VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

"The Gem Of The South Suburbs"

March 2007

Prepared By:

Globetrotters Engineering Corporation

300 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 400

Chicago, Illinois 60606

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
CATS	Chicago Area Transportation Study
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
DCEO	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HCP	Hazel Crest Proper
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
ISTHA	Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
NIPC	Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
ROW	Right-of-Way
WRDGC	Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

CREDITS

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Acknowledgements

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Regional Context

The Village of Hazel Crest is located in south suburban Cook County at the intersection of Interstate Route I-80 and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294). This location is approximately 22 miles south of the Chicago "Loop" (see Exhibit 1). Currently the Village has approximately 14,500 residents. Surrounding communities include Markham to the north, Harvey and East Hazel Crest to the east, Country Club Hills to the west, and Homewood and Flossmoor to the south.

A Third Airport for the Chicago Region has been proposed for a site near Peotone, which is approximately 20 miles south of Hazel Crest along I-57. If this is implemented, the METRA Electric Line might be extended to the airport site. This would put the Village in a strategic location between Chicago and the Third Airport which could have significant economic development and growth implications for the Village.

1.2 Plan Purpose and Need

A Comprehensive Plan is an official document which presents a vision of what a community wants to be and provides guidelines for policy decisions that will allow the vision to be realized. While the Plan is primarily concerned with the physical environment, it incorporates decisions which will influence the quality of life for the citizens.

In today's marketplace, economic development, community stability, quality of life and image have become highly interrelated considerations. The ability of a community to attract new business, development and residents is therefore dependent on the image and vision it projects. In this regard, the Village of Hazel Crest has recognized the strategic importance for updating its Comprehensive Plan. Globetrotters Engineering Corporation (GEC) has been retained to assist in this important task.

1.3. Land Use and Development

The Village of Hazel Crest is comprised of an irregularly bounded area covering approximately 3.4 square miles (2,180 acres). Its boundaries extend to 167th Street on the north, 187th Street on the south, Crawford

Avenue on the west and Canadian National Railroad Yard on the east. The dominant land use throughout the Village is low-density single-family residential. More than 90% of the total land area is developed (see Exhibit 2).

Early development occurred in the vicinity of 170th Street, between the Illinois Central Railroad and Dixie Highway. As the Village grew, this became the town center and more homes were built in the area west of Dixie Highway. This older section of the Village is now known as Hazel Crest Proper (HCP). In more recent times the old town center declined as government offices relocated and price conscious residents were attracted to new outlying commercial developments.

The bigger portion of the Village, south of I-80/I-294 is comprised mostly of newer 1960's, 1970's and 1980's subdivisions with single-family homes arranged along winding curvilinear streets. Expansive open space areas, parks and creeks/floodways weave through the developed areas and, in combination with the undulating terrain, contribute to a "green" and pleasant overall appearance. Higher density residential developments are found at several locations. A variety of housing types are available and there is an adequate stock of affordable and special-need housing

South Suburban Hospital, a full service acute care facility, is located at 177th Street and Kedzie Avenue. Roadside commercial developments are located along some of the main arterial streets. The largest concentrations of retail space are located along 183rd Street west of Kedzie Avenue and at the 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection. Industrial development is very limited and mostly confined to the south side of 167th Street east of Kedzie Avenue.

1.4 Strengths

The Village of Hazel Crest has certain geographic, physical and socio-economic attributes which should be strategically used to promote and foster continued future development:

- The Village has good vehicular accessibility and is well served by regional expressway, toll road, arterial street and METRA commuter rail systems.

- The Village has high visibility from I-80, the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and the METRA line.
- There is good METRA commuter train access to Chicago as well as local PACE bus service.
- The Village has a solid middle-class population and workforce base.
- There are stable neighboring municipalities to the east, west and south.
- The vast majority of the Village's housing stock is fairly new and in generally good condition.
- Good housing is more affordable than in some other parts of the Metropolitan area.
- Extensive medical facilities and services available in the Village.
- The Village has a generally attractive and inviting appearance.
- Some choice land parcels remain available for development and/or redevelopment.

1.5 Issues and Needs

The Village of Hazel Crest also has some needs and outstanding issues that need to be recognized, and in some cases rectified, in planning for its future development.

- With more than 90% of the land area developed, there is very limited room for new development.
- The Village is virtually landlocked with limited annexation options.
- Interstate Route I-80 and the Tri-Sate Tollway (I-294) split the Village, disrupting its geographic continuity and separating the original settlement from the new subdivisions.
- The Village lacks image, identity and "sense of place".
- There is a shortage of manufacturing/production type businesses that could provide well paying jobs and add to the economic base.
- There is no meaningful center of activity for people to conduct business, shop, socialize and interact with one another (to replace the original town center).

- The old town center in Hazel Crest Proper (HCP) has many vacant lots, empty store fronts, obsolete and neglected buildings, and is lacking in reinvestment activity.
- Some homes in HCP have been neglected and are in need of repairs and/or improved maintenance.
- There is a shortage of commuter parking space in vicinity of the METRA Station.
- Some roadside shopping centers are dated, lack anchor or quality stores and/or have too many vacancies.
- Major streets are not pedestrian/bike friendly.
- There are no dedicated pedestrian/bike trails for recreational or travel purposes.
- Some nearby municipalities to the north of the Village, are perceived as declining and/or lacking in reinvestment activity, and project a stigma that extends to the greater southeast suburban area.

1.6. Key Recommendations.

In view of the Village's strengths, outstanding issues and needs, policies should be adopted that would help to promote and advance the following development strategies and recommendations:

- Promote and facilitate quality development of remaining vacant land parcels (see Sections 4.4, 4.5, 9.6 and Exhibit 4).
- Develop gateways and focal point structures at strategic locations such as the 167th Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection, I-80 and Kedzie Avenue interchange, 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection. 183rd Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection, along Dixie Highway and in the METRA Station area (see Sections 7.1 and 9.6).
- Promote the development of a "Town Center" in the vicinity of 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue, incorporating existing commercial and office functions, as well as new focal point features, public attractions and possibly a new Village Hall (see Section 4.6 and 8.1).
- Facilitate the updating and retrofitting and/or redevelopment of obsolete roadside retail centers (see Sections 4.6 and 9.3).

- Promote and facilitate historic theme, mixed use and residential development/redevelopment in proximity to the 170th Street and Dixie Highway intersection and in the METRA Station area in HCP (see Sections 4.4, 6.5 and 7.3).
- Promote and facilitate the development of independent senior housing in the vicinity of the eastern portion of HCP (see Sections 4.4, 6.5 and 9.6). In particular, the Village might assist in land acquisition and assembly.
- Restrict or prohibit development in areas subject to flooding or where they could impede natural flood flow or flood water holding capacity (see Section 4.3).
- Provide additional commuter parking and drop-off/pick-up zones in vicinity of the METRA Station (see Sections 5.6, 5.7 and 9.6).
- Enhance the METRA Station by refurbishment, landscaping and cosmetic improvement of the existing structure and adjacent area (see Sections 5.6, 5.7, 7.1 and 9.6).
- Implement traffic calming measures on local streets subject to cut-through traffic (see Sections 5.3 and 5.7).
- Provide convenient and safe pedestrian/bike circulation opportunities, including "safe routes to schools", by improving street crossings, extending sidewalks and developing dedicated pedestrian/bike trails to link major destinations (see Sections 5.4 and 5.7).
- Promote implementation of the 162nd – 167th Street Trail by reserving right-of-way along the south frontage of 167th Street (see Sections 5.4 and 5.7).
- Implement streetscape improvements such as landscaped medians and parkways, well delineated pedestrian crossings, street furniture, and improved lighting and signage (see Sections 5.2, 5.7 and 7.2).
- Expand the Zoning Ordinance to include urban design, landscaping and signage guidelines/requirements for new developments (see Sections 7.5 and 7.7).
- Expand the Zoning Ordinance to include requirement for the screening and internal landscaping of off-street parking lots (see Section 7.6).

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Regional Context

The Village of Hazel Crest is located in south suburban Cook County at the intersection of Interstate Routes I-80 and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294). This location is approximately 22 miles south of the Chicago "Loop" (see Exhibit 1). Currently the Village has approximately 14,500 residents. Like other south suburban communities, the growth and development of Hazel Crest has been related to the overall dynamics of the Chicago metropolitan area. Surrounding communities include Markham to the north, Harvey and East Hazel Crest to the east, Country Club Hills to the west, and Homewood and Flossmoor to the south.

A Third Airport for the Chicago Region has been proposed for a site near Peotone, which is approximately 20 miles south of Hazel Crest along I-57. If this is implemented, the METRA Electric Line might be extended to the airport site, This would put the Village in a strategic location between Chicago and the Third Airport which could have significant economic development and growth implications for the Village.

2.2 Historic Background

The Village of Hazel Crest was incorporated in 1912, at which time it was a small farming community with a rail depot. Early development occurred in the vicinity of 170th Street, between the Illinois Central Railroad and Dixie Highway. As the Village grew, this became the town center and more homes were built in the area west of Dixie Highway. between 167th and 171st Streets. This older section of the Village is now known as Hazel Crest Proper (HCP). In more recent times, the old town center, has declined as government offices relocated and price conscious residents were attracted to new outlying commercial developments.

Construction of the Interstate Highway and Toll Road systems in the 1960's, greatly improved the accessibility of Hazel Crest and contributed to its development. A big growth spurt occurred in the 1960's and 1970's when 55% of the Village' current housing stock was built. The Village expanded to the west as far as Crawford Avenue and south to 187th Street. Kedzie Avenue has evolved as the unofficial main street of the Village.

2.3 Local Government Structure

The Village is a "home rule" unit of government under State law. The Village is governed by a President/Mayor and a six-member Board of Trustees. Day-to day operations are supervised and managed by a Village Manager. Major Village Departments include Public Works, Police and Fire, Rescue and Inspectional Services. Schools, parks and libraries are operated by separate public service districts not under the Village's jurisdiction. Approximately 15 different regional and local taxing bodies are listed on real estate tax bill as providing some type of services.

While most of the Village is in Bremen Township, Hazel Crest Proper is mostly in Thorton Township and the area south of 183rd Street is in Rich Township. For regional planning purposes, the Village is within the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) area (new agency resulting from the merger of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission or NIPC and the Chicago Area Transportation Study or CATS).

2.4 Population and Demographics

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2005 the Village had a population of 14,415. Population trends and projections for the period 1950 – 2030 are shown in Table 1. Demographic characteristics from the U.S. Census of 2000 are summarized in Table 2.

In 1950, the Village had a modest population of 2,129 which was concentrated in Hazel Crest Proper. There was a surge of new subdivisions and residents in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's and then the population leveled off. However, in the period since 1970 there has been a major shift in racial/ethnic characteristics. In 1970 only 0.3% of the population was "non-white" while the 2000 Census indicates that nearly 80% of the population was African American.

NIPC and CMAP projections indicate a modest population growth over the next 20 - 25 years but that could change if the Third Airport is developed in Peotone and/or if substantial redevelopment occurs in the eastern portion of HCP. If substantial new development takes place in the area near the METRA Station, together with in-fill development and/or annexation of all or part of the Homewood Acres, then the Village's population could exceed the NIPC projection and ultimately might reach 17,000 or more.

VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Exhibit 1
Location Map

March, 2007

Globetrotters®
Engineering Corporation

Table 1. Population Trends

Year	Population	Households	Employment
1950	2,129	NA	NA
1960	6,205	NA	NA
1970	10,329	NA	NA
1990	13,334	4,429	NA
2000	14,816	5,067	2,933
2030	15,786	5,478	3,570

Source: Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, June 2004

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics for Year 2000

Characteristic	Number	Percent	U.S.
Total Population	14,816		
Male	6,774	45.7	49.1 %
Female	8,042	54.3	50.9 %
Median Age (years)	34.6		35.3
Under 5 years	1,034	7.0	6.8 %
18 years and over	10,327	69.7	74.3 %
65 years and over	1,568	10.6	12.4 %
White	2,885	19.5	75.1 %
African American	11,308	76.3	12.3 %
Hispanic	494	3.3	12.5 %
Other	129	0.9	0.1 %
Average household size	2.89		2.59
Total housing units	5,303		
Owner occupied units	4,124	81.4	66.2 %
Renter occupied units	943	18.6	33.8 %
Vacant units	236	4.5	9.0 %
Median home value	98,700		119,600
H. S. grad. (25 yrs. +)	7,918	88.2	80.4 %
College grad.	1,981	22.1	24.4 %
Labor force (16 yrs. +)	7,453	68.8	63.9 %
Median household income (1999)	50,576		41,994
Individuals below poverty	1,207	8.4	12.4 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

2.5 Strengths

The Village of Hazel Crest has significant geographic, physical and socio-economic attributes which should be strategically used to promote and foster continued future growth and development:

- The Village has good vehicular accessibility and is well served by regional expressway, toll road, arterial street and METRA commuter rail systems.
- The Village has high visibility from I-80, the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and the METRA line.
- There is good METRA commuter train access to Chicago as well as local PACE bus service.
- The Village has a solid middle-class population and workforce base.
- There are stable neighboring municipalities to the east, west and south.
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- Good housing is more affordable than in some other parts of the Metropolitan area.
- Extensive medical facilities and services available in the Village.
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2.6 Issues and Needs

The Village of Hazel Crest also has some needs and outstanding issues that need to be recognized, and in some cases rectified, in planning for its future development.

