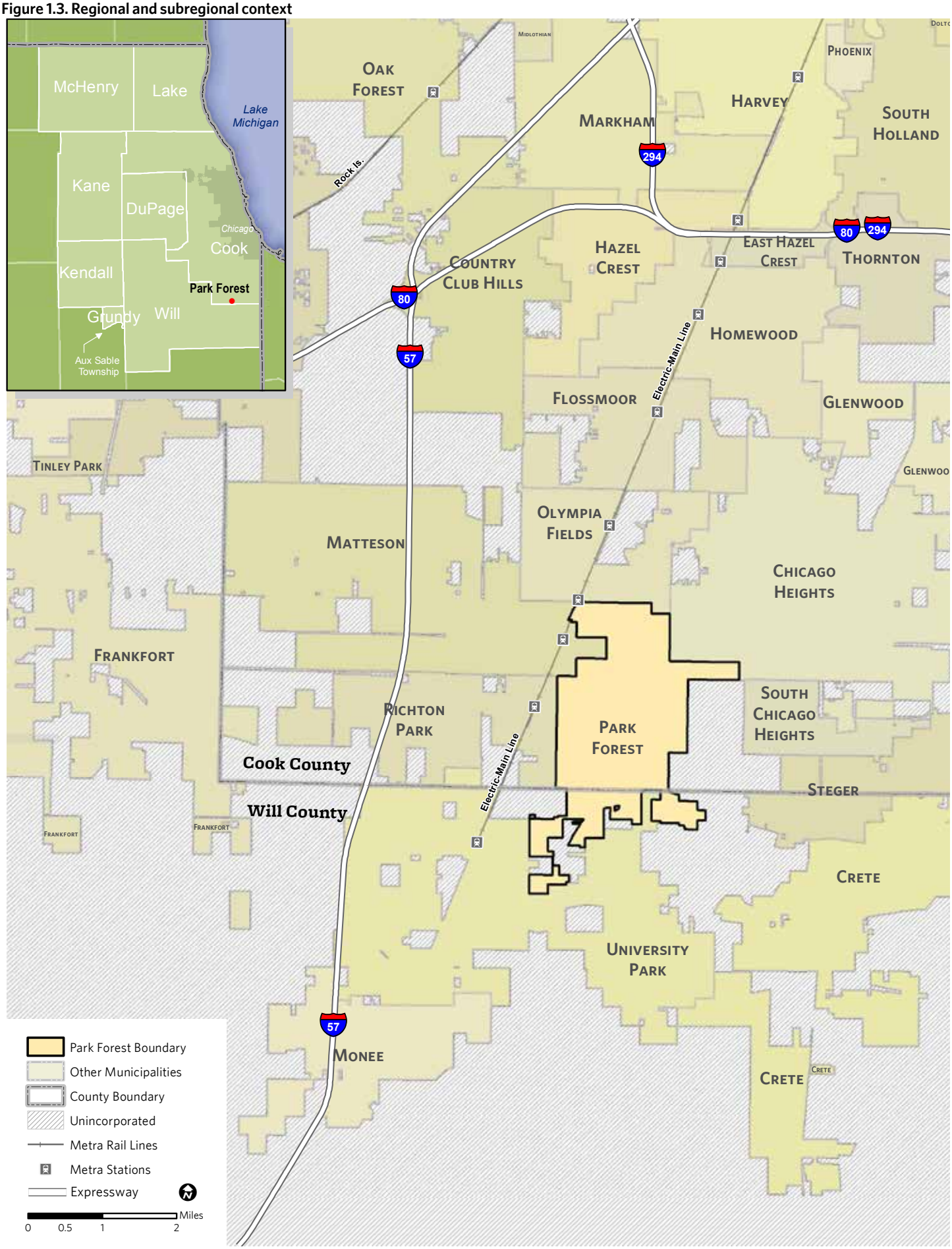
10. Invest Strategically in Transportation
11. Increase Commitment to Public Transit
12. Create a More Efficient Freight Network

GO TO 2040's recommendations in the Livable Communities chapter stress the need for mobility options that include improvements to support walking and bicycling as safe and efficient transportation modes, as well as viable connections to transit options. The Park Forest Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will help to implement the recommendations of GO TO 2040.

1. CMAP Preliminary Regional Analysis, 2014.

2. Ibid.

Figure 1.3. Regional and subregional context



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Section 2
Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports

This section provides a summary and analysis of existing Village plans, studies, and reports that will likely inform and impact the ultimate recommendation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The documents have been reviewed to build upon current or relevant findings and plans. Previously completed plans, studies, and reports reviewed in this section include:

- Village of Park Forest Going Green Sustainability Plan
- Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development
- DownTown Master Plan and Update
- 211th Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study
- Development Regulations
- Village Budget and Capital Improvement Plan

2.1 Key findings

The following are key conclusions regarding the recommendations of existing plans, studies and reports that help guide the Village. Moving forward in the planning process, these key findings will help shape and inform the bicycle and pedestrian master plan recommendations.

- The Village of Park Forest has a history of creating long-range planning documents that have been used successfully to help guide growth and redevelopment.
- The Village supports green initiatives as shown by their adopted "Going Green Sustainability Plan." Many relevant recommendations that are included in that plan will be carried forward in the final Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Sustainability Plan includes a recommended bicycle route map that will be used as the starting point for this plan.
- CMAP is currently working with the Village to update their development regulations. The development regulations are being updated in order to better align the Village's zoning and subdivision ordinances with the Sustainability Plan, other recent planning documents, and current land use practices. As the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is being created, staff will make sure that both documents support each other's recommendations.
- RTA's 211th St. Station Transit Oriented Development Plan called for further analysis of pedestrian access to the station, which the RTA will be working on in conjunction with the efforts of this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

2.2 Going Green Sustainability Plan

Prepared by the Village of Park Forest with assistance from CMAP
http://bit.ly/PFGrowingGreen

The Village's Going Green Sustainability Plan was created with assistance from CMAP. The Plan was adopted in 2012 and won awards from the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association and the Congress for the New Urbanism in 2013.

The Village sought a more cogent strategy for decision-making to strengthen its sustainability. The Sustainability Plan fulfills that role by:

1. Providing a road map for improving environmental, economic, and social conditions related to sustainability.

2. Bringing together existing initiatives and conditions as a baseline for developing strategies and recommendations.

3. Raising awareness about sustainability in the community at large and encouraging stakeholders to be involved.

4. Guiding government officials in decision-making.

5. Helping to shape the Village's sustainability-related identity and provide justification for related grants and awards.

The Sustainability Plan builds on past efforts and was developed to create a plan for residents of the Village to enjoy a high quality of life for decades to come. From energy use to development patterns to "green" jobs, the plan covers topics related to the "3 E's" – environment, economy, and equity. Planning for the document began with an inclusive, goal-setting process that engaged residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders, and then applied quantitative measures to key topic areas to track progress toward those community goals. With a focus on implementation strategies, the Park Forest Sustainability Plan is being used to assist the Village in maintaining its quality of life for future generations.

Five key themes were identified as overarching categories: Planning and Design, Natural Systems, Energy and Climate, Economic Development, and Equity & Social. The first three themes relate most directly to the environment, Economic Development relates most directly to the economy, and Equity & Social relates most directly to providing access to opportunity for residents of the Village. Subtopics to be addressed within these major themes are:

Planning and Design	**Economic Development**
A. Development Patterns	A. Green Economy
B. Transportation & Mobility	B. Local Food Systems
	C. Municipal Policies and Practices
Natural Systems	
A. Open Space & Ecosystems	**Equity & Social**
B. Waste	A. Education
C. Water	B. Community Health and Wellness
	C. Housing Diversity
Energy and Climate	D. Arts and Culture
A. Energy	
B. Greenhouse Gases	

Park Forest's Sustainability Plan includes:

- A sustainability assessment to establish baseline conditions and compile existing programs and initiatives.
- A series of goals, indicators, and strategies for each subtopic area as the plan for moving forward.
- A detailed implementation strategy.
- Monitoring and reporting guidelines to ensure that the goals of the Plan are realized.

Implications for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Chapter 2 of the Sustainability Plan presents the specific recommendations for the Village. A Transportation and Mobility subsection provides recommendations for enhancing the transportation options available to those who live and work in Park Forest. The following goals relate specifically to transportation improvements in the Village:

- Decrease vehicle miles traveled per household in order to reduce the community's use of fossil fuels.
- Provide better transit service and increase Pace access to Metra trains and intermodal linkages.
- Become more bicycle-and pedestrian-friendly.
- Resurface, maintain, and improve Village streets.
- Assess alternate transportation methods, including car sharing.

Building upon the goals within the Transportation and Mobility section, the following are specific strategies to support bicycling and walking in the community. As part of this section a proposed bicycle route system was presented (see Figure 2.1).

Create a bicycle routes plan that establishes criteria for new bike lanes and trails.

Discussions with Village officials and bicycle advocates have yielded a proposed bicycle routes plan that outlines safe, efficient routes to destinations across the village. These proposed bikeways could take different forms, such as:

- A multi-use path, where cyclists and pedestrians share a widened off-road sidewalk along a roadway. This is recommended along Western Avenue, as an extension of the path that currently exists to the north of South Street.
- Dedicated bike lanes, which are striped separate lanes for cyclists alongside cars. With the recent capital improvements along Orchard Drive, the Village installed the first dedicated bike lanes in Park Forest. Similar lanes should be considered with other road projects in the future.
- Sharrows, which are markings on roadways (those that cannot be widened to include separate bike lanes) indicating that motorists and cyclists will share the lane. This shared lane marking is often a lower cost improvement than constructing new bike lanes, but residents' lack of familiarity with the sharrow marking raises the need for public education to protect both cyclist and motorist safety.

The Village should move forward with establishing criteria to prioritize these proposed bikeway projects. The plan recommended that this be achieved by either reestablishing the Bicycle Advisory Committee or another sub-group of citizens who are well versed in cycling throughout Park Forest. The group, working with the Public Works Department, should consider the proposed routes and evaluate their strengths based on various factors, such as alignment with future capital improvements to roadways and bridges and potential connections to and expansions of regional trails like the Old Plank Road Trail. The prioritization process should be undertaken in conjunction with the creation of street types for the Village, which would designate where different types of bicycle facilities would be located. These evaluation efforts can begin immediately. Through this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has been formed and could fulfill the role of establishing criteria for new bike lanes and trails.

Explore bicycle parking requirements for new developments.

Bicycle parking facilities, such as bike racks and lockers, are essential to growing the biking network around Park Forest. Cyclists need to have a reliable way to secure their bikes when they use this non-motorized form of transportation to get to a destination, such as a local store or municipal institution. When the Village updates its zoning code, it should include provisions for either requiring bicycle parking at both public buildings and private developments over a minimum size. It should also specify preferred styles of bicycle racks to optimize security and allow bicyclists to lock both frame and wheel to the rack. In this way, all capital improvements and new development projects will include an emphasis on accommodating non-motorized transportation in a similar practice to meeting automobile parking spot needs.

Figure 2.1. Proposed bike routes from the Growing Green Plan.

Figure 2B. Proposed bicycle routes

Source: Village of Park Forest and CMAP

Improve walkability and pedestrian safety throughout the community.

A community's walkability is an important measure of its livability, since the ability to walk between points of origin and destination is related to public health and safety, community character, and local business vitality. Pedestrian "cut-throughs" (mid-block walkways allowing for shorter trips on foot) exist throughout the Village as an artifact of Park Forest's beginnings as a planned community. Promoting these cut-throughs as a part of the Village's non-motorized network would help improve pedestrian access and safety throughout Park Forest. This should include such measures as public education about the intended use of cut-throughs (to discourage loitering), improved signage, and raising awareness among adjacent property owners about their maintenance responsibilities.

The Village should emphasize that improved maintenance and even security lighting is likely to help reduce criminal activity. Additionally, the Village should prioritize the existing cut-throughs using a set of criteria that weighs indicators like current usage, connectivity between residential areas and commercial areas, and access to institutions such as schools. Ranking the cut-throughs in this way and focusing on the most used paths (like the one between 21st Century School and Rich East High School) will allow the Village to prioritize limited funds for public upkeep.

An assessment of the broader pedestrian network, particularly as it applies to children who walk to school, is also an essential action to take. Using crash data, traffic count data, and other measures that affect pedestrian safety, this information will help the Village identify where traffic-calming measures and pedestrian crosswalks should be incorporated into the street grid to enhance walkability. For example, several residents suggested that crosswalks in key locations along Western Avenue would remove it as a barrier between residential areas on the east side of the Village and DownTown.

2.3 Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development

Adopted 2008, Prepared by HNTB
http://www.villageofparkforest.com/DocumentCenter/View/728

The Village's Strategic Plan, adopted in 2008, functions as its Comprehensive Plan, in combination with the DownTown Master Plan and 211th Street Metra TOD study. The document identifies residential, commercial, and employment opportunities for the Village and implementation strategies to accomplish goals. In addition, the Plan establishes redevelopment sub-areas that will be the primary focus of the Village's redevelopment efforts over the next 15 years. The sub-areas and their proposed uses include:

1 DownTown gateway parcels - mixed-use and higher density residential development. Commercial development along Western Avenue.

2 Sauk Trail Corridor - commercial nodes and condominium development at key intersections along the Corridor. Commercial nodes recommended at Indianwood Boulevard, Main Street, and Western Avenue. Condominium nodes recommended at Main Street, Shabbona Drive, Orchard Drive, Western Avenue, and Indianwood Boulevard. Gateway recommendations on either end of Sauk Trail.

3 Norwood Square Shopping Center - primarily commercial redevelopment along Western Avenue, with limited institutional and employment uses.

4 Park Forest Business Park - commercial, industrial, and employment uses (South of Old Plank Road Trail, west of Western Avenue, north of the EJ & E Railroad, and east of North Orchard Drive).

5 Western Avenue annexation area - a potential future annexation area that could accommodate mostly employment uses, but also multifamily, single-family, and small commercial nodes.

6 Eastgate neighborhood - new townhouses and single-family homes, and renovation of existing homes.

Implications for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Walkability was a key theme of the Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development. As the six sub-areas are developed, bicycle and pedestrian routes and connections should be integrated into their designs, to ensure that land development goals are fully realized. The plan recommended an off-street pathway along Sauk Trail and Indianwood Boulevard to connect key nodes to DownTown, wayfinding improvements to encourage pedestrian activity, improved crossings and streetscaping, pedestrian-activated signals where warranted, and an extension of the trail connection from Old Plank Road trail along Western Avenue.

2.4 DownTown Master Plan and Update

Updated 2002, Prepared by Lakota
http://www.villageofparkforest.com/DocumentCenter/View/652

Park Forest Plaza was built in the early 1950s and was the region's first shopping mall, anchored by Sears, Marshall Fields, and Goldblatt's. At its outset, the mall was wildly popular but over time its success dwindled and its owners eventually allowed it to become blighted and tax delinquent. The Village purchased the Plaza in December of 1995 with a vision to transform the area into a traditional, mixed-use DownTown. The Village adopted a Master Plan for DownTown Park Forest in April of 1997, which was followed by an update to that plan in 2002.

The Chicago Chapter of the Urban Land Institute and the Campaign for Sensible Growth also co-sponsored a Technical Assistance Panel in 2003 to make recommendations about how the Village could augment the viability of DownTown. At this point in time, the recommendations from the Master Plan and the Technical Assistance Panel have nearly all been implemented.

Although there are still parcels awaiting redevelopment, DownTown is now characterized by a completely different development pattern, with storefronts built up to the sidewalk, pedestrian access, an interconnected street system, and a mix of land uses.

The Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development builds upon the recommendations of the DownTown Master Plan to affirm that future redevelopment should continue in the same vein, emphasizing higher intensity mixed-use and residential uses.

Implications for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The DownTown Master Plan and Update have helped the Village to redevelop the former Park Forest Plaza into a mixed-use area. The DownTown has a number of pedestrian and bicycle facilities including sidewalks and bicycle racks that help to encourage non-motorized transportation. Encouraging walking and biking in the community is a way to support economic development goals of the Village. The existing sidewalk and existing trail route (from Orchard Drive) should be included in the future trail system recommendations.

2.5 211th Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study

Adopted 2007, Prepared by HNTB
http://www.rtams.org/reportLibrary/558.pdf

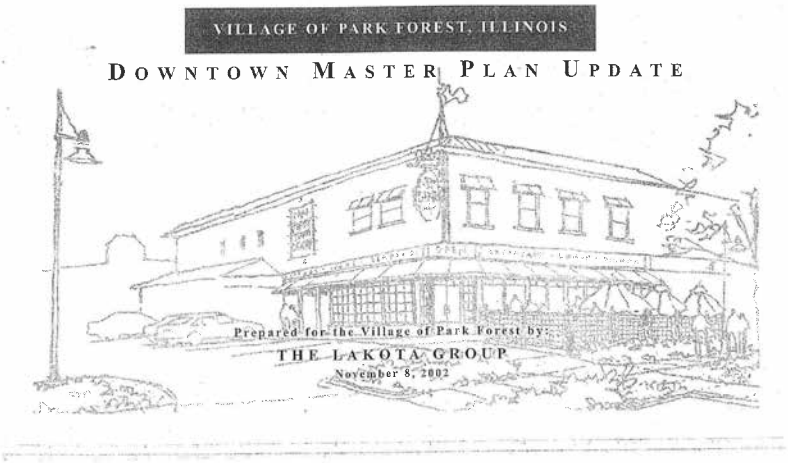
The 211th Street Metra station is within the Village boundaries of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields. The station currently functions primarily as a park-n-ride for commuters but is not capitalizing on its economic development potential. The study looks at the transit oriented development (TOD) redevelopment opportunities for the three municipalities within 1/2 mile of the station (also referred to as the station area). For Park Forest, the station area has three major redevelopment parcels, all along Lincoln Highway/US Highway 30 directly adjacent to the station. The three parcels consist of a commuter parking lot and two vacant former car dealerships. These parcels are considered underutilized due to their low intensity of uses and large amount of surface parking.

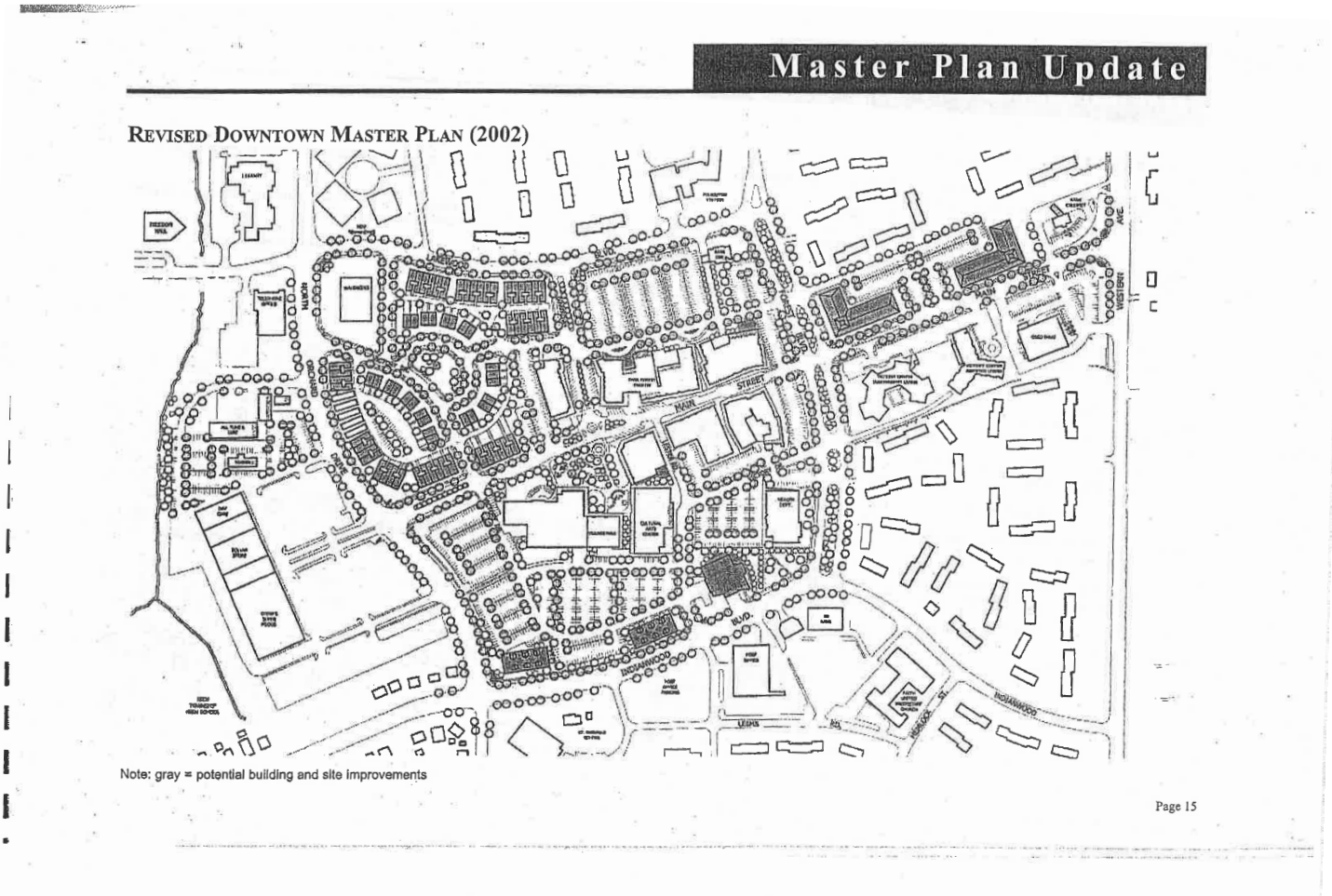
The overarching goals of the study are to establish a welcoming gateway for the three communities, create better neighborhood connections to the station, and encourage mixed-use development in the station area. Specific to Park Forest, recommendations in the study include converting the three opportunity sites to mixed-use commercial and multifamily residential uses. There are also recommendations related to modernizing the 211th Street station and making the streetscape more pedestrian friendly. RTA has committed to a follow-up pedestrian access study for the Metra station area, and they will be coordinating their efforts with this Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Implications for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should ensure that connections with the 211th Street Metra Station are supported. In addition, when the three parcels identified as key redevelopment sites are in fact redeveloped, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be included in their site designs.

