

Transportation Improvement Plan

SECTION 2

The transportation improvement plan, in combination with the land use concept plan, provides the framework for development in Romeoville's East Side TOD Area. Components included in this plan address:

- Commuter rail
- Roadway network
- Transit access
- Interconnected trail system
- Pedestrian/bicycle connections

These components are integrated into an overall plan to provide efficient and safe access for all modes of transportation. Key factors guiding improvements included in the circulation and access plan include:

- New Metra station on Heritage Corridor
- Development of the Veteran's Memorial Trail by the Forest Preserve District of Will County

- Widening/upgrades to 135th Street by the Will County Highway Department

Commuter Rail

Currently, Metra service is provided to the Village of Romeoville by the Lemont and Lockport stations on the Metra Heritage Corridor (HC). The HC Line originates in Downtown Chicago at Union Station and terminates at Joliet, a distance of nearly 40 miles, carrying nearly 3,000 trips per weekday. The Lemont station is located in the "E" fare zone, while the Lockport station is located in the "G" fare zone. Three inbound trains provide service in the A.M. peak period and three outbound trains provide service in the P.M. peak period.



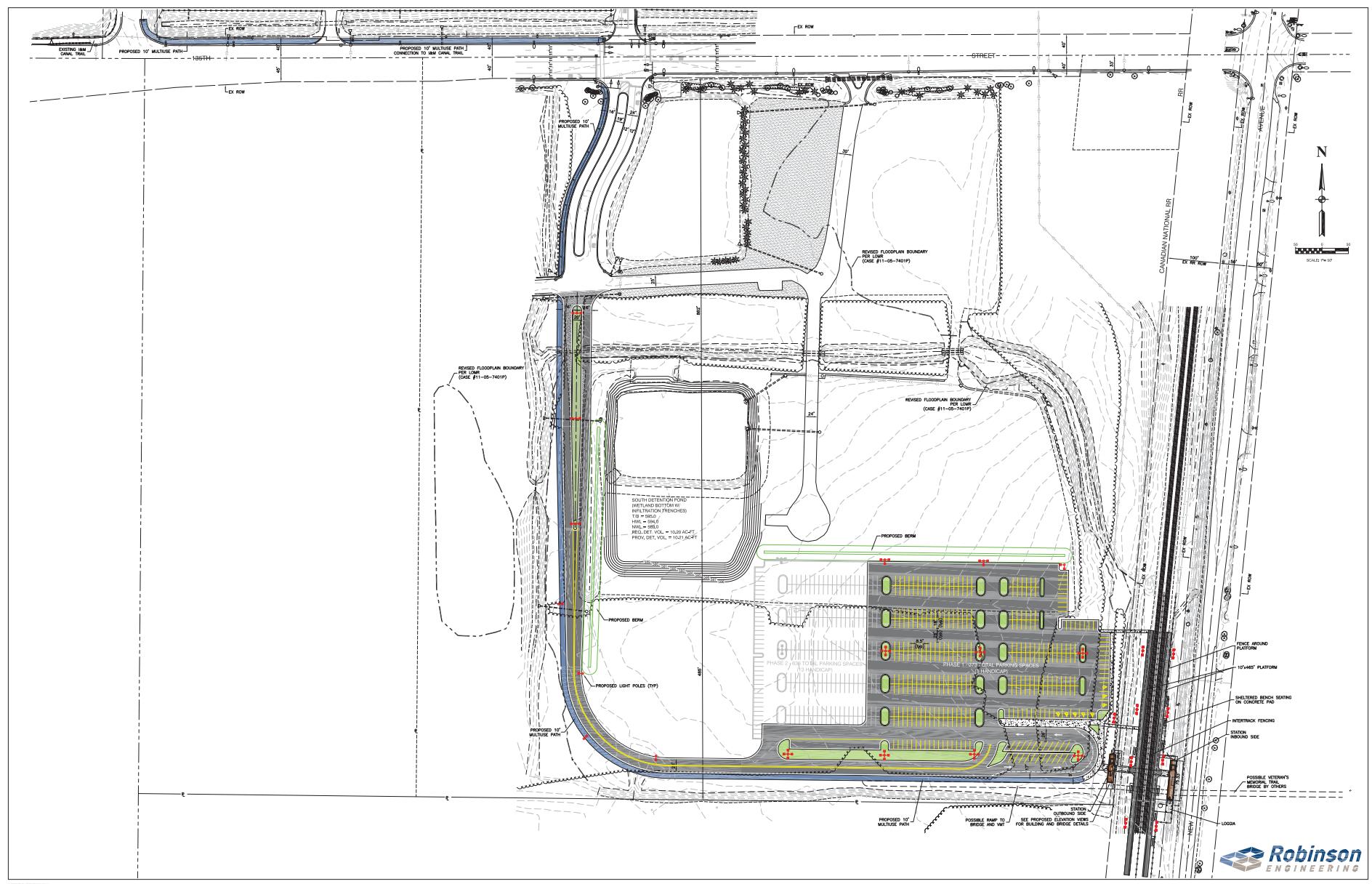


FIGURE 2-1 Proposed Metra Station Area Concept

East Side Plan | Village of Romeoville, Illinois

A new station is planned for the Village of Romeoville, to be located south of 135th Street, west of the CN railroad and New Avenue. Construction of the station is anticipated for 2014. The new Romeoville Metra Station will include an initial 373 space commuter parking lot with kiss-and-ride and bus drop off facilities, station depot, and warming shelter buildings, as well as access via bicycle and pedestrian trails. Design plans also may include a grade separated crossing between the platforms. The RTA's *Access and Parking Strategies for Transit-Oriented Development* report may serve as a valuable resource for the constructing the new station and commuter parking areas.