- With more than 90% of the land area developed, there is very limited room for new development.
- The Village is virtually landlocked with limited annexation options.

- Interstate Route I-80 and the Tri-Sate Tollway (I-294) split the Village, disrupting its geographic continuity and separating the original settlement from the new subdivisions.
- The Village lacks image, identity and "sense of place".
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- Some homes in HCP have been neglected and are in need of repairs and/or improved maintenance.
- There is a shortage of commuter parking space in vicinity of the METRA Station.
- Some roadside shopping centers are dated, lack anchor or quality stores and/or have too many vacancies.
- Major streets are not pedestrian/bike friendly.
- There are no dedicated pedestrian/bike trails for recreational or travel purposes.
- Some nearby municipalities to the north of the Village are perceived as declining and/or lacking in reinvestment activity and project a stigma that extends to the greater southeast suburban area.

2.7 Plan Purpose and Need

A Comprehensive Plan is an official document which presents a vision of what a community wants to be and provides guidelines for policy decisions that will allow the vision to be realized. While the Plan is primarily concerned with the physical environment, it incorporates decisions which will influence the quality of life for the citizens.

A typical Plan document is comprised of a series of interrelated elements that address specific core topics. The Illinois Local Planning Technical

Assistance Act (PA 92-0768, Sec. 5) suggests that the Plan should address at least the following five elements: land use, natural resources, transportation, community facilities, housing and economic development.

In today's marketplace, economic development, community stability, quality of life and image have become highly interrelated considerations. The ability of a community to attract new business, development and residents is therefore dependent on the image and vision it projects. In this regard, the Village of Hazel Crest has recognized the strategic importance for updating its Comprehensive Plan. Globetrotters Engineering Corporation has been retained to assist in this important task.

For planning purposes, the Village of Hazel Crest must be considered a "mature community" with little remaining vacant land and few options for geographic expansion. Planning efforts should therefore focus on optimizing development of the remaining vacant land parcels, redevelopment of underutilized and/or deteriorated sites, preserving existing residential areas and expanding the Village's economic base. Also, the Village needs to establish its image, identity and "sense of place".

2.8 Previous Planning Efforts

The Village's original Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1977 by Barton-Aschman Associates Inc. A key recommendation contained in this Plan was for the development of a Civic Center in the vicinity of 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue. In 1979, a "Framework for Community Preservation" study was prepared by Arthur Young & Co. A Comprehensive Plan Update was prepared in 1985 by Planning Resources Inc., with the active participation of an Ad Hoc Plan Update Committee. The 1985 Plan Update focused on review and revision of community goals and objectives and on the identification and evaluation of potential development/redevelopment sites. Since that time there have been significant and continuous changes in the community.

More recently, several planning documents and/or initiatives have focused on the 167th Street corridor, Hazel Crest Proper and the METRA Station Area:

Hazel Crest Proper Redevelopment Area Plan & Program, Dec. 2000, Teska Associates Inc. This plan, adopted in 2001, delineates a Tax Increment

Financing (TIF) District and proposes a series of public and private developments in Hazel Crest Proper.

Transit Oriented Development Plan, Oct. 2002, Teska Associates Inc. This plan document provides a framework for various public and private improvements for the METRA Station area.

Expansion of Harvey Phoenix Enterprise Zone. In 2002, Hazel Crest Proper, as well as the area between 167th Street and I-80, on both sides of Kedzie Avenue was incorporated into the Harvey Phoenix Enterprise Zone.

2.9 Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan update process involved a series of meetings with elected officials and citizens, to discuss and review various aspects of the plan. The effort was officially launched on September 25, 2006 at a joint meeting of the Village's Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission and Beautification Commission. At that time there was a review of the 1985 Comprehensive Plan and a discussion of various current issues and planning goals. A goals and objectives sub-committee was selected.

The goals and objectives sub-committee had its first open-to-the-public meeting on October 2, 2006. The goals and objectives of previous 1977 and 1985 plans were reviewed and discussed. It was decided that in order to maintain continuity, the goals and objectives of these earlier plans would serve as a starting point but would be modified or supplemented to reflect current conditions.

A joint meeting of the Planning, Economic Development and Beautification Commissions was held on October 30, 2006. Other citizens were also present. The goals and objectives sub-committee presented a status report on the updated goals. Also, all attendees participated in Planning 1-2-3 role playing exercise guided by staff from the Metropolitan Planning Council.

Another joint meeting was held on November 29, 2006. The goals and objectives were finalized and there was a discussion of potential development and redevelopment opportunities in the Village.

On January 25, 2007, the joint planning committee reviewed and discussed a draft of the Comprehensive Plan report. Various suggestions and comments were made by the attendees. It was decided that the completed Plan would be presented at the next meeting. All of the meetings were open to the public

3. VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

"The Gem of the South Suburbs" vision of the Village of Hazel Crest includes an expanded population and economic base accommodated within a distinctive overall setting of well maintained homes, parks and open space areas. The Village will have a distinct identity gained from strategic focal point features, quality streetscape and urban design elements. The current housing stock will be well maintained and supplemented by in-fill developments, town homes and trendy loft units in mixed use developments. A new Town Center will have evolved in the vicinity of 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue, which will create synergies by incorporating existing commercial and office developments and possibly a new Village Hall. Shopping areas will provide a wide range of goods and services for residents of the Village and surrounding communities. The old downtown in Hazel Crest Proper will be renovated as an historic mixed use district with shops, restaurants, cafes and new housing units near the METRA Station. Pedestrian and bike routes will link residential and open space areas with major destinations and many residents will walk or bike for routine trips and recreation.

Municipal infrastructure will be well maintained and public services will be efficiently delivered ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all residents. Public schools will provide quality education.

To achieve this vision, a Citizens Advisory Committee formulated the following specific goals and objectives:

3.1 Village Identity

Provide a strong and positive Village image and identity through distinct features and programs:

- Create neighborhood and community focal points and develop linkages which can tie together and unite all portions of the Village.
- Preserve and enhance the identity, character and aesthetic quality of existing residential neighborhoods.
- Improve the character and appearance of the commercial environment.

- Promote new community-wide beautification activities such as unified graphic systems, streetscape improvements and landscaping.
- Promote and enhance cultural and community activities which can be enjoyed by all Village residents.
- Improve the character and appearance of new commercial, residential and institutional developments.
- Preserve features of historic value.
- Maintain the Village Forestry and Tree Care Program.

3.2. Housing

Provide a housing stock and living environment which supports all Village residents and maintains the overall quality and character of the Village.

- Maintain the predominant single family character of the Village.
- Encourage improvement and updating of older existing housing.
- Require owner and resident responsibility for property maintenance.
- Encourage development of infill housing and redevelopment at appropriate locations.
- Encourage owner occupancy of dwelling units.
- Annex unincorporated adjacent land for housing development.

3.3. Transportation

Maintain and enhance the transportation system for the safe, convenient and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians with minimum disruption of surrounding areas and activities.

- Minimize non-local traffic in residential areas.
- Maintain good accessibility to more densely developed areas which are high traffic generators.
- Improve commuter parking facilities at the METRA Station.
- Improve peak-hour bus service to and from the METRA Station.

- Improve bus service to commercial and industrial centers and the hospital.
- Promote bicycling and pedestrian facilities and safety.
- Improve access to the Municipal Center.

3.4. Commercial and Industrial Development

Facilitate a level of commercial and industrial development which provides local residents with employment opportunities, goods and services, enhances the Village's tax base and complements existing residential development.

- Maintain and support existing retail and commercial enterprises while encouraging new developments, expansion and upgrading.
- Continue to cluster new commercial developments.
- Promote and encourage new office, light industrial and commercial developments within or near areas of similar and/or compatible use.
- Encourage improvement and updating of older existing commercial buildings and areas.
- Improve bus service to commercial areas.
- Develop a five-year marketing strategy.

3.5. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Provide adequate and convenient parks and open space facilities and services to satisfy the recreational needs of Village residents.

- Maintain and enhance existing parks and public open space areas.
- Increase the range and variety of public recreational facilities, programs and opportunities within the Village.
- Continue development of a greenway trail system for pedestrians and bikes utilizing existing drainage way corridors, neighborhood parks and open space areas.
- Promote the development of private recreational areas and facilities in conjunction with future development projects.
- Rejuvenate the joint use school-park concept.

- Incorporate open space areas to guide and shape the overall form and pattern of Village development.
- Encourage community organizations to participate in the operation and maintenance of local parks.

3.6. Environment and Natural Resources

Protect the environment and natural resources so as to enhance life quality and protect public health and safety.

- Protect and enhance Lake Owens and the adjacent woodlands and wetlands in the Crestview /Oak Hill area.
- Protect and enhance the Prairie Creek and Cherry Creek drainage ways and corridors.
- Protect existing floodways and floodplains from development which could impede natural water flow or flood water storage capacity.
- Provide sound buffers between noise generators, such as highways or industrial activities, and residential areas.
- Encourage the use of sustainable design principles in future developments.
- Protect existing trees on public and private property, and encourage the planting of new trees in public ways, open space areas and in private developments.

3.7 Public Facilities and Services:

Provide public facilities, programs and services to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

- Provide municipal buildings, programs and services to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all residents
- Provide quality education opportunities for all school age children.
- Provide adequate library facilities.
- Refine the Capital Improvement Plan to assure the proper operation, maintenance and repair of the Village's infrastructure.

- Improve programs and facilities for storm water management and flood control.

4. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Village of Hazel Crest is comprised of an irregularly bounded area covering approximately 3.4 square miles (2,180 acres). The northern Village limits run along 167th Street and the southern limits extend to 187th Street. On the east, the Village extends to the Canadian National Railroad Yard, and on the west to Pulaski Road. More than 90% of the total land area is developed.

4.1 Natural and Man-Made Setting

Major physical features, impacting land use and development in this area are the Expressways, Tollways and railroads. The Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and I-80 run through the northern portion of the Village splitting its geographic continuity. Multiple railroad tracks, rail yards and the Calumet Country Club, located along the eastern edge of the Village, isolate it from neighboring communities to the east.

Since virtually all of the land in the Village has been developed or altered, there are few natural features. Topography is undulating. Prairie Creek and Cherry Creek crisscross the Village and function as important drainage ways. Some low lying areas adjacent to these Creeks are subject to flood inundation. Lake Owens, a man made lake, is located north of the Municipal Center. Also, there are some attractive woodlands near the Municipal Center which were acquired by the Village as part of the Federal and Sate funded Open Lands Program.

4.2 Current Land Use

Current land use, public facilities and points of interest are shown on Exhibits 2 and 3. The dominant land use throughout the Village is low density single-family residential which occupies approximately half of the total land area and establishes the overall character and image of Hazel Crest. Expansive open space areas, parks and creeks/floodway corridors weave through the developed areas and, in combination with the hilly terrain, contribute to a "green" and pleasant overall appearance.

Transportation facilities, including, expressways, toll roads, streets and railroads are also a major land use and occupy approximately 25% of the

land area. Commercial, industrial and institutional developments occupy approximately 10% of the land area.

However, the land use is not homogeneous in that physical and historic divides, as well as the subdivision sequence, have resulted in distinct sub-areas. The older northeast section of the Village, known as Hazel Crest Proper, is located south of 167th Street and northeast of the Tri-State Tollway (I-80/I-294). This area is occupied mostly by older single-family homes, as well as small businesses and some multi-family buildings arranged along a traditional rectangular street grid. The old town center and the METRA station are located along 170th Street east of Dixie Highway. There are some vacant store fronts, vacant lots and some deteriorating structures, but the overall feel is that of a traditional neighborhood or small town rather than a suburban subdivision.

The bigger portion of the Village south of I-80/I-294 is comprised mostly of newer 1960's, 1970's and 1980's subdivisions with single-family homes arranged along winding curvilinear streets. The area west of Kedzie Avenue, between I-80 and 175th Street, is known as the "Highlands", while the area to the east is known as "Pottawatomie Hills". Further south, the area between 175th and 179th Streets and east of Kedzie Avenue is known as "Stonebridge". The area between 179th and 183rd Streets and west of Kedzie Avenue is known as "Chateaux/Versailles". The area south of 183rd Street, between Crawford Avenue and Kedzie Avenue, was most recently developed and is known as "Dynasty Lakes" and "Village West".

Various commercial, institutional and multi-family residential developments are mixed into this low density residential fabric. The Municipal Center, surrounded by extensive open space areas, is located at 171st Street and Holmes Avenue. Advocate South Suburban Hospital occupies a large site along the west side of Kedzie Avenue south of 177th Street. Imperial Nursing Home is located on 175th Street, west of Kedzie Avenue, and the Arden Courts Alzheimer's facility is on 183rd Street. Five public elementary schools, a library, two fire stations, two park field houses and many churches are also located within the Village.