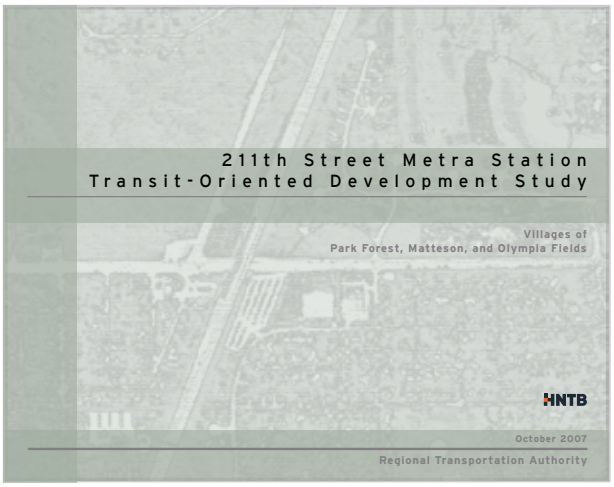
Figure 2.2. DownTown Plan

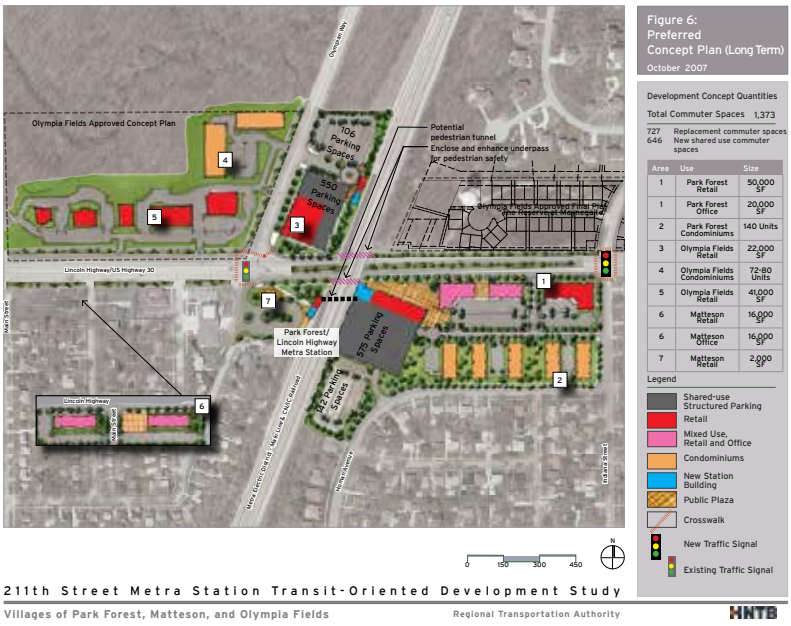


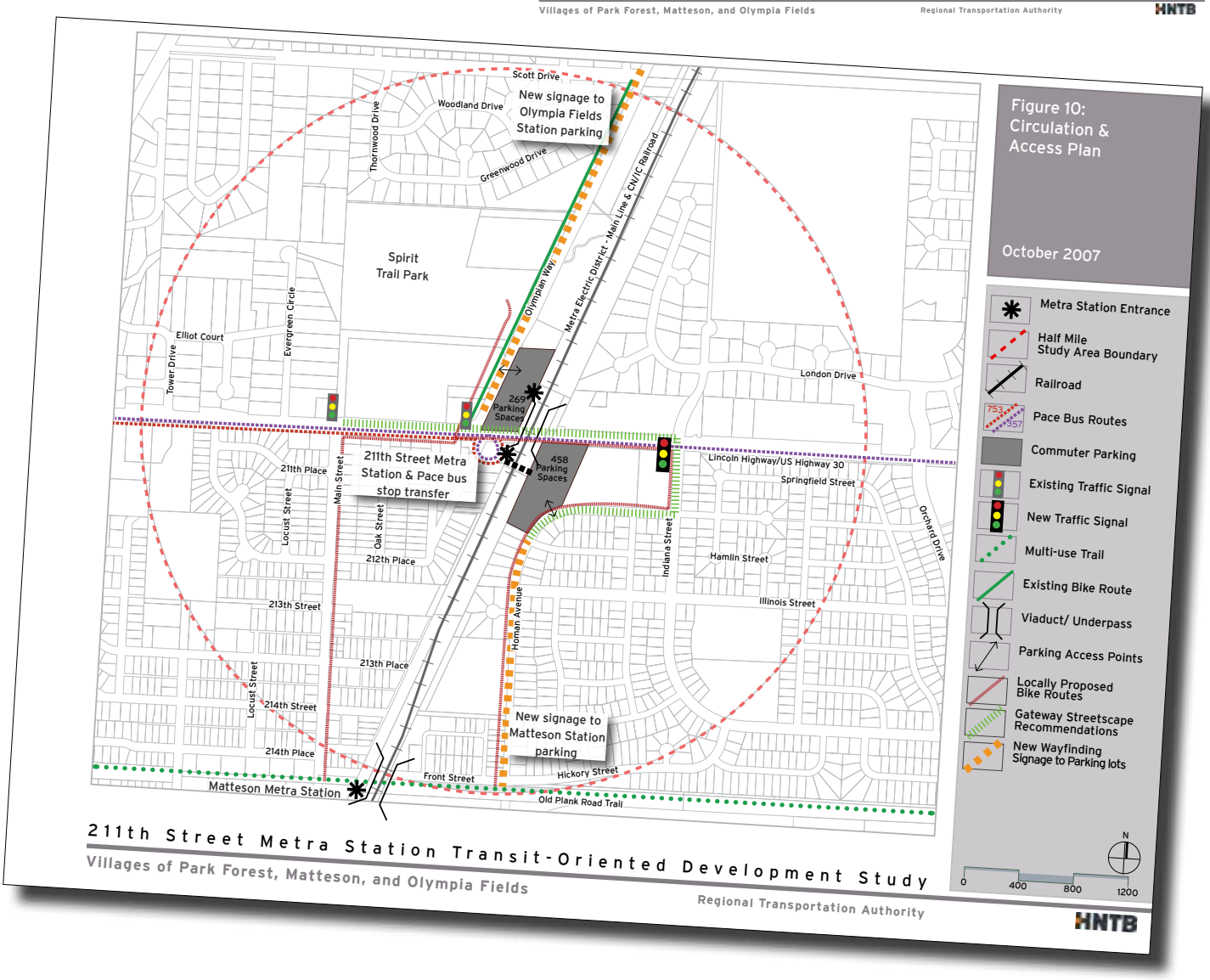


Source: Village of Park Forest and Lakota

Figure 2.3. 211th Street Station transit-oriented development plan







Source: Village of Park Forest and HNTB

2.6 Development Regulations Update

Zoning Ordinance Update Underway
Being prepared by CMAP
http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/lta/park-forest-zoning

Currently Park Forest, in conjunction with CMAP is updating its development regulations in order to better align the Village's zoning and subdivision ordinances with the Sustainability Plan, other recent planning documents, and current land use practices.

With support from CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, this development regulations update will be built around a community-based process that reflects the interests and needs of both residential and commercial property owners, as well as other community stakeholders. Key themes of this ordinance update will include removing barriers to green practices, promoting sustainable development, and creating favorable conditions for the implementation of the Village's current planning documents. In particular, regulatory revisions will focus on updating the Village's zoning districts; permitted uses; parking and loading; landscaping and buffering; signage; administrative provisions; and subdivision requirements.

Implications for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

As the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is being prepared, CMAP staff will continue to communicate with each other to understand where recommendations can be supported. Any design recommendations that are developed through this plan will be supported by the Development Regulations Update, and incorporated into their documents and ordinance.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Photo credit: CMAP staff.

Section 3
Community Outreach

The development of the Park Forest Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan includes broad community engagement, including any groups that have been underrepresented and/or hard to reach during previous planning initiatives. Numerous public engagement activities have been designed to better understand the opportunities and issues facing the community. Public engagement activities will continue throughout the planning process, engaging local residents and stakeholders and documenting the Village's unique strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

3.1 Outreach Activities to Date

Beginning in March 2014, a variety of important community engagement steps have already occurred to assist in determining the existing conditions of the Village: meeting with elected officials, a focus group meeting, and a kick-off meeting with the steering committee. This customized community outreach strategy was designed to identify and engage a wide variety of community stakeholders, and will continue to do so through the remainder of the project.

Most outreach opportunities are designed to help answer the following questions:

- What are Park Forest's strengths as they relate to non-motorized transportation?
- What are the main challenges to being a pedestrian in Park Forest? A cyclist?
- Aside from the work already planned, what projects or actions should the Village pursue to make Park Forest more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly?
- How do you envision Park Forest's non-motorized transportation network in 2025?

Village Board Presentation

CMAP and Village staff met with Village Board Members during the March 2, 2014 Village Board meeting. CMAP staff gave a brief presentation outlining the purpose of the project, the proposed planning process, and the estimated timeline.

Project Steering Committee Meeting

On May 15, 2014 the first Project Steering Committee meeting was held at Village Hall. The Project Steering Committee is responsible for providing guidance and feedback on existing issues and opportunities, revising project goals, reviewing plan documents and identifying stakeholders who should be involved in the planning process. The committee is comprised of a diverse subset of community stakeholders including members from the local school districts, residents, bicyclists, Village departments, and representatives from the Regional Transportation Authority and Active Transportation Alliance. The first meeting objective was to introduce the committee to the project and begin to catalog issues and opportunities in the Village as they relate to walking and biking.

The steering committee identified a number of key strengths that make Park Forest bicycle-friendly including the recently developed bike lanes on Orchard Drive, the Thorn Creek and Old Plank paved park trails, and the number of residential streets that supplement and connect most of the infrastructure already in place. The committee also identified recent updates to bike parking at key locations, in particular the addition of bike lockers at the Matteson Metra stop. The committee identified pedestrian-friendly strengths, most notably the network of "cut-through" paths which allow residents to walk between housing subdivisions. This system supports walkability throughout the Village by providing a more direct travel route to destinations, especially for school-bound children. The Committee identified that the extensive sidewalk system in the Village is well maintained, provides direct access to green space, and is considered to be relatively safe with mostly updated crossing signals. Additional related strengths included: a strong perception of safety community-wide; a high level of pride for the amount of parks and support for green space; and, a system of infrastructure and governance that supports the elements listed above.

While the committee felt overall the bicycle and pedestrian system within Park Forest was adequate, they identified specific areas for improvement. The committee identified a number of major roadways that need improvements in order to better connect the bike and pedestrian networks that exist between them. They identified difficulties traveling along or across the following streets: Western Avenue, Sauk Trail Road, US Route 30, Monee Road, and Crawford Avenue. The committee also recommended the Village make additional safety improvements to existing systems such as better lighting, more benches and improved handicapped access. A more specific list of improvements by locations is listed in Appendix 1 of this report.

The Steering Committee recommended a number of projects to consider as part of improved expansion beyond the specific locations listed above. They expressed support for community education around bicycle and pedestrian safety and rules of the road, engaging youth in projects that support ongoing development of new and expanded projects, and continuing to increase and improve the network within the community and its connections to nearby asset such as the Governors State University and Cook County Forest Preserves.

Focus Group: Folks on Spokes Bicycle Club

On May 22, 2014 representatives from CMAP held a meeting with the Folks on Spokes bicycling group. The Folks on Spokes club meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 7:30 pm at the Flossmoor Village Hall. The purpose of this meeting was to learn from bicyclists in the area about their experience regarding bicycling in Park Forest. The following is a summary of the information that was provided by participants.

In addition to many of the key strengths listed above, the attendees noted that the infrastructure in Park Forest is complete enough that people choose to transit within or through Park Forest compared to other communities because of its bike infrastructure. The value the wide residential streets, the connection from Orchard AvenueDrive to the Old Plank Road Trail, and the bike lockers at the Matteson Metra stop. They identified a number of challenges including inconsistent conditions of trails, inadequate bike infrastructure along Western Avenue, and difficulties with winter plowing. They expressed support for expanding the bike network to improve connections and infrastructure, specifically improving access to Governors State & Prairie State Colleges, improving crosses at and access along Western, and the creation of a bike bulletin board. A full list of specific feedback can be found in Appendix 1.

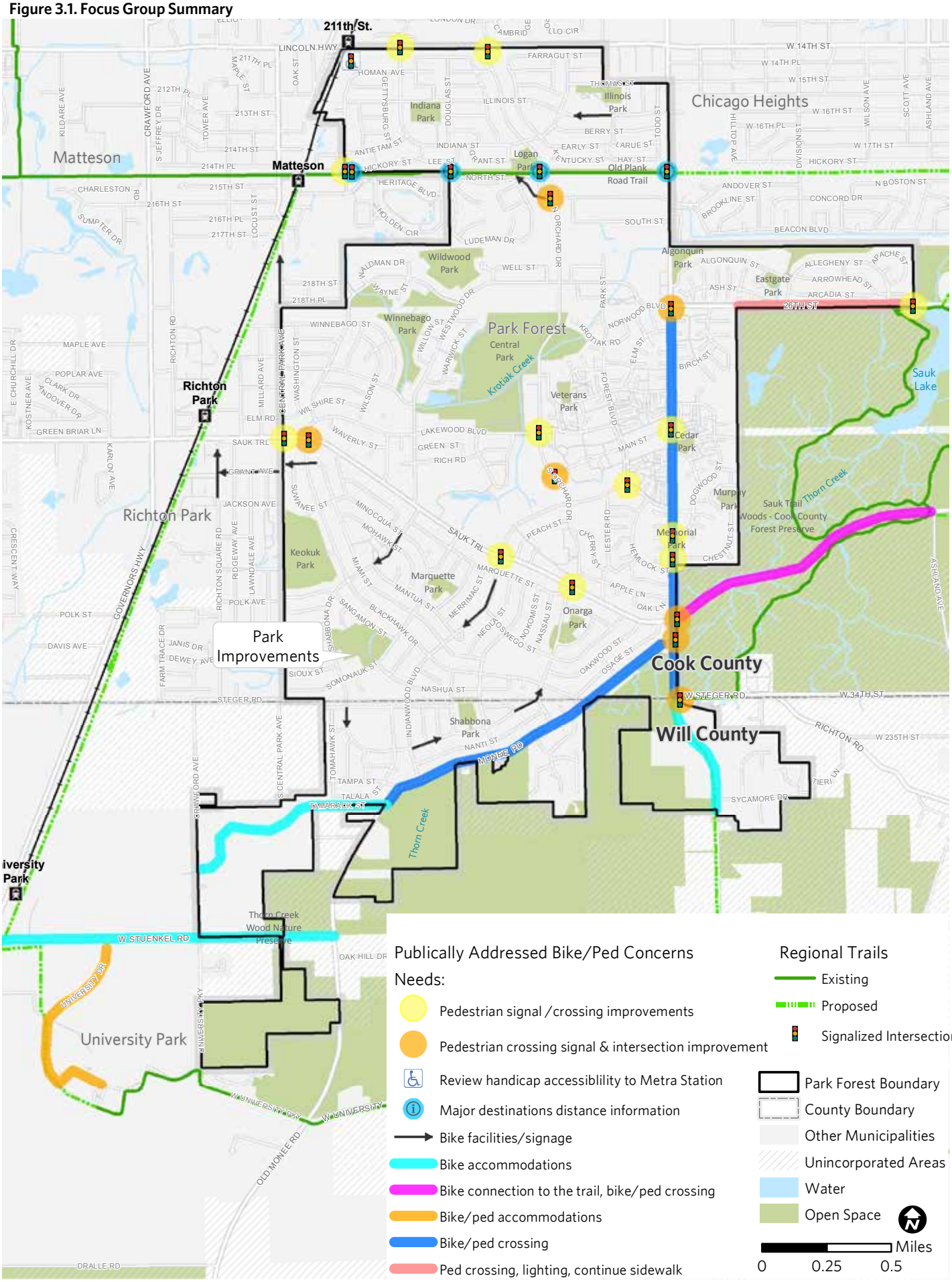
Bike Audit

On July 5, CMAP staff conducted a bike audit of the existing conditions with two steering committee members. The audit reviewed the existing trail & road bike network and the areas identified for improvement from prior meetings. Staff also visited a number of additional assets in the community – the Farmers Market, shopping districts, the Metra stop, and parks.

Key Person Interviews

At this time, CMAP staff is currently in the process of scheduling and completing interviews with key persons. The list of key persons has been compiled by Village Staff and members of the Steering Committee. Through key person interviews, CMAP staff will gather a stronger and more-nuanced understanding of the community. The summaries of the interviews will be included as an appendix in the final report.

Figure 3.1. Focus Group Summary



'cago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Photo credit: CMAP staff.

Section 4
Community Context and Travel Behavior

4.1 Key findings

The following are key conclusions regarding the existing conditions of Park Forest's community context and resident's travel behavior. Moving forward in the planning process, these key findings will help shape and inform the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations.

- Park Forest's population dropped slightly in the last decade and saw a shift in its racial and ethnic makeup. Between 2000 and 2010, Park Forest's population declined by 6.3 percent (from 23,462 to 21,975 residents), the number of white residents decreased by more than 45 percent while the number of black residents increased by nearly the same rate.
- Residential areas account for the majority of Park Forest land uses, with single-family and multi-family residences making up nearly 50 percent and 7 percent, respectively. The Village's multi-family uses are primarily located on the east side of the Village on parcels zoned as R-2A: Multiple Family Residential District, which allows for a maximum density of 17 dwelling units per acre.
- As a planned community, Park Forest was designed with excellent access to open space. Nearly 20 percent of lands in Park Forest are made up of parks or nature preserve lands, making open space the second most common use of land in the Village.
- DownTown Park Forest, which was developed at the site of the historic Park Forest Plaza is a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use shopping and entertainment district. Despite the vacancies, the presence of DownTown is a unique feature of the community that could contribute greatly to neighborhood walkability in terms of meeting daily needs on foot.
- Park Forest is a bedroom community with over 96 percent of its residents working outside the Village. At 24.5 percent, the City of Chicago is the leading employment destination for Park Forest residents. Between two and three percent of residents work in each of the nearby communities of Matteson and Tinley Park, with the remainder of residents employed across Cook County and the region.

