

Transportation Assessment

SECTION 4

This section provides an overview of existing transportation conditions in the Study Area.

Regional Setting

The Village of Romeoville is located in northern Will County, with good access to many parts of the region through interstates and major arterials. I-55, I-355, Weber Road, Joliet Road (IL Route 53), Archer Road / State Street (IL Route 171) and Renwick Road all provide connections to Romeoville. Pace local and express buses provide service to the Village, and existing commuter rail service is located nearby in adjacent communities. Potential new improvements to road-

ways, bus service, and commuter rail service will continue to help Romeoville capitalize on its regional access.

Existing Roadway Characteristics

Major roadways within the Study Area include IL Route 53, 135th Street, and New Avenue. These roadways, along with future improvements are described in the Romeoville Master Transportation Plan (November 2009).

IL Route 53

IL Route 53 is the main north-south road through the Village, under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of



Source: Teska Associates, Inc.

This northward view of IL Route 53 shows Downtown Romeoville on the left side of the photo, with the Shell gas station sign marking the southeast corner of downtown. The tall pole signs, including the one for Spartans' Square, and deep lot setbacks are atypical of a traditional downtown.

Transportation (IDOT). North of the Village of Romeoville, IL Route 53 provides access to I-55 and I-355. Between the northern village limits at 135th Street, IL Route 53 carries about 33,000 average daily traffic (ADT). South of 135th Street, IL Route 53 carries between 26,000 and 29,000 ADT.

New Avenue

New Avenue, located in the eastern portion of the Study Area, provides connections north to Lemont and south to IL Route 171 (Archer Road / State Street). It is an unmarked, state-maintained route. North of 135th Street, New Avenue carries about 8,000 ADT. South of 135th Street it carries about 10,000 ADT. The intersection of New Avenue and 135th Street was recently improved.

135th Street / Romeo Road

135th Street / Romeo Road is an east-west arterial under the jurisdiction of the Village of Romeoville. 135th Street termi-

nates on the west side of Romeoville at Weber Road, which provides access to I-55. East of IL Route 53, 135th Street carries 13,800 ADT. IDOT is currently studying improvements to the interchange at I-55 and Weber Road, which could impact traffic volumes on 135th Street.

Additionally, Will County is currently in the process of widening 135th Street from High Road (just east of New Avenue) to IL Route 171 (Will County has jurisdiction from High Road to Archer Avenue).

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 Avenue with completion in 2012. Phase II will focus on Archer Avenue to Smith Road with completion in 2015. Phase III will focus on Smith Road to High Road with completion in 2017.

Bus Service

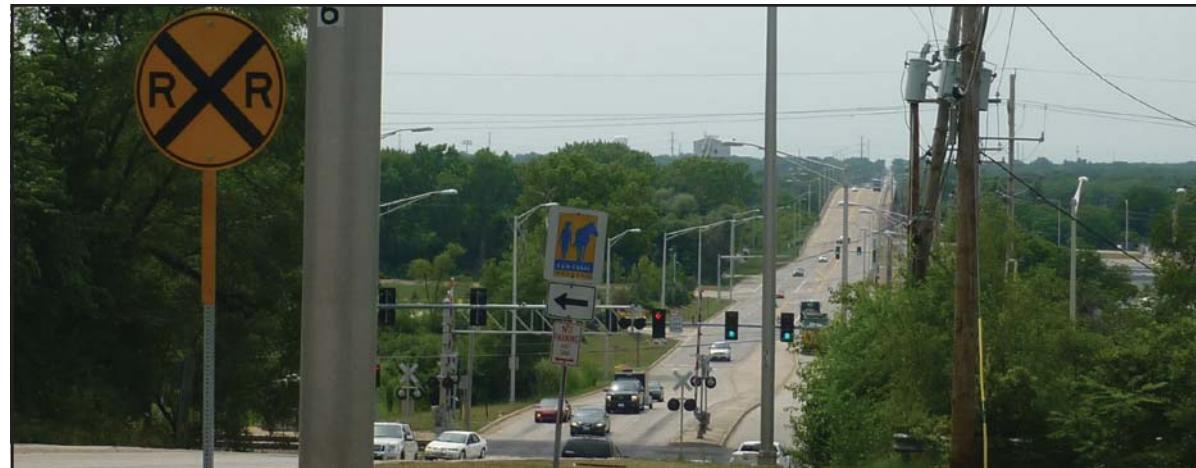
Pace Route 834

Pace Route 834 travels along IL Route 53 with a stop at the Spartans' Square Park-n-Ride lot. Service is provided 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 Line, and Joliet Union Station on the Rock Island Line. Service operates Monday through Saturday on an approximately hour headway.