The proposed Metra Station area concept is shown in Figure 2-1, illustrating how the commuter parking lot and station elements fit within the existing environment. The graphic in Figure 2-2 focuses on the proposed layout of the shelter buildings and platforms.

Station Access

Although there is no existing Metra station in Romeoville, it is anticipated that the mode of access to the future station would be similar to that of Lockport and the Heritage Corridor Line in general with very low walk access and much higher drive alone access.

Vehicular access will be provided from 135th Street via the existing access road serving the CITGO off-site parking lots. Pedestrian/bicycle access will be via a new 10-foot wide multi-use path constructed from the Metra station to the existing I&M Trail, connecting at the point where it leaves off on the north side of 135th Street. This could also provide a possible future link to the Veterans Memorial Trail. A "kiss-n-ride" drop-off/pick-up lane will be constructed adjacent to the station.

No fixed route bus service is planned, although Pace is completing a survey of Heritage Corridor riders to determine future needs. Route 834, traveling along IL Route 53, is the closest fixed route bus service to the new station. A future option could be a new type of community-based flexible service, similar to the West Joliet Call-n-Ride service. Call-n-Ride service is a reservation-based, shared-ride service for the general public that picks up riders and takes them anywhere within a designated service area. This service differs from other curb-to-curb service, like Dial-a-Ride and ADA Paratransit service, because it is always open to the general public, consumers can reserve same day service if space is available and the fare is set by Pace.



With a present lack of a fixed route bus service on the East Side, a community-based flexible service, similar to the West Joliet Call-n-Ride service (above), could be established for short-term transit service.

