

# Planning & Urban Design Assessment

## 3

### SECTION

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This section provides an overview of general planning and urban design elements that have a significant influence on the character and evolution of Downtown Romeoville and the Village's East Side. In particular, land use, zoning, environmental characteristics, utilities, sustainability, and community character are assessed in this section.

## Existing Land Use

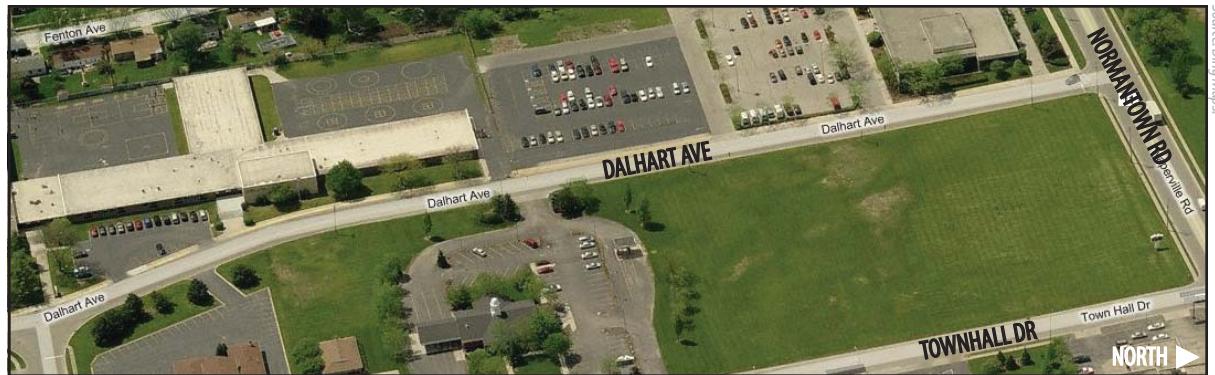
The existing land use composition of the overall Study Area is unique in that it is characterized by the various forms of settlement and development patterns that define Romeoville's history. While the Study Area boasts the original Romeo settlement, it also includes the expansive CITGO refinery site, suburban development patterns around the 135<sup>th</sup> Street / IL Route 53 intersection, and a non-traditional

downtown area that is more like a sprawling suburban retail strip center than a dense hub of the community's civic, retail, residential, and public uses.

Each of the two focus areas – Downtown Romeoville and the Village's East Side – has its own distinct existing land use composition as described below and illustrated in Figures 3-1 and 3-2.

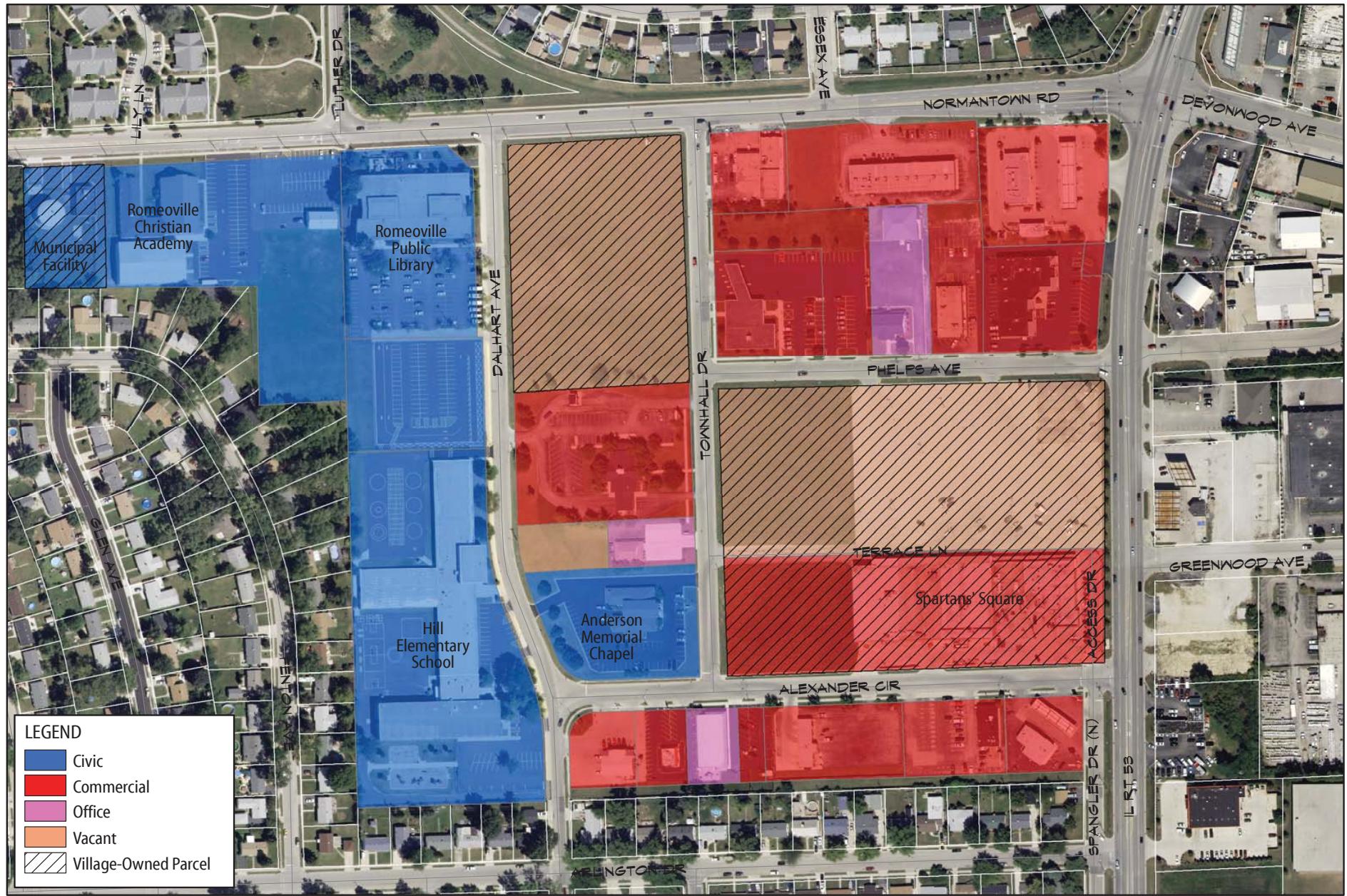
### Land Uses: Downtown

Downtown Romeoville is primarily characterized by commercial uses, including financial services, retail businesses, and a funeral home. The commercial core of Downtown Romeoville is more commonly referred to as Spartans' Square. Non-commercial uses, such as Romeoville Public Library, Hill Elementary School, and Romeoville Christian Academy,



Source: Bing Maps.

Hill Elementary School (top left) and Romeoville Public Library (top right) may serve as long-term fixtures in the downtown landscape. Harris Bank's iconic dome building (bottom center) may also serve a prominent function in downtown's evolution, even if the building tenant changes.



Source: Teska Associates, Inc.; field work conducted on July 15, 2011.

0 50 100 200  
Feet

FIGURE 3-1

## Existing Land Use Map | DOWNTOWN AREA

East Side Plan | Village of Romeoville, Illinois



FIGURE 3-2

## Existing Land Use Map | EAST SIDE TOD AREA

East Side Plan | Village of Romeoville, Illinois

are also located in Downtown Romeoville. Although some of the commercial spaces are occupied, many of the units are currently vacant and under Village ownership. There are also a few vacant parcels.

Most of the existing downtown uses do not relate well to each other, to the street, or to the pedestrian experience. Well-established neighborhoods to the north, west, and south maintain a substantial residential market for Downtown Romeoville. The absence of stormwater detention ponds in an area dominated by impervious surfaces has contributed to flooding problems during major storm events.