Pace Route 834, which has an average weekday bus ridership of 841 riders¹⁷, is one of the strongest performing routes in Joliet, so there could be potential for future service improvements. 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.

Pace Route 855

Pace Route 855 travels along I-55 with stops at various park-and-ride lots between Plainfield and Burr Ridge. Pace Route 855, which has an average weekday bus ridership of 266 riders¹⁷, is travels non-stop from Burr Ridge to North Michigan Avenue in Downtown Chicago. Service operates rush hour only Monday through Friday. Two trips are provided from the Spartans' Square Park-n-Ride lot 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-ride lots served.



Source: Teska Associates, Inc.

This westward view of 135th Street illustrates the rolling topography that defines the East Side. The railroad crossing sign in the foreground indicates the approach to the Canadian National Railroad, which carries the Metra Heritage Corridor Line and provides the opportunity for a new commuter station.

¹⁷ Source: RTAMS, Ridership Statistics, Pace Bus Route Detail, June 2011.

Starting in November 2011, Pace Route 855 service along I-55 is planned to begin operating along the shoulders of I-55 to improve travel time and service reliability. Currently no additional service is planned to be added when the bus shoulders improvement is implemented, but could be a future possibility.

Spartans' Square Park-n-Ride Lot

Spartans' Square Park-n-Ride is located in the parking lot of Spartan Square. It currently has about 20-30 vehicles parked on a daily basis. No changes are envisioned for the location of this lot in the near future. Long-term changes would depend on improvements to the I-55 / Weber Road interchange.

Romeoville's Ride Around Town Program

Romeoville's Ride Around Town service is a general purpose dial-a-ride service provided by the Village of Romeoville to its residents. Appointments must be made 24 hours in advance on a first come, first service basis. Fare is \$1.50 one-way within Romeoville, increasing based on distance of destination. Service operates on Mondays from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 am until 3:00 pm.

Heritage Corridor Transportation Survey

Pace recently conducted an online survey of communities whose residents use Metra's Heritage Corridor service in order to assess origin-destination information and commute needs. The survey also explores the possibility of providing bus service to supplement Heritage Corridor service.

The majority of survey respondents were from either Lockport (29%) or Lemont (25%), with the next highest

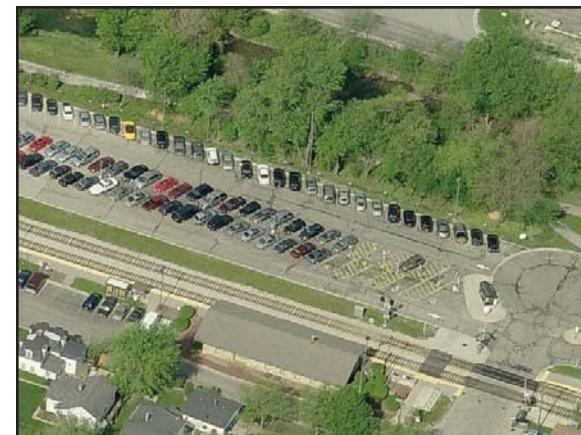
response rate coming from Joliet (10%). Romeoville residents comprised 9% of the survey respondents. Findings from this survey include:

- ❑ 73% of respondents use the I-55 / Heritage Corridor to travel to/from work.
- ❑ 32% of respondents use the Heritage Corridor 5 days a week. Only 8% of respondents use Pace service at least one or more days a week, and only 2% use vanpool.
- ❑ When asked what other Metra lines were used, 37% use the Rock Island Line, 36% use the BNSF Line, and 22% use the Southwest Service Line.
- ❑ Of those who use the Heritage Corridor for their morning commute, 42% board at the Lockport station, 37% board at the Lemont station, and 18% board at the Joliet station.
- ❑ When asked if they would use Pace service if it was utilized to supplement Metra Heritage Corridor service, 30% responded they would definitely use Pace service, 28% would probably use the service, while only 9% respondents answered that they would definitely not use the service.
- ❑ Several comments expressed a desire for midday service to be provided by either Pace or Metra. However, most respondents expressed that they would like more departure time options during the morning and evening peak periods.
- ❑ Currently, the first Metra Heritage Corridor train arrives at Chicago Union Station at 6:50 am. 19% of people

who provided their ideal arrival time in Chicago listed between 6:16 and 6:30 am. The last train to arrive at Chicago Union Station arrives at 8:10 am. Of the people who provided their ideal arrival time in Chicago, 27% would like to arrive between 8:15 and 8:30 am.