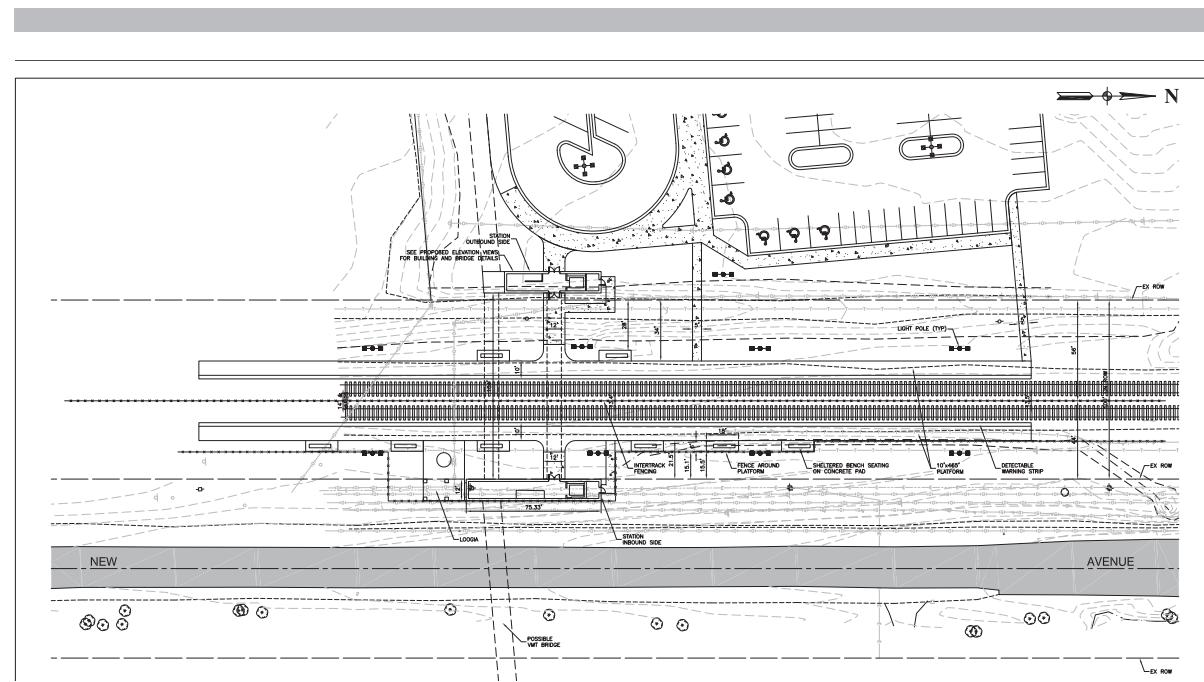


FIGURE 2-2 Proposed Metra Station & Platform Concept

Riders can travel to many destinations, including work, school, shopping, medical offices or to other Pace routes as long as these destinations are within the geographic boundaries of the service area. Riders travel on anywhere in the designated service area on the small, wheelchair-accessible Call-n-Ride bus. The vehicle is recognizable with its large green phone number and logo. Trip reservations are granted on a first come, first served basis.

No official ridership forecasts have been developed for the new Romeoville station. However, it is anticipated that this station will attract some new riders as well as Romeoville residents who are travelling to other nearby stations. While many of those traveling to stations along other lines, such as the BNSF, may not be attracted to the more limited service along the HC, those commuting to other HC stations may find the new Romeoville station more attractive, particularly since parking at both Lemont and Lockport are fully utilized. Based on this, it would be reasonable to anticipate about 250 to 300 riders initially. As service improvements are considered for the Heritage Corridor, this number could increase in the future.

Heritage Corridor Improvements

The Heritage Corridor is a 38-mile commuter rail line serving southwest Cook County and northwest Will County. The Heritage Corridor improvement project will seek to provide full-service commuter rail service on the line which currently has limited service. This line, owned by the Canadian National Railroad (CN), is also a busy freight line. Included in the improvement project would be additional stations, improved peak and off-peak service frequencies, and weekend service. This project is included in CMAP's Go To 2040 Plan. Further, the CREATE program also recommends freight improvements along this line.

IDOT has recently initiated a line capacity study for the Heritage Corridor. This study, being conducted by the CN, is to be completed in early 2012. The result of this study will be to determine the type of infrastructure that will be needed to support an increase in commuter service, as well as determine if the Heritage Corridor could be used for the planned high speed rail service between Chicago and St. Louis.

Transit Services

The Village of Romeoville is primarily served by two Pace bus routes – Route 834 and 855. Future changes to these two routes include:

- Pace Route 834 travels along IL Route 53 providing service from Yorktown Shopping Center to Joliet Union Station and provides connections to the Downers Grove Main Street Metra Station located on the BNSF line, the Lockport Metra Station on the Heritage Corridor, and Joliet Union Station on the Rock Island Line. This route is scheduled to change from operating on a "flag stop" basis to a "posted stop" basis, which means the vehicle will only stop at posted/signed stops. Further, Route 834 is one of the strongest performing routes in Joliet, so there could be potential for future service improvements.
- Pace Route 855 travels along I-55 with stops at various park-and-ride lots between Plainfield and Burr Ridge, traveling non-stop from Burr Ridge to North Michigan Avenue in Downtown Chicago. Two trips are provided from the Spartan Square park-and-ride in Romeoville during the A.M. peak period. There are six return trips in the P.M. peak period, stopping upon request at any of the park-and-rides served. Starting in November

2011, Route 855 service along I-55 began operating along the shoulders of I-55 to improve travel time and service reliability. Initial results show ridership increases along the line. With increased ridership, increased service levels could be a future possibility.