### Land Uses: East Side

Although the Village's East Side includes the original Romeo settlement, it did not become the Village's central focal point. Many of the original structures of the Romeo settlement remain today in a small enclave south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and east

of New Avenue. The CN Railroad cuts through the area following along New Avenue and providing the opportunity for the proposed Metra station and TOD. The CITGO refinery is the most prominent use, with its facilities situated north of 135<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides of the CN Railroad. Across the street from the main CITGO facilities sits additional parking and staging areas, as well as the proposed Metra site.

Big Run Golf Club is another prominent use at the southwest corner of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Smith Road. Significant open space and recreational areas include the Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve<sup>3</sup> and Isle a la Cache Museum<sup>4</sup> along the Des Plaines River, Bambrick Park<sup>5</sup> off of Smith Road, an equestrian facility along 143<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Long Run Seep Nature Preserve<sup>6</sup> around the 143<sup>rd</sup> Street/High Road intersection. Aside from a concrete business, Enbridge pipeline station, the Old Orchard Lane neighborhood, and a few other residential enclaves, the remainder of the East Side is comprised of general open space or vacant land.

Further west, Midwest Generation's Will County Generating Station has a major presence south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street along the western bank of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. The north side of 135<sup>th</sup> Street includes the trailhead for Centennial Trail (Schneider's Passage) and the trail's historic swing bridge. Within the Des Plaines River sits an island, which is home to Isle a la Cache Museum and a portion of the Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve. Vinckus Memorial Park lies on the river's western bank.

ComEd right-of-way corridors are another prominent use on the East Side, with the looming electrical transmission towers cascading along the rolling topography while also preserving open spaces for wildlife and potential recreational purposes.

<sup>3</sup> Owned and maintained by the Forest Preserve District of Will County.

<sup>4</sup> Owned and maintained by the Forest Preserve District of Will County.

<sup>5</sup> Owned and maintained by the Lemont Park District.

<sup>6</sup> Owned and maintained by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



Source: Bing Maps.

*Anchoring the southwest corner of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Smith Road, Big Run Golf Club provides not only recreational activity but also a pristine terrain that integrates well with the natural landscape. Whether it remains a golf course or lends itself for redevelopment, the property is a gem on the East Side.*

The D-D zoning district is intended to create an environment that reflects the characteristics typically displayed by a traditional downtown, particularly creating a distinctive, walkable neighborhood that features a variety and concentration of destinations and activities.

Contrasting from its current suburban-style physical layout, the D-D zoning district establishes standards for elements intended to make Downtown Romeoville more pedestrian-friendly and reflective of a traditional downtown.

## Zoning

The underlying zoning for both focus areas of the Study Area are described below and illustrated in Figure 3-3. While the descriptions below provide a snapshot of the current zoning situation in Downtown Romeoville and the East Side, the Zoning Code will be revisited as the East Side Plan continues to evolve throughout this planning process to ensure concepts and are supported by the Village's zoning regulations. If necessary, modifications to the Zoning Code may also be among the East Side Plan's recommendations to facilitate implementation of the final approved plan.

### Zoning: Downtown

In terms of zoning, Downtown Romeoville is designated as a Downtown District (D-D). The D-D District is intended to create an environment that reflects the characteristics typically displayed by a traditional downtown, particularly creating "a distinctive, walkable neighborhood that features a variety and concentration of valuable destinations and activities" that includes "a more viable, walkable shopping experience" offering additional residential opportunities and captivating and friendly public spaces with an attractive physical appearance.<sup>7</sup>



With a Downtown District (D-D) zoning designation, redevelopment efforts for Downtown Romeoville will focus on creating a built environment that resembles a more traditional downtown with buildings that relate well to the street and the pedestrian scale -- both of which are presently lacking.

To encourage a diverse mix of uses that define a typical downtown, the D-D District allows for a variety of permitted uses, including retail, dining and entertainment, service, office, personal care, institutional, and residential uses. A few uses are allowed as special uses, including apartments above ground floor commercial, multi-story residential condominiums, and pubs or restaurants that sell alcohol.

In addition to outlining permitted and special uses, the D-D District also defines physical attributes that can strongly influence how Downtown Romeoville is redeveloped. Today, Downtown Romeoville is defined by a more suburban layout exhibiting large building setbacks, expansive parking areas, and a general lack of cohesiveness among the existing sites, structures, and uses. Contrasting from this current physical layout, the D-D District establishes standards for the following elements that are intended to make Downtown Romeoville more pedestrian-friendly and reflective of a traditional downtown:

- **Building setbacks.** Downtown buildings "will be located close to the street to foster an animated, pedestrian-friendly environment."<sup>8</sup>
- **Building massing & form.** Downtown "shall be reminiscent of a traditional downtown with a variety of different stores and buildings constructed"<sup>9</sup> that shall have a strong relationship to the street and variations in the vertical and horizontal planes to reduce monotony.