Higher density residential development is found at seven locations. In Hazel Crest Proper, a row of small apartment buildings are located in the strip between 171st Street and the Tollway, west of Dixie Highway. The low rise English Valley Apartment Complex is located to the west of the Municipal

VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Exhibit 2
Existing Land Use Map

March, 2007

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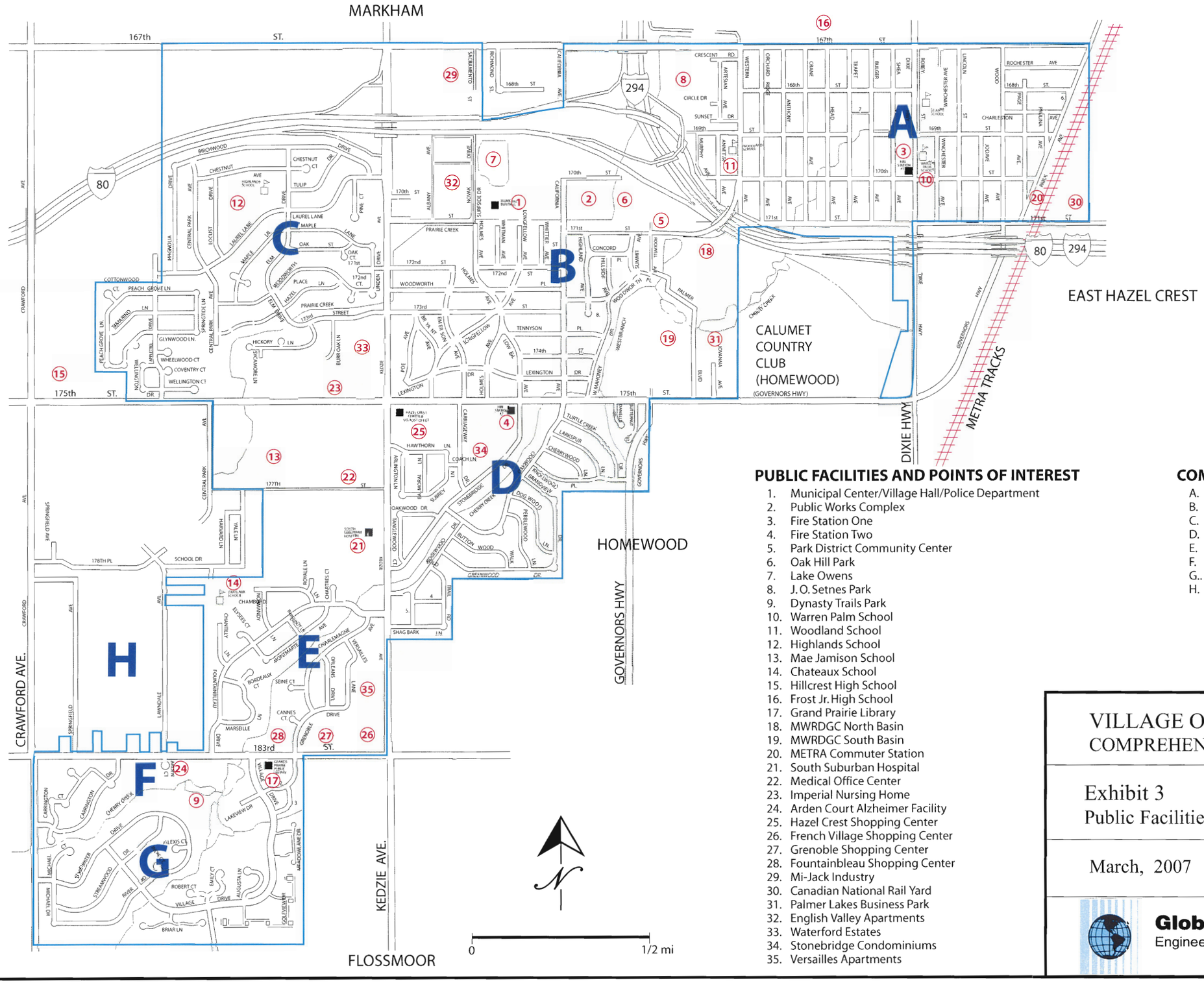

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Municipal Center/Village Hall/Police Department
2. Public Works Complex
3. Fire Station One
4. Fire Station Two
5. Park District Community Center
6. Oak Hill Park
7. Lake Owens
8. J. O. Setnes Park
9. Dynasty Trails Park
10. Warren Palm School
11. Woodland School
12. Highlands School
13. Mae Jamison School
14. Chateaux School
15. Hillcrest High School
16. Frost Jr. High School
17. Grand Prairie Library
18. MWRDGC North Basin
19. MWRDGC South Basin
20. METRA Commuter Station
21. South Suburban Hospital
22. Medical Office Center
23. Imperial Nursing Home
24. Arden Court Alzheimer Facility
25. Hazel Crest Shopping Center
26. French Village Shopping Center
27. Grenoble Shopping Center
28. Fountainbleau Shopping Center
29. Mi-Jack Industry
30. Canadian National Rail Yard
31. Palmer Lakes Business Park
32. English Valley Apartments
33. Waterford Estates
34. Stonebridge Condominiums
35. Versailles Apartments

COMMUNITY AREAS

A. Hazel Crest Proper
B. Pottawatomie Hills
C. Highlands
D. Stonebridge
E. Chateaux/Vsailles
F. Village West
G.. Dynasty Lakes
H. Homewood Acres

VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Exhibit 3
Public Facilities & Points of Interest

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Center at 170th and Albany Avenue. Waterford Estates, an attractive large mid-rise assisted living complex, is located along Kedzie Avenue south of 173rd Street. The mid-rise Stonebridge condominium complex is located at Stonebridge Drive and Carriageway Drive. Further to the south, the low-rise Versilles apartment complex is located along the west side of Kedzie Avenue. South of 183rd Street, in the Dynasty Lakes area, there are the Waters Edge and Club mid-rise condominium developments.

Roadside commercial developments are located along some of the main arterial streets. The largest concentration of retail space is located along the north side of 183rd Street west of Kedzie Avenue. This includes French Village on the northwest corner of 183rd Street and Kedzie Avenue (53,300 sq. ft.), Grenoble Square at 3330 West 183rd Street (93,000 sq. ft.) and Fountainbleau Court at 3450 West 183rd Street (39,000 sq. ft.). Another commercial concentration is located at the 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection. This includes the Hazel Crest Center on the southeast corner of 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue (83,300 sq. ft.) and the Crossings on the northeast corner (11,000 sq. ft.). Several smaller centers and individual businesses are located along Dixie Highway between 167th and 171st Streets.

MI-JACK, the Villages largest industry, is located along the south side of 167th Street east of Kedzie Avenue.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad Yard is located north of 171st Street and east of the METRA tracks. However, most of the yard and intermodel terminal are located in Harvey.

Palmer Lakes Business Park, located at 175th Street (Governors Highway) and Jodava Avenue, is a relatively new 30-acre business park. It contains a complex of buildings used for light manufacturing, distribution and offices. A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District covering this site was established in 1988.

4.3 Creek, Drainage Way and Flood Plain Protection

Prairie Creek and Cherry Creek crisscross the Village. Both of these creeks have been, in part, rerouted and modified, and now function as important regional drainage ways. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC) has two large flood control basins located along Cherry Creek just west of the Calumet Country Club. These basins are

dry much of the time, but become inundated with flood water during peak storm conditions.

Some low lying areas adjacent to these creeks are subject to flood inundation. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Maps show some areas with the Zone AE designation, which means that base flood elevations have not been determined. Further hydraulic and hydrologic analysis is needed to determine flood flow and water retention issues associated with these locations.

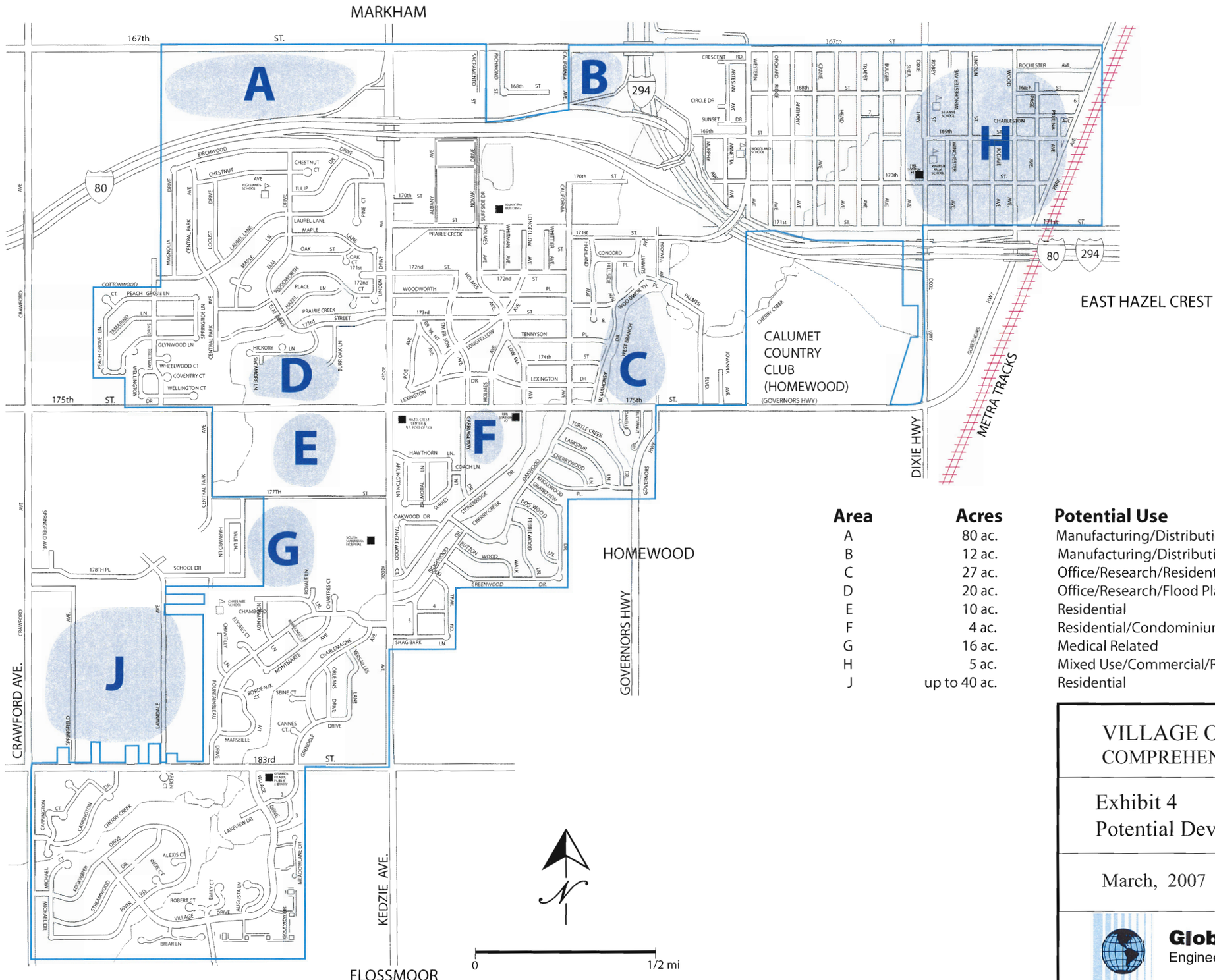
To the extent possible, creek frontages should have public access. Areas subject to flooding should be considered for park or open space designation. Any development which would impede the natural flow or run-off should be prohibited. Flood plain development should be considered only if there is no adverse effect on flood water holding capacity or if compensatory storage capacity is provided.

4.4 Development/Redevelopment Opportunity Areas

While more than 90 % of the land area in the Village has been developed, there still remain a number of attractive development and/or redevelopment sites (see Exhibit 4).

Area A. This site is located between 167th Street and I-80, west of Kedzie Avenue, and covers approximately 80 acres. It contains some older homes, farm structures and woodlands, but is mostly used as cropland. This site is very accessible, has great visibility from I-80 and is included in the Harvey Phoenix Enterprise Zone. Village water service has been extended to the site under I-80, but there is no sewer service. Current M-1 Limited Manufacturing Zoning would permit light industrial or distribution/warehousing type development. The site would also be well suited for commercial/retail type development. In either case, this would improve the Village's tax base and provide local job opportunities. Development guidelines should include reservation of Right-of-Way (ROW) for pedestrian/bike trail along the south frontage of 167th Street.

Area B. This site is located along the south side of 167th Street just west and north of the I-80/I-294 interchange. This site is vacant, contains 12 acres and is zoned M-1 Limited Manufacturing. Sanitary sewer is available, but there is no water service. This area is also included in the Harvey Phoenix



Area	Acres	Potential Use
A	80 ac.	Manufacturing/Distribution/Commercial
B	12 ac.	Manufacturing/Distribution
C	27 ac.	Office/Research/Residential
D	20 ac.	Office/Research/Flood Plain
E	10 ac.	Residential
F	4 ac.	Residential/Condominium/Municipal
G	16 ac.	Medical Related
H	5 ac.	Mixed Use/Commercial/Residential
J	up to 40 ac.	Residential

VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Exhibit 4
Potential Development Sites

March, 2007

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Enterprise Zone. Development guidelines should include reservation of ROW for pedestrian/bike trail along the south frontage of 167th Street.

