

# Issues, Challenges & Opportunities

## SECTION 7

Below is a summary of issues, challenges, and opportunities relating to the revitalization of Downtown Romeoville and potential development of the Village's East Side TOD Area.

### Current Issues & Challenges

#### Downtown Area

- ❑ Limited downtown development options exacerbated by poor market conditions and competition from other existing community and regional retail agglomerations, both in Romeoville and Bolingbrook.
- ❑ Lack of a downtown critical mass including well-established retail businesses and restaurants; the lack of a significant activity generator, such as a large medical or entertainment use, also impact the critical mass necessary to attract other businesses or investment.

- ❑ The lack of a signalized intersection into the Spartans' Square site and high-speed traffic make IL Route 53 unfavorable to destination-oriented traffic.
- ❑ Less than ideal visibility of the Downtown area, particularly for prospective retailers and restaurants considering a smaller, not well-established commercial location.
- ❑ Physical and symbolic barriers are created by the fact that the Downtown is not centrally located in the Village, with the high growth areas occurring to the south and west. I-55, the river, and canals also create physical barriers that may deter visitors to Downtown.
- ❑ Competition from other potential retail sites that offer greater accessibility, visibility, and agglomeration advantages than Downtown Romeoville.



Source: Tesla Associates, Inc.

- The existence of multiple grocery and general merchandise stores within 5 miles of Downtown.
- Limited pedestrian and bikeway connectivity.

### East Side TOD Area

- Planning for a non-traditional TOD that strays from the common axioms of dense residential and mixed use development.
- The secluded location of the proposed Metra site will accommodate only a commuter rail station and parking but little else on the immediate site (CITGO will still operate its auxiliary parking and staging area).
- The impact of nearby intensive industrial activities at the CITGO refinery and the Midwest Generation coal facility.
- The lack of municipal water and wastewater utilities to the East Side.
- Competition to potentially attract industrial space users to the East Side from the overall I-55 industrial market, which has no shortage of building space options for users in other communities.
- Locational disadvantages that may prevent the attraction of potential office and industrial space users.
- Since there has not been an operating commuter rail station in Romeoville, there is not the same type of "culture" of Metra use compared to communities that have had a station in their town for years or decades,

where it has received significant use for generations. A new station takes some time to establish itself as an important element in the community.

- Unlike many Metra routes, the Heritage Corridor only operates five days per week and for those days only 3 inbound / 3 outbound trains. As a result, it will be difficult for the new station in Romeoville to generate a significant amount of activity, at least at the onset.

## Potential Opportunities

### Downtown Area

- Strong support for a revitalized Downtown, enhanced transit service, and growth of the East Side, extending as far back to the community's vision statement and recommendations from the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Survey results also contribute to this support.

- Increased awareness and desire for transit helps to encourage transit usage, build up Romeoville's transit infrastructure, and promote more sustainable living.

- An existing system of Pace bus service and paratransit service upon which to build an enhanced transit system for Romeoville.

- Strong employment base to support downtown retail.

- The D-D zoning district designated for Downtown provides the zoning support that encourages revitalizing the Downtown in a more traditional form, with greater orientation to the pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape.

- A favorable market generated by high occupancy rates and rising rents creates the opportunity to enhance the Village's stock of apartment housing, particularly in Downtown.



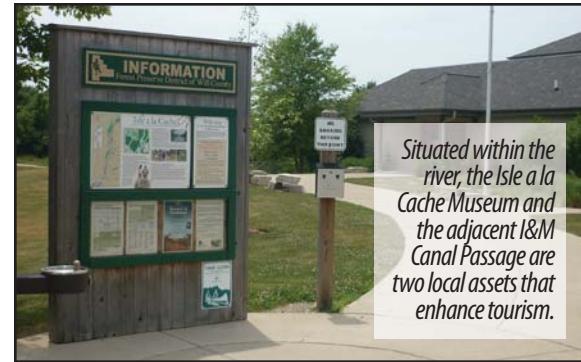
- ❑ The competitive positioning offered by the potential to build a second recreational center of 30,000 sq ft as a desirable complimentary use to an enhanced apartment housing stock in Downtown.

### East Side TOD Area

- ❑ The planned Metra station and commuter parking will enhance the Village's transit infrastructure.
- ❑ Potential findings from the Heritage Corridor Line Capacity Analysis currently being undertaken by CN, which will have bearing on the proposed Metra station in Romeoville as well as the prospects for high speed rail service between Chicago and St. Louis.
- ❑ Willingness of certain property owners to participate in the planning process. This includes the owner of the Big Run Golf Club property, which provides a prime location for potential redevelopment with a natural landscape as a backdrop.

- ❑ The rolling topography and significant changes in elevation of the East Side creates opportunities to encourage creative site design and enhance the physical separation between the CITGO refinery and the rest of the East Side.