- ❑ Of respondents who provided their ideal departure time from Chicago, 17% listed a departure time between 4:31 and 4:45 pm, and 15% listed a departure time between 6:15 and 6:30 pm. The first departure from Chicago Union Station provided by Metra Heritage Corridor trains is 4:50 pm and the last departure is 6:12 pm.

The survey findings are currently under review by Pace and Metra to determine future potential actions.



Source: Bing Maps.

Located along the Heritage Corridor Line and south of Romeoville, the Lockport Metra Station is similar to the transit opportunity in Romeoville in that trail connections are available next to the station.

Metra Commuter Rail Service

The Village of Romeoville is served via the Lemont and Lockport stations on the Metra Heritage Corridor. This line originates in Downtown Chicago at Union Station and terminates at Joliet, a distance of nearly 40 miles. The Heritage Corridor Line carries 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.

A new station is planned for the Village of Romeoville, to be located south of 135th Street, west of the Canadian National

Railroad and New Avenue. A 600-space surface parking lot is also proposed, scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Ridership

Per Metra's System-wide Boarding / Alighting Counts conducted in Fall 2006, there were 381 boardings at the Lemont station and 552 boardings at the Lockport station. The table in Figure 4-1 shows ridership over the last decade.

No official ridership forecasts have been developed for the proposed 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. As presented below in the table in Figure 4-2, there were

286 Romeoville residents found to be using other Metra stations (per Metra counts). 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 Heritage Corridor, those commuting to other Heritage Corridor stations may find the proposed 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 future service improvements are considered for the Heritage Corridor, this number would increase.

Station Origins

As mentioned, many Romeoville residents use Metra com-

FIGURE 4-1
Weekday Boardings Over Time

Metra Station	1999	2002	*2006
Joliet	253	313	395
Lockport	201	303	552
Lemont	341	407	381
Willow Springs	82	142	97
Summit	66	79	64
Glenn	-	-	-
Brighton Park	-	-	-
Halsted	-	-	-
Union Station	905	1,180	1,421
Heritage Corridor	1,848	2,424	2,910
TOTAL			

* Most current data available; new data survey is expected to be conducted in Fall 2012.

Source: Metra.

FIGURE 4-2
Station Origins for Romeoville Residents, 2006

Metra Station	Rail Line	*Number of Romeoville Residents
Lemont	Heritage Corridor	68
Lockport	Heritage Corridor	108
Joliet	Rock Island / HC	18
Downers Grove	BNSF	20
Belmont	BNSF	19
Lisle	BNSF	17
Naperville	BNSF	17
Route 59	BNSF	19

* Most current data available; new data survey is expected to be conducted in Fall 2012.

Source: Metra.

FIGURE 4-3
Mode of Access to Station, 2006

Mode	**Lockport	**Heritage Corridor	**Metra System
Walk	2%	6%	21%
Drive Alone	76%	71%	54%
Dropped Off	11%	15%	14%
Carpool*	10%	6%	4%
Bus	3%	1%	4%
Bike	-	-	1%
Taxi	-	1%	1%
Rapid Transit	-	1%	1%
Other	-	2%	1%

* As driver or passenger.

** Most current data available; new data survey is expected to be conducted in Fall 2012.

Source: Metra.

muter rail service by traveling to other stations along various lines. The table in Figure 4-2 shows some of the nearby stations use by Romeoville residents. The map in Figure 4-4 illustrates the distribution of the origins of Romeoville commuters to various Metra stations in the region.

Mode of 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. The Heritage Corridor differs from Metra system-wide with a very low walk access and much higher drive alone access. The table in Figure 4-3 shows mode of access to the Lockport Metra Station compared to the Heritage Corridor and the entire Metra system.