No service is provided within the East Side planning area. However, with the new Metra station planned, Pace has recently conducted an online survey of communities whose residents use Metra's Heritage Corridor service to assess origin-destination information and commute needs, as well as to explore the possibility of providing bus service to supplement Metra's Heritage Corridor service. Additionally, as previously described under the Metra station access section, a community-based flexible service could be appropriate for this area.

Roadway/Intersection Improvements

Major roadways within the study area include IL Route 53, 135th Street, New Avenue, and High Road, as briefly described below.

- 135th Street/Romeo Road is the primary road running through the East Side. Will County is currently in the process of widening 135th Street from New Avenue to IL 171/Archer Road (Will County has jurisdiction from New Road to Archer Road). Currently, this segment of 135th Street is a two-lane road with no shoulder (or narrow aggregate shoulder) and is to be replaced with a five-lane cross-section consisting of four travel lanes, a center median, and left turn lanes at intersections and driveways. Pedestrian and bicycle paths are not included in this project, although could be included by the local jurisdiction.

As part of Phase I of this project, the County is acquiring right-of-way (ROW) to improve the alignment and signalize the intersection of 135th Street and Archer Road with completion in 2012. Phase II will focus on Archer Road to Smith Road with completion in 2015. Phase III will focus on Smith Road to High Road with completion in 2017.

- New Avenue is located immediately east of the CN railroad tracks, providing connections north to Lemont and south to IL 171 (Archer Road/State Street). It is an unmarked, state-maintained route. The intersection of New Avenue and 135th Street was recently improved.

- High Road is located approximately 550 feet east of New Avenue, travelling parallel to New Avenue from IL 171 to the south and to 127th Street to the north. North of 135th Street, High Road exists primarily to provide access to CITGO tanks. The intersection of High Road at 135th Street is offset.

Concept Plan Recommendations

The concept plan for the East Side proposes retail and employment-generating uses, such as offices and business parks, to be concentrated east of the future Metra station

along 135th Street between High Road and a new north-south access roadway and at the key intersection of 135th Street and Smith Road. To accommodate the proposed new land uses, roadway/intersection improvements are proposed for 135th Street.

135th Street /High Road Intersection

Due to the dramatic grade change between New Avenue and High Road, several safety issues exist at this location:

- North and south legs of High Road are offset.
- Sight distance between the north leg of High Road and New Avenue is approximately 200 to 220 ft. This distance is insufficient for motorists to react to a vehicle turning from High Road.
- With trees and hedges along both 135th Street and High Road, the sight triangle that allows motorists to observe and anticipate the actions of other vehicles is insufficient.

With the future land uses proposed in the concept plan plus additional traffic generated by the new Metra station, the following improvements to this intersection should be considered:

- Redesignate High Road north of 135th Street for local access only (with potential to dedicate road to CITGO). Since the primary purpose of this segment is to provide access for CITGO with limited local circulation, this segment could be redesignated for local access and turned over to CITGO as a private roadway; however, such road vacation should only occur once this area is to be redeveloped. As shown in Figure 2-3, a new north access

Realign High Road to provide safer and more efficient road access for the proposed land uses developed for the East Side concept plan

Maintain northern segment of existing High Road for local access and turn over to CITGO for use as a private roadway (road vacation only to occur once area redevelops)

Maintain southern segment of existing High Road for local access for existing residential homes (short term) and interior access for new commercial development (long term)



FIGURE 2-3

Potential High Road Realignment

drive would be added as part of a potential realignment of High Road, located further east to accommodate future new development as proposed on the concept plan. This new north access drive may reconnect with the current High Road alignment; however, this is not necessarily required if future development will not gain much benefit to such a reconnection.

□ Reroute south leg of High Road further east. The concept plan proposes retail and employment-generating uses, such as offices and business parks, to be concentrated along 135th Street between High Road and a new north-south access roadway. Consideration should be given to rerouting High Road east to the location of the new access road, as shown in Figure 2-3. The proposed rerouted south leg would reconnect to the current High Road alignment to provide continuous traffic movement along this road as it continues south to 143rd Street and Route 171 (State Street / Archer Avenue). The existing south leg of High Road would be converted to a local access road to serve existing adjacent residential uses in the short term and new commercial development in the long term. Aligning the new north access road and the relocated south leg of High Road would also accommodate bicycle access.