4.2 Demographic profile and analysis

To gain insight into the market and demographic dynamics that impact the Park Forest community, data from the U.S. Census Bureau was gathered for analysis. Data discussed in this section is drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census, 2010 U.S. Census, and the 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

Park Forest can be characterized generally as a moderate income community, with significant pockets of middle-class and working-class family households. Park Forest's housing stock is a balanced mix of single-family homes and multifamily structures. The overwhelming majority of Park Forest's area is located in Cook County, with a small section located in Will County. Because Park Forest is a cross-county community, its demographic data is presented alongside that of Cook County, Will County, and the 7-county region whenever possible.

Analysis of U.S. Census and American Community Survey data yields the following findings:

Park Forest's population dropped slightly in the last decade. Between 2000 and 2010, Park Forest's population declined by 6.3 percent (from 23,462 to 21,975 residents). That figure is consistent with Cook County's decline of 3.4 percent and modest regional growth of 3.5 percent, but less than Will County's nearly 35 percent growth over the same period.

Park Forest's households are slightly smaller than regional averages. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Park Forest has an average household size of 2.46 persons. This is slightly smaller than the Cook County average of 2.60, significantly smaller than Will County's 2.97, and below the regional average of 2.73.

Park Forest is similar in its age profile to the Chicago region. Park Forest's age distribution is close to the regional average. The largest differences are among residents age 20 to 34, where Park Forest has less than the regional percentage, and 50 to 64, where it has slightly more than the region's average.

Park Forest underwent a shift in its racial and ethnic makeup in the last decade. At the start of the last decade white residents comprised the majority of Park Forest's population. However, by 2010, the number of white residents in Park Forest decreased by more than 45 percent and the number of black residents increased by nearly the same rate, making African-Americans the majority in the community. Park Forest has modest numbers of residents of other backgrounds; around ten percent of residents report a background other than white or black.

Park Forest's median income is below county and regional averages. According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, Park Forest has a median income of $47,062, compared to $54,648 for Cook County, $76,352 for Will, and $71,198 for the region as a whole. Compared to the counties and region, Park Forest has a larger percentage of households who make less than $25,000 per year.

Table 4.1 Population and Change in Population, 2000 and 2010

	Park Forest	Cook County	Will County	Region
Pop, 2000	23,462	5,376,741	502,266	8,146,264
Pop, 2010	21,975	5,194,675	677,560	8,431,386
Change, 2000-10	-1,487	-182,066	175,294	285,122
Change as %, 2000-10	-6.3%	-3.4%	34.9%	3.5%
Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census				

Table 4.2 Population, Households, and Household Size, 2010

	Park Forest	Cook County	Will County	Region
Population	21,975	5,194,675	677,560	8,431,386
Households	8,750	1,966,356	225,256	3,088,156
Average Household Size	2.46	2.60	2.97	2.73
Source: 2010 U.S. Census				

Table 4. 3 Age Cohorts and Median Age, 2010

	Park Forest		Cook County		Will County		Region	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Under 19 years	6,284	28.6%	1,374,096	26.5%	215,132	31.8%	2,346,937	27.8%
20 to 34 years	3,964	18.0%	1,204,066	23.2%	119,370	17.6%	1,790,049	21.2%
35 to 49 years	4,455	20.3%	1,067,351	20.5%	163,084	24.1%	1,807,886	21.4%
50 to 64 years	4,473	20.4%	928,833	17.9%	117,160	17.3%	1,534,488	18.2%
65 to 79 years	2,006	9.1%	436,799	8.4%	47,240	7.0%	679,470	8.1%
80 years and over	793	3.6%	183,530	3.5%	15,574	2.3%	272,556	3.2%
Total Population	**21,975**	**100.0%**	**5,194,675**	**100.0%**	**677,560**	**100.0%**	**8,431,386**	**100.0%**
Median Age	37.4		35.3		35.4		35.5	
Source: 2010 U.S. Census								

Table 4.4 Race and Ethnicity, 2010

	Park Forest		Cook County		Will County		Region	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
White	6,759	30.8%	2,278,358	43.9%	455,577	67.2%	4,486,557	53.2%
Hispanic or Latino*	1,407	6.4%	1,244,762	24.0%	105,817	15.6%	1,823,609	21.6%
Black or African American	12,977	59.1%	1,265,778	24.4%	74,419	11.0%	1,465,417	17.4%
Asian	157	0.7%	318,869	6.1%	30,458	4.5%	513,694	6.1%
Other**	675	3.1%	86,908	1.7%	11,289	1.7%	142,109	1.7%
Total Population	**21,975**	**100.0%**	**5,194,675**	**100.0%**	**677,560**	**100.0%**	**8,431,386**	**100.0%**

* Includes Hispanic or Latino residents of any race
** Includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, and two or more races
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Table 4.5 Change in Race and Ethnicity, 2000-2010

	Park Forest		Cook County		Will County		Region	
	Change in Population	Percent Change	Change in Population	Percent Change	Change in Population	Percent Change	Change in Population	Percent Change
White	-5,653	-45.5%	-280,351	-11.0%	67,054	17.3%	-200,702	-4.3%
Hispanic or Latino*	238	20.4%	173,022	16.1%	62,049	141.8%	414,407	29.4%
Black or African American	3,833	41.9%	-124,670	-9.0%	22,439	43.2%	-72,117	-4.7%
Asian	-31	-16.5%	61,026	23.7%	19,437	176.4%	137,701	36.6%
Other**	126	23.0%	-11,093	-11.3%	4,315	61.9%	5,833	4.3%
Total Population	**-1,487**	**-6.3%**	**-182,066**	**-3.4%**	**175,294**	**34.9%**	**285,122**	**3.5%**

* Includes Hispanic or Latino residents of any race
** Includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, and two or more races
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Table 4. 6 Household Income

	Park Forest		Cook County		Will County		Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than $25,000	2,303	27.0%	456,264	23.6%	28,023	12.6%	599,075	19.6%
$25,000 to $49,999	2,231	26.1%	436,472	22.6%	39,699	17.9%	640,942	21.0%
$50,000 to $74,999	1,894	22.2%	339,402	17.6%	41,249	18.6%	537,114	17.6%
$75,000 to $99,999	1,163	13.6%	235,745	12.2%	35,206	15.9%	402,300	13.2%
$100,000 to $149,000	701	8.2%	253,222	13.1%	46,059	20.7%	468,043	15.4%
$150,000 and over	**246**	**2.9%**	**212,565**	**11.0%**	**31,856**	**14.3%**	**401,400**	**13.2%**
Total Households	**8,538**	**100.0%**	**1,933,670**	**100.0%**	**222,092**	**100.0%**	**3,048,874**	**100.0%**
Median HH Income	$47,062		$54,648		$76,352		$71,198	
Source: 2008-12 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau								

4.3 Planning and Health

The development patterns, transportation options, and environmental quality of a community influence the health of its residents. Diabetes, heart disease, motor vehicle mortality, and obesity are just a few of the key health issues associated with the physical characteristics of a community and its context, both of which can be largely influenced by local planning and policy decisions. The dramatic rise of chronic disease across the country has induced a search for causes in an effort to reverse this trend. Research into causes and intervention strategies has found that efforts to address the community context and socioeconomic factors (such as poverty and urban design) have larger public health impacts than those that focus on the health and risk behaviors of individuals. In other words, overall efforts to reduce poverty, improve education, expand job opportunities for residents, and change the day-to-day environment so that it supports healthy eating and physical activity provide the greatest impact among health intervention strategies.[3]

There is a strong relationship between public health and local planning and policy. For example, public health scientists partially attribute the obesity epidemic as an unintended consequence of the removal of daily physical activity from our lives through changes in our transportation system and neighborhood design. In Illinois, 64 percent of adults and 40 percent of children are now classified as overweight or obese, a trend that contributes to an increasing risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other serious illnesses and conditions.[4]

To help improve community health, planners and public health officials have been working together to promote plans, policies, and community designs that address physical activity, environmental exposure, food and nutrition, health and human services, social cohesion, and mental health. It is much easier to stay healthy when residents can easily and safely walk, run, or bike to destinations or for exercise; when they have clean air, healthy food, and access to affordable housing; and when people are safe from things like violent crime, automobile accidents, and exposure to lead. Making health a priority also involves preventing disease and injury and ensuring that health services are connected to those in need.

4.4 Aging in Place

According to a 2010 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) survey, nearly 90 percent of people over age 65 want to remain in their residence for as long as possible, and 80 percent believe their current residence is where they will always live. As individuals age, however, their homes, neighborhoods, and existing services may not address all of their new and evolving needs. Aging in place is the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level. While decisions concerning where to live are ultimately for individuals and households to make, the policies and investments of local governments shape the livability of communities for this growing population.

Creating an environment that allows aging in place depends on local decisions about housing, transportation, land use, and health, among others. Seniors preferring to remain in their homes may need to make improvements to make them more accessible. Others seek multi-family housing that eliminates the maintenance requirements of a single-family home. The affordability of housing is also a critical element, as many seniors are on fixed incomes that can only accommodate modest housing. In addition, many people become less able or willing to drive, increasing the need for an effective public transportation system and the availability of key destinations — including shopping, social opportunities, and health services — within walking distance of residential neighborhoods and senior housing. Communities should also look at other health considerations that go beyond physical planning to address community services, nutrition, socialization, and other contributors to physical and mental health.

3. A Recipe for Healthy Places: Addressing the Intersection of Food and Obesity in Chicago. City of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development, 2013.

4. Health Status Indicators, State Health Facts. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Accessed on May 9, 2013 at http://kff.org/state-category/health-status/ and Obesity Prevention Initiatives, American Academy of Pediatrics, Illinois Chapter. Accessed on May 9, 2013 at http://illinoisaap.org/projects/obesityprevention/

Photo courtesy of Village of Park Forest.

4.5 Land Use and Destinations

Land use refers to the physical use of land such as residential, commercial, industrial, open space, etc. Table 4.7 illustrates the type of land uses and their distribution in the Village of Park Forest. The reported acreage was calculated using parcel data, meaning that all roads and right-of-ways were excluded in the calculation.


Photo by CMAP Staff.

Table 4.7 Overall Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Single-family Residential	1,300.2	49.6%
Open Space	451.7	17.2%
Institutional	211.8	8.1%
Multi-family Residential	176.3	6.7%
Transportation, Communications, and Utilities	163.1	6.2%
Vacant	135.1	5.2%
Commercial	93.1	3.5%
Private Open Space	60.7	2.3%
Industrial	30.9	1.2%
Other	0.3	0.0%
Total	2,623.3	

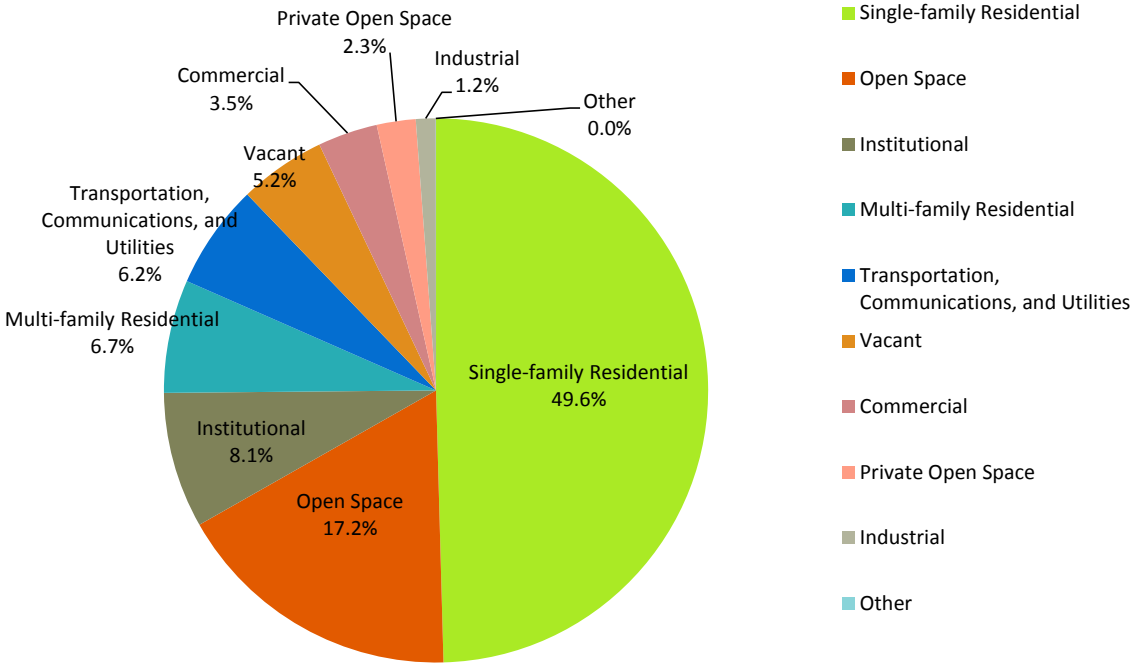
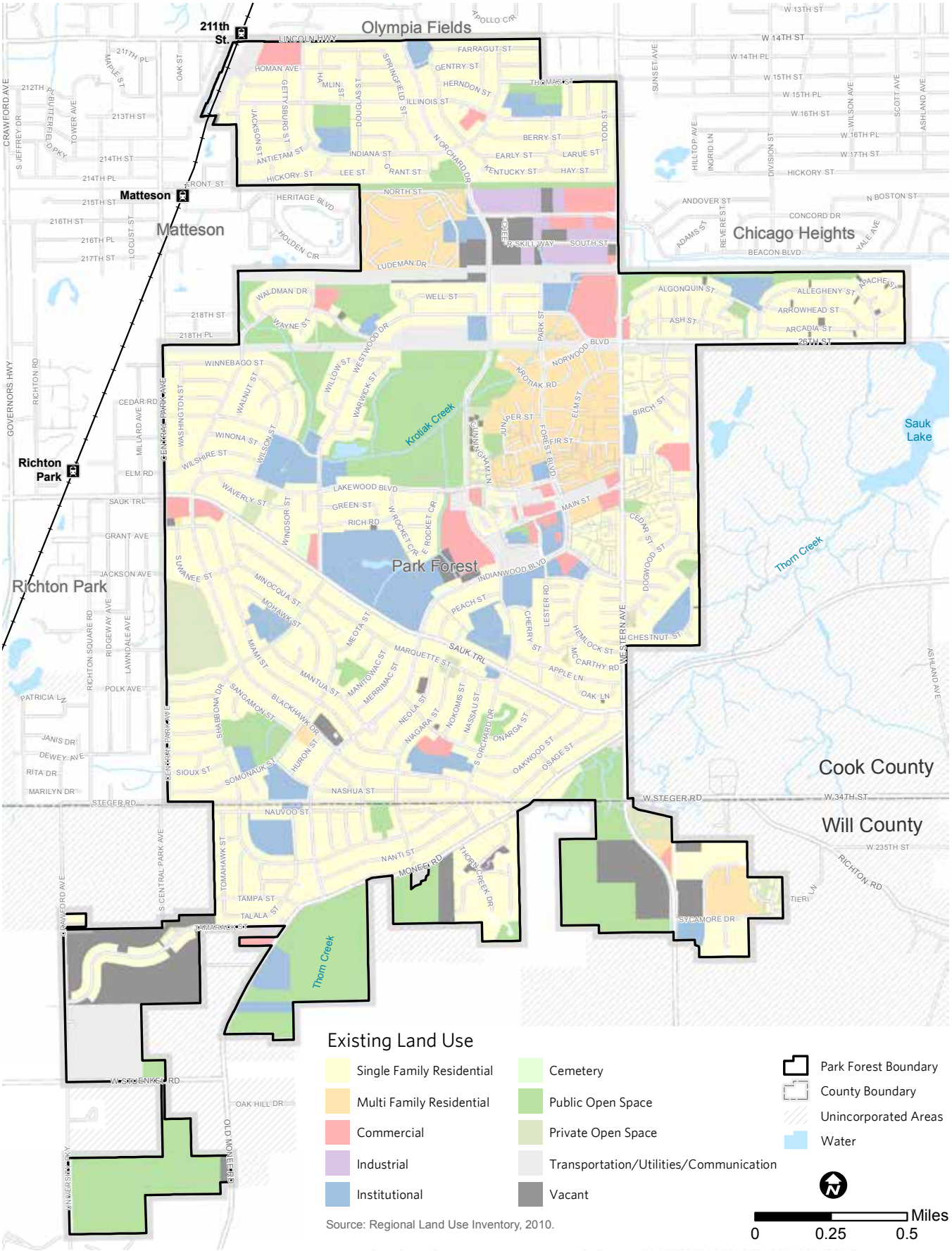


Figure 4.1 Existing land uses



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Residential

Residential areas account for the majority of Park Forest land uses, with single-family and multi-family residences making up nearly 50 percent and 7 percent, respectively. Single-family homes in the Village are typically one to two stories tall and located on lots approximately 60-70 feet wide. They are also built somewhat close to the street, with most set back about 15 feet. While the majority of single-family development in Park Forest is zoned for a maximum of 6.1 dwelling units per acre (per the R-1: Single Family Residential District), newer developments are denser, such as Legacy Square adjacent to DownTown at 13 dwelling units per acre. Increased residential density is beneficial for walkability in that it may help to support commercial uses and transit services. Legacy Square is also the only residential development in Park Forest to utilize alleys, which help to minimize potential pedestrian conflicts with vehicles at driveways.

The Village's multi-family uses are primarily located on the east side of the Village on parcels zoned as R-2A: Multiple Family Residential District, which allows for a maximum density of 17 dwelling units per acre. Multi-family rental units were originally intended to provide suitable housing following World War II. Most of those rental units have since been converted to cooperative housing, although many remain as rentals. The multi-family developments are characterized by long blocks with some of the buildings fronting on public streets and others fronting on open space within the blocks. Most of the multifamily blocks are insular in nature, with access drives for parking but little in terms of throughways for outside traffic.

Open Space

As a planned community, Park Forest was designed with excellent access to open space. Nearly 20 percent of lands in Park Forest are made up of parks or nature preserve lands, making open space the second most common use of land in the Village. The Village maintains over 400 acres of public parks, which range in size from 2 to 88 acres. Most of the parks have narrow, paved walking paths throughout. Open space in the Village also includes 102 acres of the 1,500 acre Thorn Creek Nature Preserve and is immediately adjacent to the Sauk Trail Woods Forest Preserve (Figure 4.3).

Institutional

Institutional uses, such as churches, schools, social services, and government, make up 8.1 percent of Park Forest land use and are located throughout the Village. As shown in Figure 4.4, Park Forest is home to nine public schools, including Rich East High School in central Park Forest, and five private schools. Civic uses, including Village Hall, are concentrated in DownTown.