7 Source: Section 159.76(A) of the Village of Romeoville Zoning Code.

8 Source: Section 159.76(C)(2) of the Village of Romeoville Zoning Code.

9 Source: Section 159.76(C)(3) of the Village of Romeoville Zoning Code.

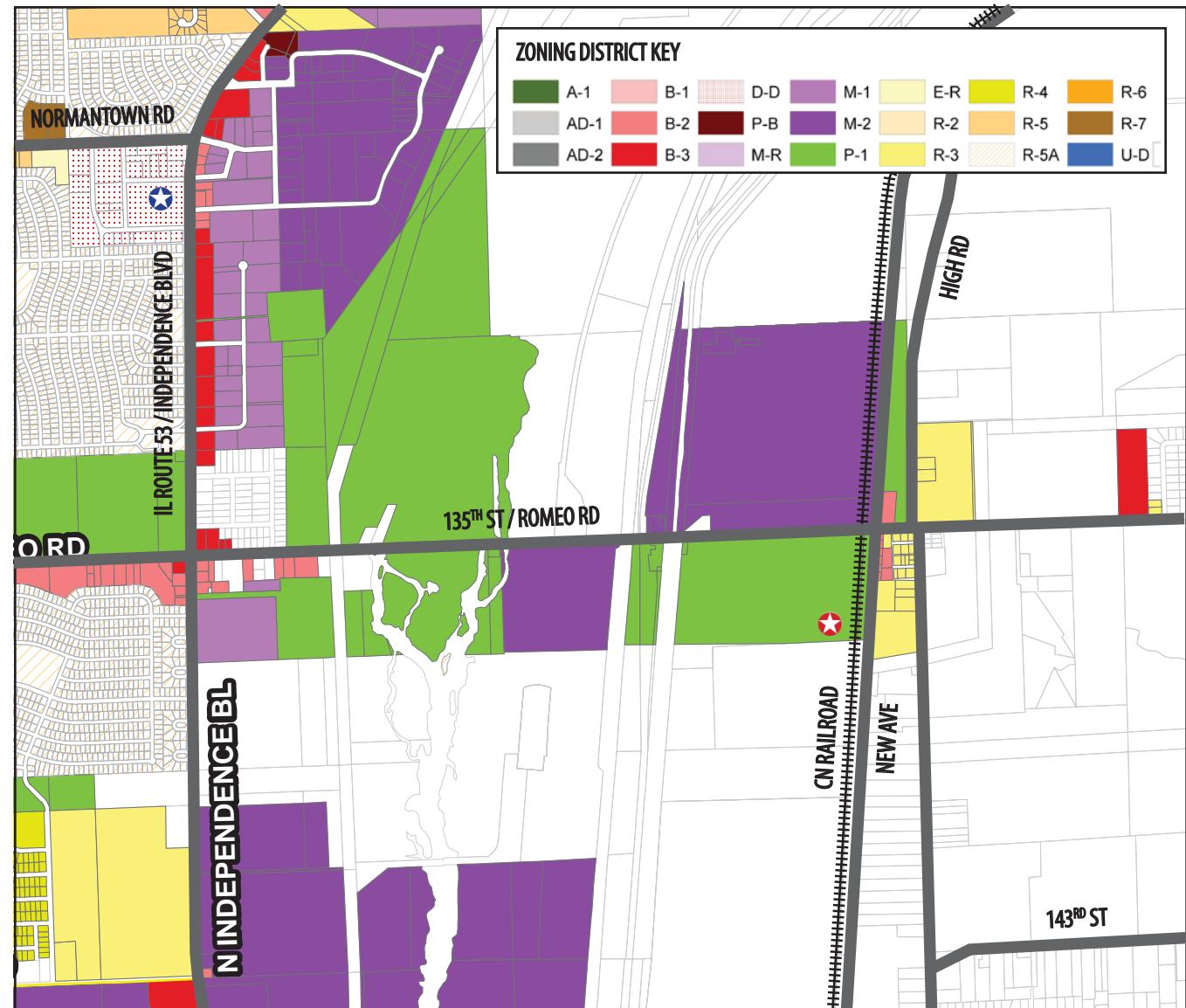
**ZONING DISTRICT KEY**

AS DEFINED BY THE 2010 OFFICIAL ZONING MAP

A-1	Agricultural
E-R	Single Family Estate Residential (1 ac)
R-1	Single Family Residential (20,000 sq ft)
R-2	Single Family Residential (15,000 sq ft)
R-3	Single Family Residential (10,000 sq ft)
R-4	Single Family Residential (8,000 sq ft)
R-5	Single Family Residential (6,500 sq ft)
R-5A	Single Family Residential (6,000 sq ft)
R-6	Attached Residential (5,500 sq ft)
R-7	General Residential (4,500 sq ft)
B-1	Local Shopping
B-2	Community Shopping
B-3	Highway / Regional Shopping
B-4	Automotive Service
P-1	Public / Private Land Conservation
P-B	Planned Business
D-D	Downtown
M-R	Manufacturing - Research
M-1	Light / Medium Manufacturing
M-2	Medium / Heavy Manufacturing
AD-1	Airport I
AD-2	Airport II
U-D	University
FP-1	Flood Plain Overlay

★ Proposed Metra Site

● Downtown Romeoville



Source: Village of Romeoville Official Zoning Map, 2010.

FIGURE 3-3

**Zoning Map | DOWNTOWN AREA & EAST SIDE TOD AREA**

East Side Plan | Village of Romeoville, Illinois

This planning process is intended to design a conceptual master plan for the East Side, which holds the potential to recommend certain parcels to be rezoned, designated for special uses, or designated as a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

**□ Architecture.** A variety of complimentary urban architectural themes shall be encouraged to create a distinct character for Downtown Romeoville. Buildings are also encouraged to exhibit 360° architecture, which is intended to provide attractive and quality physical appeal on all sides of the building.

**□ Pedestrian-friendly streetscape.** Elements such as ground floor orientation, sidewalk design, detailed building features, and pedestrian-scale elements (signage, lighting, landscaping, etc.) are encouraged to create a streetscape that is more inviting and usable by pedestrians and bicyclists.

While the existing Zoning Code is generally supportive of downtown redevelopment as outlined in the 2003 Downtown Master Plan, certain zoning regulations for the D-D District may need to be reviewed and possibly modified as a more detailed master plan is developed as part of this planning process and the concurrent master plan update (conducted by Hitchcock Design Group). Potential zoning modifications will be explored as recommendations are prepared for Downtown later in the planning process.

#### Zoning: East Side

As summarized in Figure 3-4, the East Side is characterized by a combination of zoning designations which are gener-

ally consistent with the underlying land use, but also portend potential land uses.

Overall, the existing zoning on Romeoville's East Side is generally defined by a piecemeal approach following the underlying land uses which developed over time as separate uses and not part of a cohesive master plan. This planning process, however, is intended to design a conceptual master plan for the East Side, particularly contemplating the optimal land uses and multi-modal transportation network for the area near the proposed Metra station. Concepts for the East Side hold the potential to recommend certain parcels to be rezoned, designated for special uses, or designated as a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Designation as a PUD is generally appropriate for a TOD, particularly as defined by Romeoville's Zoning Code, which intends a PUD to "encourage and promote a more creative, imaginative and an environmentally sensitive design for the development of land"<sup>10</sup> by allowing greater flexibility in applying the standards of conventional zoning.

#### Unincorporated Areas

A significant portion of the East Side is situated within unincorporated Will County (approximately 1,600 acres). An-

<sup>10</sup> Source: Section 159.150(B) of the Village of Romeoville Zoning Code.

nexion of unincorporated parcels will be worth exploring, as it would facilitate greater control of implementing the final approved East Side Plan and provision of municipal utilities and services. Annexation would also add the new properties to the municipal tax base in Romeoville.

With Lemont, Homer Glen, and Lockport bordering Romeoville's East Side to the north, east, and south, respectively, the Village will need to consult its boundary agreements and coordinate with these neighboring communities to determine the appropriate measures for annexation and proposed development of properties along shared boundaries. For example, most properties located south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street between New Avenue and Smith Road are within Lockport's jurisdiction as dictated by the boundary agreement.

In addition, Romeoville's Facilities Planning Area (FPA) boundary extends south to 143<sup>rd</sup> Street but excludes two parcels located at the immediate northwest corner of 143<sup>rd</sup> Street and Smith Road, which borders Lockport's jurisdiction. As a result, preparing development plans for these particular areas will require coordination between Romeoville and Lockport.



Source: Tekla Associates, Inc.

Many existing homes on the Village's East Side, including most in the Old Orchard neighborhood, are currently unincorporated.

**M-2: MEDIUM / HEAVY MANUFACTURING DISTRICT**

- EXISTING USES:** CITGO refinery; Midwest Generation coal-generated power station
- POTENTIAL:** While a zoning district that allows for medium/heavy manufacturing and similar industrial uses is atypical of an area slated for a future TOD, the M-2 designations will remain as is for the CITGO refinery and the Midwest Generation facility as long as both businesses stay at their present locations, as both are viable uses in the Study Area and contribute significantly to the local employment base. Aside from these two businesses, no new properties are anticipated to carry the M-2 designation.

**P-1: PUBLIC / PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

- EXISTING USES:** Vacant parcels, recreational areas, open space, or land under Forest Preserve jurisdiction
- POTENTIAL:** Vacant parcels, including the proposed Metra site and surrounding area, that hold the potential to be developed will be considered for rezoning to a more suitable zoning designation to be more appropriately reflective of the new land uses. Properties that are presently utilized for recreation and active open space, particularly along the Des Plaines River and I&M Canal, will maintain the P-1 designation. Even new uses may continue to maintain the P-1 designation; for example, the rural nature of the East Side and an existing equestrian center along 143<sup>rd</sup> Street may indicate the potential for other equestrian-focused uses, such as riding stables, which are permitted in a P-1 zone.

**R-3: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (MAXIMUM 10,000 SQ FT LOT SIZE)**

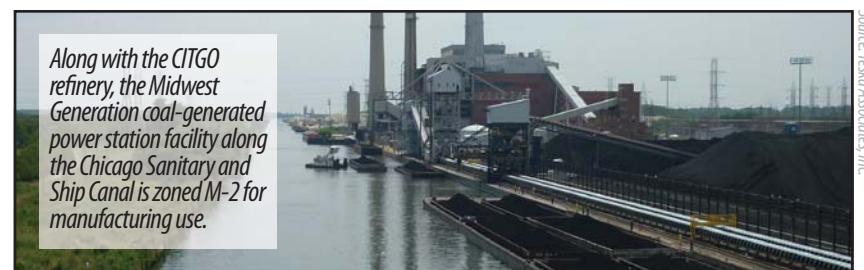
- EXISTING USES:** Existing residences, including those within the original Romeo settlement
- POTENTIAL:** An R-3 District generally allows for greater opportunities for open space, recreational facilities, and pedestrian access, which are all features that are fitting for an innovative TOD that respects the unique qualities of the East Side. Shifting from the traditional high density, mixed use TOD, Romeoville's TOD would still focus on the proposed transit facilities but also encourage conserving open spaces, creating pedestrian and bicycle connections, and providing for increased housing opportunities to support transit. While maintaining the R-3 designation would ensure compatibility with existing residential uses, there is potential to explore other residential zoning designations to support varying residential types that are appropriate for the area and can be supported by the market.