□ Signalize the 135th Street/High Road intersection. To provide easier access from High Road onto 135th Street, reduce travel speeds, and account for future traffic volumes, a new traffic signal at this intersection should be considered. This intersection would be approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection of 135th Street and New Avenue, which is generally considered to be an appropriate spacing. A traffic signal warrant study would be required to consider future traffic volumes,

a gap analysis, pedestrian/bicycle movements, and safety concerns.

135th Street /Smith Road Intersection

As noted, the concept plan proposes retail and employment-generating uses, such as offices and business parks, to be concentrated east of the future Metra station along 135th Street between High Road and a new north-south access roadway and at the key intersection of 135th Street and Smith Road. To accommodate the proposed new land uses by providing for easier access onto 135th Street and account for future traffic volumes, a traffic signal at this intersection should be considered. This intersection would be approxi-

mately three-quarter miles from the intersection of 135th Street and relocated High Road, which would be an appropriate spacing. Left turn lanes should also be provided. A traffic signal warrant study would be required to consider future traffic volumes, a gap analysis, pedestrian/bicycle movements, and safety concerns.

Regional Trail System

The proposed concept plan includes a network of interconnected existing and proposed trails, enhancing the connectivity of the East Side planning area. Future improvements and study recommendations are presented below.

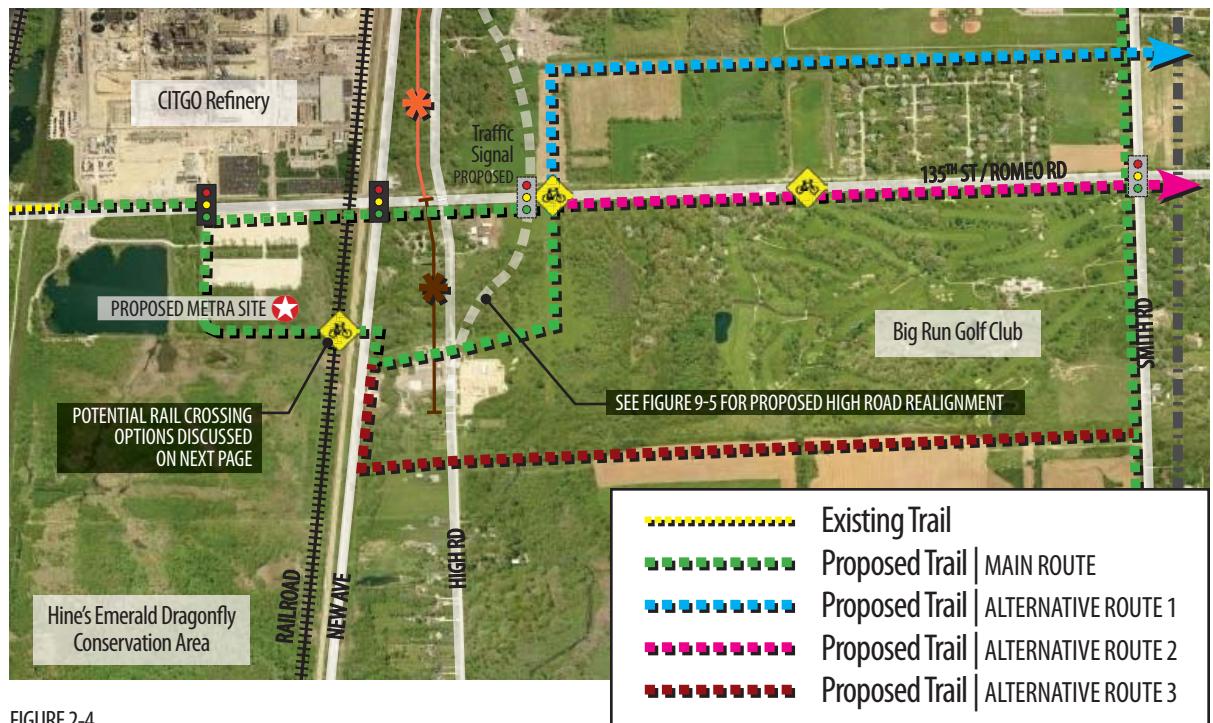


FIGURE 2-4
Veterans Memorial Trail | ALTERNATIVE PATH ALIGNMENTS

Veterans Memorial Trail

The Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) is currently developing the Veterans Memorial Trail (VMT) across the Des Plaines River, connecting the Centennial Trail to International Parkway at I-355. This trail is planned as a 10-foot-wide, multi-purpose trail paved with asphalt for non-motorized, bicycle, and pedestrian use. As shown in Figure 2-4, three alternative alignments have been proposed for the east-west segment to connect from I-355 to the Centennial Trail:

- Existing ComEd right-of-way north of 135th Street
- 135th Street
- Existing ComEd right-of-way south of 135th Street

As part of this project, a new bike path/pedestrian crossing has been proposed to cross New Avenue and provide access

to the new Romeoville Metra Station. While a bike/pedestrian bridge concept has been developed, no preferred alternative has been recommended for the New Avenue crossing.