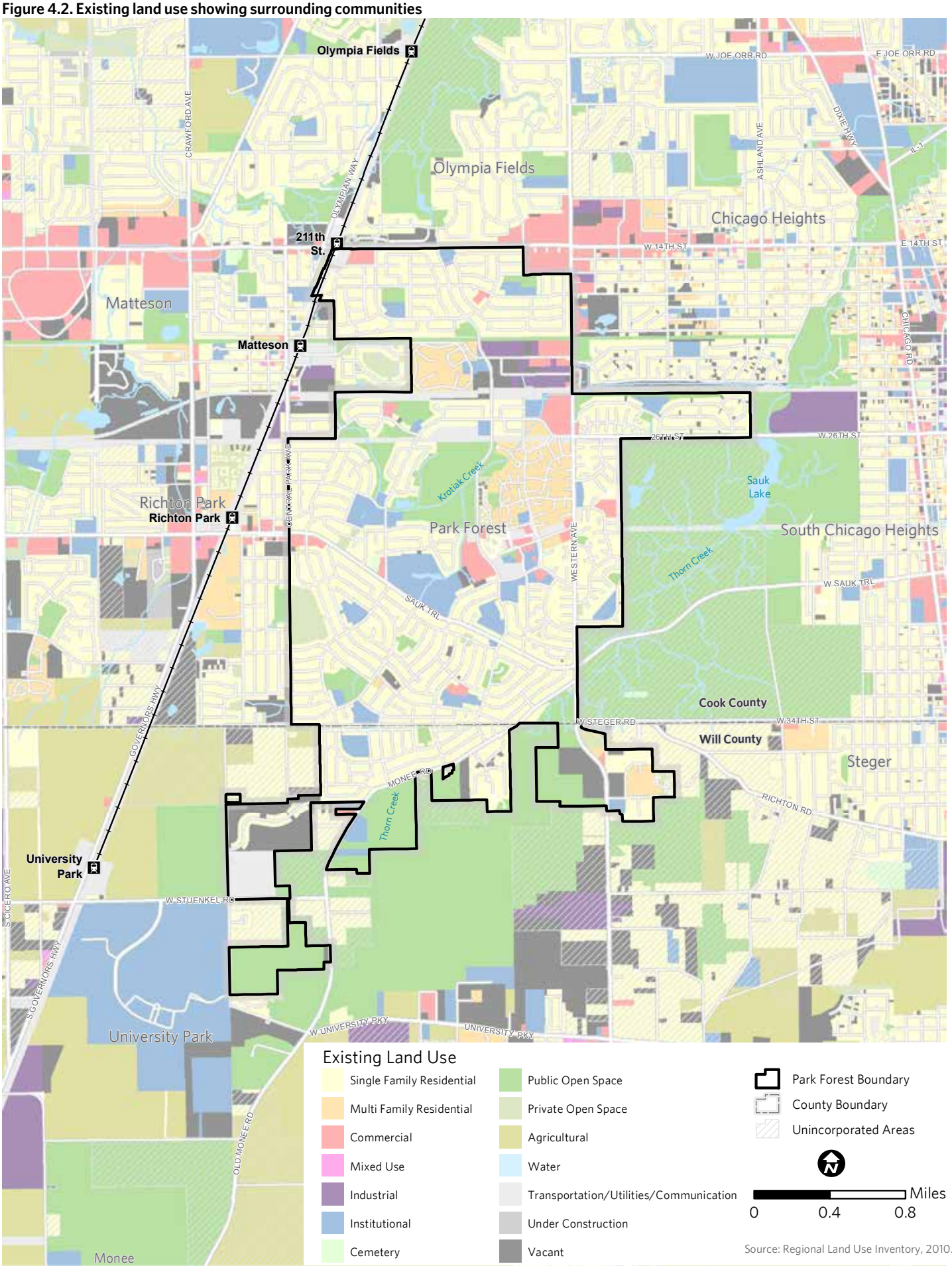
Commercial

There are various scales of commercial development within Park Forest, including small commercial nodes within neighborhoods, downtown shops, and larger, auto-oriented commercial developments along the major thoroughfares. Accounting for 3.5 percent of total land uses, in terms of built form, commercial properties in Park Forest generally fall into two categories: mixed-use style development with buildings built up to the sidewalk or an auto-oriented style of development with buildings set back and parking in front. DownTown Park Forest, which was developed at the site of the historic Park Forest Plaza as a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use shopping and entertainment district, is the best example of the first classification, while the largely vacant shopping centers west of DownTown along Orchard Drive and at the intersection of Western Avenue and 26th Street best exemplify the latter, auto-oriented classification. Despite the vacancies at these high profile locations, the presence of DownTown and smaller neighborhood nodes of commercial uses is a unique feature of the community that could contribute greatly to neighborhood walkability in terms of meeting daily needs on foot.

Industrial

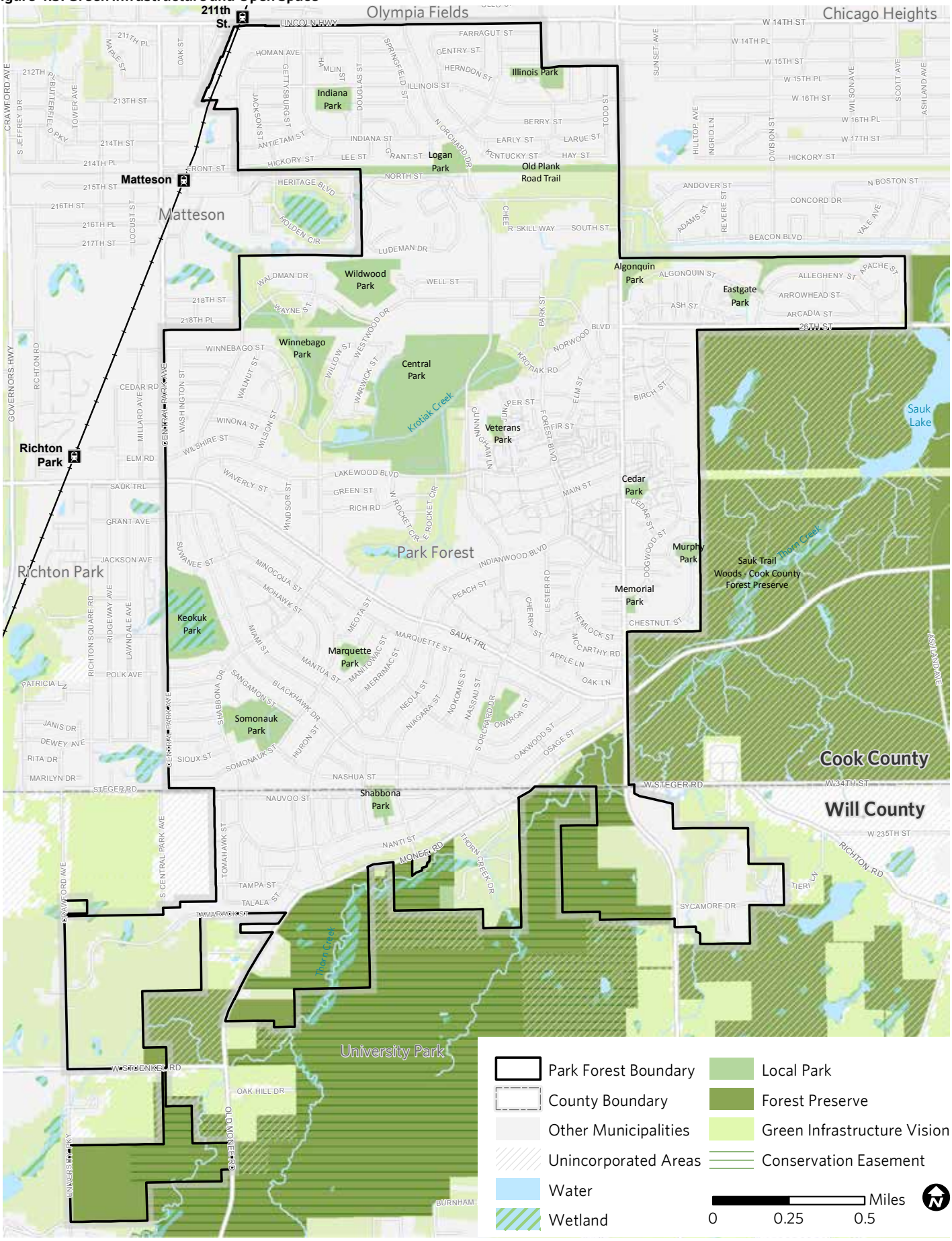
Industrial uses make up 1.2 percent of Park Forest land uses and are concentrated west of Western Avenue along North and South Streets. This area is buffered from nearby residential areas to the north by Old Plank Road Trail and wooded area and to the south by a freight railway.

Figure 4.2. Existing land use showing surrounding communities



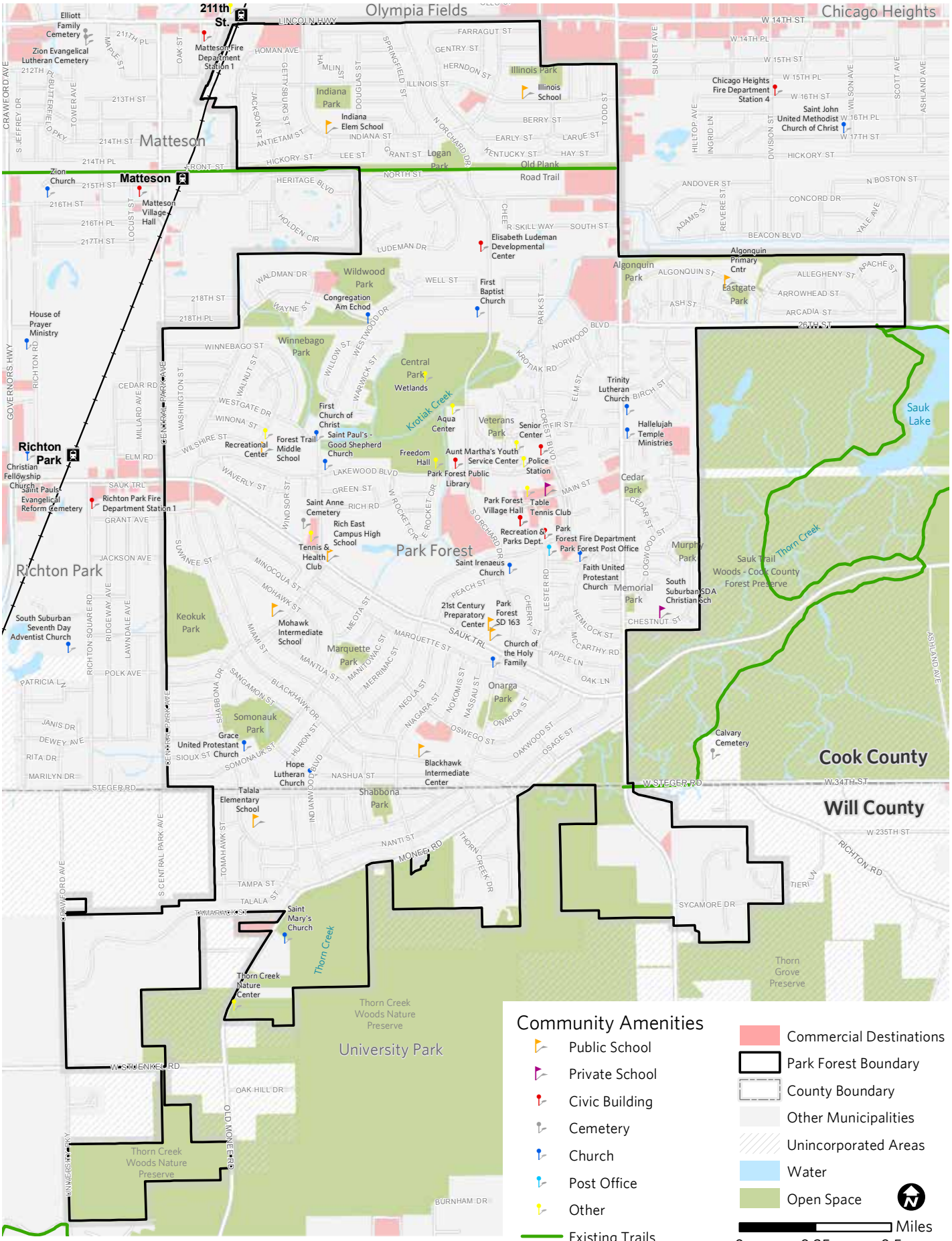
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 4.3. Green infrastructure and Open Space



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 4.4. Community Facilities



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

4.6 Mode Share

Compared to Cook County and the region, a higher percentage of Park Forest residents drive alone to work, while fewer walk or bike. When compared to Will County, Park Forest has a significantly higher proportion of transit users, and is similar to regional averages. Notably, the proportion of Park Forest residents who walk or bike to work is lower than the averages for Cook County, Will County, and the region.

Table 4. 8 Mode Share, as Percentage of Work Trips

	Park Forest		Cook County		Will County		Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Work at Home*	202	N/A	93,836	N/A	12,842	N/A	171,635	N/A
Drive Alone	7,019	75.03%	1,485,736	65.21%	261,269	85.70%	2,731,969	72.50%
Carpool	1,039	11.11%	221,832	9.74%	23,699	7.77%	348,682	9.25%
Public Transit	1,175	12.56%	420,010	18.43%	13,117	4.30%	489,131	12.98%
Walk or Bike	79	0.84%	124,078	5.45%	3,221	1.06%	154,848	4.11%
Other	**43**	**0.46%**	**26,844**	**1.18%**	**3,555**	**1.17%**	**43,476**	**1.15%**
Total Commuters	**9,355**	**100.00%**	**2,278,500**	**100.00%**	**304,861**	**100.00%**	**3,768,106**	**100.00%**
Source: 2010 U.S Census								

4.7 Transportation, Employment, and Affordability

Employment and Residential Locations

Park Forest residents are employed throughout the metropolitan region. Overall, Park Forest is a bedroom community with over 96 percent of its residents working outside the Village. At 24.5 percent, the City of Chicago is the leading employment destination for Park Forest residents. Five percent of residents work in the nearby community of Chicago Heights, while between two and three percent of residents work in neighboring Matteson and Tinley Park. Most of the remaining residents are employed in other areas of Cook County and the region, but a significant 13.5 percent work in counties outside the CMAP region.

Workers in Park Forest come from all parts of the seven-county Chicago metropolitan region. While close to a fifth (18.4 percent) of the workforce lives and commutes to the Village from the City of Chicago, the remaining workers come from throughout the region. 7.9 percent of the Village workforce resides in Park Forest, with an additional 7 percent in the neighboring communities of Chicago Heights, Matteson, and Richton Park. Many of the remaining employees come from Cook and Will counties, but almost a fifth 19.9 percent) come from counties outside the CMAP region.

Figure 4.5. LEHD where residents work

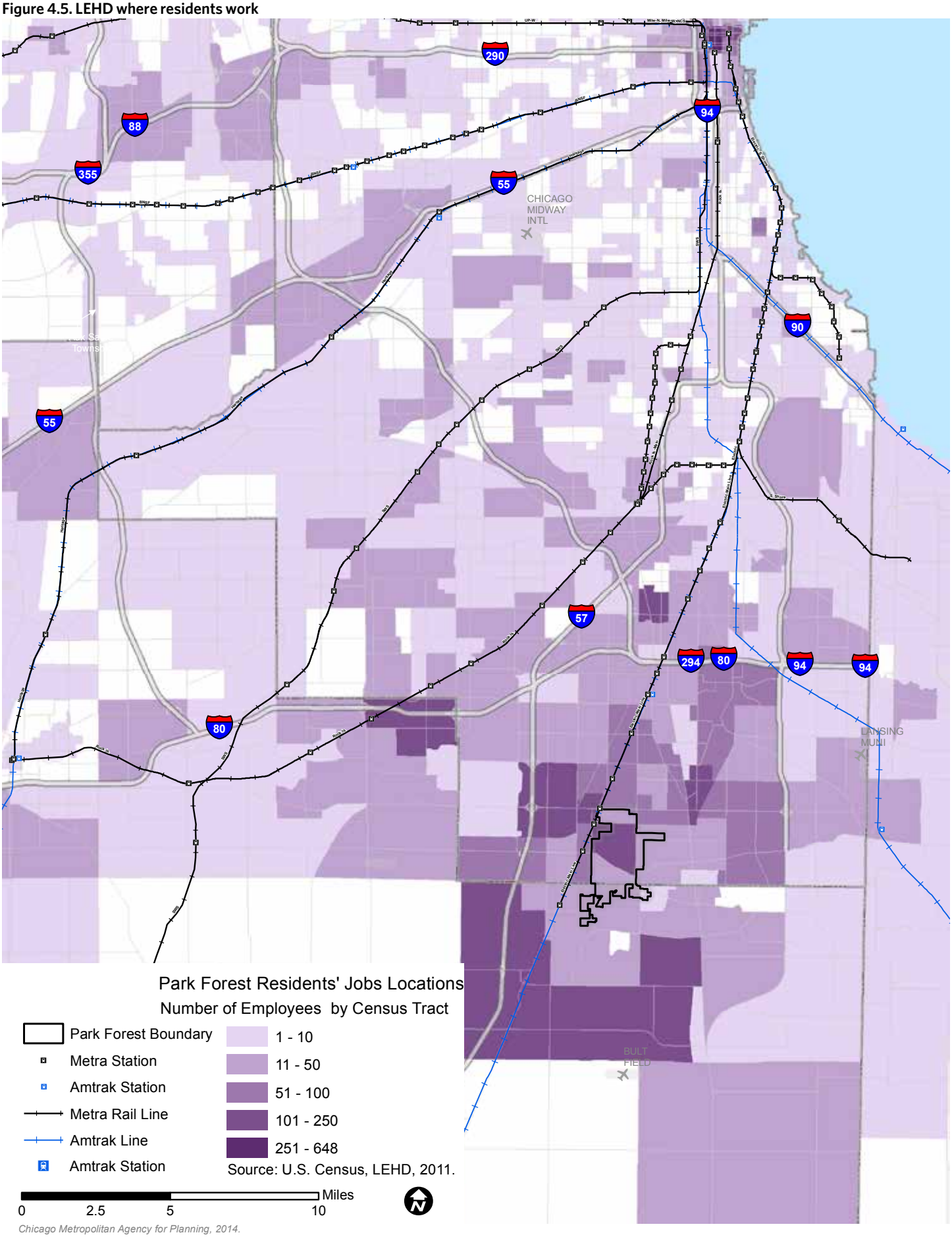


Table 4. 9 Employment Location of Park Forest Residents, 2011

Location	Count	Percent
Chicago city	2,265	24.5%
Chicago Heights city	473	5.1%
Park Forest village	321	3.5%
Matteson village	261	2.8%
Tinley Park village	215	2.3%
Other Locations		
Other Cook County, IL	2,621	28.4%
Will County, IL	907	9.8%
DuPage County, IL	487	5.3%
Lake County, IL	248	2.7%
McHenry County, IL	41	0.4%
Kane County, IL	153	1.7%
In Other Counties	1,242	13.5%
Total Employed Population	9,234	100.0%
Source - Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, U.S. Census Bureau		

Table 4. 10 Residence Location of Workers in Park Forest, 2011

Location	Count	Percent
Chicago city	753	18.4%
Park Forest village	321	7.9%
Chicago Heights city	136	3.3%
Matteson village	81	2.0%
Richton Park village	64	1.6%
Other Locations		
Other Cook County, IL	1,039	25.4%
Will County, IL	587	14.4%
DuPage County, IL	106	2.6%
Lake County, IL	76	1.9%
McHenry County, IL	32	0.8%
Kane County, IL	74	1.8%
In Other Counties	814	19.9%
Total Workers	4,083	100.0%
Source - Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, U.S. Census Bureau		

Housing + Transportation Affordability Index

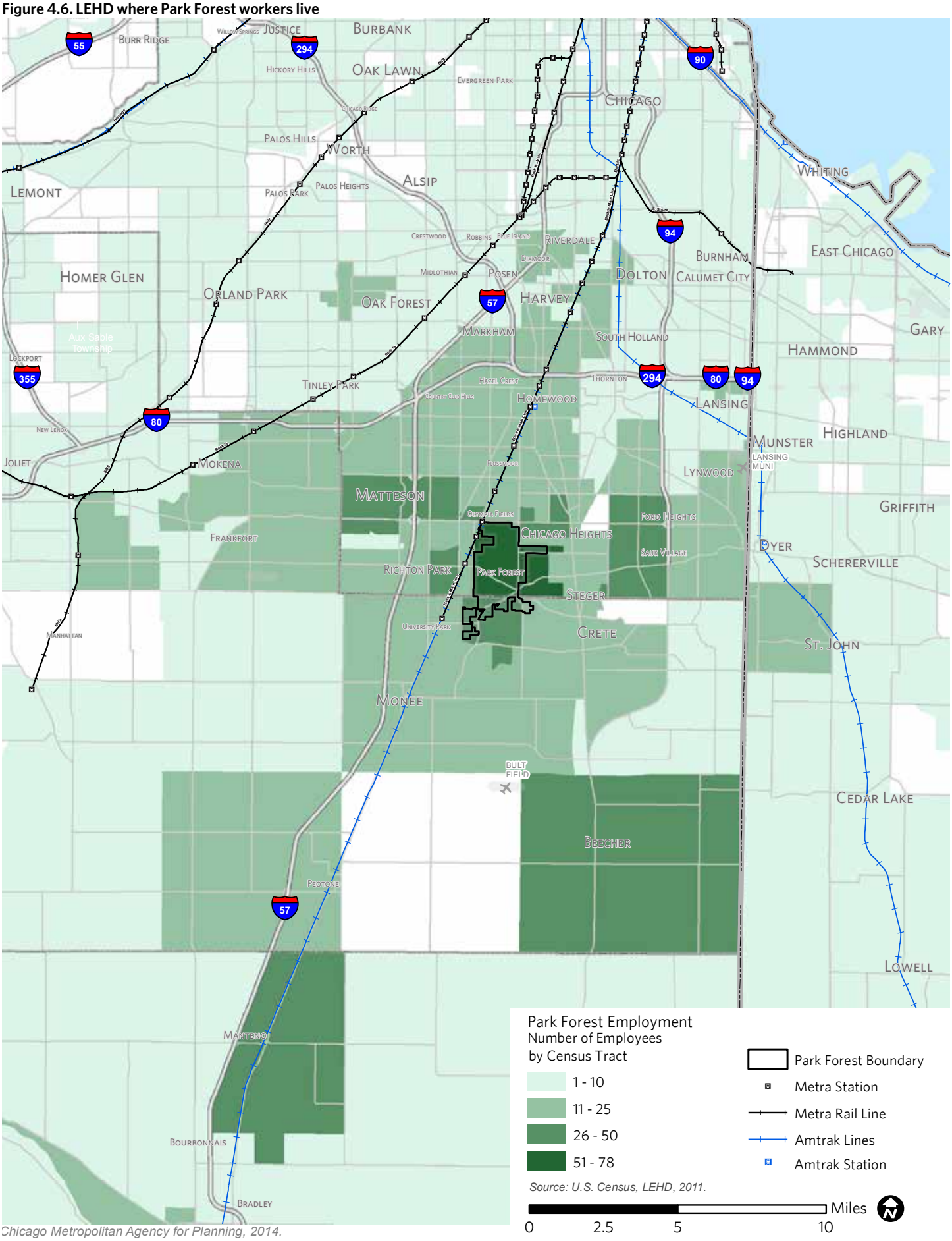
Table 4.11 shows the combined costs of housing and transportation for typical households in Park Forest, Cook County, Will County and the Chicago metropolitan region. Residents with long commutes, particularly by automobile, often face high transportation costs that offset the gains of moving to communities with less expensive housing. The table below shows the percentage of total income a household earning the region's Average Median Income (AMI) would spend on housing plus transportation if that household lived in the average home in Park Forest, Cook County, Will County, or the Chicago metropolitan region.

