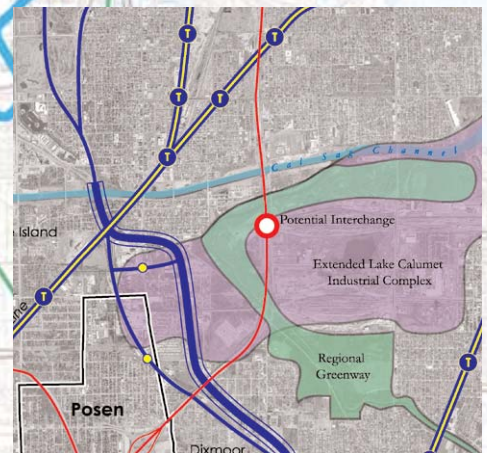
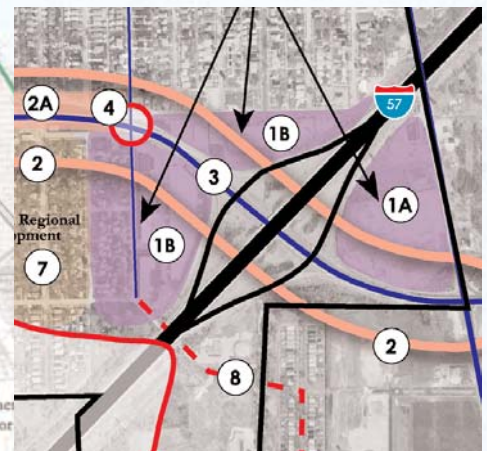


# Opportunities Analysis and Brownfields Site Identification and Prioritization

## Village of Posen



Final: December 15, 2003

Prepared by: Vandewalle & Associates

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document highlights several key planning and development opportunities for the Village of Posen. It specifically identifies and prioritizes brownfield sites that have the potential to undergo successful redevelopment that would spur revitalization of target areas within the Village. Together, the Opportunities Analysis and Brownfield Site Identification and Prioritization address regional and local redevelopment issues and lay the foundation for a targeted approach to environmental site assessment and remediation.

This planning effort was funded through two grants: a community planning grant from Department of Commerce and Community Affairs and a brownfields redevelopment grant from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association coordinated the Illinois EPA grant award, and in conjunction with a U.S. EPA brownfields pilot grant, it supported the creation of the South Suburban Chicago Brownfields Coalition (SSCBC). SSCBC is a group of eight municipalities whose goal is to identify, assess, and redevelop brownfields sites in eight south suburban municipalities that are believed to contain a concentration of vacant, abandoned, and possibly contaminated properties because of their industrial histories. The Village of Posen has successfully completed assessment of one industrial property, Miller's Potato House, which is now being marketed for redevelopment by both SSMMA and the Village.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

This document represents a planning process developed by VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES specifically for SSCBC. To date, the process has been applied to six coalition member communities, including the Villages of Posen, Riverdale, Lansing, Dolton, South Chicago Heights, and the City of Chicago Heights. The Opportunities Analysis identified regional and local strategic opportunities for redevelopment that could strengthen area economics and social fabrics.