**B-2: COMMUNITY SHOPPING DISTRICT**

- EXISTING USES:** A few parcels at the northeast and southeast corners of the 135<sup>th</sup> Street/ New Avenue intersection
- POTENTIAL:** A CITGO gas station is currently situated at the northeast corner, while a combination of undeveloped parcels and single family residential homes are located at the southeast corner. As defined in the Zoning Code, the B-2 designation is appropriate for this location as it provides for commercial uses at a major intersection. The intersection will become even more prominent as it is most proximate to the proposed Metra site, creating potential opportunities for commercial businesses that cater to commuters. The B-2 designation may also apply to other areas on the East Side, such as the southwest corner of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and New Avenue, which is even more proximate to the proposed Metra site. The 135<sup>th</sup> Street/Smith Road intersection also holds the potential for commercial uses and the B-2 zoning designation, particularly as the eastern gateway into the TOD area and the Village as a whole.

**B-3: HIGHWAY / REGIONAL SHOPPING DISTRICT**

- EXISTING USES:** A few parcels at the northeast and southeast corners of the 135<sup>th</sup> Street/ New Avenue intersection
- POTENTIAL:** While the B-3 designation may be appropriate given the size of the parcel and its location along a major road, the future zoning designation of this parcel may be reassessed based on the conceptual development plan to be recommended for the East Side. It is possible that the B-3 designation will remain as is; however, rezoning may be needed to fit the future land use strategy, particularly as it relates to developing the East Side as a TOD.



Source: Village of Romeoville Official Zoning Map & Zoning Code, 2010.

FIGURE 3-4

**Zoning Designations | EAST SIDE TOD AREA**

## Environmental Characteristics

Whereas Downtown Romeoville is mostly built out with intentions to redevelop, the East Side is partly built out with greenfields that represent potential areas for new development. However, whether its redevelopment or new development, the environmental characteristics of each focus area will play a critical role in assessing how Downtown Romeoville and the East Side will each evolve.

### Topography

Downtown Romeoville has a relatively even topography, save for a few high spots along Normantown Road. Flooding has become an issue at certain spots within Downtown Romeoville, although this may be less an issue with topography and more an issue with the adequacy of an aging utility infrastructure and an extensive amount of impervious surfaces. However, topography may play a role in deter-

mining the optimal locations for any new stormwater management elements, such as detention ponds and updated stormwater pipelines.

Topography is more prominent on the East Side, with the most substantial topographic change sloping upward from west to east around the 135<sup>th</sup> Street/New Avenue intersection. A significant bluff runs along the east side of New Avenue, creating a major drop-off in topography and dramatic westward views. The landscape is defined by rolling topography in the area located between New Avenue and Smith Road. A series of creeks that run through the area located south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and east of New Avenue create a range of bluffs that progressively raise the topography in a southeasterly direction, creating remarkable views of the overall landscape looking north and east. The rolling topography near the southwest corner of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Smith Road were cleverly integrated into the golf course

design of the Big Run Golf Club. Although not an intense change in slope, the topography along the railroad tracks is significant enough to create a visual contrast relative to the proposed Metra site to the west, which would create some unique views between the tracks and the Metra station and commuter parking lot.

The significant topographic changes on the East Side will be a major factor in developing conceptual plans to maximize site lines at high points, identify stormwater management facilities at low points, and incorporate topographic attributes into site designs. Integrating the rolling topography and its spectacular views will play a vital part in maintaining the pastoral character of Romeoville's East Side, even as it introduces sensibly designed development into the landscape to support the proposed TOD.



The rolling topography that defines the East Side is quite apparent at various points, including along roadways like High Road (left), within the Big Run Golf Club property (center), and along the ComEd right-of-way (right). Topography will play a critical role in how the East Side evolves.



Source: Telsa Associates, Inc.

The rolling topography of the East Side is prominent along this west-bound stretch of 135<sup>th</sup> Street between High Road and the CN Railroad. Along with the dense tree cover, the bluff created by this topographic rise helps separate the CITGO refinery from the rest of the East Side.

## Water Elements

The East Side is defined by various water elements. Although located outside the primary East Side focus area, the Des Plaines River is the most prominent water element. Given its distance from the Metra site, the Des Plaines River will have a limited impact on how the TOD area will evolve. However, the river provides opportunities for trail and recreational linkages to the TOD. These trail linkages to, from, and across the Des Plaines River may also present opportunities to form the broader link between the East Side and Downtown Romeoville.

Two man-made water elements -- the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and I&M Canal -- both run in a north-south direction before extending eastward around the CITGO refinery. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is presently utilized for water-based transportation purposes, generally for the movement of barges and other commercial/industrial freight. Although transportation operations ceased in 1933, the I&M Canal still remains as a significant element in the Chicago region's landscape, particularly offering a historic link to the past and opportunities for recreational trails along the canal channels. The Centennial Trail/I&M Canal Trail runs along the west side of the I&M Canal providing a 12.5-mile path stretching from Joliet north to the Will County/Cook County border.

Bruce Lake, formerly known as Romeo Beach, is located immediately west of the proposed Metra site and east of the I&M Canal. A few small ponds are interspersed throughout the area.

A series of creeks run through the East Side, some of which create a range of bluffs that progressively elevate the area's

Existing and future trail linkages along local water elements, such as the I&M Canal and Des Plaines River, present opportunities to form the broader link between the East Side and Downtown Romeoville.

topography in a southeasterly direction and produce dramatic views of the overall landscape to the north and east. Long Run Creek is the most prominent creek because it not only spans across multiple communities, but also feeds into the large wetland area located south of the Metra site between the two railroads. This is significant because this particular wetland area serves as a conservation area for the endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly.

These water elements offer the potential to integrate well-designed water-related features (e.g. bridges, culverts,

docks, educational facilities, waterfront trails and trail connections, etc.) into the site designs for the proposed TOD and East Side. Proposed site designs shall also carefully consider how these water elements will be protected, whether they are enhanced with water features or left as is.

Water elements are illustrated in the Environmental Features Map in Figure 3-5. No major water elements are located in Downtown Romeoville.