The combined cost of housing and transportation in Park Forest is similar to that of Cook County, and less than the average for Will County or the region. Overall, a household with the region's median income would spend 45 percent of their income on housing and transportation in Park Forest compared to 46.5 percent for Cook County on average. This difference means that Park Forest has a housing cost burden that makes it slightly more affordable to live in, even though its transportation costs may be more expensive. At 45 percent, Park Forest's combined housing and transportation cost is lower than either county or the region, and it is identical to the 45 percent target that characterizes "affordability."

Table 4.11 Housing and Transportation Costs, 2010

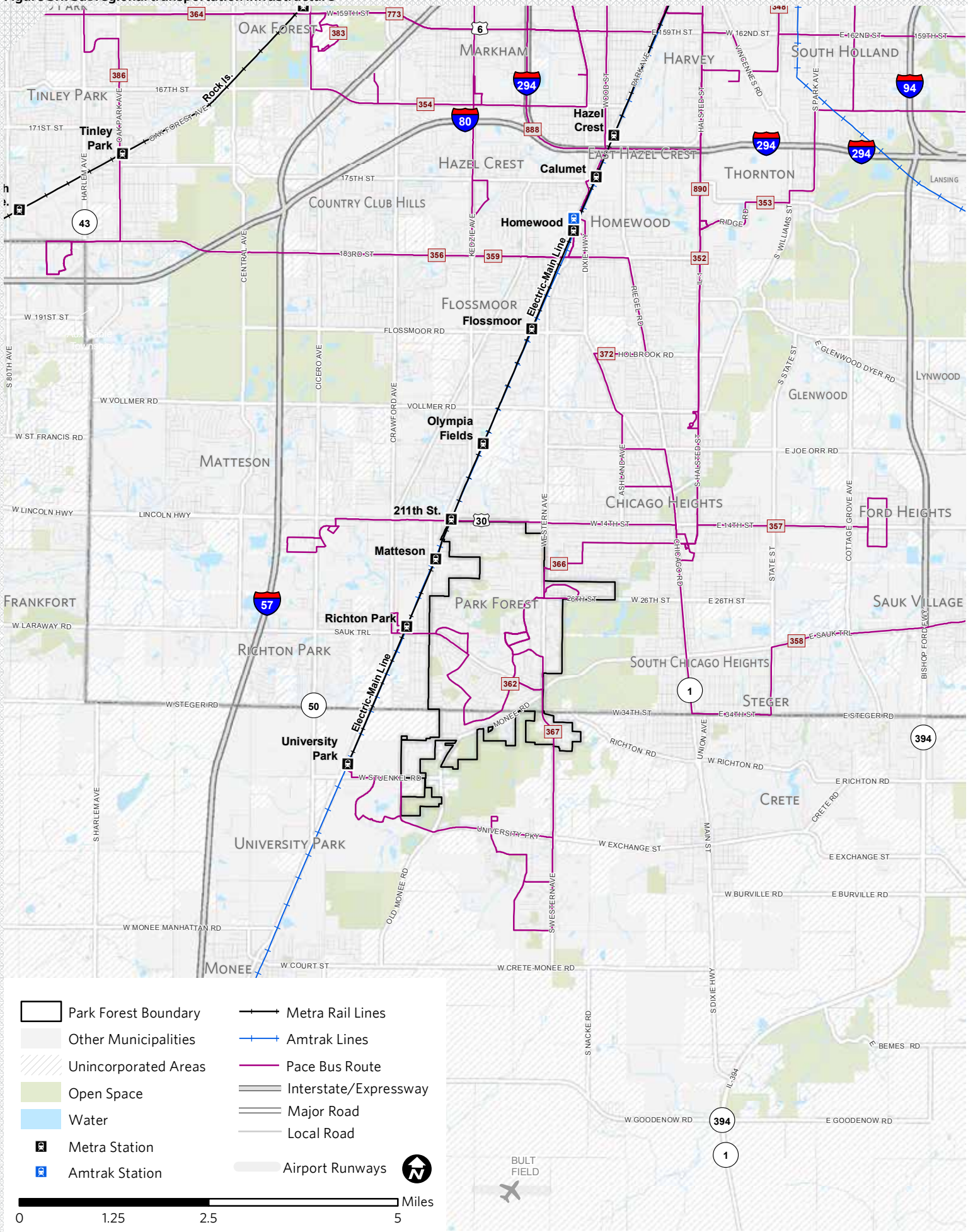
	Park Forest	Cook County	Will County	Region
Housing costs as % of income	21.0%	26.9%	33.0%	29.3%
Transportation costs as % of income	23.9%	19.6%	25.2%	21.5%
"H+T" costs as % of income	45.0%	46.5%	58.3%	50.8%
Source: CMAP calculations of Center for Neighborhood Technology's "H+T Affordability Index"				

Figure 4.6. LEHD where Park Forest workers live



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 5.1. Subregional transportation infrastructure



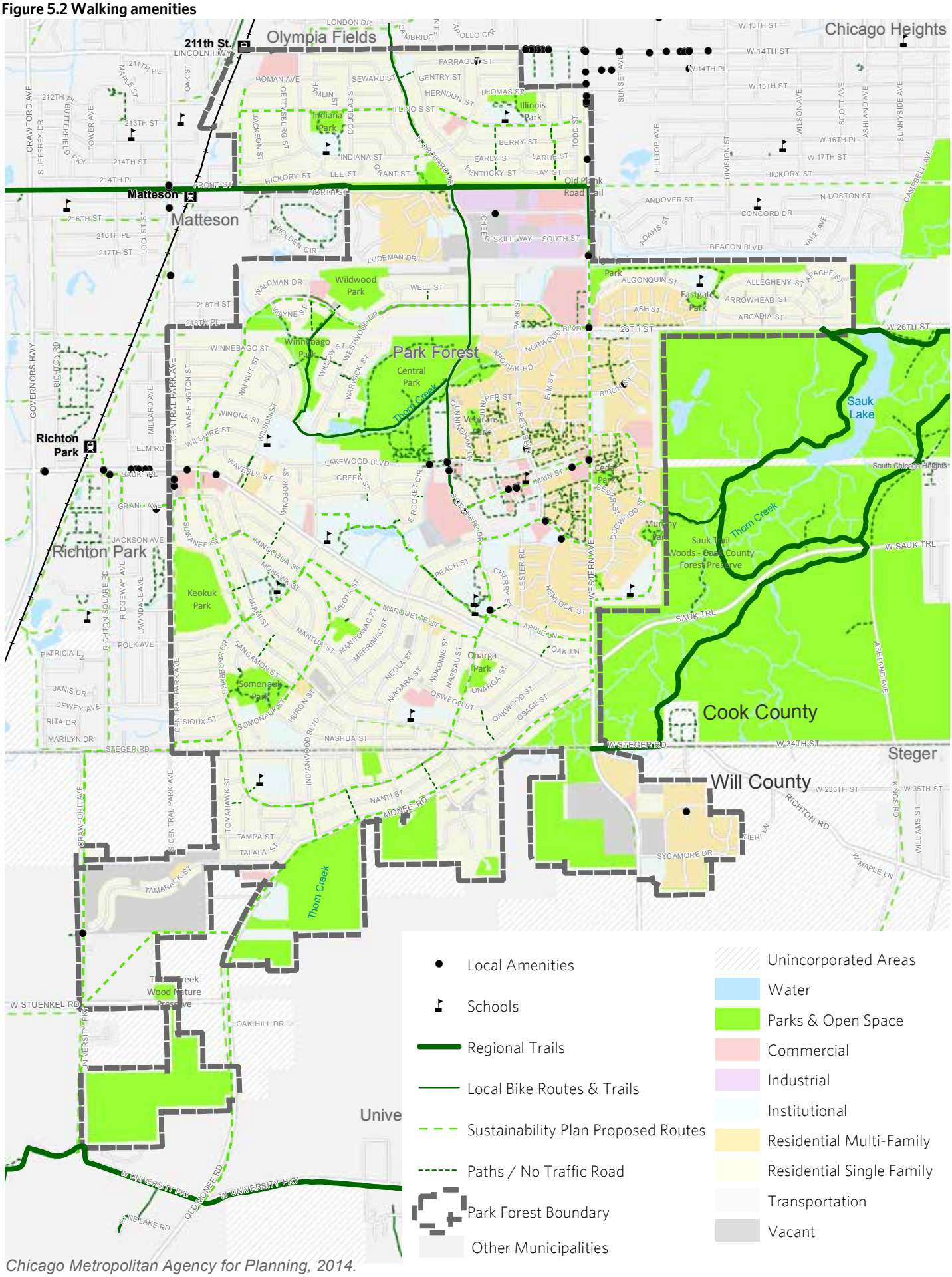
Section 5
Transportation Infrastructure

5.1 Key findings

The following are key findings regarding the existing transportation infrastructure in the Village of Park Forest. Moving forward in the planning process, these key findings will help shape and inform the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations.

- The multi-family residential properties bisected by Western Avenue have poor pedestrian accommodations, and dangerous crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians
- There are limited accommodations for bicyclists along Western Avenue, which connects two regional trail systems in Park Forest: the Old Plank Trail and the Thorn Creek Trail
- Curvilinear streets, typically known for poor walkability, are supplemented by pedestrian cut-throughs in Park Forest, which improves walkability unless the residents responsible for maintaining the property fail to do so
- Park Forest is well-served by transit, compared to neighboring communities, with access to both Metra and Pace

Figure 5.2 Walking amenities



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

5.2 Walkability

Walkability is an important factor in the health and vitality of our communities. Elements of a walkable neighborhood include a central attraction, main street, or public space; buildings close to the street, and complete streets designed for safe travel for all modes – foot, bicycle, transit, and car. Housing density, access to amenities, stores, parks, and places of work are also important. Many planners refer to the "D's" of walkability: density, diversity, design, as well as destination access and distance to transit.

Having the ability to walk to accomplish errands or to reach a variety of amenities is good for personal health, the environment, and for household cost savings. The website WalkScore.com estimates the following:

- People in walkable places weigh 6-10 lbs. less than people in auto-oriented communities.
- For every ten minutes a person spends in a daily car commute, time spent in community activities falls by 10 percent.
- One point of Walk Score is worth $3,000 in home value.

The average Walkscore for the Village of Park Forest is 32 / 100, classifying it a "Car-Dependent City." However, the area along Park Forest's "Main Street" scores 66 / 100, or "Somewhat Walkable." These ratings mostly rely on the number of accessible amenities (Figure 5.2), but also include factors such as access to transit, intersection density, block length, and population density. Strategies that help to create a more connected and attractive pedestrian network focus on the importance of clear wayfinding systems, connections to transit and other modes, as well as public space amenities such as street furniture and public art. Having a high-quality pedestrian experience is important to both encourage more people to walk, and ensure that walkability can be an inclusive characteristic throughout the Village to enhance quality of life and increase environmental sustainability, safety, and mobility. Making these improvements can help Park Forest increase it's overall Walkscore.

Sidewalks & Paths

There are approximately 103 miles of sidewalk throughout Park Forest, allowing residents and visitors to walk between homes, places of employment, and other amenities. While the curvilinear street grid in the Village creates long blocks in some residential areas (making it more difficult for some pedestrians to find a direct route), there are approximately 3 dozen pedestrian cut-throughs scattered throughout Park Forest to facilitate walkability. Twenty-eight cut-through paths run between residential properties – making it easier and faster to get from one block to another – while several others connect residential neighborhoods to open space or school properties in the Village.

To assess walkability in terms of accessible and convenient routes to local destinations, Figure 5.3 illustrates the areas that are within 5 and 10-minute walks to local schools and other amenities and destinations throughout Park Forest. These other destinations, shown on the map as varying in size based on number of businesses located in close proximity to one another, include local retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, Metra stations, and entertainment venues. The "walkshed" that emanates from each of these points, and the highlighted pedestrian-accessible roadways, trails, and paths, visualize the connectivity of the local pedestrian network, highlighting the somewhat limited coverage afforded by the curvilinear street network and its arrangement of long blocks.

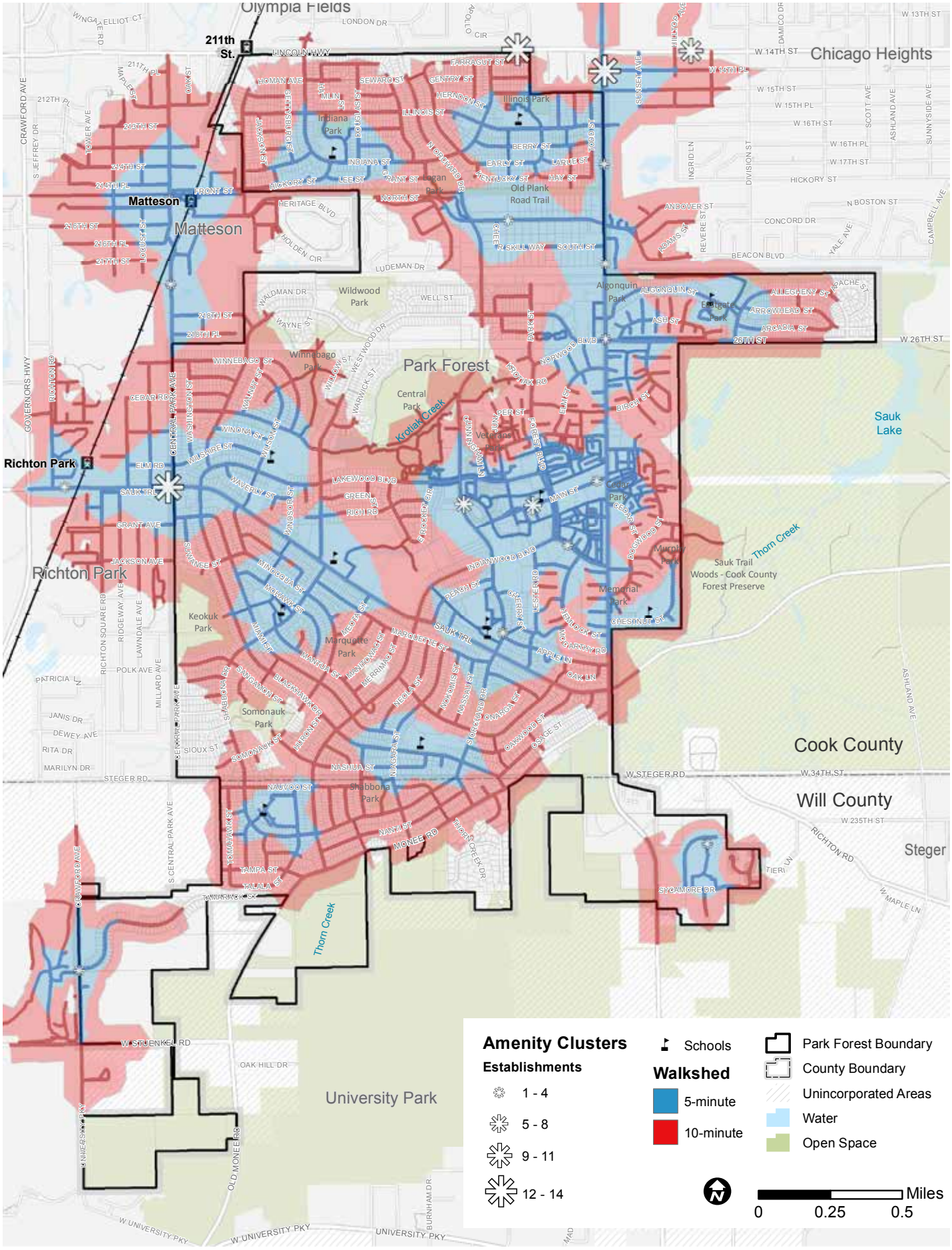
While the vast majority of schools and mapped destinations are located along the pedestrian network, it is important to note that the destination clusters along Lincoln Highway, which lacks pedestrian amenities, are inaccessible to pedestrians. These clusters include the 211th Street Metra station, which despite having dedicated parking within Park Forest, lacks clear and safe pedestrian paths/ routes to residential areas in north Park Forest. This will be important for RTA to take note of in their pedestrian access study of the 211th St. station. The residential neighborhood located northwest of DownTown Park Forest and southeast of the Matteson Metra Station does not have good pedestrian access to local schools or amenities, as shown by the large white hole in Figure 5.3. This is also the case for the residential neighborhood west of Somonauk Park, and the neighborhood south of Monee Road.

Comparing Park Forest's dendrite-like walksheds and routes to the nearly symmetrical diamond-shaped walkshed around the Matteson Metra station shows the different degree of walkability and route density present within Matteson's fairly grid-like street network and that of Park Forest. To a degree, the presence of pedestrian cut-throughs and trails helps to fill the gaps in Park Forest's pedestrian network. These pedestrian cut-throughs are owned by the Village but neighboring residents are responsible for their maintenance. This sometimes poses an issue when residents fail to maintain the pathways. However, the cut-throughs have the potential for anchoring a Safe Routes to School proposal, for which Park Forest schools have previously attempted to secure grant money.

A pedestrian "cut-through" connecting a residential neighborhood to a school.

A poorly maintained, overgrown pedestrian "cut-through."

Figure 5.3. Walkshed



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Intersections and Streetscaping

While most of Park Forest's intersections are controlled by stop signs, there are 20 signalized intersections in the Village. Pedestrian safety at these intersections ranges from very safe (with ladder-stripe painted crosswalks, accessible curb cuts, audible signals, and flashing-hand pedestrian warnings) to very unsafe (lacking sidewalks, pedestrian signals, painted crosswalks, and/or accessible curb cuts, sometimes across 5 lanes of traffic).

Appropriate intersection treatments to improve safety will vary with the speed of traffic, number of lanes, presence of a raised median, and the average daily traffic flow. Western Avenue, Sauk Trail Road, and 211th Street each have high daily traffic volumes (15,300; 20,400; and 28,900, respectively) and marked crosswalks without additional treatments could increase pedestrian crash risk. At the intersection of Indianwood Boulevard and Western Avenue, for example, there is no signal, yet there is a marked crosswalk across five lanes of traffic with a speed limit of 35 mph. While this intersection has not had a recent pedestrian crash, it is the site of more than one automobile crash (Figure 5.11).