The VMT project ends at New Avenue, which will require an additional linkage to connect the VMT and the East Side planning area to the Centennial Trail and further west to other parts of the Village of Romeoville. The most direct connection would be to follow along the north side of 135th Street. Should a bike path/pedestrian bridge be constructed over New Avenue, the bike route would travel along 135th Street to the Metra station access drive and then to the bike/pedestrian bridge.

Additional options are being explored to provide this connection between the VMT and the East Side planning area,

particularly the future Romeoville Metra Station on the south side of 135th Street. One of these potential options is an at-grade “diversion” crossing design, which is being considered by CN Railroad and Metra and would create a safe crossing environment at track level. Another potential option would be to provide crossing access for Metra commuters that is separate from access for regular pedestrians and bicyclists who do not need to utilize the station. These separate crossings may run parallel to each other and possibly share infrastructure, such as columns or piers to elevate them above the railroad tracks and New Avenue.

Centennial Trail

The Centennial Trail/I&M Canal Trail is a 12.5 mile regional trail of the FPDWC. This trail extends between the Cook County Line and the City of Joliet, located along the Des Plaines River, I&M Canal, and the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal, connecting along 135th Street to the Village of Romeoville. At 135th Street in Romeoville, the trail passes over a historic swing bridge, which for many years spanned the Des Plaines River on 135th Street. A small parking facility is located at Schneider’s Passage on 135th Street. Additional parking is available at Isle a la Cache Museum.

This trail, situated between the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal, terminates at 135th Street where it shifts onto the bike/pedestrian pathway along the north side of 135th Street, travels across the bridge to where the pathway terminates, and connects to the I&M Canal Trail. Two options exist to complete this link to the Metra station and planned Veterans Memorial Trail. The first option would be the bike/pedestrian bridge as previously described. The second option would be to continue the existing pathway on the north side of 135th Street to the signalized intersection at 135th Street and the CITGO parking



lots, which will also be the entrance to the Metra station. At this point the path would cross to the south side of 135th Street, continue east to the signalized crossing at New Avenue, and then connect to the VMT. There is a significant grade change between New Avenue and High Road. However, this grade change and tree line continues north and south of 135th Street, so there are no other at-grade options other than 135th Street.

Village Pedestrian/Bicycle System

The Village does have existing bike paths throughout the community, although there are several key linkages missing to connect the East Side planning area to other parts of the Village. Improvement recommendations are described below and shown in Figure 2-5.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Multiple lanes of auto traffic and varying topography create a precarious crosswalk area, despite signage and pavement striping (LEFT); alternate view of crosswalk that connects to the Centennial Trail (RIGHT).



POTENTIAL CROSSING ENHANCEMENTS

Elevated signage and stop light (IMMEDIATE LEFT); high intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) that combines beacon flashers and signage (BOTTOM LEFT); high visibility pavement (BOTTOM RIGHT).