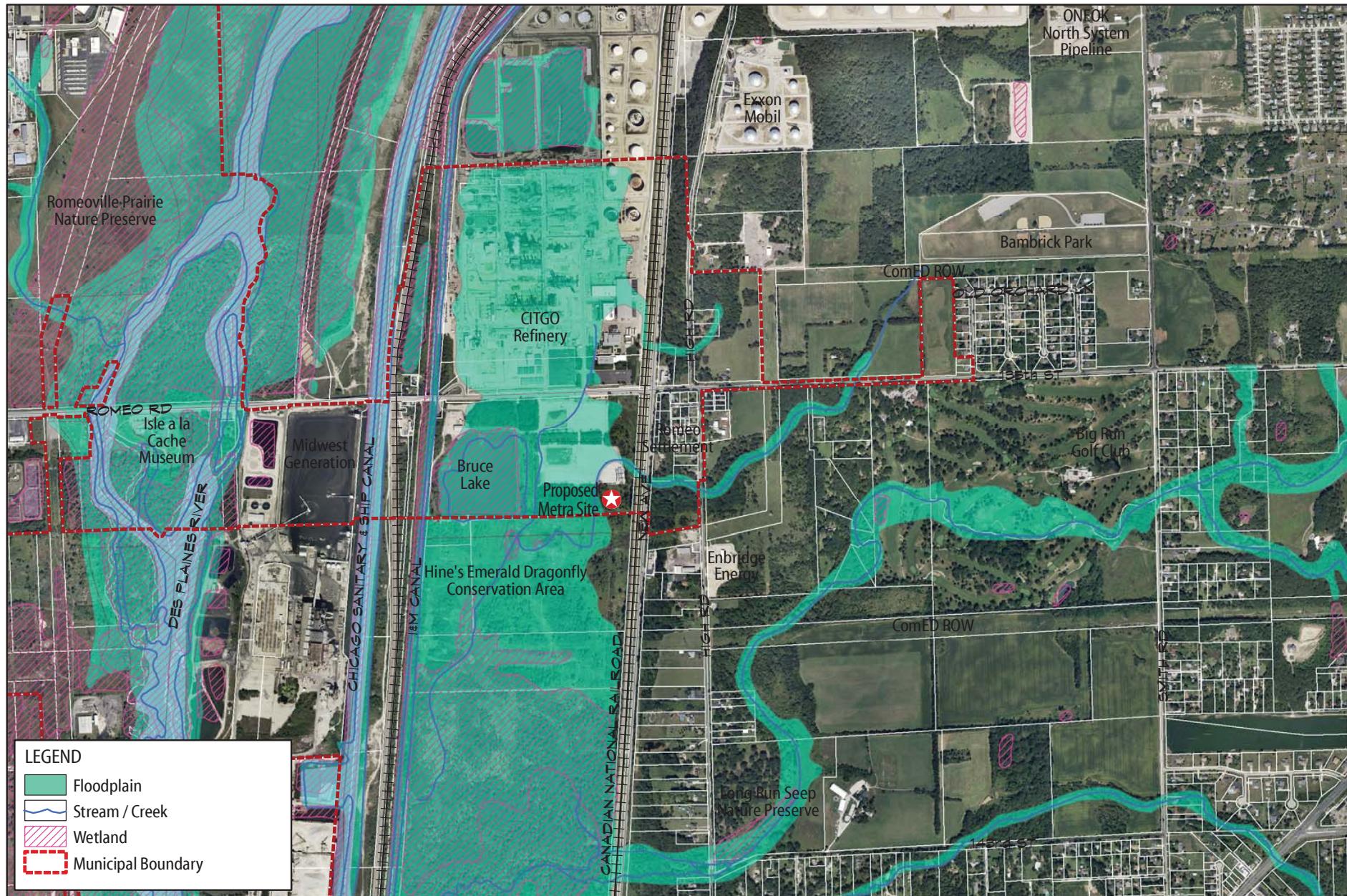
Source: Tecta Associates, Inc.



Source: Tecta Associates, Inc.

*The Des Plaines River flows along the western edge of the East Side. The natural landscape with native plantings around the riverside provides a vivid contrast to the more intensive industrial uses nearby.*

*The I&M Canal (above) is one of two canals traversing through the East Side, with the other being the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Though no longer active, the I&M Canal offers a recreational trail along its banks.*



Source: Teska Associates, Inc.; field work conducted on July 15, 2011.

0 250 500 1,000

Feet



FIGURE 3-5  
Environmental Features Map

## Wetlands

Large wetland areas appear along the Des Plaines River, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and I&M Canal. As previously described, the large wetland area located south of the Metra site between the two railroads is highly significant to the region, as it is designated as a conservation area for the Hine's emerald dragonfly, which thrive in the marshy conditions created by wetlands. A few smaller wetlands are scattered throughout the area east of the CN Railroad. Many of the wetlands are located near local streams and within floodplains.

Large or small, wetlands provide vital benefits to both the natural and built environments, reinforcing the need to carefully consider how they will be integrated into the design and function of the proposed TOD and East Side.

Wetlands are illustrated in the Environmental Features Map in Figure 3-5. No wetlands are located in Downtown Romeoville.

## Floodplain

Floodplains are rather extensive on Romeoville's East Side as they are generally formed by the outflow of local wetlands, creeks, the Des Plaines River, and the two canals. Floodplains will need to be carefully taken into account as conceptual site designs are considered for the proposed TOD and East Side. In many cases, areas covered by floodplain will best be suited for non-structural development, such as parking, outdoor recreation, and open space conservation.

Floodplains are illustrated in the Environmental Features Map in Figure 3-5. No floodplains are located in Downtown Romeoville.

Big or small, wetlands provide vital benefits to both the natural and built environments, reinforcing the need to carefully consider how they will be integrated into the design and function of the proposed TOD and East Side.

## Tree Masses

Significant tree masses characterize various sections of the East Side of Romeoville. While tree preservation will be of utmost importance when considering conceptual site designs for the TOD and East Side, there may also be opportunities to judiciously remove unhealthy trees and replace them with new trees or other landscaping.

No significant tree masses are located downtown.

## Hine's Emerald Dragonfly

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Hine's emerald dragonfly was identified as an endangered

species in 1995 and steps are being taken to protect and enhance their wetland habitats, which have been compromised by urban and industrial development. The impacts of pesticides and pollutants on wetlands and the deteriorating quality of groundwater also imperil the dragonfly's capacity to breed, grow, and develop.

The Hine's emerald dragonfly typically seeks calcareous (high in calcium carbonate) spring-fed marshes, wetlands, and sedge meadows overlaying dolomite bedrock. The quarries and wetlands located on Romeoville's East Side are thus an attractive environment for the dragonfly to establish its habitat. The map excerpts in Figure 3-6 illustrate



The tree masses located along High Road towards New Avenue and the CN Railroad create a dense natural buffer between the CITGO refinery and the rest of the East Side, which rises atop a bluff along High Road and weaves among rolling topography progressing eastward.

the general areas on Romeoville's East Side that have been identified as habitat restoration areas for the Hine's emerald dragonfly. The habitat restoration area that is most proximate to the Study Area is located immediately south of the proposed Metra site between the I&M Canal and the CN Railroad.

The map excerpts in Figure 3-6 also illustrate the coverage of the broader habitat conservation planning (HCP) areas and groundwater recharge and buffer zones, as coordinated by the Biodiversity Project<sup>11</sup> and Applied Ecological Services<sup>12</sup>, Inc. and in partnership with the Village of Romeoville. In particular, Downtown Romeoville is located within the

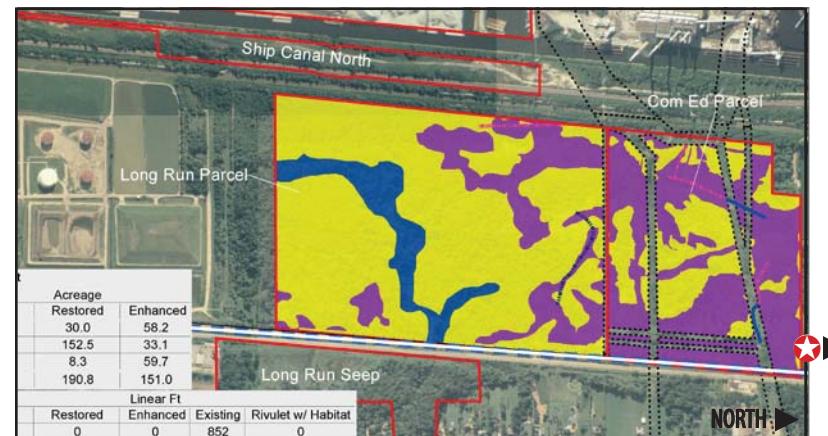
<sup>11</sup> The Biodiversity Project is a Chicago-based organization that protects the environment through advocacy, public education, outreach, and action.

<sup>12</sup> Applied Ecological Services, Inc. is a Wisconsin-based ecological services firm that develops land use solutions that properly balance culture, cost, and ecology.