Other streets in the Village have lower traffic volumes, fewer lanes, and slower traffic speeds. On these streets, marked crosswalks may be sufficient to provide pedestrians a safe crossing area. Intersections with poor sight distance, complex or confusing designs, and high truck traffic should not have crosswalks installed without other accompanying safety measures.

Park Forest has exemplary streetscaping along Main Street in DownTown, with brick pavers for crosswalks, planters, benches, on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Most streets in the Village have sidewalks and street trees. Western Avenue has an inconsistent sidewalk with missing sections on the east side of the street between Algonquin Street and 15th Street, as well as the segment south of Chestnut Street. It also does not have sidewalks on the west side of the street from Lincoln Highway / 211th Street south to Illinois Street / W. 16th Street, and from Cedar Street south to Hemlock Street.

The intersection of Orchard Drive and Route 30 / 211th Street has a Pace bus stop, but no pedestrian crossing markings across the 7 lanes of traffic. Photo by CMAP staff.

Traffic calming on Blackhawk Drive, south of Orchard Drive. Photo by CMAP staff.

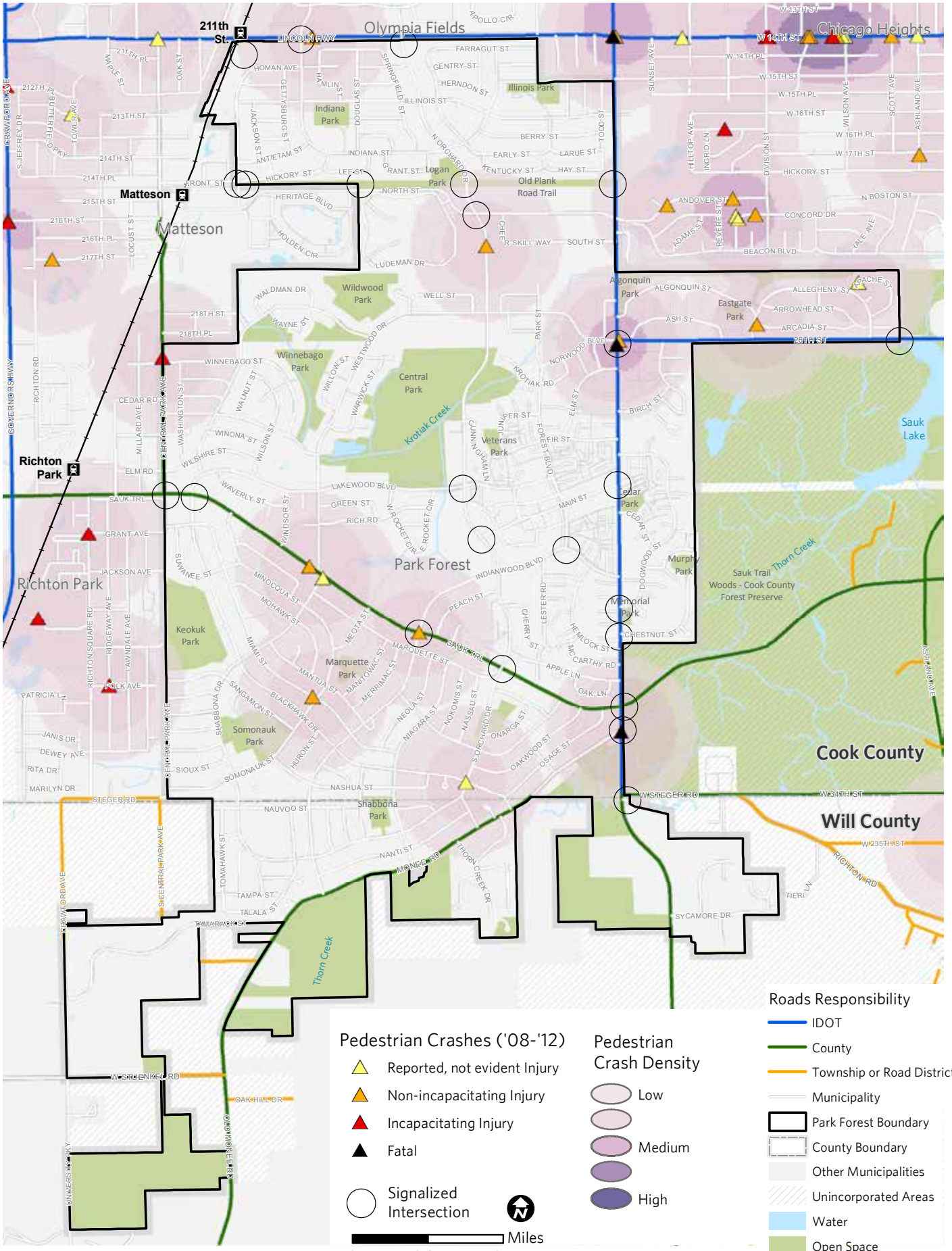
Pedestrian Safety

Western Avenue appears to be the most dangerous road for pedestrians in Park Forest; all three of the nearby pedestrian fatalities in the past 5 years have occurred along Western Avenue. Of specific concern are the segments lacking sidewalks and the crossings that are not controlled by traffic signals. There are long stretches of Western Avenue with residential multi-family properties on both sides of the street and no signalized intersections. In the one-mile stretch between Sauk Trail Road and 26th Street, there is only one traffic signal. Sauk Trail Road is also a concern for pedestrian safety due to high traffic volume. Lincoln Highway / 211th Street has no pedestrian accommodations and has seen a high number of pedestrian crashes, most of which are in Chicago Heights (including a fatality at Western Avenue). Most of the roads in Park Forest, however, have not seen many pedestrian crashes, and are generally regarded as safe and pleasant to walk along due to sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian cut-throughs, and the presence of other pedestrians.

Discontinuous sidewalk on Western Avenue. Photo by CMAP staff.

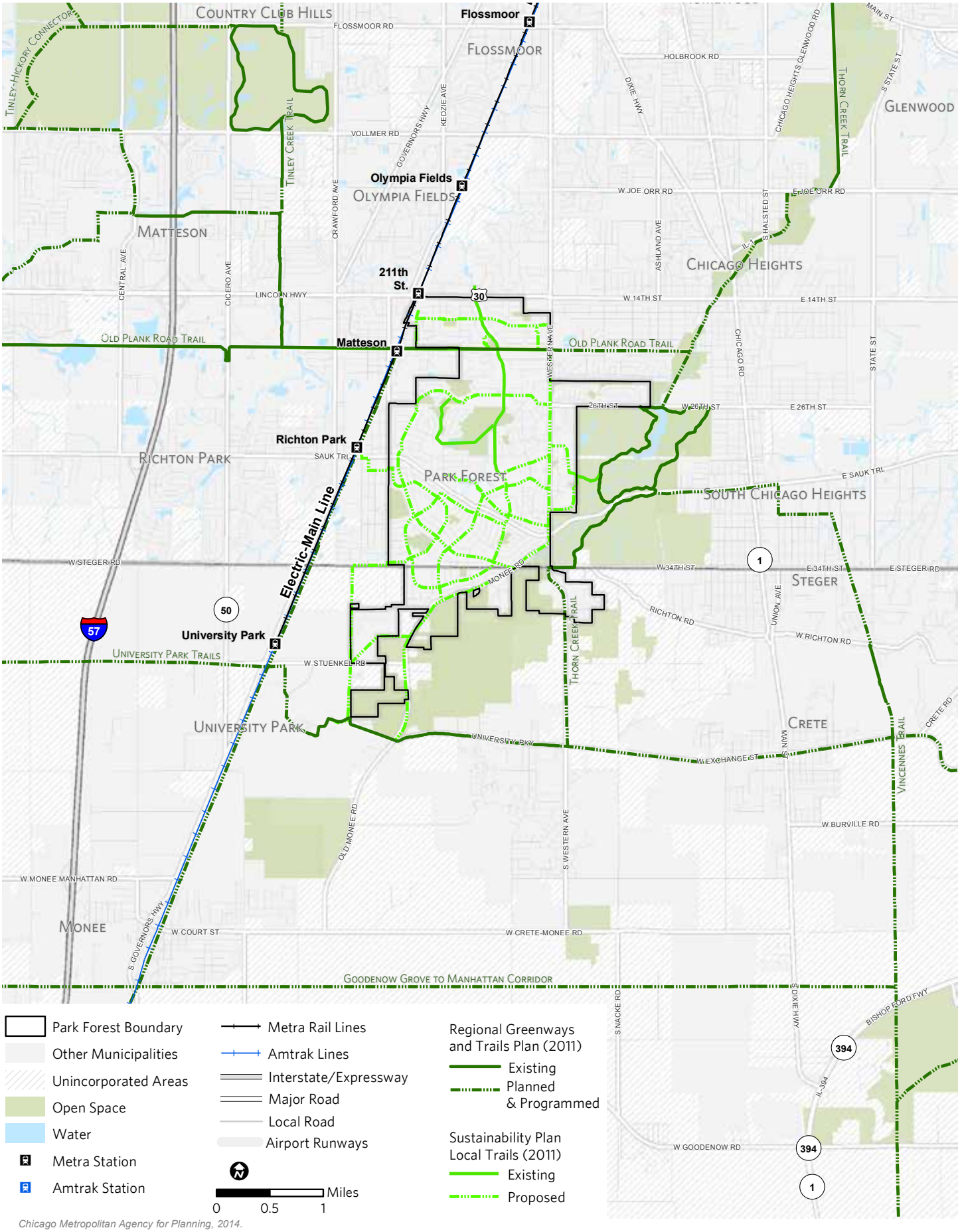
Mid-block crossing on Orchard Drive to connect a residential neighborhood to the Aqua Center. Photo by CMAP staff.

Figure 5.4. Pedestrian crashes



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 5.5 Bicycle infastructure



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

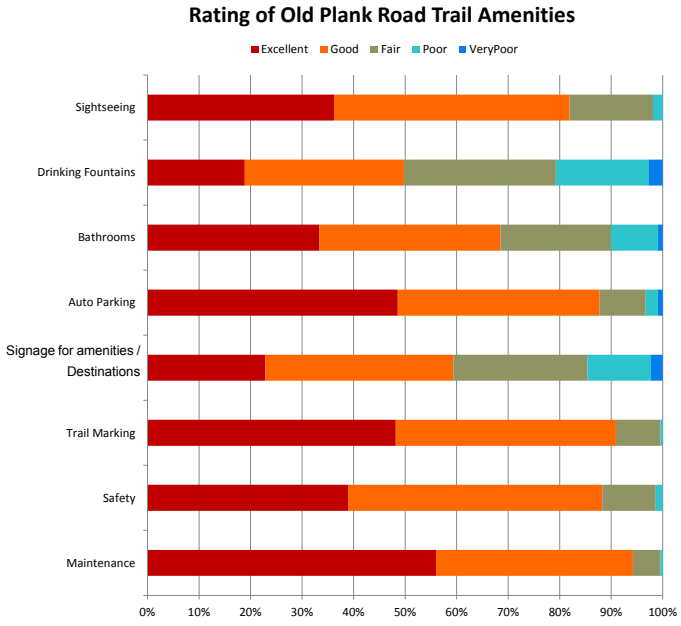
5.3 Bicycling

Routes and Trails

Park Forest is linked to a larger regional network of trailways in several areas of the Village (see Figure 5.5). Both Old Plank Road Trail and Thorn Creek Trail are as classified as Primary Regional Trails, and serve as part of the backbone of trailways around northeastern Illinois that connect to smaller community trails and paths. These trails are heavily traveled for recreational purposes, particularly over the weekends.

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County is extending the Thorn Creek trail north from Sauk Trail Woods. The project will connect three separate portions of the existing Thorn Creek Trail System, and link the Thorn Creek Trail with the Old Plank Road Trail and the Burnham Greenway Trail. The project will add 4.75 miles of new trail in Thornton, Lansing, Glenwood, Chicago Heights and Park Forest to the existing 12.7 mile system.

In a 2012 study of the Old Plank Road Trail[5], which runs from the western edge of Park Forest to Joliet, trail counts estimated that there are between 400 and 700 daily trail users, and an average annual estimate of over 125,000 users. Usage is highest on Saturday and Sundays, while weekday usage is consistently around 400 users. The study also noted that the demographics of trail users do not match the demographic breakdown of the communities that are connected by the Old Plank Road Trail. While 20 percent of the population in these communities is African-American, only 7.5 percent of trail users surveyed identified as African-American. Three-fourths of the surveyed trail users were over the age of 45, 60 percent of trail users have a household income greater than $70,000, 70 percent of trail users travel 1.5 miles or less to reach the trail, and over 70 percent of users are bicyclists. Surveyed users also rated the trail on a variety of amenities such as access to bathrooms, drinking fountains, and maintenance of the trail. Most users found Old Plank Road Trail to be good or excellent in all categories.



5. Online: http://trailsforillinois.tumblr.com/MTC-Download

There are many proposed extensions of, and connections between the existing trails in Park Forest. For instance, the University Park Trail, which runs along the southern end of the Village, is proposed to be extended in both directions, connecting Park Forest with both University Park and Steger.

Most of the parks in the Village have paved pathways, though many are quite narrow. Also, Orchard Drive, with new bike lanes, offers a north-south connection between Old Plank Road Trail and DownTown Park Forest. A "green-stripe" bicycle route used to exist throughout the Village and onto the Thorn Creek trail, guiding cyclists throughout Park Forest. While there are separate trails as well as bike signage along this former route, this reconfiguration of Orchard Drive is the first dedicated bike lane to be integrated with the roadway.

Narrow pathway in Central Park. Photo by CMAP staff.

Orchard Drive bike lane. Photo by CMAP staff.

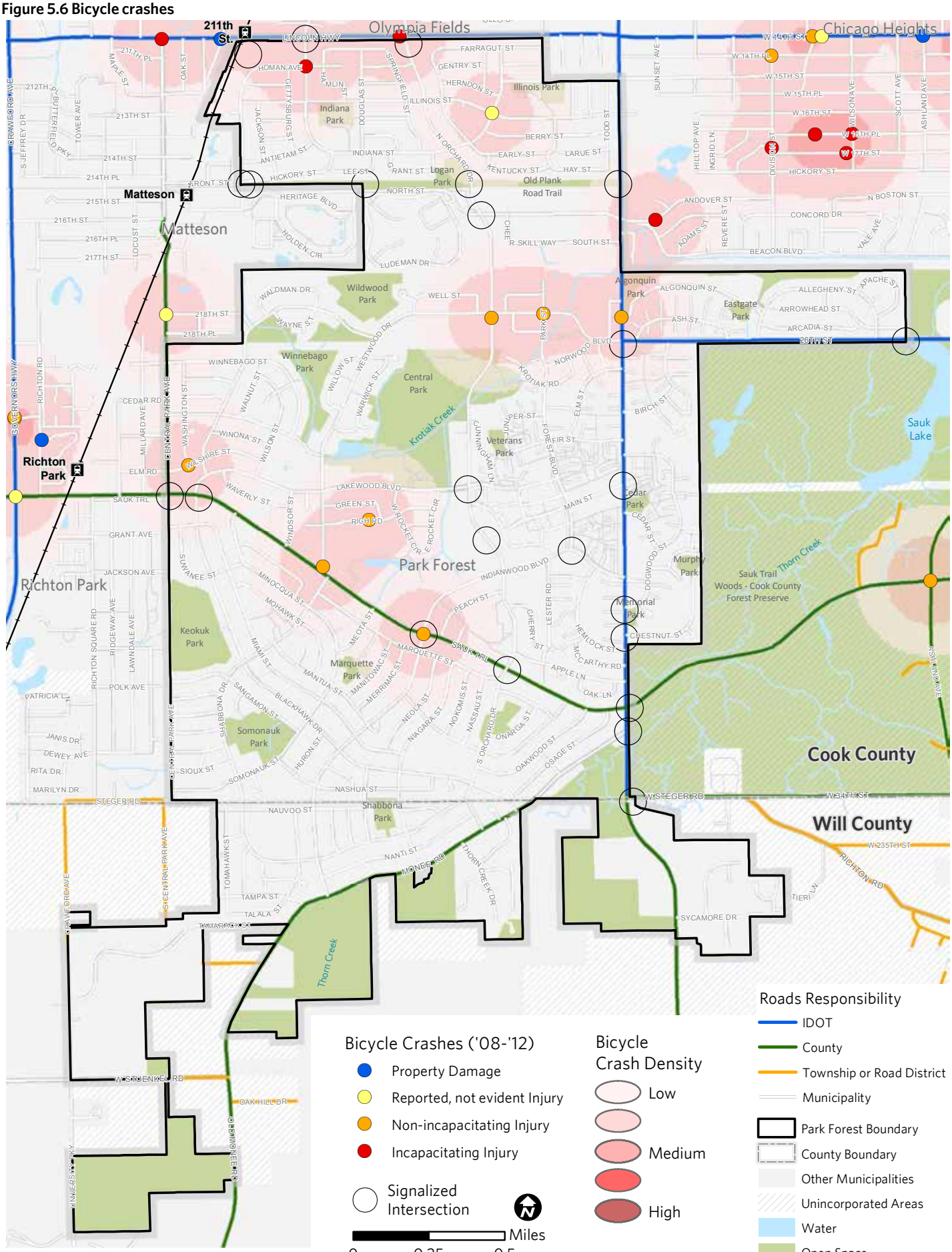
Bicycle Parking

There are currently bike racks at locations throughout the Village, including at schools, the Aqua Center/Central Park, the Public Library, Village Hall, Thorn Creek Nature Center, and the Tennis and Health Club, and there are new bike locker facilities at the Matteson Metra station. Many of the bicycle racks located at municipal buildings are "fence" style racks, consisting of vertical bars between two rows of horizontal bars. These racks do not allow both the wheel and the frame to be locked, which increases the potential for bicycle theft. The Matteson Metra station and the library have "wave" racks, with increased security potential similar to a U-Rack, while accommodating more bicycles than a single rack. Bicyclists would prefer that the bike racks at Metra stations be covered, as they are intended for all-day storage and exposure to the elements can be harmful to the bikes. For those concerns, there are available bicycle lockers, but some riders prefer not to use the bike lockers or are unsure of how to get a key or how to use them.

"Fence" bike rack at the Aqua Center. Photo by CMAP staff.

"Wave" rack at Park Forest Library. Photo by CMAP staff.

Figure 5.6 Bicycle crashes



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Bike Safety

When bicyclists and drivers share the road, many factors affect safety, including the speed and volume of traffic, and the width of the road. The perception of safety is very important to developing a robust cycling community; most people will not ride a bicycle if they don't think that the route is safe. And the mere presence of regular bicyclists on the roadway can significantly increase overall safety, as drivers come to expect and anticipate bicyclists. When it is not feasible to create off-street or barrier-protected bike lanes, certain road treatments can help improve the safety of the road. Figure 5.6 shows where recent bicycle crashes have occurred within Park Forest and just outside of the Village. The crashes may indicate dangerous conditions, preferred routes of cyclists, or perhaps both.

A sidepath along a portion of Western Avenue helps protect bicyclists and pedestrians from the heavy traffic. Photo by CMAP staff.

Truck traffic along a bicycle route. Photo by CMAP staff.

Level of Traffic Stress

According to a recent report from the Mineta Transportation Institute, a highly connected, low-stress network is fundamental to attract the highest numbers of bicyclists to the network.[6] The method developed to measure traffic stress considers a number of factors, including the average daily traffic (ADT), the number of travel lanes, posted speed limits, and location of the center line. For streets where bicyclists and cars share the road, street width and speed limit are the primary factors affecting traffic stress. These ratings aim to estimate the level of stress that a bicyclist would feel while riding along different routes, without the need to survey every road in the study area. Using available data, Figure 5.7 measures the Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) on the roadways in Park Forest.