Area C. This site is located on the north side of 175th Street and east of Mahoney Parkway. It contains 27 acres and is currently zoned M-OR Office and Research, but previously had residential zoning. The setting is very attractive, bounded by the park-like MWRDGC detention basins on the east and Cherry Creek along the western site boundary. However, a bridge over Cherry Creek would be needed to make the site accessible from Mahoney Parkway. In 1996, this area was designated as a TIF District, but has not attracted any office or research type developments. In 2006, a residential development was proposed and the Village Board approved a Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance permitting a 90-unit townhome type development.

Area D. This vacant site, located along the north side of 175th Street and west of the Imperial Nursing Home, covers approximately 20 acres. It is zoned M-OR Office and Research. Prairie Creek (also known as Calumet Union Drainage Ditch) runs along the western edge of the site. Much of this site is wooded, low lying and subject to flood inundation. FEMA Maps show this area as Zone AE which means that base flood elevations have not been determined. Further hydraulic and hydrologic analysis is needed to delineate floodway and floodplain location.

Area E. This area is located between 175th and 177th Streets north of South Suburban Hospital and east of the Mae Jamison School. Current zoning is R-O Single Family Residential. Some homes have been built, but much of the interior remains vacant and inaccessible due to lack of public streets and infrastructure. This area offers in-fill housing opportunities, but municipal intervention may be required to consolidate land parcels and extend streets and infrastructure. Approximately 10 acres could be available. Proximity to the hospital would make residential development attractive for employees.

Area F. This site is located west of South Suburban Hospital and covers 16 acres. Like the hospital itself, it has S-U Special Use Zoning. This site should be reserved for hospital expansion and/or medical related research or office development.

Area G. This site is located along the south side of 175th Street, west of Fire Station #2 and north of the Stonebridge Condominiums. This site is partly

vacant and partly paved for parking. The site covers approximately four acres and is zoned SU Special Use. This site would be well suited for medium-density multi-family or condominium development. It would also be suitable for municipal use.

Area H. There are a number of sites and structures in HCP in the vicinity of 170th Street and Dixie Highway, and along Park Avenue near the METRA Station that are well suited for redevelopment and/or renovation. Specific locations and strategies have been identified in the *Hazel Crest Proper Redevelopment Area Plan and Program, Dec. 2000 by Teska Assoc.* and the *Transit Oriented Development Plan, Oct. 2002 by Teska Assoc.* Recommendations for development include mixed-use housing and commercial, condominiums and townhomes. Independent senior housing would also be well suited for this area. In order to support and facilitate development/redevelopment in this area, a 41-acre TIF District has been designated. This area is also within the Harvey Phoenix Enterprise Zone.

The Village already owns a number of parcels in HCP that have been obtained through the South Suburban Tax Reactivation Program. These parcels are available for redevelopment. Development/redevelopment in this area should reflect an historic theme in building appearance and streetscape details.

4.5 Potential Annexation Areas

With the exception of one adjacent unincorporated "pocket", Hazel Crest is landlocked. That exception is the area known as "Homewood Acres" which occupies approximately 40 acre between 183rd and 179th Streets, and extends from the current Village limits west to Crawford Avenue (see Area J on Exhibit 4). Two rural standard streets, Springfield Avenue and Lawndale Avenue, extend north from 183rd Street into the interior of this area. Much of the land has been subdivided into large lots, typically 600 ft. deep and 100-200 ft. wide. Approximately 70 homes and several churches have been built, but many lots are still vacant. Except for the Pulaski Road (Crawford) frontage, individual structures depend on well water and septic systems.

Annexations are generally initiated by property owners and/or developers in order to get municipal services such as water and sewer. Developers may also request specific zoning classification. However, some current residents

may oppose annexation for various reasons such as fear of higher taxes and greater regulatory controls.

Annexation of all or portion of Homewood Acres into Hazel Crest would increase the Village's population and tax base, and provide an opportunity for additional housing development. In addition to the 70 existing homes, this area could accommodate 50 – 100 new homes.

However, this would also require substantial expenditures for the construction of new streets, extension of water and sewer services, and probably abandonment of existing wells and septic systems. Current and future residents would also require a full range of municipal services.

4.6. New Town Center

As noted previously, the Village lacks a meaningful center of activity for people to conduct business, shop, socialize and interact with one another. At one time, the old town center in Hazel Crest Proper served this function, but this role was lost and the area declined when government offices relocated and price-conscious residents were attracted to outlying new commercial developments. The Village's 1977 Comprehensive Plan proposed the development of a Civic Center at 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue, but this did not move forward and the Civic Center concept in general has dropped out of favor.

Many suburban communities throughout the country have in recent years developed new downtowns under the guise of "lifestyle centers". Such centers contain retail stores as well as offices, cafes, performance spaces, parks, government offices and even residential units all in a themed architecture setting.

The current geographic center of the Village remains at 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue. This is also a very visible and accessible location with a total of 37,000 vehicles per day passing by on the two intersecting streets. A new town center could be developed at this location incorporating existing commercial and office functions, as well as new focal point features, public attractions and possibly a new Village Hall. The most suitable location would be the southwest quadrant of this intersection. This area already contains the Hazel Crest Shopping Center, adjacent office and professional buildings, a clubhouse and an extensive parking area. Vacant land is

available to the east for additional buildings and/or parking. The entire area would fall within a compact ¼-mile square footprint which would be conducive for pedestrian circulation.

5. TRANSPORTATION

The Village of Hazel Crest has good vehicular accessibility and is well served by the regional expressway, toll road, arterial street and METRA commuter rail systems. Primary routes and traffic volumes are shown on Exhibit 5.

5.1 Expressways and Tollways

The junction of I-80 and the Tri-State Tollway (I-80/I-294) is located in the northern portion of the Village. These routes run to the east, west and north. I-80 west of Kedzie Avenue is a conventional freeway while I-80/I-294 to the east and I-294 to the north are part of the Tri-State Tollway. Tollway collection plazas in both directions are located in the junction area. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume on I-80 is 80,000 and on I-80/I-294, the ADT is over 129,000.

However, accessibility to and from the Village is somewhat limited. There is a half-diamond interchange at I-80 and Kedzie Avenue with ramps for eastbound exit and westbound access. There also is a westbound/northbound entrance ramp to the Tri-State (I-80/I-294) from Wood Street/Governors Highway and an eastbound exit ramp to Dixie Highway. However, there are no ramps in the Village for eastbound access to, nor westbound exit from, the Tollway. For these movements motorists must use the 159th Street interchange in Markham.

Another important expressway link serving the area is I-57. This is a north-south route providing access to Chicago and to points south. This route runs just to the west of the Village with a full interchange at 167th Street.

Over the years, Village officials have lobbied for completion of the other half of the diamond interchange at Kedzie, which would provide an eastbound entrance ramp and a westbound exit ramp. However, this has been found unfeasible due to space and geometric constraints associated with the adjacent I-80/I-94/Tollroad interchange and the toll collection plazas.

5.2 Primary Arterials

Primary north-south arterial streets are Pulaski Road, Kedzie Avenue, Western Avenue, Dixie Highway., Wood Street and Governors Highway.

Primary east-west arterials are 167th Street, 175th Street and 183rd Street. Kedzie Avenue, 167th Street and 175th Street are under Cook County jurisdiction. Dixie Highway., Wood Street and Governors Highway. are under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). With few exceptions, the arterial streets have two moving lanes in each direction and continuous left-turn lanes or paved medians. Curbside parking is not permitted. Sidewalks are provided at some locations, but not everywhere. Kedzie Avenue functions as the "main street" and the intersection of Kedzie and 175th Street is the main intersection and approximate geographic center of the Village. Typical ADT traffic volumes are shown on Exhibit 5.

Western Avenue, though not a primary arterial in this area, extends across I-80/I-294 and provides the main connection between Hazel Crest Proper (HCP) and the rest of the Village. A new Western Avenue overpass structure was constructed in 2006.

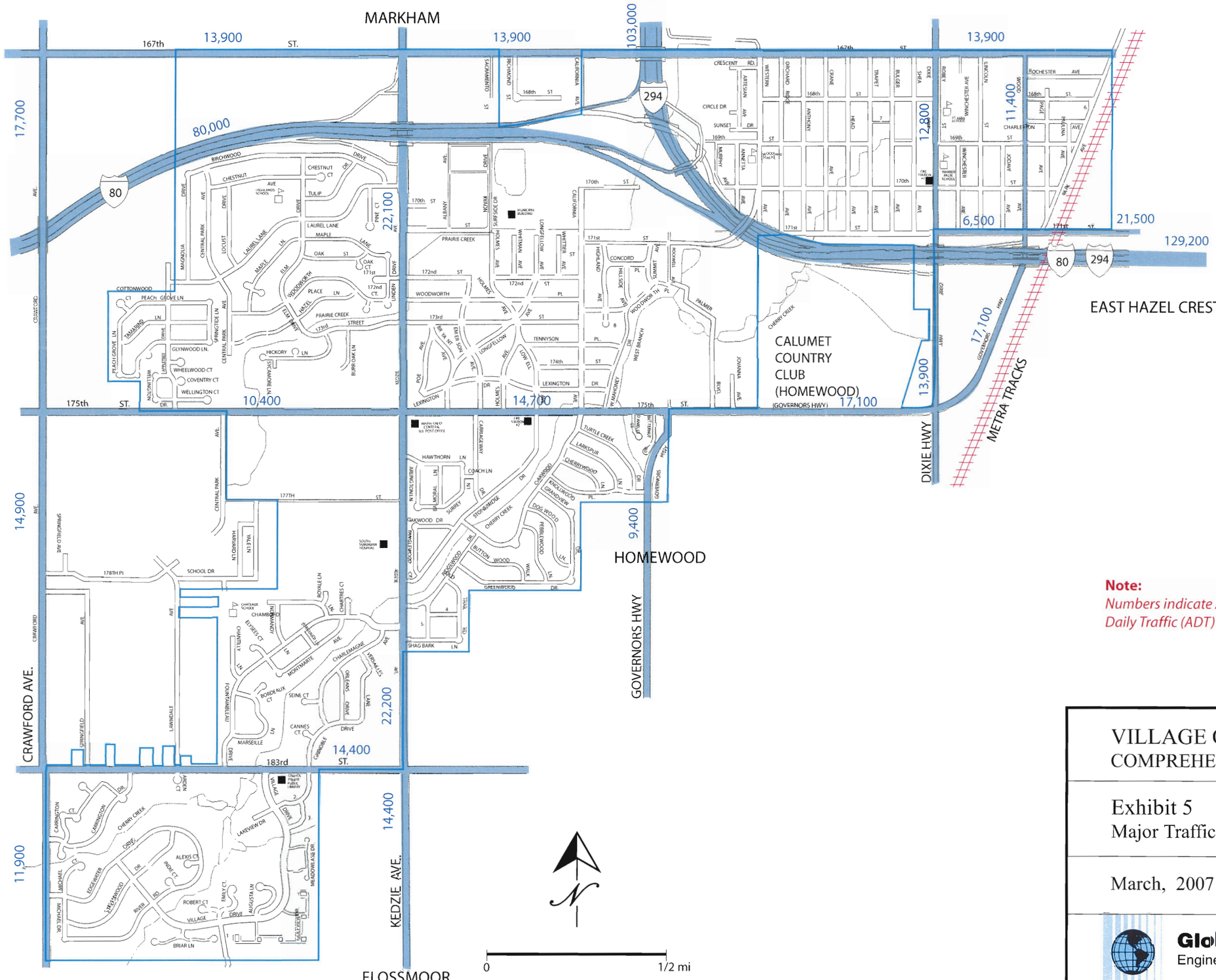
The arterial system is well established and operates without significant conflicts or congestion. At some locations, moderately heavy traffic volumes and high operating speeds on arterial streets make it difficult to safely access these streets from local streets or parking areas.

5.3 Local Streets

The primary arterials form a large grid, which provides access to the local streets and major traffic generators. In the HCP area, local streets are aligned in a traditional rectangular grid pattern. Elsewhere, in the newer portions of the Village, local streets are aligned in irregular curvilinear patterns. At some locations, local residential street are used as short cuts to non-local destinations.

5.4 Pedestrian/Bike Facilities

While many of the Village's residential areas have sidewalks, walking or biking is not common. The major arterial streets are wide, busy and not pedestrian friendly. Some arterial street segments lack sidewalks on one or both sides. Pedestrian crossings of arterial streets are long and poorly delineated. Commercial establishments, including convenience stores, tend to cater to drive-in customers. There are no significant dedicated pedestrian/bike trails in the Village.