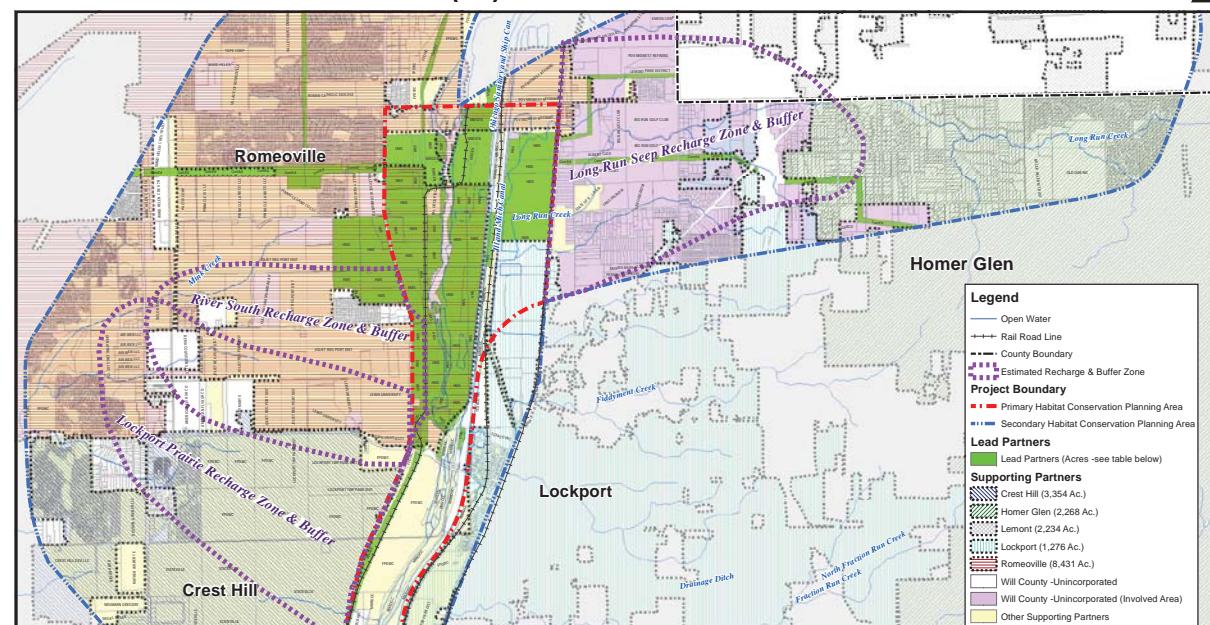
The Hine's emerald dragonfly makes its home in Romeoville.

#### DRAGONFLY HABITAT RESTORATION AREAS



The map excerpt to the left illustrates the dragonfly habitat restoration areas designated for Romeoville's East Side (yellow, blue, and purple shading). This particular area is located south of the proposed Metra station site, which is marked by the red star. The extensive wetland coverage in this area creates an ideal environment for the Hine's emerald dragonfly to thrive.

#### COVERAGE OF HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANNING (HCP) AREAS TO PROTECT DRAGONFLY HABITATS



Source: Habitat Conservation Planning Area, Applied Ecological Services, Inc., 2010.

**FIGURE 3-6**  
**Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) Area | HINE'S EMERALD DRAGONFLY**

secondary habitat conservation planning (HCP) area but outside any recharge and buffer zone. The East Side is split between the primary and secondary HCP areas and is mostly covered by the Long Run Seep recharge and buffer zone. The groundwater recharge and buffer zones generally indicate the areas within which Best Management Practices for shallow groundwater well recharge should be pursued.

As TOD development concepts are considered for the East Side, carefully consideration will be made to ensure the protection of the habitat restoration areas for the Hine's emerald dragonfly.

## Utilities

The availability and quality of the Village's water and wastewater utilities infrastructure varies between Downtown Romeoville and the East Side. Downtown Romeoville is served by an established but aging utilities infrastructure. On the other hand, the East Side is only partially built out and is presently served by private utilities, with the exception of limited stormwater infrastructure along 135<sup>th</sup> Street.

Below is a description of the water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities infrastructure serving the Study Area. The presence and impact of other non-municipal pipelines are also described.

<sup>13</sup> Source: Village of Romeoville 2010 Water Quality Report; Prepared by the Village Public Works Department, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Village of Romeoville 2010 Report on Water and Wastewater Service to the East Side of the Facilities Planning Area; Prepared by Robinson Engineering, September 2010.

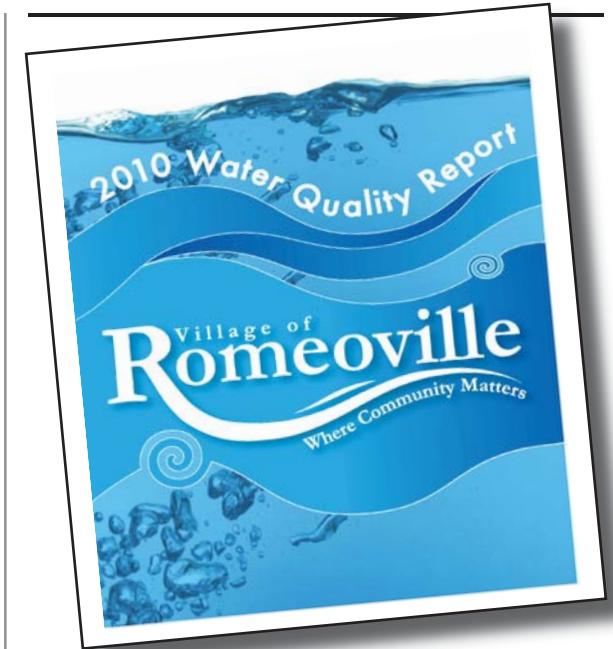
### Water Utilities

Downtown Romeoville is located within the Village's Water Plant Service Area #2 (Normantown)<sup>13</sup>, which provides an established water utility infrastructure. However, much like the building stock and site design in Downtown Romeoville, the water utilities are aging and were designed for the present configuration of downtown structures and properties. As redevelopment scenarios are considered for Downtown Romeoville, the configuration and capacity of existing water utilities will be considered to ensure a revitalized downtown is adequately provided with municipal water service.

Municipal water service serving Romeoville's East Side is limited. As proposed in the Village's 2010 Report on Water and Wastewater Service to the East Side of the Facilities Planning Area<sup>14</sup>, water service to the East Side may expand, including new 8- and 12-inch water mains extending east to Smith Road, north towards the I-355 overpass at New Avenue (to the county line), and south to 143<sup>rd</sup> Street. In addition, two alternative options were proposed for a new elevated water tank and well house. Additional water utilities may need to be considered as development concepts for the East Side are evaluated.

### Wastewater Utilities

Similar to water utilities, Downtown Romeoville is served by an established but aging wastewater utility infrastructure, particularly designed for the present configuration of downtown structures and properties. As redevelopment scenarios are considered for Downtown Romeoville, the configuration and capacity of existing wastewater utilities will be considered to ensure a revitalized downtown is adequately provided with municipal wastewater service.



In addition to maintaining the community's water utility facilities, the Village annually reports on water quality in Romeoville. Future development of the East Side may require new areas to assess and serve.

Like water service, municipal wastewater service serving Romeoville's East Side is limited. The Village's 2010 Report on Water and Wastewater Service to the East Side of the Facilities Planning Area<sup>15</sup> indicates that Romeoville's existing wastewater treatment facility will likely have sufficient permitted remaining capacity to handle the 20-year project

<sup>15</sup> Source: Village of Romeoville 2010 Report on Water and Wastewater Service to the East Side of the Facilities Planning Area; Prepared by Robinson Engineering, September 2010.



As new development is considered for the East Side, water and wastewater utilities will need to be extended to properly serve new uses. For example, a potential force main along 135<sup>th</sup> Street would link to the Village's existing wastewater treatment facility near the Des Plaines River.

flows within the entire FPA, accounting for development growth scenarios defined in the report. However, additional capacity may need to be added to the wastewater treatment facility to adequately handle operational remaining capacity<sup>16</sup> as the East Side builds out over time.