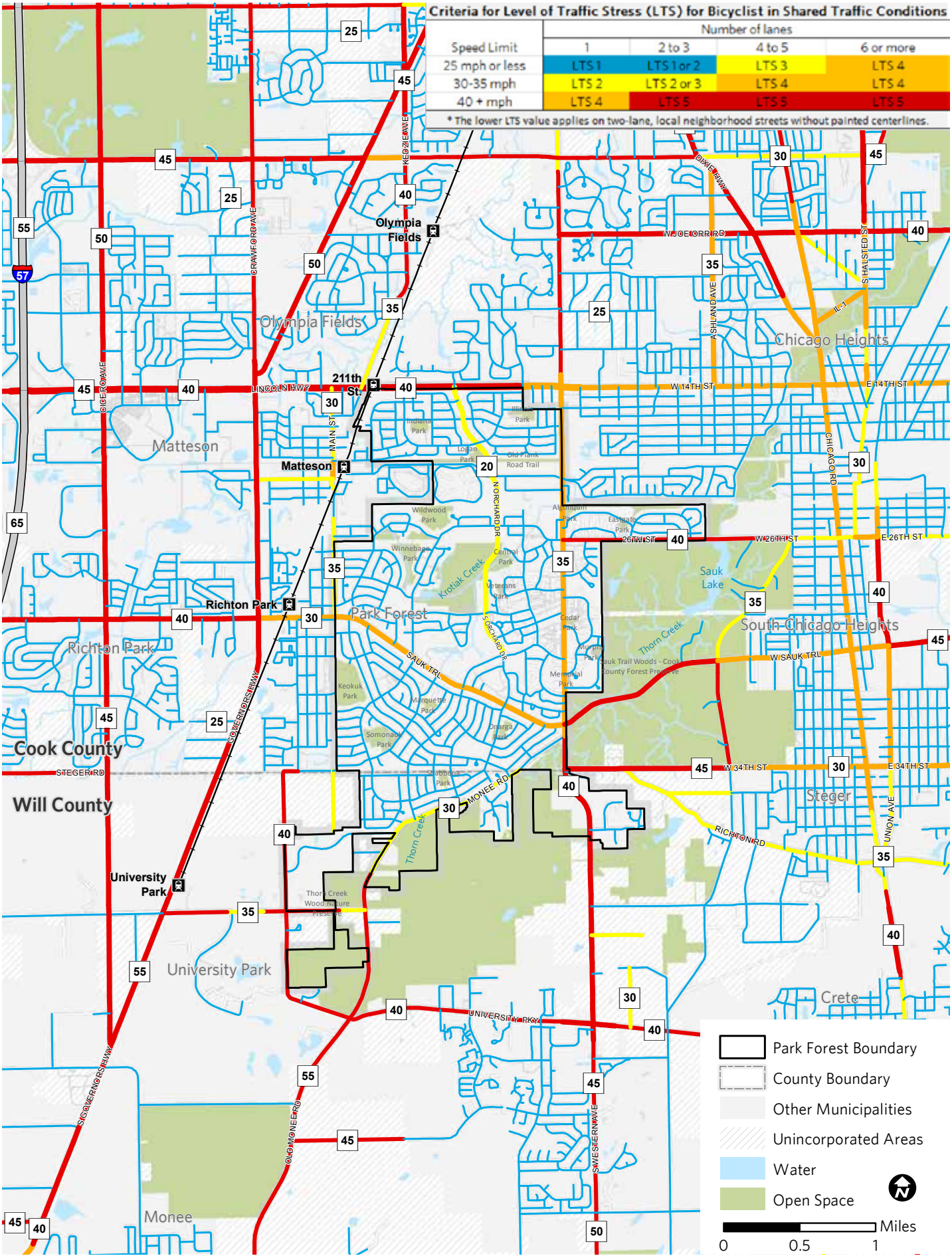
Most of the roads in Park Forest are low-stress (LTS 1 or 2), with exceptions along arterial roadways and collectors. Orchard Drive is rated LTS 3, but the presence of an on-street bicycle lane helps reduce the stress level. The main problem streets are 211th Street / Lincoln Highway (LTS 5), Western Avenue (LTS 4 and 5), 26th Street (LTS 5), Sauk Trail Road (LTS 4 and 5), and Monee Road (LTS 3 and 5). A well-connected, low stress network will need to address these important links.

Biking on a quiet residential street (LTS 2). Photo by CMAP staff.

Biking on Western Avenue (LTS 4). Photo by CMAP staff.

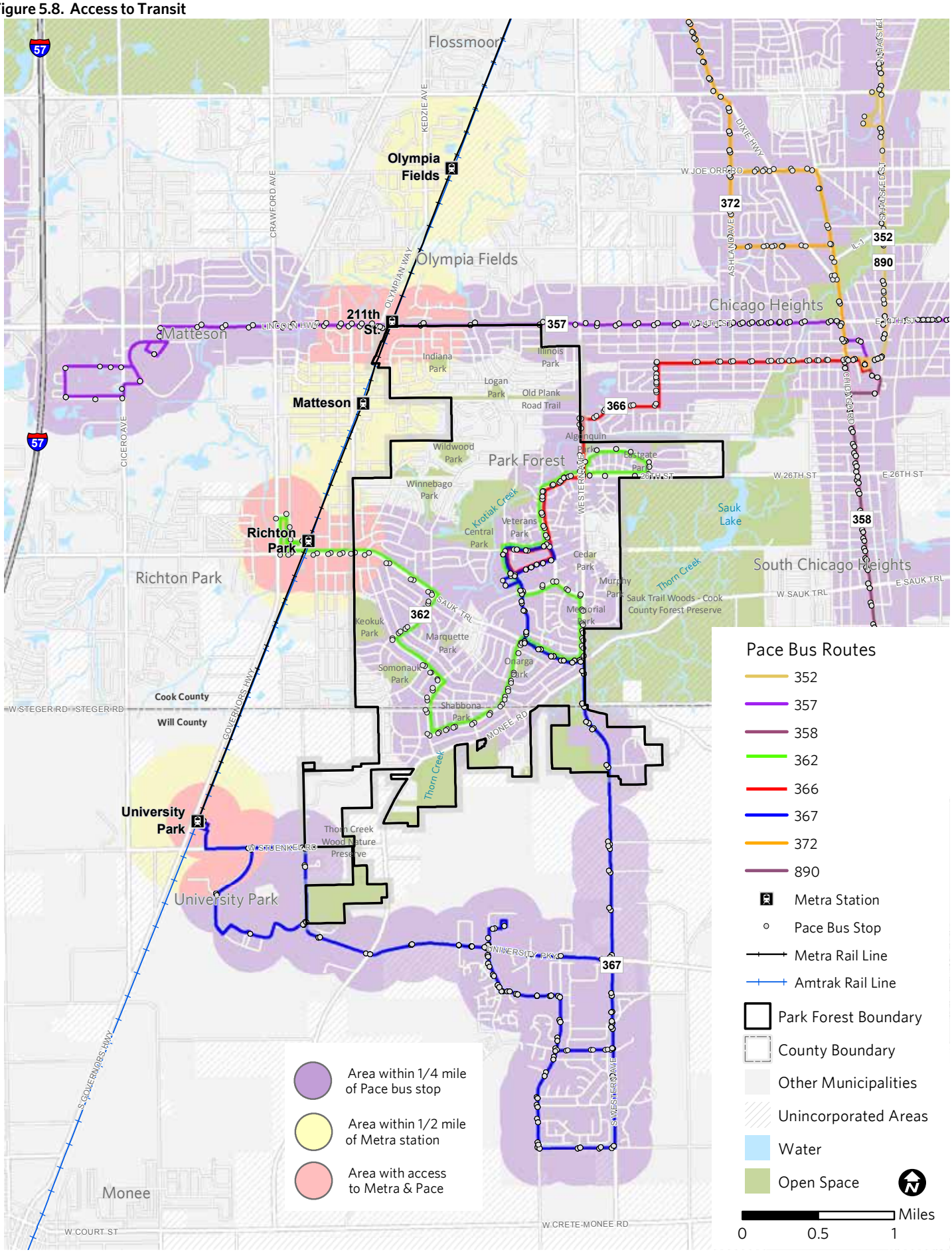
6. Mekuria, M. C., Furth, P. G., and Nixon, H. 2012. Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity. San Jose: Mineta Transportation Institute. Online: http://transweb.sjsu.edu/PDFs/research/1005-low-stress-bicycling-network-connectivity.pdf

Figure 5.7 Level of traffic stress



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 5.8. Access to Transit



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

5.4 Transit

Regional public transit options that serve the Village include Metra commuter train service and Pace suburban bus service (see Figure 5.8). Additionally, there is a circulator connector bus called "The Jolly Trolley" that primarily serves Park Forest residents. Much of the public transportation service connects DownTown Park Forest to residential neighborhoods in the Village, as well as other destination points outside the Village (like Governors State University or Lincoln Mall). In 2009, approximately 12 percent of Park Forest residents commuted to work via public transit, which is similar to the 12.5 percent of public transit commuters in the six-county Regional Transportation Authority's jurisdiction, and exceeds the national average of 5 percent.

Metra

Metra's Electric District (ME) main line serves Park Forest, connecting the Village to Downtown Chicago and other south suburbs along its 31.5 mile extent. The 211th Street station of the ME is located where Park Forest's municipal boundaries intersect with those of Matteson and Olympia Fields. Figure 5.8 shows the locations of the 211th Street station and the Matteson and Richton Park stations that serve Park Forest residents. As can be seen, the residential areas along the Village's western border have the most convenient access to the nearby Metra stations. Table 5.2 highlights ridership and parking capacity and utilization at each of the three Metra stations serving Park Forest.

Both the 211th Street station and the Richton Park station are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards (although the 211th Street station is a long walk from the parking lot), and a limited number of bicycles are allowed on ME trains during peak and off-hour trips. Many Park Forest bicyclists prefer the Matteson station for its easy access via the Orchard Drive bike lane and the available bike lockers and bicycle rack. Due to security concerns, Metra recommends covered bicycle parking at stations rather than bike lockers.

Table 5.2 Metra Boardings and Parking in Park Forest

Station	Boardings, 2006	Parking Capacity, 2013	Parking Utilization, 2013
211th Street (Lincoln Hwy.)	1,149	694	60.2%
Matteson	879	754	51.1%
Richton Park	1,625	1,045	72.2%
Source: RTAMS, 2014.			

Matteson Metra bike lockers and "wave" rack. Photo by CMAP staff.

211th Street Metra Station. Photo by CMAP staff.

Pace Bus

As shown in Figure 5.8, four Pace suburban bus routes (357, 362, 366, and 367) directly serve Park Forest, with connections to other Pace routes that run beyond the Village as well as to Metra train stations. Figure 5.8 also shows that much of the Village is within a - mile (as the crow flies) of a Pace bus stop, with the exception of some northern residential areas surrounding Wildwood and Logan Park. All of the Pace vehicle fleet is ADA compliant, and there are numerous "dial-a-ride" services to supplement their accessible fixed routes. Furthermore, all buses are equipped with front-loading bike carriers so that Pace users can access the bus via bicycle.

DownTown Pace bus service. Photo by CMAP staff.

"Jolly Trolley" Connector Bus Service

The "Jolly Trolley" is a Village-run connector bus service that links Park Forest residents to community amenities and other public transit services. This demand-responsive bus service is administered by Rich Township for the Park Forest community, providing door-to-door transit for seniors, students, and adults of all ages. The Jolly Trolley operates a fleet of three vehicles – originally Pace short buses – that make pre-reserved trips and also pick up customers every hour on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at two pre-determined stops in DownTown Park Forest. Jolly Trolley approximates about ten percent of their trips are connecting to other transit services (like Metra stations), while the majority of trips taken are to other amenities for shopping reasons (groceries, prescriptions, etc.). The Trolley costs $3 per trip for an adult or $1.50 per trip for seniors, disabled persons, and students; riding the Trolley is free for children under 7, as long as they are with a fare-paying adult.

5.5 Roadways

Functional Classification

Roads provide space for vital functions within a community – mobility, access, commerce, and civic life. Park Forest street network, shown in Figure 5.9, consists mainly of local roadways that accommodate the Village's residential character. A breakdown of Park Forest's roadways based on IDOT's functional classification designations is provided in Table 5.3. The functional classification of a road describes the character of the road in terms of vehicular mobility and the level of service they are intended to provide. Additionally, Table 5.3 includes the average daily traffic (ADT), width, and jurisdiction of each roadway for comparison and to identify the agency responsible for repairs and maintenance.

Figure 5.9. Functional classification and AADT

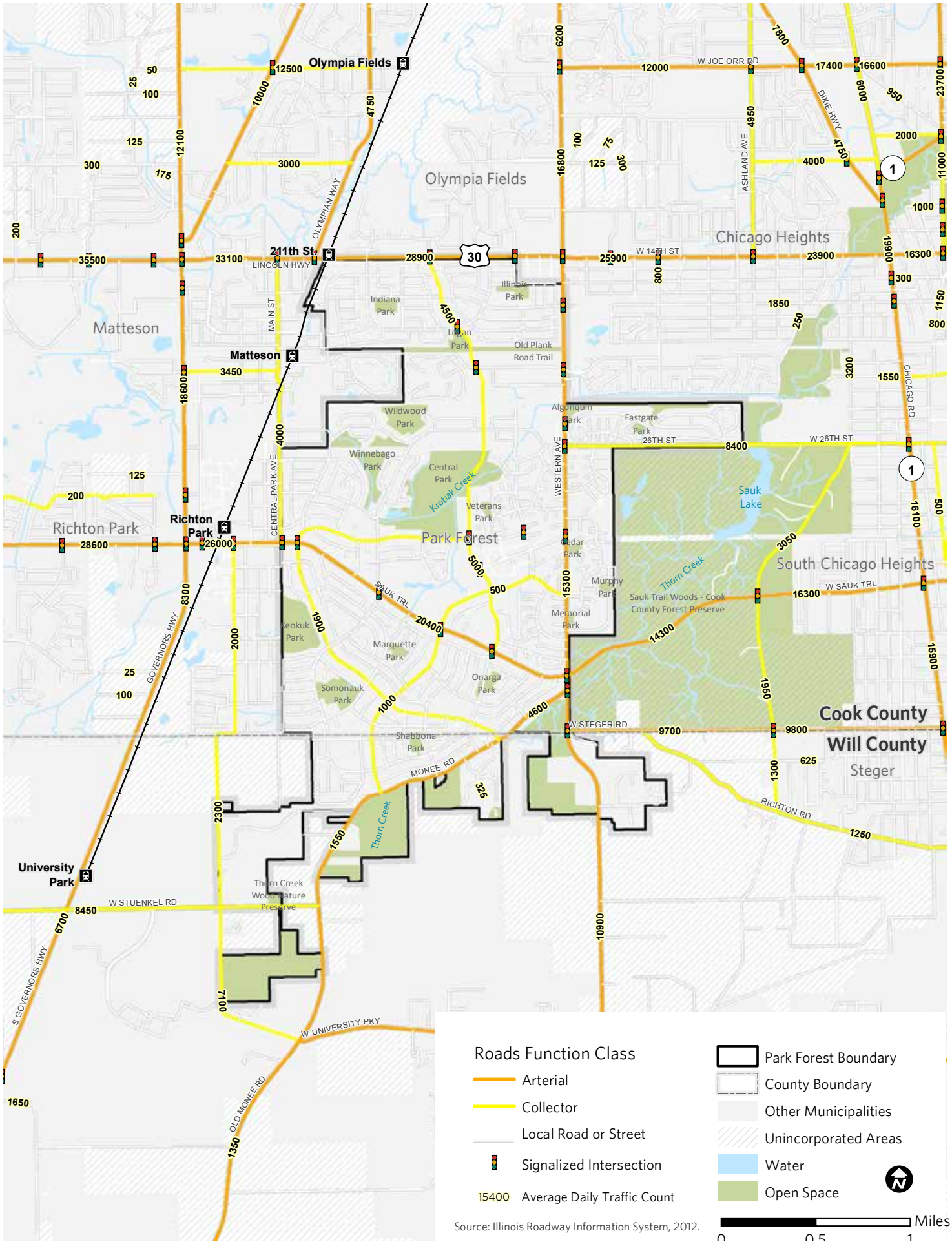
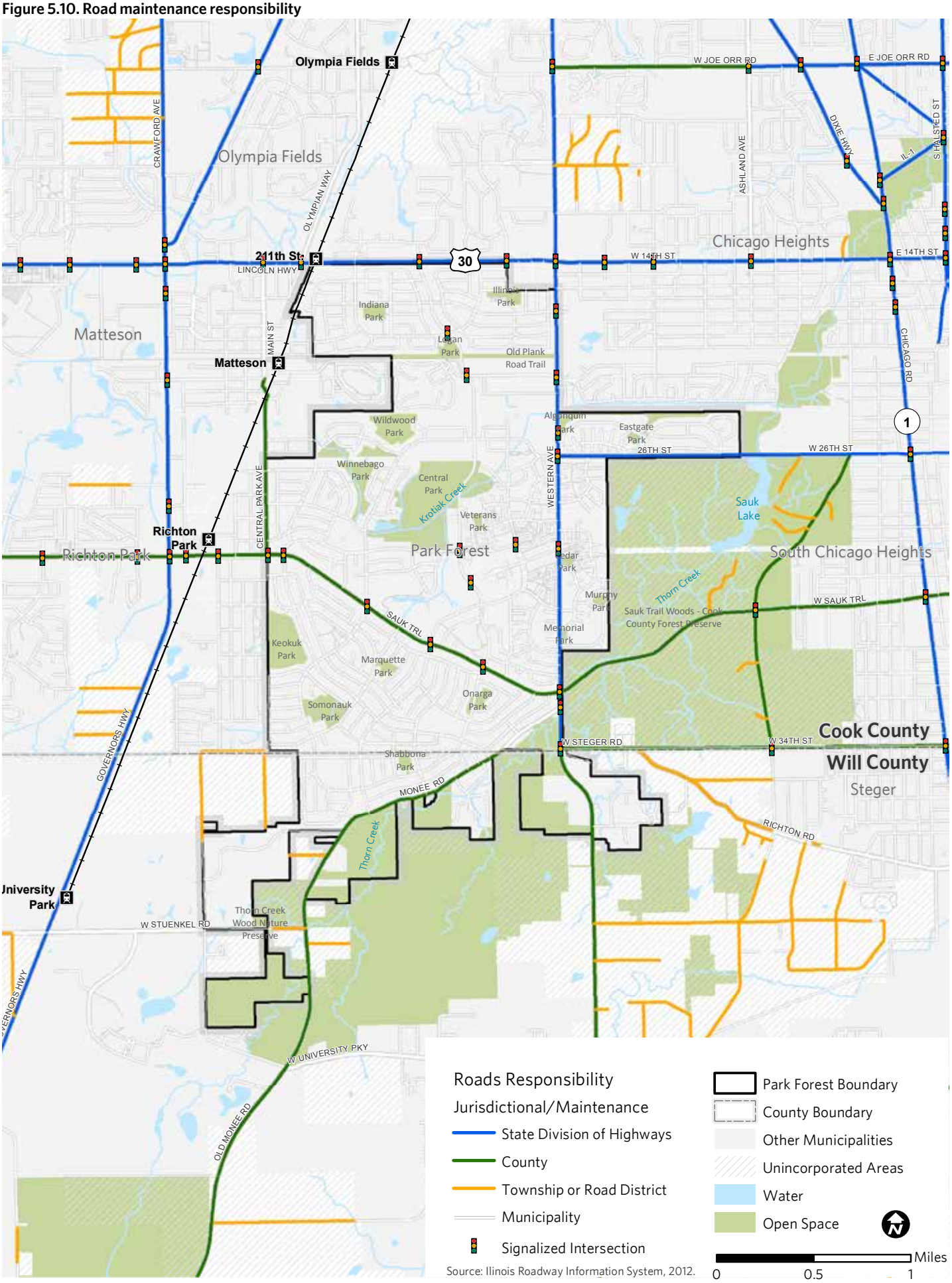


Figure 5.10. Road maintenance responsibility



Source: Illinois Roadway Information System, 2012.