Note:
Numbers indicate Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes

VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Exhibit 5
Major Traffic Routes and Volumes

March, 2007

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In a regional context, an extensive trail network has been developed throughout the Metro Area and in the south suburbs. The Tinley Creek Trail System is located two miles to the west of the Village and provides linkages to other existing and proposed regional trails. More trails are being planned in the future. In 1997, the Northern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) adopted the "Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenway and Trail Program" which includes a proposed 162nd – 167th Street Trail along the north edge of the Village. This trail could run, in part, along 167th Street and would be extended from the Orland Tract Forest Preserve through the Tinley Creek Forest Preserve to the Little Calumet River.

5.5 Public Transportation

Several PACE bus lines operate within and through the Village. Rt. #359 operates along Kedzie Avenue from Blue Island to Homewood. Rt. #352 runs from Blue Island to Chicago Heights, partly along Park Avenue with stops in front of the METRA Station. Rt. #460 runs west from the METRA Station along 170th, 171st, 175th and 177th Streets, past South Suburban Hospital to Country Club Hills.

5.6 METRA Commuter Service

Hazel Crest is served by the METRA Electric District commuter line which provides train service between Millennium Station in downtown Chicago and Blue Island to the south. The METRA Station is located at 170th Street and Park Avenue at the northeast edge of the Village and accommodates approximately 700 boardings per week day.

The METRA Station is an old unattractive masonry structure with more modern passenger entrance appendages at 170th and 171st Streets. The original station building, as well as a shed addition, is used for storage. The station is not ADA compatible, has no user amenities and no designated drop-off/pick-up zones. Commuter parking is currently provided at two lots, 170th Street and Park Avenue, and 170th Street and Wood Street. These lots have a total of 144 spaces which are more than 90% occupied during the day. Commuters also park on streets and various vacant lots.

Another METRA station is located at 175th St., in the neighboring municipality of East Hazel Crest.

5.7 Transportation Improvement Needs and Recommendations

Commuter parking expansion at the METRA Station. As noted above, two existing commuter parking lots have a total of 144 spaces which are more than 90% occupied during the day. Additional commuter parking spaces should be provided along Park Avenue and/or by providing additional off-street space. To the extent that additional parking will generate additional station usage, this will also help support convenience to retail business in the station area.

Drop-off/ pick-up provisions at the METRA Station. Drop-off/pick-up zones and improved pedestrian crossings should be delineated in front of the station.

METRA Station Building Enhancement. The existing METRA Station is old, unattractive and not ADA compatible. While a new station would be very desirable, it could cost $5 million or more and is not a current METRA priority. Refurbishment and cosmetic improvement of the existing structure could be achieved for a fraction of that cost. At a minimum, this should include removal of the storage shed structure, cosmetic/decorative improvement of the old brick station building, and decorative lighting and landscaping of the adjacent area. To the extent practical, the original station building should be refurbished for commuter type services such as a coffee shop, news stand, or convenience store. The Village should seek assistance from METRA, as well as from State and Federal funding sources.

Traffic-Calming Measures. On some local streets subject to cut-through traffic, traffic calming measures may be appropriate to reduce speed. Such measures could include red-light cameras, traffic circles, street chokers, bulb-outs and speed humps. Community input and professional analysis will be required to identify specific improvement needs.

Pedestrian facilities. Sidewalks with ADA compatible ramps should be provided along both frontages of all arterial streets. Signalized intersections should have high visibility pedestrian crossing pavement markings, countdown pedestrian signals, appropriate signage and refuge islands. "Safe Routes to Schools" provisions should also be incorporated. Since all of the major arterials are under County or IDOT jurisdiction, these agencies should be requested to assist with the sidewalks and to implement the crossings.

Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRTS). This is a Federal funding program administered by IDOT. This program supports projects and programs that enable and encourage walking and bicycling to school. This can include infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks and signals, as well as education and safety programs. The Village should work with the appropriate school districts and community members to develop SRTS plans and programs.

Pedestrian/bike trails. In addition to the sidewalk needs discussed above, the Village should implement pedestrian/bike trails at locations where they would provide access to activity centers, as well as link open space areas and serve a recreational function.

162nd – 167th Street Trail. This trail is included as a proposal in the "Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenway and Trail Program" adopted by NIPC in 1997. The trail would extend from the Orland Tract Forest Preserve through the Tinley Creek Forest Preserve to the Little Calumet River. The Hazel Crest portion of this trail could be located along the south side of 167th Street. It could then extend west into Country Club Hills and provide access to the newly developed commercial center at 167th Street and Pulaski Avenue. To preserve this option, a right-of-way for this trail should be reserved along the south frontage of 167th Street between Kedzie Avenue and Pulaski Road.

PACE Service Improvements. Village officials should lobby for improved PACE bus service to commercial and industrial centers and South Suburban Hospital, as well as more frequent peak-hour service to the METRA Station

6. HOUSING

The Village of Hazel Crest is predominantly a community of detached single-family homes. However, these homes cover a wide range in terms of age, condition, size and value. There also is a significant supply of apartments and condominiums, as well as affordable and special need housing units.

6.1. Housing Statistics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Village had a total of 5,303 housing units of which 3,889 (74%) were single-family detached homes. In addition, there were 321 (6%) single-family attached homes, 47 (less than 1%) mobile homes and 1,032 (19%) units in multi-family structures. Approximately 200 new single-family homes have been built since 2000. (U.S. Census data on housing is included in Appendix A.)

Of all the housing units, 4,124 (81.4%) were owner occupied while 943 (18.6%) were renter occupied. It might be surmised that owners occupied the bulk of the single–family homes, as well as some condominiums in multi-family structures.

In terms of age, more than half (54%) of all housing units were built between 1960 and 1980. An additional one-fifth (21.3%) of the units were built between 1940 and 1960, another one-fifth (19.7%) were built since 1980 and the remaining 5% were built before 1940.

Of the owner occupied units in 2000, 250 units had a value of $200,000 - $999,999 while 1,882 units had a value of less than $99,999. For rental units, median rent was $934. It is estimated that since 2000, home values have increased by 20 – 30 %.

6.2. Housing Condition and Distribution

The geographic distribution of housing follows the historic growth pattern of the Village. Most of the smaller, older and more affordable homes are located in Hazel Crest Proper (HCP). The area between Park Avenue and Dixie Highway contains a mix of older residential and commercial uses and small apartment buildings. There also are a number of vacant lots. Purhman Trailer Park is located at 169th Street and Dixie Highway. The area west of

Dixie Highway contains modest single-family homes on small 5,000 sq. ft. lots.

Some homes and buildings in HCP are in need of improvements and/or improved maintenance, but they do offer a large stock of affordable housing. In order to promote home maintenance and improvement, the Village has a strong property maintenance code and a local Housing Adjudication Court. The Village is promoting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Rehabilitation Program which offers interest-free improvement loans to qualifying home owners.

Newer subdivisions, south of I-80/I-294, were built in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's and contain typical suburban single-family homes arranged along winding curvilinear streets. The area west of Kedzie Avenue, between I-80 and 175th Streets, is known as the "Highlands" while the area to the west is known as "Pottawatomie Hills". Further south, the area south of 175th Street and east of Kedzie Avenue is known as "Stonebridge". The area south of 183rd Street was developed in the 1990s and is known as "Dynasty Lakes" and "Village West".

Concentrations of higher density residential development are found at seven locations. In Hazel Crest Proper, a row of small apartment buildings are located west of Dixie Highway between 171st Street and the Tollway. A low- rise apartment complex is located to the west of the Municipal Center at 170th and Albany Avenue. Waterford Estates, an attractive 250 unit mid-rise assisted living complex, is located along Kedzie Avenue south of 173rd Street. The mid-rise Stonebridge condominium complex is located at Stonebridge Drive and Carriageway Drive. Further to the south, the low-rise Versilles apartment complex is located along the west side of Kedzie Avenue. South of 183rd Street, in the Dynasty Lakes/Village West area, there are the Waters Edge and Club mid-rise condominium developments.

6.3. Affordable and Special Need Housing Considerations

The Illinois Affordable Housing and Planning Act of 2003 established a 10% affordable housing goal for all municipalities. According to the 2000 census, the median household income in Hazel Crest was $50,576. Typically, a family can reasonably afford to buy a home that costs two to two-and-one-half times its total annual income. A median income family could therefore afford to buy a home for $101,000 - $126,000 and a family

earning 80% of the median could afford $81,000 - $101,000. The 2000 Census also shows that of all owner-occupied units, 1,882 (52%), had a market value of less than $100,000, and of all rental units, 257 (28%), had gross rent of less than $750 per month. Therefore, it is clear that the Village of Hazel Crest easily satisfies the State's 10% affordable housing goal

Assisted living units are provided in the Waterford Estates complex which has 250 such units. Nursing home housing is provided at the Imperial Nursing Home. However, the Village lacks market rate or subsidized housing for independent seniors.

6.4 Housing Improvement Needs

As noted previously, most of the Village's housing stock is fairly new and in generally good condition. Still, there are units that have code violations and/or are in need of repairs and improved maintenance. A large proportion of the deficiencies are found in HCP and many of those involve low income, elderly or absentee property owners.

In order to promote home maintenance and improvement, the Village has a strong property maintenance code. The Department of Fire, Rescue and Inspectional Services makes regular visual inspections of all homes and commercial structures. Tickets are issued for violations and the Fire Department tracks compliance activity. A local Housing Adjudication Court has been established to deal with maintenance code violations.

To assist low income homeowners, the Village is promoting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Rehabilitation Program which offers interest-free improvement loans to qualifying home owners. Also, a local contractors registration list is maintained by the Fire/Inspections Department.

6.5. New Housing Opportunities

Since little vacant land remains in the Village, there are no opportunities for any large scale subdivisions. Therefore, new housing development will be limited to in-fill locations and as replacement for obsolete or blighted existing structures. In aggregate, these locations could accommodate approximately 500 – 1,000 new housing units. The Village should expedite these housing opportunities and encourage development of owner-occupied

market rate housing. Specific housing opportunity areas include the following (area designations refer to Section 4.4 and Exhibit 4):

Area C. This vacant 27-acre site is located on the north side of 175th Street and east of Mahoney Parkway (see Section 4.4, Area C). In 2006, a residential development was proposed and the Village Board approved a Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance for a 90-unit townhouse development.

Area E. This is a prime in-fill housing location between 175th and 177th Streets, north of South Suburban Hospital and east of the Mae Jamison School (see Section 4.5, Area E). Current zoning for this area is R-O Single Family Residential. The area has been subdivided and some homes have been built, but much of the interior remains vacant and inaccessible due to lack of public streets and infrastructure. Also, the area is heavily wooded and partially subject to flooding. To promote development, municipal intervention may be required to consolidate multiple ownerships and extend streets and infrastructure. The wooded setting and proximity to the hospital would make single-family or townhome development attractive for employees. Depending on layout and density considerations, this area could accommodate up to 100 new homes.

Area F. This vacant three-acre site is located along the south side of 175th Street, west of Fire Station #2 and north of the Stonebridge Condominiums (see Section 4.4, Area F). Current zoning is SU Special Use. This site would be well suited for medium-density residential development similar to the adjacent condominium building.

Area H (Hazel Crest Proper). There are a number of vacant and underutilized sites that could be developed for residential or mixed-use purposes (see Section 4.4, Area H). Locations in close proximity to the METRA Station could be attractive for commuters and for independent senior housing. In order to facilitate development/redevelopment in this area, a 41-acre TIF District has been designated. This area is also within the Harvey Phoenix Enterprise Zone. The Village owns a number of parcels that have been obtained through the South Suburban Tax Reactivation Program. Specific development/redevelopment locations and strategies have been identified in the *Hazel Crest Proper Redevelopment Area Plan and Program, Dec. 2000 by Teska Associates Inc.* and the *Transit Oriented Development Plan, Oct. 2002 by Teska Associates Inc.* The latter document

indicates that approximately 400 new townhomes, condominiums and/or apartments could be developed in this area.

Area J (Homewood Acres). Another potential location for new housing development is the unincorporated "Homewood Acres" area, which occupies approximately 40 ac. between 183rd and 179th Streets, and extends from the current Village limits west to Crawford Avenue (see Section 4.5). This area could potentially be annexed into the Village. Two rural standard streets, Springfield Avenue and Lawndale Avenue, extend north from 183rd Street, into the interior of this area. Much of the land has been subdivided into large lots, typically 600 ft. deep and 100-200 ft. wide. Approximately 70 homes and several churches have been built, but many lots are still vacant. Except for the Pulaski Road (Crawford) frontage, individual structures depend on well water and septic systems.

Annexation of all or portion of Homewood Acres into Hazel Crest would increase the Village's population and tax base and provide an opportunity for additional housing development. In addition to the 70 existing homes, this area could accommodate 100+/- new homes. However, annexation would also require substantial expenditures for the construction of new streets, extension of water and sewer services and the likely abandonment of existing wells and septic systems. Current and future residents would also require a full range of municipal services.

7. VILLAGE IDENTITY AND URBAN DESIGN

It has been said that "you only get one chance to make a first impression". Currently one does not get much of an impression or "sense of place" while traveling to or through the Village of Hazel Crest. Like many typical suburban communities, Hazel Crest is lacking in municipal identity. There are few features of identity or visual or historic interest. The sense of community and identity is further inhibited by the Village's meandering boundaries, multiple school districts and the barrier effects of I-80/I-294.