Even if the Water and Wastewater Service Report indicated no need for additional capacity, the capacity of existing wastewater utilities on the East Side should still be monitored as development concepts for the East Side are assessed.

<sup>16</sup> Operational remaining capacity is typically the better indicator as it is based on actual hydraulic and organic loadings on the wastewater treatment facility and thus reflects actual capacity; on the other hand, permitted operational remaining capacity relates to capacity levels permitted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). [Source: Village of Romeoville 2010 Report on Water and Wastewater Service to the East Side of the Facilities Planning Area; Prepared by Robinson Engineering, September 2010.]

To accommodate potential development growth on the East Side, the Water and Wastewater Service Report recommends potential expansion of wastewater service to the East Side, including new drainage interceptors. Three options are proposed to convey and treat wastewater from the East Side as new development justifies the cost:

- **Option 1.** Install a new 16-inch force main is proposed along 135<sup>th</sup> Street that would extend west from a proposed lift station to the Village's existing wastewater treatment facility, which is located near the southeast corner of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and IL Route 53.
- **Option 2.** Establish a new wastewater treatment facility near the natural drainage point near the I&M Canal, which would preclude the need for any new lift stations on the East Side.
- **Option 3.** Convey wastewater to the City of Lockport for treatment, which may not be a viable option due to issues relating to availability of a nearby treatment facility, need for additional infrastructure, and related costs. In the end, costs may make Options 1 or 2 more feasible.

Property acquisition would be necessary for either Option 1 or 2 to establish the new facilities. The Water and Wastewater Service Report ultimately recommends Option 1 as the most cost effective solution which minimizes additional infrastructure construction and utilizes existing available wastewater treatment capacity.

### **Stormwater Management**

The 2003 Downtown Master Plan documented the stormwater management issues that have troubled Downtown Romeoville. Built decades before contemporary stormwater management techniques and best practices, downtown infrastructure has constrained abilities to properly handle stormwater. The extensive amount of parking with impervious surfaces left unmitigated by the lack of landscaping also contributes to the volume of stormwater runoff generated by downtown uses, particularly the Spartan Square site.

As the downtown master plan update, which is being conducted by Hitchcock Design Group concurrently with the East Side Plan, develops new conceptual site designs for Downtown Romeoville, modern stormwater management techniques will be explored to curtail flooding problems like

To accommodate potential development growth on the East Side, the the Village's Water and Wastewater Service Report recommends potential expansion of wastewater service to the East Side.

the major flooding event in July 2003. Some stormwater management best practices also offer the added value of beautifying the built environment with attractive landscaping and better engineered sites.

Since the East Side is not built out to the extent of the downtown area, stormwater management planning must be integrated with long range plans. The extensive amount of water bodies, wetlands, and floodplains provide natural opportunities for better stormwater management. As development concepts are considered for the TOD and East Side, stormwater management best practices will need to be integrated into site designs to minimize flooding problems in an organized manner.

Encouraging stormwater management practices that specifically replenish groundwater on the East Side will also provide the added benefit of improving the natural habitat of the Hine's emerald dragonfly.



*The Enbridge Energy Lockport Station, which is located along High Road near the original Romeo settlement, is one of the national companies that operate pipelines that run through the East Side.*

## Pipelines

In addition to water and wastewater utility lines, an extensive series of pipelines traverse through Romeoville conveying gas and liquid materials to users within the Village and well beyond as pass-through connectors navigating across the continent. The map in Figure 3-7 illustrates the network of gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines that traverse the Study Area. With the CITGO refinery and a few other industrial users on Romeoville's East Side, the network of pipelines is more substantial to serve the specific production and operational needs of these commercial and industrial users.

Development concepts for the East Side will need to carefully consider the location of certain potential uses, particularly to ensure any necessary excavation will not have adverse impacts on any pipelines. Since the map in Figure 3-7

does not depict gas gathering and gas distribution systems that serve specific properties, a more detailed survey of the pipeline network would need to be conducted to identify the location and content of all pipelines.

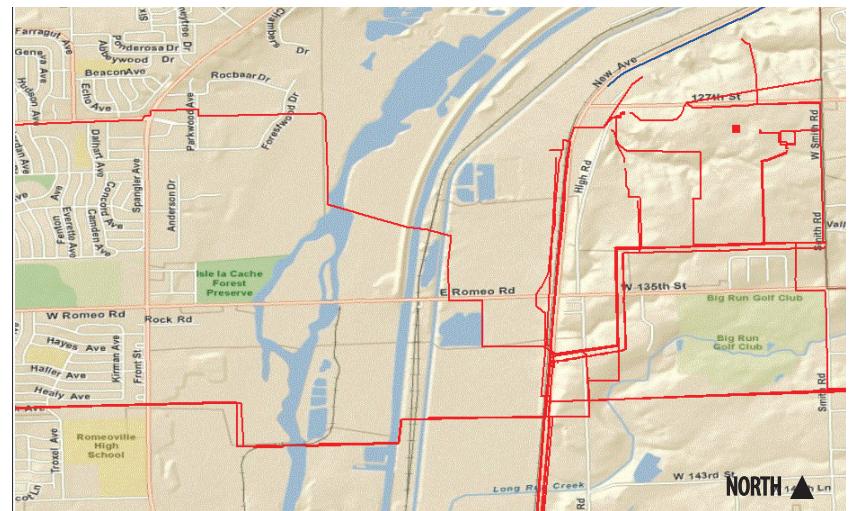
## Other Utilities

Electrical transmission and telephone lines that serve both Downtown Romeoville and the East Side remain above ground and generally run along roadways. Although these utility lines serve functional purposes, they also create visual clutter along the streetscape. Urbanized areas have transitioned to placing electrical and telephone lines below ground, especially bundling them along the same underground channels that also carry telecommunication lines such as broadband cable. Burying electrical and telephone lines should be considered to not only modernize the utility transmission system but also clear the streetscape wherever-

### MAP KEY

- Gas Transmission Pipeline
- Hazardous Liquid Pipeline
- LNG Plants
- Breakout Tanks

*Source: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 2011.*



**FIGURE 3-7**  
**National Pipelines Map**

Sustainability is an emerging topic that touches almost every facet of community life and development. Romeoville has an extraordinary opportunity to not only create two special places downtown and on the East Side, but also design them in such a way that links them and intrinsically encourages sustainable living.

er possible to provide increased space for other streetscape elements such as signage, landscaping, lighting, and enhanced pedestrian amenities.

The larger ComEd electrical transmission towers traverse along wide right-of-way corridors to the north and south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street. As they maintain open spaces and follow along the rolling topography of the East Side, the ComEd right-of-way corridors provide excellent opportunities to introduce new trails.



While the ComEd electrical transmission lines dot the East Side landscape, the ComEd right-of-way also creates the opportunity for establishing trail connections, particularly to the proposed Metra station.

## Sustainability

From setting up an electronics recycling program to adopting its Open Space and Park Land Acquisition Plan, Romeoville is a progressive-minded community when it comes to issues relating to sustainability. Whether it's safeguarding the environment or taking household measures to lower energy costs, every step counts.

The strategies that will result from this planning process to revitalize Downtown Romeoville and prepare conceptual plans for the East Side hold the potential to build upon the community's emerging culture of making Romeoville's built and natural environments more sustainable.

The East Side Plan can propose inventive strategies that incorporate sustainability measures into a revitalized downtown and a unique development centered on the East Side. While traditional measures such as instituting best practices in stormwater management and encouraging green buildings will be embraced, innovative strategies that forge connections between Downtown and the East Side.

In addition, developing a creative TOD that breaks the traditional mold may change the way people view livable com-

munities served by a fully integrated multi-modal transportation network which, in turn, enhance sustainability.