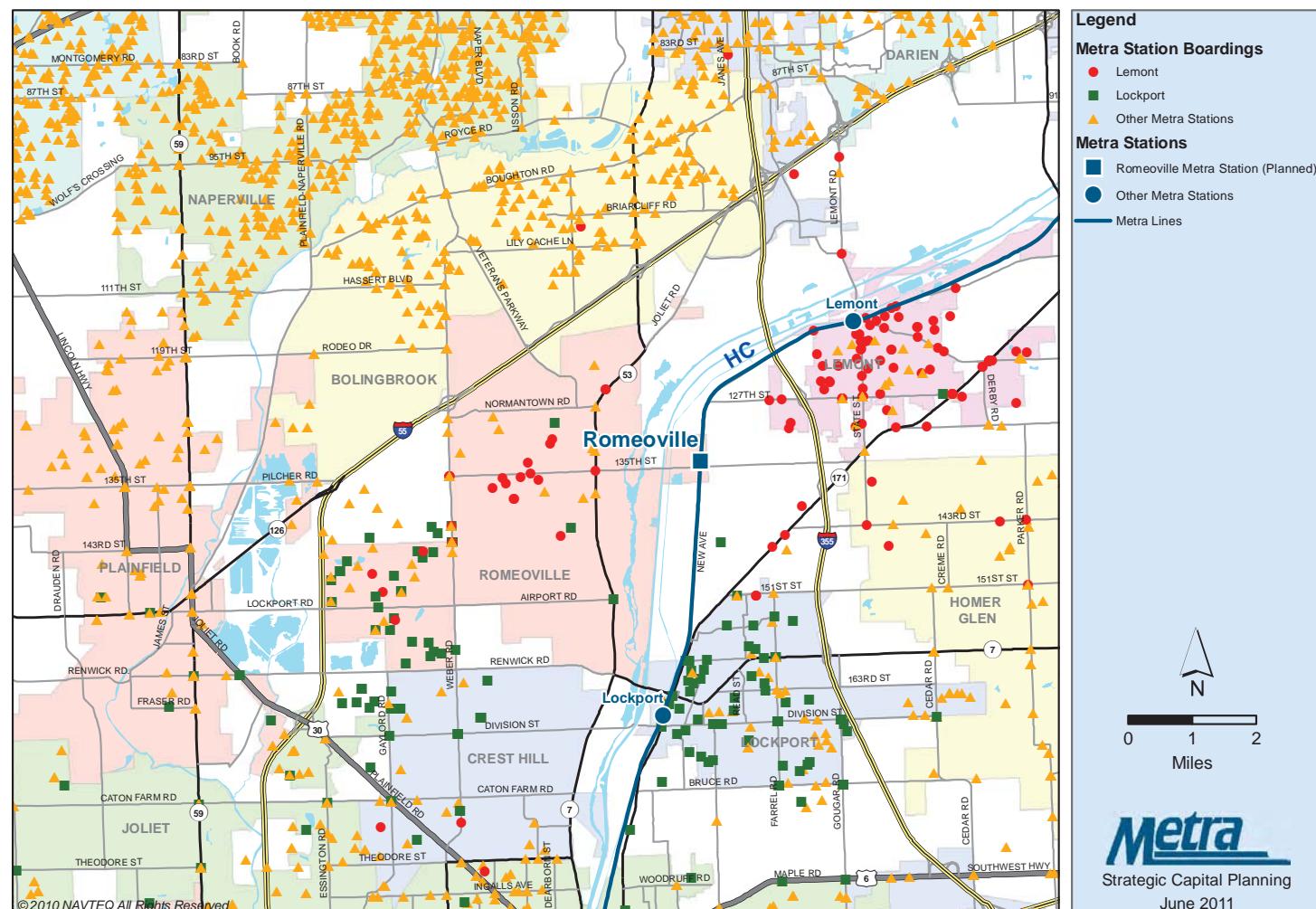


FIGURE 4-4
Origins of Metra Riders in the Romeoville Area

Heritage Corridor Improvements

The Heritage Corridor is a 38-mile commuter rail line serving southwest Cook 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. Work on the Heritage Corridor is defined in CMAP's Go To 2040 Plan as "fiscally unconstrained," meaning "projects... showed regional benefits, but are not far enough along in the study phase to have firm cost estimates, alignment, or limits."

IDOT has recently agreed to fund a line capacity study for the Heritage Corridor. This study is to be completed by the end of 2011 and is being completed by the CN. The intent 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. In addition to the Line Capacity Analysis Study, which is in progress by the CN and will be completed in 2012, several CREATE projects along this line will help facilitate expansion service.