7.1 Community Gateways and Focal Points

Existing Village welcome signage is attractive, but not very noticeable, memorable or legible when seen from rapidly moving vehicles. To make a unique first impression and create an aura of vitality and sense of place, gateway features should be developed at several strategic locations.

Approximately 11,000 southbound vehicles per day flow down Kedzie Avenue under the I-80 overpass (the total driver and passenger count would be greater than the Village's population). This would be a natural location for a major gateway feature. Currently, the I-80 overpass is a utilitarian structure serving the functional needs of traffic, but drab in appearance and lacking visual quality. This structure should be enhanced by the addition of ornamental railings and decorative lights and/or pylons (see Exhibit 6). A planter should be constructed along the Kedzie Avenue median to the north and south of the overpass structure. Adjacent expressway side slopes and open interchange areas should be landscaped with decorative plant materials. Properly sized and illuminated Village welcome signage should be installed in place of the present sign. The overall impression would enhance the travel experience of passing motorists while lending identity to the Village. Overall treatment might be comparable to the 205th Street overpass over I-57 in Matteson.

Another natural location for a focal point feature is the 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection. This is the geographic center of the Village with a total of 37,000 vehicles per day passing on the two intersecting streets. Currently, the northwest and southwest corners are occupied by gas stations, a nondescript restaurant sits on the southeast corner and the northeast corner is occupied by a strip mall. A focal point/landmark feature,

such as a clock tower, should be developed on one of the corners, possibly as a public/private partnership.

METRA's Electric District line carries 9,000 riders per day through the Village. This line is on an embankment which makes adjacent areas of the Village highly visible, particularly for south-bound riders. A properly sized and illuminated Village identity feature along the line would make riders take notice.

Other strategic locations for gateway or focal point features could include the northwest corner of 183rd and Kedzie Avenue, southeast corner of 183rd and Pulaski Road., east and west Village limits along 167th Street, and Dixie Highway intersections at 169th, 170th and/or 171st Streets.

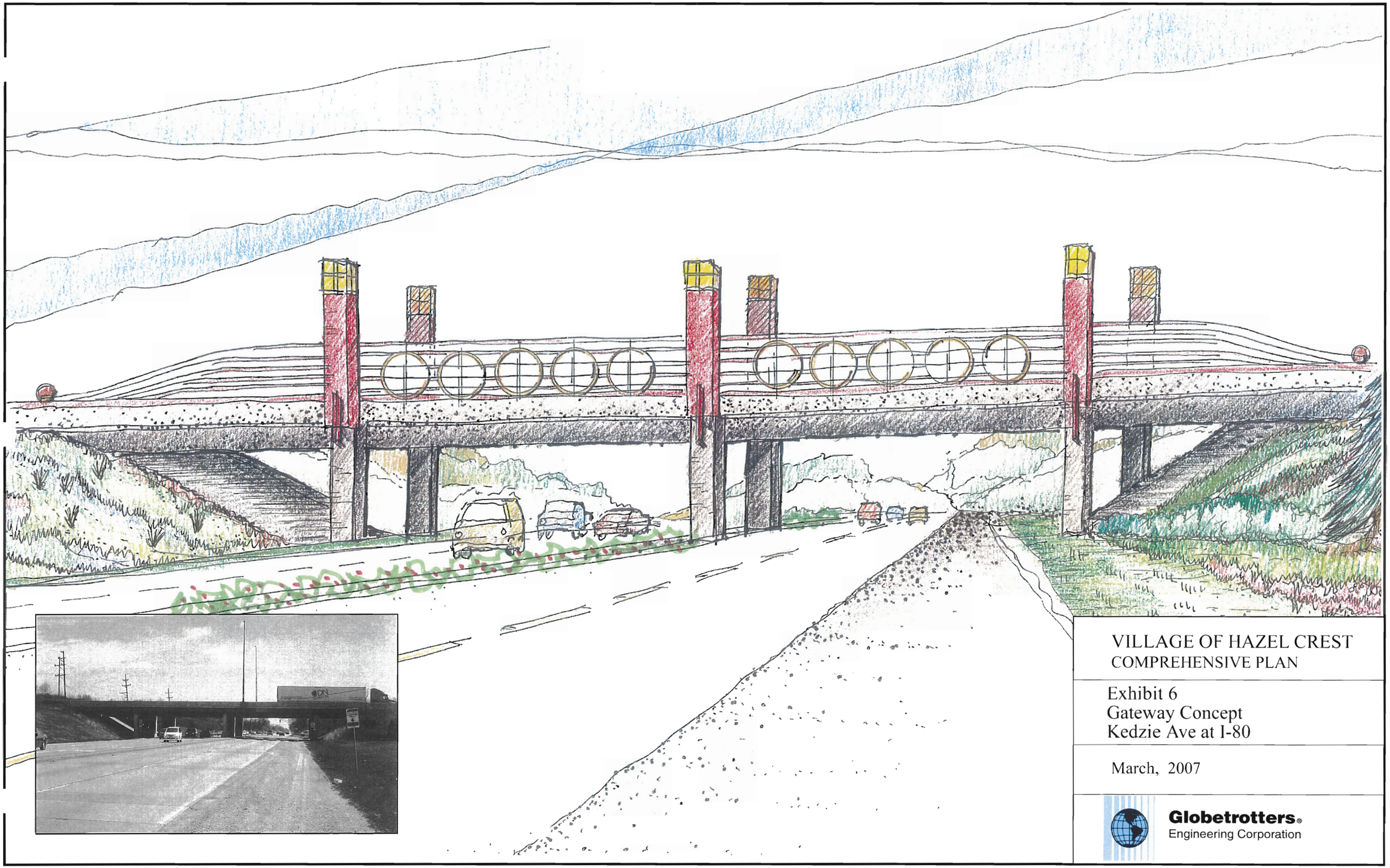
7.2 Streetscape Features

While the curvilinear residential streets are tree lined and attractive, the major arterials and business streets look dull, monotonous and pedestrian unfriendly. For thousands of drivers, the view from the road is uninspiring.

Streets, including roadways, parkways and sidewalks, are a highly visible feature for motorists, as well as walkers and bikers. Therefore the appearance of these elements has great impact on the overall appearance of a community.

Typical streetscape improvements include landscaped medians and/or parkways, decorative lighting, decorative paving in pedestrian areas and crosswalks, bus shelters and street furniture. Guidelines for streetscape improvements for Park Avenue, 170th Street, Wood Street and Dixie Highway in the METRA Station area are included in the *Transit Oriented Development Plan.*

Streetscape improvements can be expensive and need to be phased in over time as part of an ongoing long-term program. In the HCP area TIF funds might be utilized. Private developers should be required to provide parkway improvements, sidewalks and/or decorative pavement elements along their respective street frontages.



VILLAGE OF HAZEL CREST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Exhibit 6
Gateway Concept
Kedzie Ave at I-80

March, 2007

Globetrotters®
Engineering Corporation

7.3 Historic Preservation

Dixie Highway, one of America's great historic highways, runs through the old town center in Hazel Crest Proper. This route was conceived in 1915 by Carl Fisher to bring Northerners south to his development in Florida. In recent years there has been a surge of interest in the history of this famous road and some neighboring communities have developed and/or preserved attractions around the "Driving the Dixie" theme. The Village should initiate some Dixie Highway theme features including signage and light post banners. Obviously, any Dixie Highway signage in identity programs would be more effective if they were implemented in cooperation with neighboring municipalities to the north and south.

Currently, no buildings in the Village have any kind of historical designation. Efforts should be undertaken to identify and designate historic buildings in HCP for preservation, enhancement and incorporation into the areas historic redevelopment framework.

7.4 I–80 Corridor Visioning Plan

The I–80 Corridor Council was formed under the auspices of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, to provide a common voice for communities along this route. The Council's goals are to facilitate economic development while maintaining a unified identity. An I-80 Visioning Plan was completed in 2004. This plan includes recommendations for special identity signage and visual enhancements along the corridor. However, implementation funding has not been secured or identified.

7.5 Signage Regulation and Enhancement

Commercial and informational signage serves important functions. Businesses exist in a highly competitive environment and must be able to communicate with customers quickly and effectively regarding their products or services. For most retailers, the on-premises business sign is the most basic and cost effective link to customers

Studies show that in order to focus motorists' attention, signs need to use bold and bright colors and need to be sized in proportion to the speed of the passing traffic.

At many locations, existing commercial signs appear unattractive, cluttered and ineffective. The Village should adopt guidelines and/or an ordinance promoting effective and attractive commercial signage.

7.6 Off-Street Parking Area Enhancement

Some shopping centers, strip malls and other developments have expansive wide-open parking areas that project a monotonous "sea of asphalt" image.

Current zoning regulations do not require screening or internal landscaping. The Village should enact zoning amendments that would require large parking lots to include screening, islands, landscaping and other enhancements. Screening, comprised of landscaping or decorative fencing, should be provided along street frontages. Internal islands should comprise about five percent of the parking area and should be planted with trees and decorative plant materials, These requirements should be applicable to all new developments, as well as to existing developments if they are substantially rehabilitated or expanded or if the parking area is resurfaced.

7.7 Urban Design Guidelines

The Village should adopt design guidelines for future commercial and residential developments. Such guidelines would establish a set of standards and identify building and site development elements to enhance the visual quality of new structures and developments.

Extensive urban design guidelines targeted at redevelopment of HCP are included in the *2002, Transit Oriented Development Plan.*

7.8 Cultural and Civic Activities

In addition to the physical identity and urban design elements noted above, community identity can be reinforced by cultural and civic events. In 2005, the Village revived its annual Hazelnut Fest which featured a parade, musical entertainment, cook-offs and other activities. Other events have included farmers markets, Arbor Day Celebration and Owens Lake fishing derbies. Additional events that could contribute to community cohesion and identity include music events, art fairs, food fairs, book fairs, antique markets, car shows, winter festival, running/biking events etc.

8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Various public facilities, including municipal facilities, schools, parks and health facilities are located throughout the Village (see Exhibit 3).

8.1. Municipal Center/Village Hall

The Hazel Crest Municipal Center is located at 3000 West 170th Place. This location is on the north side of the Village west of California Avenue. The Center is a former school building situated on a large site surrounded by open space and ample parking. It functions as a Village Hall housing various municipal government offices, as well as the Police Department. A senior citizen's facility is also located in the Center. Village owned, wooded open lands preserves are located to the north and west of the Center.

The Municipal Center/Village Hall is in an attractive setting, but is not highly visible or prominent and is difficult to access. Over the years there has been discussion and/or speculation regarding the need for a new Village Hall at a more central location. If a decision is made to build a new Village Hall, it should be located in conjunction with a new Town Center in the vicinity of the 175th Street and Kedzie Avenue intersection.

8.2. Municipal Public Works Department

The Village's Public Works Department is housed in a complex located at 170th Street and California Avenue. The compound includes several buildings, a water storage tank and a yard waste composting facility. The Department is responsible for maintaining and improving the Village's infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks and alleys, street lights, parkway trees, sanitary and storm sewers, water distribution facilities, urban forest resources, municipal buildings and grounds, public parking lots and the yard waste composting facility. Municipal infrastructure data is summarized in Table 3.

Hazel Crest's water supply is provided by the City of Chicago via Harvey. The Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (WRDGC) provides wastewater treatment services. A Sewer and Water Fund has been established, as an enterprise fund within the Public works structure for controlling revenues and expenses related to water and sewer services.

Table 3. Municipal Infrastructure Facilities

50 miles of streets
7 miles of creeks
10,000 parkway trees
54 miles of water mains
37 miles of sanitary sewers
24 miles of storm sewers
780 fire hydrants
700 street lights
4 water storage tanks with a combined capacity of 3,000,000 gallons
3 water pumping stations

8.3. Municipal Department of Fire, Rescue and Inspection Services

The Village's Department of Fire, Rescue and Inspection Services operates two fire station facilities. Fire Station #1 is located in Hazel Crest Proper at 170th Street and Dixie Highway. Fire Station #2, at 2903 West 175th Street, also houses the Department's headquarters. In addition to fire fighting and emergency response services, this department is responsible for building permits, construction plan review and regular building inspections. Building permits are processed at Fire Station #2.