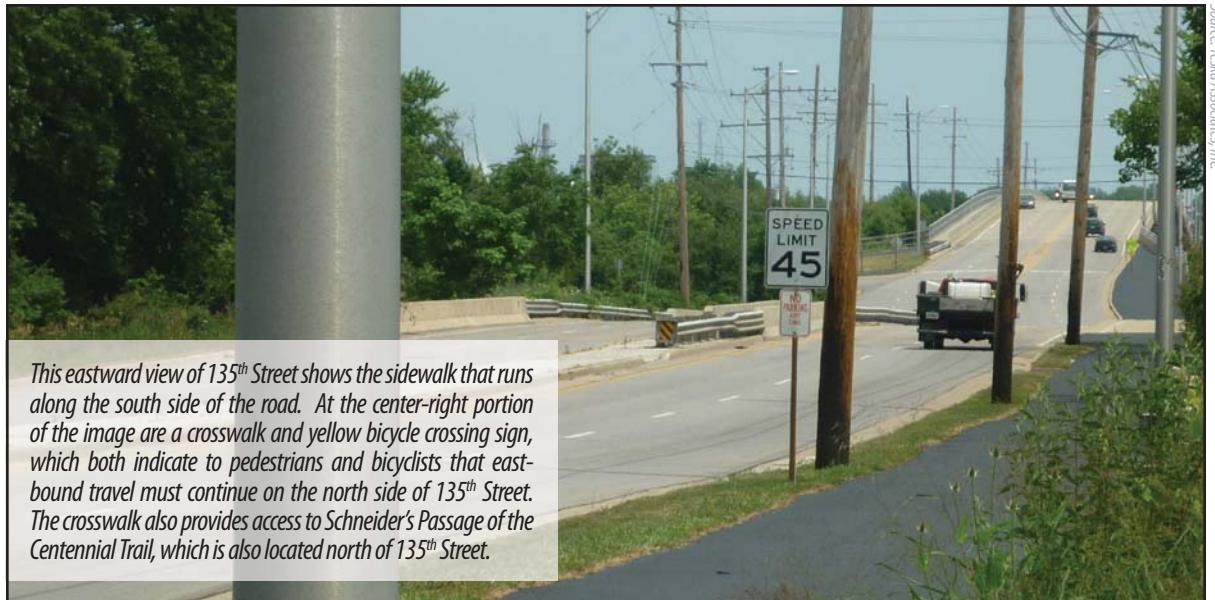
FIGURE 2-5

135th Street Bike/Pedestrian Path Crossing

□ 135th Street between IL Route 53 and the Centennial Trail. Along 135th Street, a sidewalk is located on the south side of the roadway, ending at the Centennial Trail. At the Centennial Trail, the path crosses 135th Street to the north side of the road, providing access to the Centennial Trail or connecting to the I&M Trail further east. The existing sidewalk on the south side is 6 ft wide, expanding to 8 to 10 ft feet wide on the bridges.

It is recommended that the segment between IL Route 53 and the Centennial Trail be expanded to 10 ft for the entire length to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians. There should also be a buffer between the path and the roadway.

□ 135th Street bike/pedestrian path crossing. The existing bike path crossing includes a crosswalk and signage, as



shown in Figure 2-5. However, the bridge being at a higher elevation than the roadway, this crossing is not immediately visible to motorists. Improvement should be made to this crossing to increase visibility. The crossing could be enhanced with potential elements such as the following:

- » High intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) that includes a combination of a beacon flasher and signage
- » Enhanced streetscape elements of high visibility pavement, signage, and streetlights
- » In-roadway warning lights

□ IL Route 53. The Village Bicycle Master Plan calls for a bike/pedestrian path along IL Route 53 from the downtown area to the north and Romeoville High School to the south. The East Side planning area would connect to this path via the improved path along 135th Street. The proposed IL Route 53 path has been proposed for the west side of this route, although there would be a constraint at the cemetery near Juliet Avenue. Alternatively, there does appear to be room to place the path along the east side of IL Route 53 and would cross the road at its signalized intersection at Belmont Drive.



LEGEND

Existing Trail	Existing Traffic Signal	Proposed High Road Realignment
Proposed Trail MAIN ROUTE	Proposed Traffic Signal TO ACCOMMODATE SAFE TRAIL CROSSINGS	SEGMENT NORTH OF 135 TH STREET TO REMAIN FOR LOCAL TRAFFIC ONLY, POTENTIALLY TURNING OVER TO CITGO FOR PRIVATE ROADWAY; CURRENT PUBLIC ACCESS WILL BE RESTRICTED ONCE THIS AREA REDEVELOPS
Proposed Trail ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 1		
Proposed Trail ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 2		
Proposed Trail ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 3	Proposed Road/Railroad Crossing Improvements TO ACCOMMODATE SAFE TRAIL CROSSINGS (E.G. SIGNAGE, PAVING, STRIPING, UNDERPASS/OVERPASS, ETC)	Proposed High Road Realignment SEGMENT SOUTH OF 135 TH STREET TO REMAIN FOR LOCAL TRAFFIC ONLY; CURRENT PUBLIC ACCESS WILL BE RESTRICTED ONCE THIS AREA REDEVELOPS

FIGURE 2-6

Regional Trails Network