- ❑ The existing regional trail network provides a strong foundation to create new trail linkages that connect to Downtown and the rest of the community.
- ❑ Continued support of preserving the natural habitats of the Hine's emerald dragonfly, which makes its home in the wetlands on the East Side; this makes Romeoville one of the few locations in the region that has habitats that allow the endangered species to thrive.
- ❑ A strong foundation of community characteristics -- including history, industrial heritage, rolling topography, pastoral nature, nature conservation, landscaped streetscapes, and a culture of sustainability -- upon which to build urban design themes.



*Situated within the river, the Isle a la Cache Museum and the adjacent I&M Canal Passage are two local assets that enhance tourism.*

- ❑ The opportunity to redevelop Downtown and develop the East Side with a cognizant eye on sustainability practices relating to the transportation network as well as the built and natural environments.
- ❑ Historical and recreational tourism, such as at the Isle a la Cache Museum, and bike trails attract visitors and residents alike to the area.

## Issues, Challenges & Opportunities Map

The Issues, Challenges & Opportunities Maps in Figures 7-1 and 7-2 illustrate the key issues that will have an impact on the development concepts for Downtown Romeoville and the East Side, respectively. Key issues relate to site, transportation, environmental, and design elements. Transportation issues are described in greater detail in the Transportation Assessment in Section 4.

The intent of the Issues, Challenges & Opportunities Maps is to present the existing conditions of each focus area and the opportunities that each offers, which will inform planning, design, transportation, and market recommendations in the later phases of this project.