8.4. Parks, Open Space and Recreation

Village parks are under the jurisdiction of the Hazel Crest Park District which is a separate unit of government. The Park District facilities are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Hazel Crest Park District Facilities

Name	Location	Land Area
Bicentennial Park	170th & Park Avenue	0.3 acre
Chateaux Park	3500 Chambord	1.0 acre
Thurgood Marshall Park	183rd & Fountainbleau	12.0 acres
Cherry Creek Park	175th & Stonebridge	1.9 acres
Lake Owens	17001 Holmes	13.0 acres
James O Setnes	2500 Crescent	21.0 acres
Lions Park	169th & Trapet/Bulger	2.0 acres
Oak Hill Park West	171st & California	5.0 acres
Oak Hill Park East	2600 171st Street	22.0 acres
Oak Valley	171st & Rockwell	23.0 acres
Stone Hollow Park	Stonebridge & Oakwood	5.0 acres
Tri-Hi Park	171st & Anthony	1.1 acres
Wolf Park	Locust near Laurel	5.8 acres
Dynasty Trails	183rd & Village Drive	33.0 acres
Community Center	2600 171st Street	NA
Recreation Center	2801 170th Street	NA
Maintenance Ctr.	2500 169th Street	NA

Total Park District area covers 146 acres. Specific outdoor facilities include picnic areas, playgrounds, ball fields and walking trails. Lake Owens has fishing. The Community Center and Recreation Center have various indoor facilities including basketball courts.

In addition to the Park District parks, the Village owns wooded Open Land areas around the Municipal Center, which cover approximately 40 acres.

The Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (WRDGC) has flood control facilities along the West Branch of Cherry Creek, between 171st and 175th Streets. There are two large storm water detention basins which are dry most of the time, and in dry weather are used for recreational purposes.

In aggregate, the Village has over 200 acres of parks and open space areas which amounts to 15 acres per 1,000 population. This is substantially higher than the general standard of 5 – 10 acres per 1,000. However, there are some activities and areas that are not well served. The outdoor pool/aquatic-center is no longer operational and in need of repair or replacement and there is a shortage of facilities targeting current teenager interests. Also, there is a shortage of park space in Hazel Crest Proper.

Calumet Country Club, a private golf course facility, is located just outside the Village limits in Homewood at the Dixie Highway and Governors Highway intersection. The club covers about 160 acres, but, according to some accounts, the site may be slated for development.

8.5 Schools

The Village of Hazel Crest is served by multiple school districts, none of which corresponds with the Village's boundaries. Public schools serving Village residents are operated by three separate elementary school districts and four separate high school districts. All of these school districts also serve other adjacent municipalities. Five elementary schools are located within the Village. Other elementary schools which serve some Village residents and all of the high schools are located outside the Village. There also are several private parochial schools within and adjacent to the Village. Public elementary school data is summarized in Table 5.

Currently, there are no elementary schools in the area between Kedzie Avenue and California Avenue. All children residing east of Kedzie Avenue must cross this busy arterial street to get to one of the three Prairie Hill District Schools. Furthermore, all three of these schools are somewhat overcrowded. There would be merit in considering the feasibility of developing a new elementary school in the area between Kedzie Avenue and California Avenue.

Table 5. Public Schools

Highlands School
Located in the Highlands area on Laurel Lane.
Currently has an enrollment of 390 students
Part of Prairie Hill Elementary School District 144 *

Mae Jamison Elementary School
Located on 177th Street east of Central Park Avenue
Currently has an enrollment of 500 students
Part of Prairie Hill Elementary School District 144 *

Chateaux School
Located on Chambourd Lane
Currently has an enrollment of 455 students
Part of Prairie Hill Elementary School District 144 *

Woodland School
Located at 169th Street and Western Avenue
Currently has an enrollment of 370 students
Part of Hazel Crest School District 152 ½ **

Warren Palm School
Located at 170th Street and Dixie Highway
Currently has an enrollment of 260 students.
Part of Hazel Crest School District 152 ½ **
Administrative offices of District 152 ½ are also housed in this building.

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* Prairie Hill Elementary School District 144 is based in Markham. Hazel
** Crest School District 152 ½ is based in the Warren Palm School building.

8.6. Libraries

The Grand Prairie Library is located at 183rd Street and Village Drive (3479 West 183rd Street). It is owned and operated by the Grand Prairie Public Library District, which is a separate unit of government serving Hazel Crest

and Country Club Hills. The existing library was built in 1982 and has an area of 16,000 sq. ft.

According to some library development guidelines, one square-foot of library space is recommended per capita of the served population. Hazel Crest and Country Club Hills now have a combined population of 31,000 and NIPC projects 35,000 residents for 2030. This suggests that the library should be double the current size. The Library District should therefore consider expansion or replacement of the current facility.

8.7 Health Care Facilities

Advocate South Suburban Hospital occupies a large site in the vicinity of 177th Street and Kedzie Avenue. This is a 286-bed full service acute care hospital with 300 physicians plus support staff. The hospital offers a wide range of in-patient and out-patient diagnostic and ambulatory medical services, as well as 24-hour emergency services.

Other significant medical care facilities include the modern 64 unit Arden Court Alzheimer Facility on 183rd Street; the Imperial Nursing Home is located on 175th Street west of Kedzie Avenue; and the 250-unit Waterford Estates assisted living complex is located just to the north.

A three-story, 60,000+ sq. ft. medical office building was recently built just north of South Suburban Hospital at 177th Street and Kedzie Avenue. A number of other clinics and practitioners operate at various locations.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For planning purposes the term "economic development" refers to efforts to retain existing businesses, institutions and jobs and to accommodate new businesses and stimulate economic growth. For local governments, economic development translates into tax revenues and generates growth through the multiplier effect of job creation.

9.1 Economic Base

While Hazel Crest is basically a residential community, it does contain businesses and institutions that generate substantial economic activity (see Table 6). To various degrees, businesses and institutions also provide employment and generate property and sales tax revenues for the Village and other units of local government. Employees of businesses, institutions and industries shop and eat in the Village producing secondary and tertiary benefits. Also, many employees live in the Village. The U.S, Census for 2000 indicates that 2,933 jobs were based in the Village (as compared with a labor force of 7,453)

The Village's leading economic generator is the Health Care & Social Assistance sector (NAICS Code 62). According to the 2002 U.S. Economic Census, this sector generated $181 million in revenues, had an annual payroll of $67 million and provided 1,700 jobs (see Sections 8.7 and 9.2).

Another major economic generator is the retail and food services sector (NAICS Code 44-45 and 72). The Village contains four shopping centers, as well as strip malls and free standing stores and restaurants with over 300,000 sq. ft. of floor space. The 2002 U.S. Economic Census indicated that this sector generated over $48 million in sales/receipts, had an annual payroll of $6 million and provided 460 jobs. This sector also generates substantial property and sales tax revenues.

The industrial/manufacturing sector is not highly developed in the Village. Mi-Jack Products, on 167th Street, is the largest industrial establishment in the Village, with 350 employees. This firm manufactures and distributes material handling and construction equipment. There are but a few other light manufacturing and distribution establishments.

The public/government sector, including the Village government, several School Districts, Park District and Library District is a major source of employment. This sector does not produce local tax revenues, but it does provide secure and well paying jobs.

Table 6. Major Employers and/or Tax Payers in the Village of Hazel Crest

South Suburban Hospital
Mi-Jack Products
Graycor Corporate Offices
Gierczyk Development Corp.
Fountainbleau Shopping Center
French Village Shopping Center
Grenoble Square Shopping Center
Hazel Crest Shopping Center
Waterford Estates
Imperial Nursing Home
Arden Courts Alzheimer Center
Elementary School District 144
Elementary School District 152 ½
Village of Hazel Crest government

9.2 Health Care and Social Assistance Sector

As noted above, the Village's leading economic generator is the Health Care and Social Assistance sector (NAICS Code 62). The anchor institution in this sector is Advocate South Suburban Hospital, a 270-bed full-service acute care hospital with 300 physicians plus support staff. Other operators include the Arden Court Alzheimer Center, Imperial Nursing Home, Waterford Estates, a 250-unit assisted living center, a medical center building on 177th Street and a number of professional medical offices. According to the 2002 U.S. Economic Census, this sector generated $181 million in revenues, had an annual payroll of $67 million and provided 1,700 jobs.

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector appears to have achieved a critical mass in the Village. This could be an attraction for other institutions and practitioners in related fields. The Village should network with existing institutions and practitioners to determine their current and long-term needs, and identify opportunities for expansion and complimentary facility and business development.

9.3 Retail/Commercial Sector

For planning purposes, the retail and food services sector is highly significant because it has land use and life style, as well as economic implications. Primary shopping developments in the Village are summarized in Table 8. There are four "neighborhood" scale centers and four strip malls, as well as a number of free standing stores and restaurants. In aggregate there are over 300,000 sq. ft. of floor space.

Surveys suggest that typical retail expenditures (including food service) average approximately $8,000 per capita annually or $20,000 per household. For Hazel Crest residents this would amount to $120 million per year. But to capture these expenditures, a community must offer a full range of retail opportunities. Currently, there are no regional centers, "lifestyle centers", auto dealers or "big box" stores in the Village. Therefore, local residents must go outside the Village for many of their major purchases.

Table 8. Primary Shopping Centers/Stores in the Village of Hazel Crest

Name	Location	Square Footage	Prime Tenants
Grenoble Square	183rd Street	93,000 sq. ft.	Moo & Oink Groc. Family Dollar
Hazel Crest Ctr.	175th & Kedzie	84,000 sq. ft.	Post Office Dollar General
French Village	183rd & Kedzie	53,000 sq. ft.	Dollar Tree
Fountainbleau Ct.	183rd Street	39,000 sq. ft.	Blockbuster Radio Shack
Walgreens	183rd & Pulaski	12,000 sq. ft.	Walgreens
Crossings	175th & Kedzie	11,000 sq. ft.	
Highlands Center	173rd & Kedzie	10,000 sq. ft.	
Aldi	183rd Street	7,000 sq. ft.	Aldi
Karp's Plaza	170th & Dixie	7,000 sq. ft.	
New Strip Mall	171st & Dixie	10,000 sq. ft.	Proposed

The 2002 U.S. Economic Census shows that retail and food service sales in the Village totaled $48 million, which includes expenditures by non-residents who work or pass through the Village. This suggests that local retail establishments captured less than 40% of the Village's total retail expenditures.

It appears likely that the local retail sector will be negatively impacted by the recent development of a large Wal-Mart complex just outside the Village limits at 167th Street and Crawford Avenue in Country Club Hills. This big box store provides virtually every type of retail product plus service and an adjoining Multiplex entertainment center.

Still, current retail space in the Village averages out to about 21 sq. ft. per capita which exceeds the Chicago Metro average of 18 sq. ft. per capita. In

view of the fact that local retail establishment capture only one third of the Village's retail expenditures, the current space ratio appears to be very high.

All of this suggests that the Village may have too much dated retail space which could result in high vacancy rates and low quality tenants. In order to maintain a robust retail sector, some existing centers will need to restructure or modernize and/or retrofit space for other uses. There are many municipalities where outdated or surplus retail space has been retrofitted for use by government agencies, educational institutions, offices and other non-retail uses. The remaining retail space then becomes more valuable and is sought out by higher quality merchandisers.

9.4 Industrial/Manufacturing/Distribution Sector

As noted above, the industrial/manufacturing sector is not highly developed in the Village. There are only a few such enterprises. Mi-Jack Products, on 167th Street, is the largest industrial establishment in the Village, with 350 employees. This firm manufactures and distributes material handling and construction equipment.

Palmer Lakes Business Park, on Governors Highway, is a recently developed business park containing a complex of buildings used for light manufacturing, distribution and offices. A TIF District covering this site was established in 1988. Several sites in this park are still vacant and available for development.

The overall climate for attracting new industrial/manufacturing enterprises is not promising. For many years now, Illinois and the Great Lakes region has been loosing manufacturing jobs and establishments, and this trend appears to be continuing. In this regard the Village's main focus should be on the retention of existing establishments.

However, on the regional scale, there has been a lot of activity in the development of large warehousing/distribution centers. This has been particularly true in the southwest suburban area along I-55. To a lesser extent it has also occurred in the south suburban area along I-57. Some of the new warehousing/distribution centers are huge, providing 500,000 sq. ft. or more of floor area. Generally, these centers are located in close proximity to freeway interchanges. While these developments do pay real-estate taxes they take up a lot of land, provide few jobs and provide no sales tax

revenues. Within the Village there are a few parcels along 167th Street that could accommodate a warehousing/distribution center, but in the long term this may not be the most beneficial use of this land.

9.5 Public/Government Sector

The Village does not contain any major state or regional governmental or educational facilities. The public/government sector is therefore limited to the facilities and operations of local units of government. In addition to the municipal Village government, this includes the Park District, five elementary schools operated by two separate School Districts and the Library District (see Sections 8). This sector does not produce local tax revenues but it does provide services and secure well paying jobs.

9.6. Five-Year Action Strategies

The Village's five–year economic development action strategies should focus resources and efforts on a limited number of achievable development objectives.

Development Area "A" Along 167th Street. This 80+ acre parcel between 167th Street and I-80, west of Kedzie Avenue, is exceptionally attractive and well suited for development (see Section 4.4). Suitable uses would include commercial, distribution and industrial type development. Village should facilitate development that will generate jobs and substantial tax revenues. Promotional materials targeting this site should be distributed to the development community. Village should undertake feasibility studies regarding infrastructure needs.

Health Care and Social Assistance Facility Expansion. This sector has achieved a critical mass in the Village which could be an attraction for other institutions and practitioners in related and complimentary fields. The Village should network with existing institutions and service providers to determine their current and long-term needs and identify opportunities for expansion and complimentary facility and business development.