High Speed Rail

The Chicago to St. Louis high speed rail corridor is 284 miles long and has distinct line configuration/ownership arrangements by line section. The Canadian National (CN) portion of the corridor between Joliet and Chicago (37 miles) is al-

ready equipped with two tracks. The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) portion of the corridor between Joliet and Godfrey (215 miles) is equipped with one track. The UPRR and Kansas City Southern (KCS) portion of the corridor between Godfrey and East St. Louis (29 miles) is equipped with one track for the first 10 miles, and the additional 19 miles is already equipped with two tracks. The Terminal Railroad Association (TRRA) portion of the corridor between East St. Louis and St. Louis, MO (3 miles) extends over the Mississippi River Bridge and into the St. Louis Terminal.

The overall purpose of this project is to enhance the passenger transportation network within the Chicago to St. Louis corridor, resulting in a more balanced use of the modal components. The current Chicago to St. Louis corridor operates on only one set of track; however, future visions for this corridor include the full build-out of an additional second track. The full build-out of an additional second track will be determined in the Tier 1 Study. The construction of this potential second track is not currently funded.

In 2010, Illinois received federal funding to complete a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Currently underway, this project is the next step in the Illinois High Speed Rail Chicago to St. Louis program. The 16-month Tier 1 EIS will identify and evaluate improvements needed to accommodate higher speed (125 mph maximum) trains and additional daily round trips. Higher speed trains would reduce travel time, increase service reliability and enhance safety. The Tier 1 EIS is separate from the construction currently taking place along the corridor.

The current corridor consists primarily of a single track that is shared by both freight and passenger rail service (Amtrak).

The Tier 1 EIS study area is shown in Figure 4-5. This study will determine routing alternatives between Chicago and Joliet, the Springfield area, and the approach to St. Louis. This corridor includes approximately 284 miles of primarily Union Pacific railroad track. Amtrak currently provides existing passenger service to nine counties serving the cities of Chicago, Summit, Joliet, Dwight, Pontiac, Bloomington-Normal, Lincoln, Springfield, Carlinville, Alton and St. Louis.

FIGURE 4-5
Tier 1 EIS Study Area for High Speed Rail



Sources: Illinois Department of Transportation; Midwest High-Speed Rail.



to the Metra Station. One potential option 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.

Pedestrian facilities vary within the Village of Romeoville. In the downtown area, sidewalks are generally available. Sidewalks are available along portions of IL Route 53, although not continuous. No sidewalks are located south of Belmont Drive. Sidewalks are located along the west side of IL Route 53 between Belmont Drive and Alexander Circle, generally along the frontage road. Sidewalks are sporadic between Alexander Circle and Normantown Road.

Intersections do not have marked crosswalks. The intersection of Normantown Road and IL Route 53 has large turning radii and numerous curb cuts on the south side of the intersection, creating many conflict points between pedestrians and vehicles. Signalized intersections are located at Normantown Road, Belmont Drive, and 135th Street, providing limited protected crossings for pedestrians.

Along 135th Street, a sidewalk is located on the south side of the roadway, ending at the Centennial Trail. There is no continuous sidewalk or path connection to the CITGO refinery.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Circulation

The Village developed a comprehensive Bicycle Trail Master Plan in 2006 that identified the type and location of all existing and future bicycles facilities. The Village does have existing bike paths throughout the community.

The Centennial Trail / I&M Canal Trail is a 12.5-mile regional trail of the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC). This trail extends between the Cook County Line and the City of Joliet along the Des Plaines River, I&M Canal, and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, connecting along 135th Street to the Village of Romeoville.

At 135th Street in Romeoville, the Centennial Trail / I&M Canal 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.

Starting in 2011, the FPDWC is developing the Veterans Memorial Trail 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. The project includes two segments: Segment I connects Centennial Trail to Bluff Road, and Segment II connects Bluff Road to International Parkway. Connections at 135th Street could connect either along 135th Street or north or south of the ComED right-of-way.

A Phase I engineering study for Segment I (to include connections to New Avenue) has received IDOT authorization and is currently underway, and will continue through mid-2013. As part of this project, a new bike path / pedestrian crossing is a proposed option to access the proposed Romeoville Metra Station.

In addition to this proposed bike path / pedestrian crossing, other options are being explored to provide access

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