Sustainable development will be the chief common goal shared by the efforts to revitalize Downtown Romeoville and prepare development concepts for the East Side. Environmental integrity, economic prosperity, and community livability are the principal components of sustainable development, as outlined in Figure 3-8.

Sustainability is an emerging topic that touches almost every facet of community life and development. Romeoville has an extraordinary opportunity to not only create two special places downtown and on the East Side, but also design them in such a way that links them and intrinsically encourages sustainable living.



Source: Testa Associates, Inc.

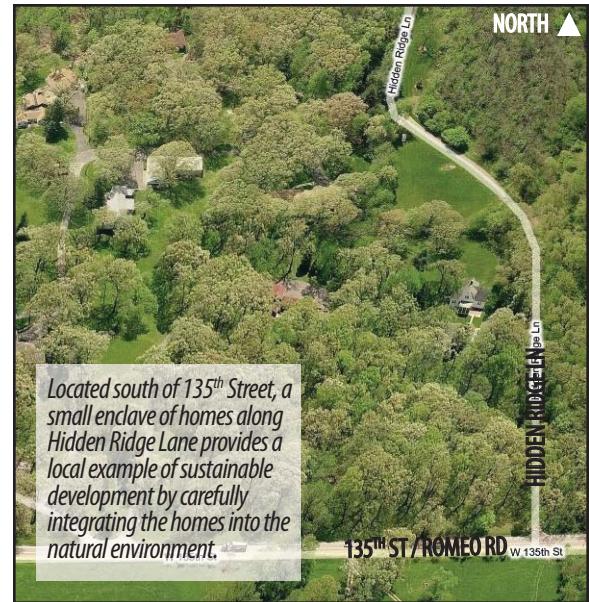
Landscaping helps manage stormwater on sites with extensive amounts of impervious surfaces. Although the parkway along IL Route 53 is laid with grass and some plantings, additional sustainability measures are encouraged for Downtown Romeoville.

FIGURE 3-8

**Components of Sustainable Development**

- **Environmental integrity** involves protection and improvement of the natural environment by enhancing it and increasing biodiversity through sound decisions in land use, development, and stewardship practices.
- **Economic prosperity** is enhanced by supporting cost effective conservation development, improving stormwater management, and maintaining water quality, which will enhance community well being and development prospects.
- **Community livability** ensures mobility and access to employment, recreational, education, and shopping opportunities, particularly when conservation development strikes a balance between the natural and built environments.

Source: "Conservation Development in Practice," The Nature Conservancy and Chicago Wilderness.

**Community Character**

Just as important as developing structures and creating public spaces, incorporating community character into the design of these structures and spaces ensures that Downtown and the East Side truly reflect the distinct characteristics that define Romeoville and enrich its identity. Community character traits can range from physical attributes (e.g. rolling topography and pastoral nature east of New Avenue) to local cultural attitudes (e.g. growing emphasis on sustainability). Recognizing these traits that shape Romeoville's community character will be valuable to the planning and design of development concepts for key sites, public spaces, gateways, streetscape, signage, architecture, and other urban design elements.

Prominent community character traits in Romeoville are described below.

## History

From the original Romeo settlement to the I&M Canal Passage to Bruce Lake (formerly Romeo Beach), Romeoville – particularly the East Side – maintains various linkages to its storied past. In addition to preserving physical historical elements, new development can reflect certain historic attributes, such as architectural patterns and industrial heritage of the two canals.

Harkening to Romeoville's past can also be applied to the revitalization efforts of the downtown area. Historic Route 66 is also part of Romeoville's history, as the renowned roadway is now present day IL Route 53. Specifically, IL Route 53 follows old Route 66 south of the first junction with I-55 towards Joliet. Some businesses in Downtown Romeoville reference Route 66 in their signage and theme.



*The I&M Canal Passage provides a link to Romeoville's past.*

## Industrial Heritage

As a subset of the Village's history, the industrial heritage of Romeoville has always been a prominent facet of the community's identity. From the historic use of the network of railroads and shipping canals to the excavation of local quarries to the crude oil refinement at the CITGO facilities today, industry has traditionally been a major strength of the local economy. Romeoville's industrial past and present can be encapsulated in historical tributes or informational kiosks along the local trail network. And while the future may not necessarily encourage the types of industry that characterize Romeoville's past, new businesses downtown and on the East Side may reflect the Village's capacity to be a strong employment center that innovatively connects people to jobs, businesses to resources, and customers to products and services.



*The shipping canal is a lasting reminder of the local industrial heritage.*

## Rolling Topography

The varying topography creates scenic vistas and unique site design of properties on the East Side. While the views of open spaces and waterways create appealing natural backdrops, the integration of built structures atop high points, into hillsides, and within valleys can also produce attractive views when designed properly. As a result, the topographic profile of the East Side will influence site design concepts for the East Side. The topography in Downtown Romeoville is generally level; however, there are some grade changes, particularly along IL Route 53, which may factor into site redevelopment.



*The rolling topography is one of the East Side's most prominent features.*

While new development relating to the TOD will have an impact on the existing pastoral nature, land planning approaches such as conservation design are often lauded for their abilities to be highly conscious of the natural environment

### Pastoral Nature

Even as parts of the East Side have evolved to become an industrial center accessing the railroads and canals, the far eastern portions of the East Side have generally maintained a pastoral nature with the rolling topography, green open spaces, natural waterways, and tree masses concealing interspersed private homes. While new development relating to the TOD will have an impact on the existing pastoral nature, land planning approaches such as conservation design are often lauded for their abilities to be highly conscious of the natural environment by conserving the most sensitive elements and integrating them into site designs where appropriate. The East Side has struck a fine balance thus far with heavy industrial uses integrated into the present rural setting; creative site design can maintain that fine balance as development concepts will be considered for the proposed TOD.



*Many properties on the East Side maintain a pastoral quality.*

### Nature Conservation

Nature conservation is a strong characteristic of Romeoville and the region. In addition to the broad coverage of the Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve, much of the land along the Des Plaines River and the two shipping canals has been preserved to sustain their natural qualities. For example, the Isle a la Cache Museum is situated in a natural setting with native plantings along the river banks. The Village is also a member of the partnership that strives to protect the endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly by providing for habitat conservation planning (HCP) areas and groundwater recharge and buffer zones.



*Protection of creeks and wetlands will preserve local dragonfly habitats.*

Source: Teska Associates, Inc.

## Landscaped Streetscapes

The Village takes great pride in the appearance of its streetscapes. The Downtown Master Plan and Transportation Corridor Beautification Plan both outline specific recommendations for enhancing the Village's streetscapes. Although Downtown Romeoville presently lacks substantial landscaping treatments, the landscaped medians along IL Route 53 and along the parallel frontage roads (e.g. Spangler Road) which lead to downtown are a testament to the Village's commitment to maintaining attractive transportation corridors.

Landscaped streetscapes also extend to the East Side, most notably with the landscaped parkway along the south side of 135<sup>th</sup> Street fronting CITGO's auxiliary parking and staging area lots. This dedication to enhancing the Village's streetscapes will continue as development concepts for Downtown Romeoville and the East Side are prepared and evaluated.



Landscaped parkways along IL Route 53 extend towards downtown.

## Sustainability

Building upon its ongoing sustainability efforts throughout the Village, the Romeoville community has an extraordinary opportunity to create two special places – a revitalized downtown and a new TOD on the East Side – that can be designed in such a way that links them and intrinsically encourages sustainable living.

While the other aforementioned character traits can enhance the sustainable quality of Romeoville's character, sustainability reciprocates by being a contributing factor to the enhancement of the community's character. This is a strong indicator that enhancing one character trait can often help enhance other traits.



Native plantings can markedly improve the sustainability of sites.

The Village takes pride in the appearance of its streetscape; this dedication to enhancing the community's streetscapes will continue as development concepts for Downtown Romeoville and the East Side are prepared and evaluated.

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