Development of Independent Senior Housing in HCP. The Village should promote and expedite the development of independent senior housing in the eastern portion of Hazel Crest Proper. In particular, the Village could provide assistance in land acquisition and assembly. This initiative could

provide significant economic momentum for other developments in the area and provide a customer base for local businesses. TIF funding could be targeted to assist project implementation. The Village already owns a number of parcels in this area and could acquire additional land to provide a suitable site. The Village should proceed to identify one or more suitable sites and initiate contacts with potential senior housing developers.

Expansion of METRA Commuter Parking. As noted previously in Sections 5.6 and 5.7, there is a shortage of commuter parking space in the vicinity of the METRA Station. Additional parking will increase station usage and will help to support convenience retail businesses in the surrounding area. The Village should develop plans for and seek funding assistance for additional commuter parking facilities.

Completion of Palmer Lakes Business Park. Some sites in this business park remain undeveloped and available. The park is a modern development in an attractive setting and is suitable for office, research and light manufacturing uses. Village should assist developers in attracting some additional businesses to round out and complete this development.

Development of a Village Gateway at the I-80 and Kedzie Avenue Overpass.
Although this is not strictly an economic development initiative, it would enhance the Village's image and identity and thus contribute to the retention and attraction of businesses. The existing I-80 overpass structure could be enhanced by the addition of ornamental railings, decorative lighting and landscaping improvements (see Section 7.1). The Village should seek assistance and funding from IDOT, the Tollway Authority and other State and Federal sources.

Third Airport. The Village should support efforts to develop the Third Airport near Peotone which would have a very positive economic impact on all south suburban communities.

9.7 Organizational Resources

There are a number of active organizations in the south suburban area that can provide assistance on planning and economic development issues.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Jack Lavin, Director
620 East Adams Street
Springfield, IL 62701-1615
Phone: (217) 782-7500

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
1904 West 174th Street
East Hazel Crest, IL 60429
Phone: (708) 206-1155
Web: www.ssmma.org

Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce
1154 Ridge Road
Homewood, IL 60430-0698
Phone: (708) 957-6950
Web: www.chicagosouthland.com

Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation
1154 Ridge Road, PO Box 1698
Homewood, IL 60430-0698
Phone: (708) 957-6950
Web: www.chicagosouthland.org

South Metropolitan Regional Leadership Center
At Governors State University
1 University Parkway
University Park, IL 60466
Phone: (708) 534-4487
Web: www.lincolnnet.net

10. SUB-AREA PLANS

Several recent planning documents and/or initiatives have focused on Hazel Crest Proper and the METRA Station Area. For the most part, these documents are still current and are incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan:

Hazel Crest Proper Redevelopment Area Plan & Program, Dec. 2000, Teska Associates Inc.. This plan, adopted in 2001, delineates a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and proposes a series of public and private developments in Hazel Crest Proper.

Transit Oriented Development Plan, Oct. 2002, Teska Associates Inc.. This plan document provides a framework for various public and private improvements for the METRA Station area.

Cover pages, tables of content and introductions from these reports are attached.

Hazel Crest Transit Oriented Development Plan

Prepared By:

Teska Associates, Inc.
Business Districts, Inc.
Fish Transportation Group

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Introduction

Purpose

The goal of this project is to develop a concept plan, design criteria and strategies for redevelopment within a ½ mile radius of the Hazel Crest Metra Station. This area is locally known as Hazel Crest Proper. The concept plan addresses such issues as circulation, parking and pedestrian access, recommended physical improvements, redevelopment opportunities, and commuter-parking opportunities within the study area. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) under the Regional Technical Assistance Program funded the project.

This study is a follow-up to two previous planning studies, the Hazel Crest Proper Revitalization Action Plan completed in November 2000 by Business Districts, Inc. and Teska Associates, Inc. and the Hazel Crest Proper Redevelopment Area Plan and Program that was completed in December 2000 by Teska Associates, Inc. This last plan resulted in the creation of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District for key blocks within the larger station area.

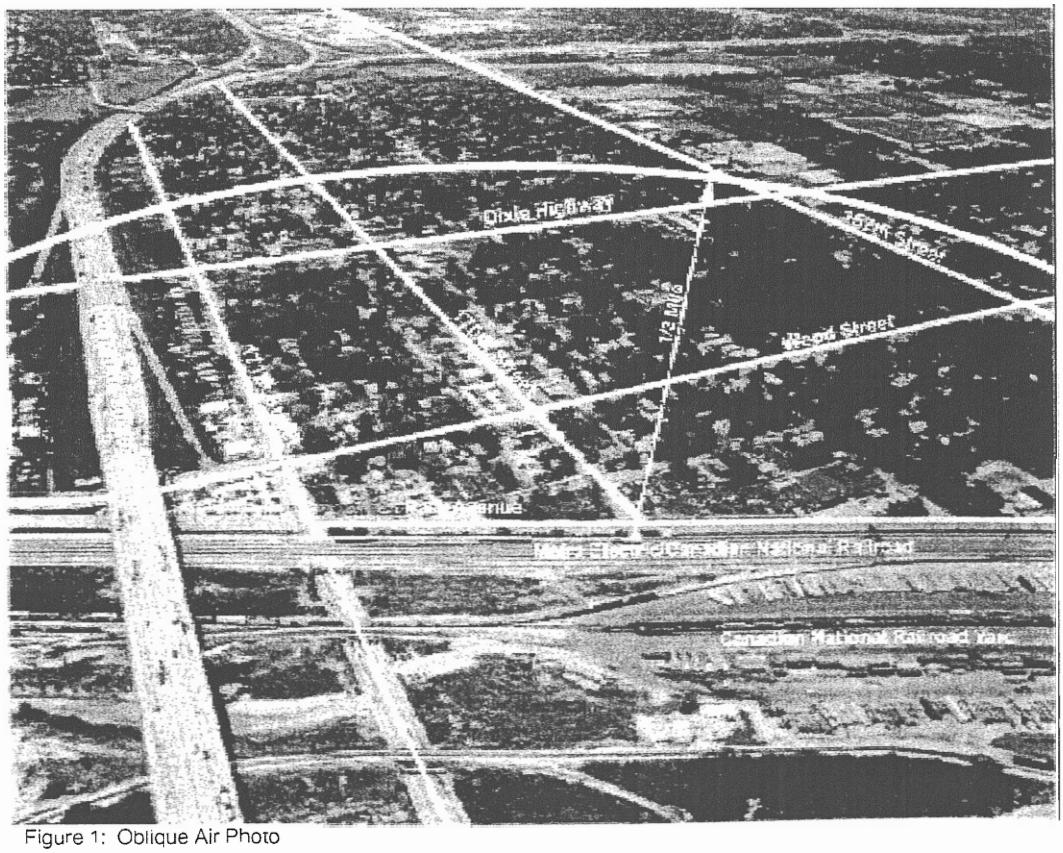

Figure 1: Oblique Air Photo

HAZEL CREST PROPER REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN AND PROGRAM

Village of Hazel Crest, Illinois

December, 2000

Prepared by:
Teska Associates, Inc.
Evanston, Illinois

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Incorporated in 1912, the Village of Hazel Crest began as a small farming community with a rail depot used to transport agricultural products to market. Although the Village has grown considerably since those early days, the original part of the community still has a unique identity and image. It is a portion of this area, known as Hazel Crest Proper, which is the subject of this plan. This area is generally located along 170th Street between the Illinois Central Railroad and Dixie Highway.

Primary efforts to organize this project began in 1997, when the Village's Economic Development Committee (EDC) began discussing the current status of Hazel Crest Proper and the need for revitalization. In 1998, a series of meetings were held with area residents. In 1999, the EDC decided to proceed with a study and redevelopment plan for the proposed area, with the possible designation of a Tax Increment Finance (or TIF) project area. One of the primary issues facing Hazel Crest Proper is economic development. Residents agree that there are few retail and service choices in this area. The study area also contains many single family and multiple family residences, many of which were built in the early 1960s and are in need of revitalization.

The 1985 Comprehensive Plan recommends a number of actions that will revitalize this important economic activity center for the Village. However, Village officials have determined that, without direct municipal involvement and financial assistance, planning objectives for this area cannot be met. To encourage new investment in the Hazel Crest Proper area, the Village has decided to explore the feasibility of the use of TIF as a financial tool to facilitate redevelopment.

TIF can be used to make the area attractive for redevelopment by eliminating the conditions which inhibit private investment, weaken the Village's tax base, affect the safety of community residents, and hinder the Village's ability to promote a cohesive development of compatible land uses. Public improvements may be constructed and incentives provided to encourage the type of private investment that will allow the Village to achieve its goals for this area.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing is permitted in Illinois under the "Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act" (Chapter 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1, et seq.) of the Illinois Statutes, as amended (hereinafter the "Act"). Only areas which meet certain specifications outlined in the Act are eligible to use this financing mechanism. Besides describing the redevelopment objectives, this Redevelopment Area Plan and Program report sets forth in general terms the overall program to be undertaken to achieve these objectives.

The Act permits municipalities to improve eligible "conservation" or "blighted" areas in accordance with an adopted Redevelopment Plan over a period not to exceed 23 years. The municipal cost of certain public improvements and programs can be repaid with the revenues generated by increased assessed values of private real estate within a designated project area. The key to this financing tool is that funding does not rely on the taxing power of the municipality alone. The property taxing power of all taxing districts with jurisdiction over the land within the project area can be employed to retire the necessary financial obligations. This taxing power is only applied to the increase in equalized assessed valuation generated within the designated project area during the limited term of the Redevelopment Plan and Program, principally increased equalized assessed valuation from new private development.

Appendix A

Images of the Village of Hazel Crest

Photo 1. Typical Homes in Hazel Crest Proper

Photo 2. Typical Homes in Highlands

Photo 3. Typical Homes in Dynasty Lakes

Photo 4. Stonebridge Condominiums

Photo 5. Municipal Center and Village Hall

Photo 6. Highlands School

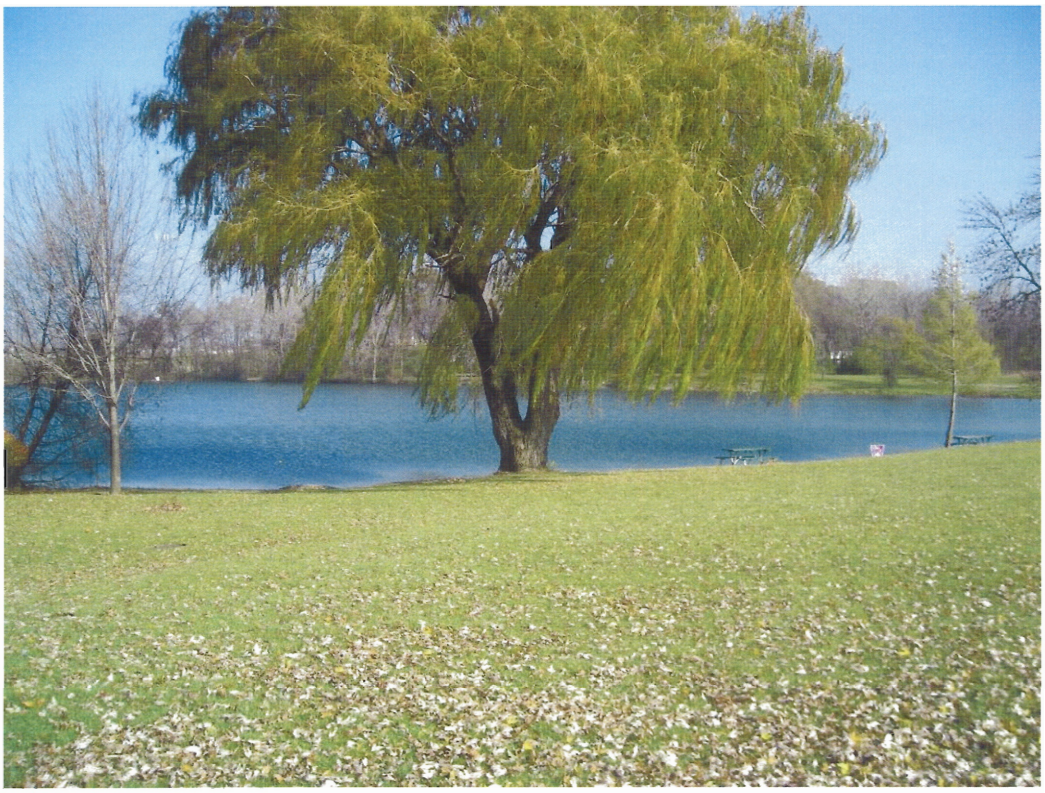

Photo 7. Lake Owen

Photo 8. Park District Community Center

Photo 9. Typical Street Scene in Hazel Crest Proper

Photo 10. METRA Train Station at 170th and Park Avenue

Photo 11. South Suburban Hospital

Photo 12. Waterford Estates Assisted Living

Photo 13. Southeast Corner 175th & Kedzie Avenue Shopping Center

Photo 14. Grenoble Square Shopping Center on 179th Street