Table 5.3 Roadway Functional Classification

Primary Service	Functional Classification	Roadway	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)	Lanes	ROW Width	Jurisdiction
Through traffic movement	**Principal Arterial**	Lincoln Highway	28,900	6	90'	Illinois DOT
	Minor Arterial	Sauk Trail	20,400	4	55'	Cook County DOT
		Western Avenue	15,300	4	65'	Illinois DOT
		Monee Road	4,600	2	20'	Will County DOT
	Collector	N Orchard Drive	4,500-5,000	4	40'-60'	Park Forest
		Lakewood Blvd	2,000	2	35'	Park Forest
		Blackhawk Drive	1,900	2	40'	Park Forest
		Central Park Avenue	4,000	2	45'	Cook County DOT
		Indianwood Blvd	500-1,000	2-4	50'-55'	Park Forest
Local trips & property access	**Local**	All other streets				Park Forest

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation, 2014.

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are intended to serve high volumes of traffic, covering greater distances at higher speeds, providing limited access in order to maintain a higher level of service. As a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) and Class II truck route, U.S. Route 30, or Lincoln Highway, is the only principal arterial serving Park Forest, running along the Village's northern border and carrying approximately 28,900 vehicles and 3,250 freight trucks per day. This route provides the Village with east-west regional connectivity and access to the regional highway system at Interstate 57 to the west and Illinois Route 394 to the east. The Illinois Department of Transportation is responsible for the maintenance of the 6 lane roadway.

Route 30 / 211th Street at Orchard Drive. Photo by CMAP staff.

Minor Arterials

Park Forest is crossed by three minor arterials, Sauk Trail Road, Western Avenue, and Monee Road. These roadways serve both regional and local trips, providing a higher degree of access and designed for moderate speeds. With the exception of Monee Road, the Village's minor arterials have two lanes of traffic running in each direction with no on-street parking available. In Park Forest, these roadways accommodate the highest volumes of local traffic and run along a range of land uses including single and multi-family residential districts, as well as commercial and industrial areas. Sauk Trail Road is the Village's primary east-west roadway, carrying 5,000 more vehicles than any of the village's roadways with the exception of U.S. Route 30.

Intersection of Sauk Trail Road and Western Avenue, both minor arterials. Photo by CMAP staff.

Collectors

Collectors serve to move traffic from local streets to arterials and other major roads, providing a high degree of access for local traffic at moderate speeds. With the exception of Central Park Avenue along the Village's eastern border, each of these roadways is under Park Forest municipal jurisdiction. Of particular importance are North Orchard Drive and Indianwood Boulevard, which serve as main north-south thoroughfares in the Village, connecting local and major roadways to DownTown Park Forest. Similarly, Lakewood Boulevard provides east-west connectivity to DownTown.

Intersection of Lakewood Avenue and Orchard Drive, both collector roads. Photo by CMAP staff.

Local Roads

All remaining roadways are classified as local roads, which primarily serve residential areas and offer the highest levels of access.

Local Road typical of those found in Park Forest. Photo by CMAP staff.

Intersection of Sauk Trail Road and Western Avenue, both minor arterials. Photo by CMAP staff.

Connectivity

Street connectivity is a way of assessing the ease of travelling between destinations within a local street network. As a whole, Park Forest's street network consists of long blocks and winding/curvilinear roads that provide links to major roadways and community destinations. While the residential areas south of Sauk Trail have a limited number of cul-de-sacs, the central and eastern portions of the village have high concentrations of dead-ends. In these instances, the unconnected street network only allows for a limited number of route options, resulting in longer and less direct trips between destinations. This can lead to high volumes of traffic being concentrated on limited infrastructure, as is the case with Sauk Trail, Park Forest's primary east-west link. This type of network arrangement typically affects walkability, encouraging automobile use for many trips that could potentially be accomplished by walking in a more connected network. However, the presence of internal pedestrian pathways in many of Park Forest's multi-family and cooperative residential areas helps to mitigate these impacts by linking residences into a more connected pedestrian network.

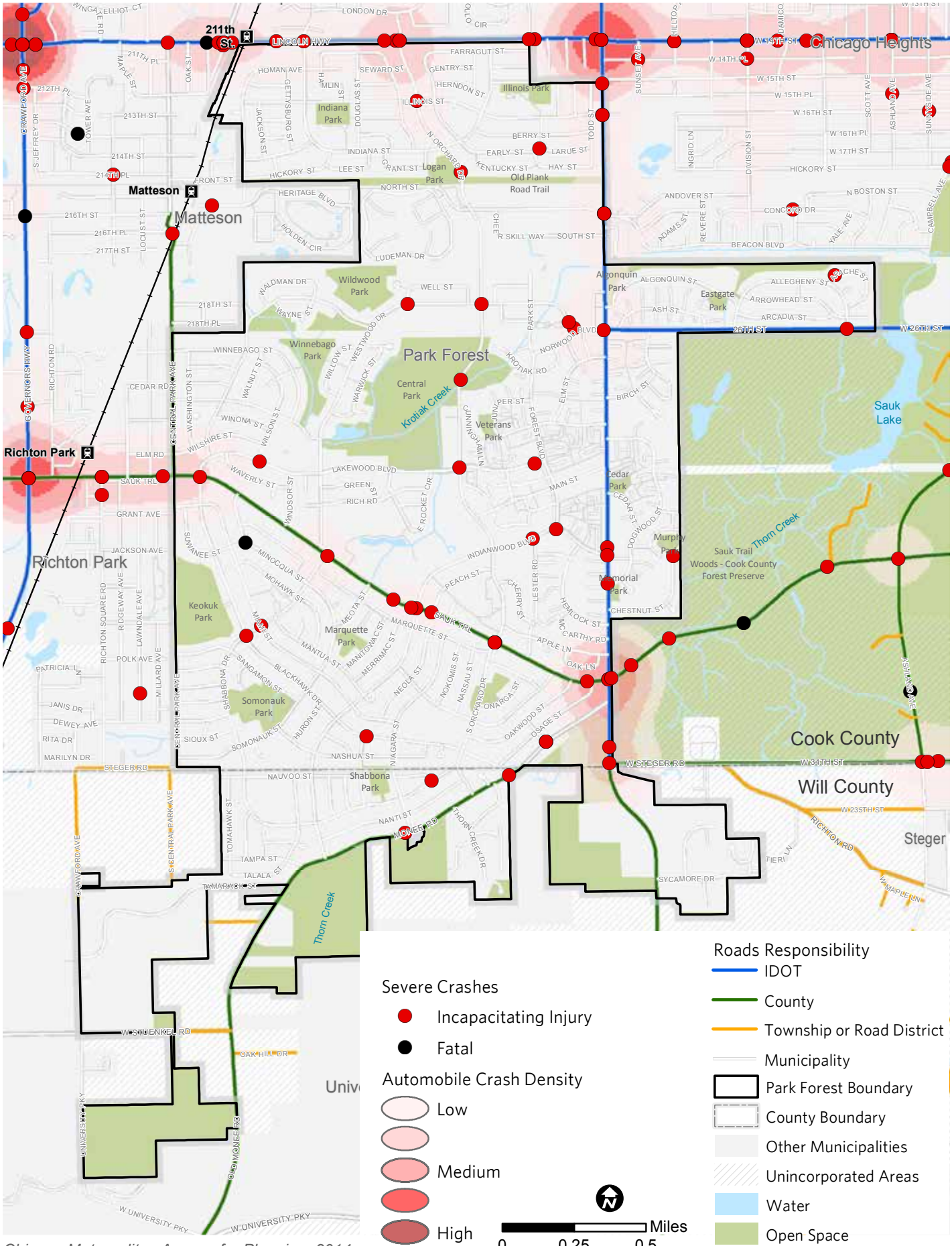
Safety

Figure 5.11 illustrates the locations of the most severe automobile crashes occurring in Park Forest and the surrounding communities between 2008 and 2012. The map also shows the areas with the highest overall density of crashes, weighted by severity. As can be seen, intersections of major roadways along or just outside of Park Forest's borders have the highest concentrations of crashes. These areas include the intersections of Lincoln Highway and Western Avenue as well as Sauk Trail and Western Avenue, which carry the heaviest volumes of daily traffic at the highest speeds in the Village and the surrounding area.

While there is not a concentration of severe crashes at any one point along Sauk Trail similar in magnitude to the aforementioned intersections, there is a distinctive pattern of crashes involving serious injury spread along the roadway's extent. Specifically, the area surrounding the intersection of Sauk Trail and Indianwood Boulevard stands out. This area was also identified in both the bike and pedestrian analysis.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Figure 5.11. Automobile crash density



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Photo by CMAP staff.

Section 6

Planned and Programmed Roadway Improvements

6.1 Key findings

The following are key findings regarding planned and programmed roadway and infrastructure improvements in Park Forest. Moving forward in the planning process, these key findings will help shape and inform the bicycle and pedestrian master plan recommendations.

The Village of Park Forest has a history of including bicycle and pedestrian related construction projects within their municipal budget. As discussed below, the Village has a number of capital improvements planned that will help improve biking and walking conditions within the community. Moving forward, the recommendations of the final Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be included in future budgets and capital improvement plans.

6.2 Village Budget and Capital Improvement Plan 2014/2015

Budget http://www.villageofparkforest.com/DocumentCenter/View/823

Capital Improvement Plan http://www.villageofparkforest.com/DocumentCenter/View/684

Since the Village and its roads were all built post-World War II, Park Forest currently faces aging transportation infrastructure. Many of the roadways in Park Forest need maintenance and improvement, and such projects are regularly included in local, county, and state capital plans (see Table 6.1). These maintenance and improvement projects will increase the safety, reliability, and usability of the Village's transportation infrastructure. In addition, the projects will have the added benefit of making the neighborhoods look more attractive, and therefore more marketable.

Implications for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The following is a summary of the key capital improvements that are included in both the Village's Budget and Capital Improvement Plan for 2014-15. These projects are primarily under the jurisdiction of the Village's Public Works Department.

The Public Works section contains expenditures for the General Fund, Motor Fuel Tax Fund, Vehicle Service Fund, Municipal Parking Fund, Water Fund and Sewer Fund. For Fiscal 2014/2015 the General Fund includes dollars for sidewalk removal and replacement and storm sewer improvements. Sidewalk replacement has been moved from Motor Fuel Tax to the General Fund. Lincoln Highway streetscape engineering and construction, resurfacing North Street, Indianwood Drive and bikeway striping are major projects included in the Motor Fuel Tax plan. These four projects have substantial grant funding.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Photo by CMAP Staff.

Status	Location	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Completed prior to 2014	Indianwood Boulevard, Sauk Trail to Western Avenue	$539,000				
Completed prior to 2014	Lakewood Boulevard, Sauk Trail to Orchard Drive	$68,800				
	Streetscape Lincoln Highway-Indiana-East Village limit - construction	$280,000				
	Streetscape Lincoln Highway-Indiana-East Village limit – construction engineering	$120,000				
Completed	Mill & Resurfacing North Street (Orchard to W Corp. Limit) construction	$80,000				
In Planning	Bikeway striping	$120,000				
	Resurface Indianwood Blvd. (Sauk Trail to Monee Rd) - design	$150,000				
	Contractual pavement and street maintenance	$420,000	$420,000	$420,000	$420,000	$420,000
	Resurface Indianwood Boulevard (Sauk Trail to Monee Rd) - Construction		$1,725,000			
	Resurface Indianwood Blvd. (Sauk Trail to Monee Rd) – Construction engineering		$173,000			
	Resurface Illinois Street (Orchard Drive to Western Avenue) design				$70,000	
	Resurface Illinois Street (Orchard Drive to Western Avenue) – Construction					$1,155,000
	Resurface Illinois Street (Orchard Drive to Western Avenue) – Construction engineering					$115,500
	Intersection improvements (Forest/Park at Norwood)				$1,200,000	
	Resurface Westwood (Orchard Drive to Sauk Trail)					$1,221,000
	Sources: Village of Park Forest Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2015, Village of Park Forest 2014/15 Budget					

Old Plank Road Trail. Photo by CMAP staff.

Section 7
Looking Forward

The existing conditions report thus far has identified a number of issues, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that exist for non-motorized transportation in the Village of Park Forest. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will utilize this extensive database of information to formulate recommendations for supporting and improving biking and walking in the community. Based on the information compiled, key topic areas of the plan are identified in this chapter. It should be noted that the following summary does not include all issues that will be addressed in the final Plan.

The Plan will address the following topic areas that have been identified as key issues through analysis of existing conditions:

- Coordinate with the Village's ongoing development regulations update. Currently, through another CMAP led LTA grant, the Village is in the process of updating its development regulations (UDO). The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the updated regulations should support each other whenever feasible. For example, the Plan will include typical street cross-section requirements by street type for installing bicycle and pedestrian facilities; bicycle parking requirements at commercial and multi-family residential uses; and the creation and adoption of complete streets policy. The UDO will use these requirements and staff working on the UDO will provide feedback as needed.
- Strengthen connections to the regional trail system and Forest Preserves. The Village of Park Forest is linked to a larger regional network of trails in several areas of the community. Both Old Plank Road Trail and Thorn Creek Trail are classified as primary regional trails, and serve as part of the backbone of trails throughout the northeastern Illinois region that connect to smaller community trails and paths.
- The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will identify future extensions of and connections between the existing trails in Park Forest and the regional trail system including connections to nearby forest preserves.
- Establish safe pedestrian and bicycle street crossings. Currently, major roadway corridors such as Sauk Trail, US Route 30, Monee Road, Crawford Avenue, and Western Avenue are difficult to cross. The Plan will identify key intersections along these corridors, as well as along other collector streets that should have more clearly visible pedestrian crosswalks. Crosswalk markings should be enhanced with appropriate additional pedestrian treatments such as signing, traffic calming, signalization, or other countermeasures.
- Improve wayfinding. Currently only limited bicycle trail signage exists in the Village. The Plan will recommend that the Village install interrelated wayfinding program to assist bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians in identifying routes and crossings. Signs should include directions and mileage to community facilities, parks, schools, shopping areas, Metra stations, and regional trails. In addition to signage, the Plan will recommend the creation of a bicycle map that should be posted on the Village's website, made available for pick-up at community facilities, and updated on an annual basis.
- Identify on-street bike lane locations and build upon the recently installed Orchard Drive bike lane. Last year the Village completed the Orchard Drive capital project that included the creation of the Village's first dedicated bike lane. The bike lane has created a north-south connection between Old Plank Road Trail, DownTown, and the Thorn Creek Trail. The Plan will identify additional streets that dedicated bike lanes should be installed to improve connectivity throughout the community.
- Provide adequate bicycle parking. Currently there are bike racks at locations throughout the Village, including at schools, the Aqua Center/Central Park, the Public Library, Village Hall, Thorn Creek Nature Center, and the Tennis and Health Club, and there are bike locker facilities at the Matteson Metra station. The Plan will support the inclusion of bike parking requirements for commercial and multi-family residential uses in the Village's development regulations update, and will include recommendations for the type of bicycle racks.
- Hold community biking and walking events. Special events such as "ride your bike to work week "and "walk/ride to school days" should be organized by either the Village, through the department of Recreation and Parks or the Police Department in collaboration with the School District or through a partnership. The Plan will recommend hosting special events that encourage walking and biking for all age groups and levels of mobility.

- Improve sidewalk conditions. Currently there are over 100 miles of sidewalks throughout the Village. Due to the Village's curvilinear street grid there are long blocks in some residential areas which make it more difficult for some pedestrians to find a direct route. As a result, there are approximately thirty-six pedestrian cut-throughs to facilitate walkability. Approximately twenty-eight of those cut-through paths run between residential properties – making it easier and faster to get from one block to another – while several others connect residential neighborhoods to open space or school properties in the Village. Cut-throughs are owned by the Village but neighboring residents are responsible for their maintenance. This sometimes poses an issue with residents who fail to maintain the pathways.
- In addition to cut-throughs, the overall condition of sidewalks varies from fair to poor. The Plan will recommend that the Village create a prioritized list of sidewalk improvements/replacements based upon detailed assessments which should be included as part of the Village's Five Year Capital Plan.
- Support bike riding education. The Plan will recommend that the Village department of Recreation and Parks and the Police department partner with the School District to provide classes to all-age groups for bicycle riding education. Classes should be designed for different experience levels ranging from beginner bicyclists up to experienced bicyclists who want to refine their skills.
- Pursue partnerships, grants and alternative funding sources to assist with implementation. To assist with funding the recommendations of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan the Village should strengthen partnerships and also seek out and apply for available grants and other funding resources. The Village should look to partner with other groups or governmental agencies whenever possible. The School District and the Forest Preserve Districts (Cook and Will County) are examples of groups the Village should partner with to improve bicycling and walking throughout the community. Examples of potential grants include Safe Routes to School program, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement program (ITEP) and the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program. The Plan will identify potential partnerships and/or funding sources for each recommendation whenever possible.

Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

312 454 0400
info@cmap.illinois.gov

www.cmap.illinois.gov

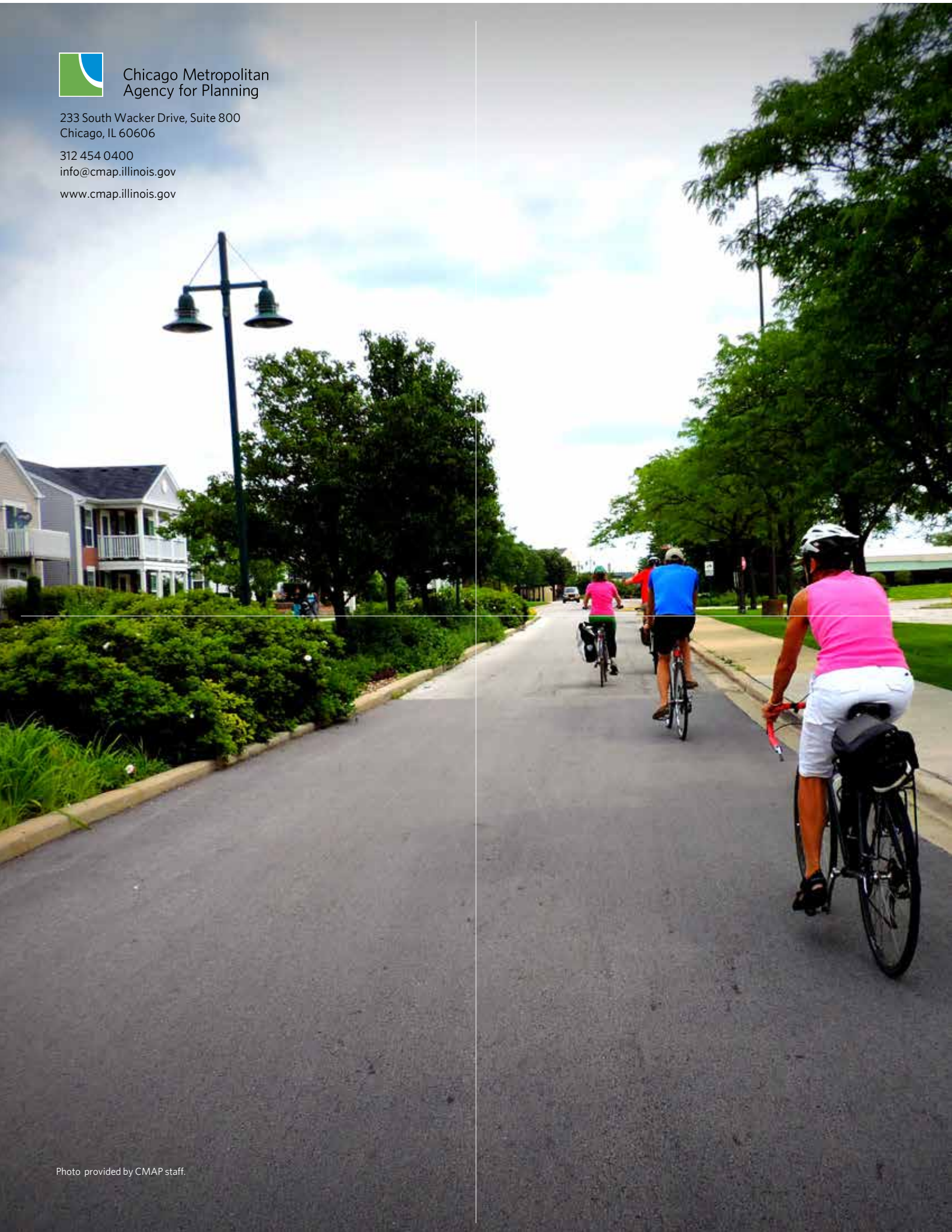


Photo provided by CMAP staff.