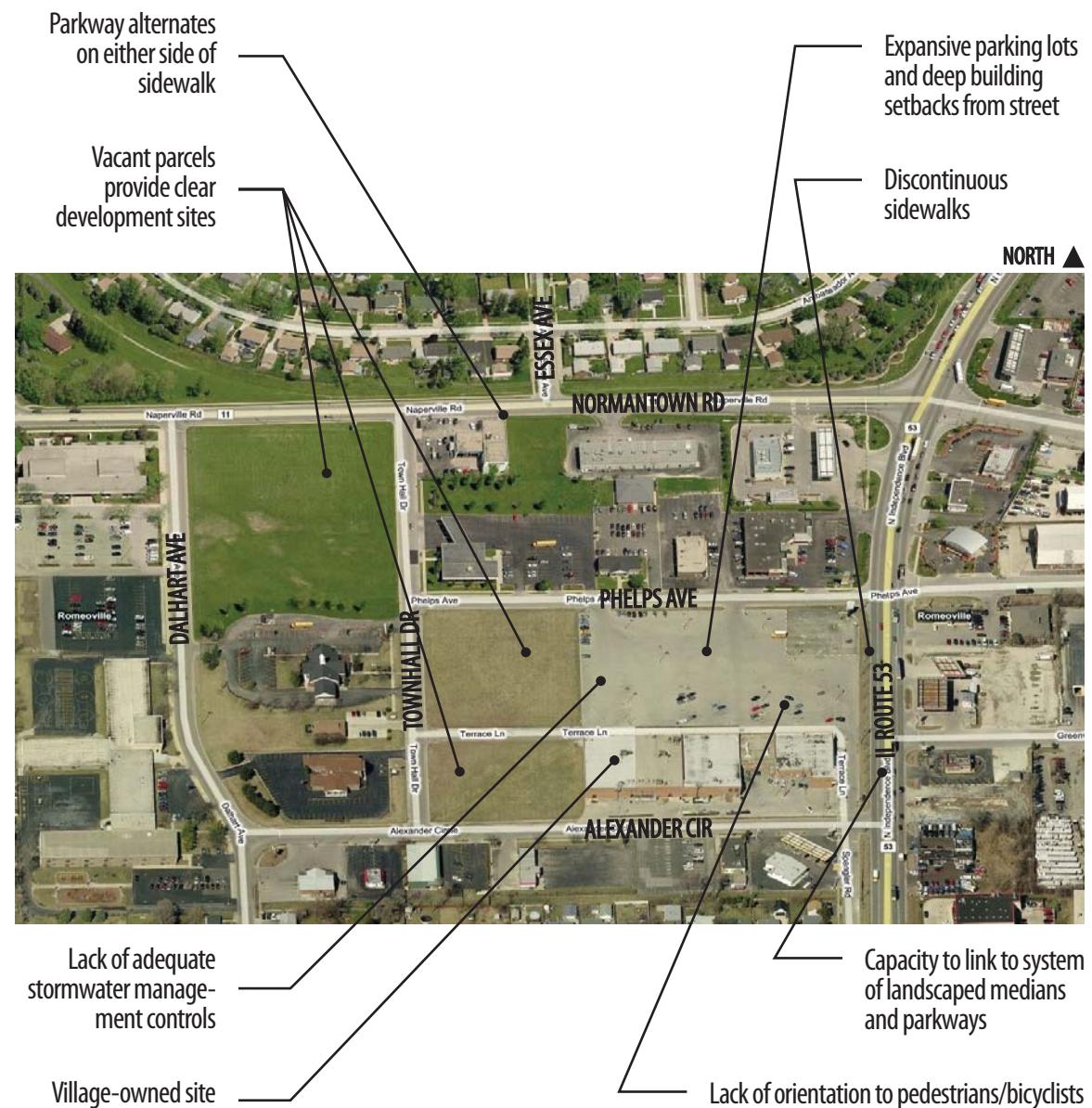
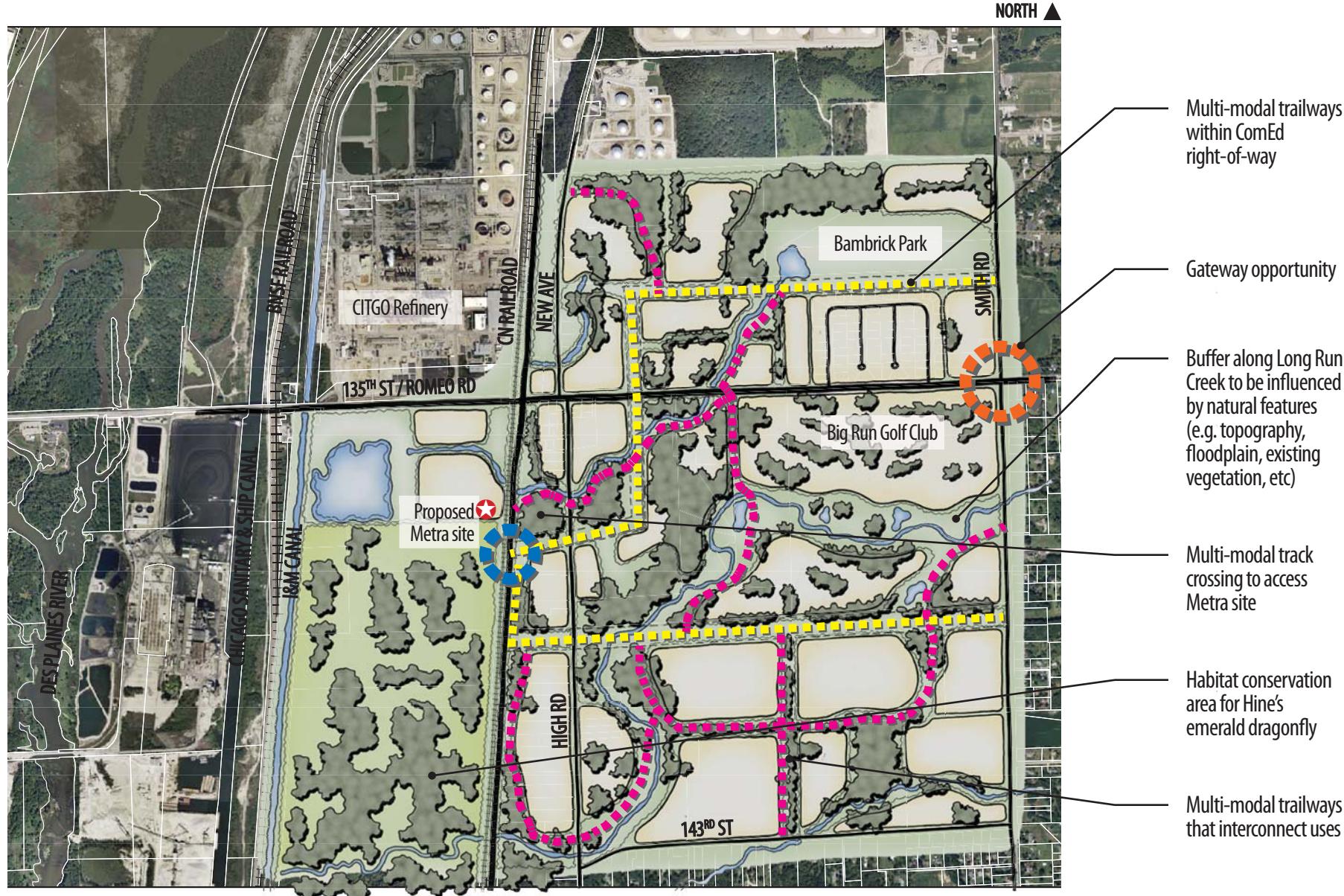


FIGURE 7-1

## Issues, Challenges & Opportunities Map | DOWNTOWN AREA



Source: Teska Associates, Inc.; field work.

FIGURE 7-2

## Issues, Challenges & Opportunities Map | EAST SIDE TOD AREA

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