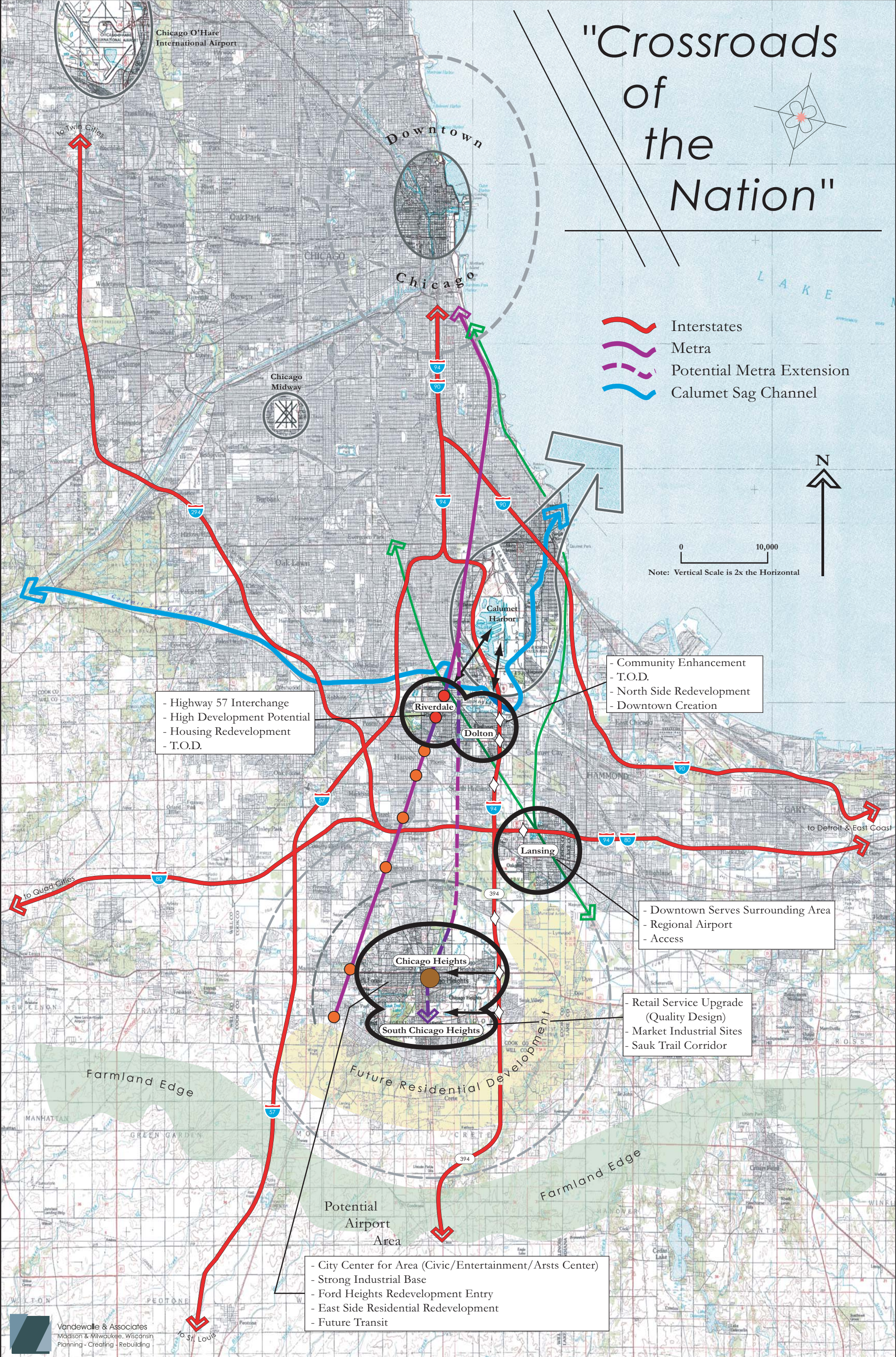
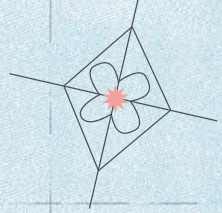
While conducting the Opportunities Analysis, VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES also worked with the Village of Posen to undertake the Site Identification and Prioritization process designed for SSCBC. This process is outlined in greater detail on page 13 of this document. The first step of the Site Identification and Prioritization Process involved identifying broad target areas that are in need of redevelopment. Given that the Village of Posen is approximately only one square mile in area, many of the target areas overlap. Within each of these target areas, potential brownfield sites were then identified based on a reuse feasibility analysis and cursory reviews of ownership and environmental status. The list of potential brownfield sites was then presented in a community focus group. The focus groups applied the communities' priority redevelopment goals to the potential brownfield sites and then validated the prioritized list of recommended sites that were proposed by VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES. With the list compiled, several of the recommended sites in the Village will now become the subject of an environmental assessment funded by the remaining resources of the Illinois EPA grant.





## **OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS**

The purpose of an Opportunities Analysis is to explore a community's untapped potentials, and to offer suggestions on how these potentials can be realized. Factored into the analysis are such things as available land; transportation and communications infrastructure; development trends; regional economic strengths and initiatives; proximity to concentrations of employment, education, and industry; national and regional economic trends and influences; urban design considerations; and perhaps most importantly, the community's development goals. It is designed to provide planning and economic development guidance to Village officials as they contemplate future development opportunities, planning and zoning amendments, capital improvements, intergovernmental discussions, and public-private ventures.

Although focused specifically on the Village of Posen, the Opportunities Analysis is an analysis of the Village's potential economic role in the south suburbs and all of Metro Chicago. It recognizes that the Village is not an island, but that it exists within a complex urban region, which presents numerous opportunities and challenges for local development. The Opportunities Analysis also provides a backdrop for evaluation of the many brownfield redevelopment opportunities in the Village, and is designed to help inform that process.

# "Crossroads of the Nation"



-  Interstates
-  Metra
-  Potential Metra Extension
-  Calumet Sag Channel

0 10,000  
 Note: Vertical Scale is 2x the Horizontal

- Highway 57 Interchange  
 - High Development Potential  
 - Housing Redevelopment  
 - T.O.D.

- Community Enhancement  
 - T.O.D.  
 - North Side Redevelopment  
 - Downtown Creation

- Downtown Serves Surrounding Area  
 - Regional Airport  
 - Access

- Retail Service Upgrade (Quality Design)  
 - Market Industrial Sites  
 - Sauk Trail Corridor

- City Center for Area (Civic/Entertainment/Arts Center)  
 - Strong Industrial Base  
 - Ford Heights Redevelopment Entry  
 - East Side Residential Redevelopment  
 - Future Transit

### **Regional Opportunities – “Crossroads of the Nation”**

Many development opportunities for the Posen area have been previously noted in the Opportunities Analysis for the original group of SSCBC members. These opportunities include a diverse workforce, extensive transportation networks, and ‘industrial-strength’ infrastructure; and are included in the broader context of the entire south suburban region—an area that covers major portions of southern Cook County and portions of Will County.

As noted in the preceding SSCBC document, Posen and neighboring communities are part of a constellation of south suburban communities that are joined by a common geography, economy, and shared elements of the physical and social landscape. Such features include a common street grid, shared regional public transportation services, overlapping school districts, a common labor pool, familiar patterns of ethnic succession, and major transportation corridors that both unite and divide the communities. The previous regional analysis labeled the general area as the “Crossroads of the Nation”. Located at the intersection of I-57 and I-294, crossed by a major rail line, and approximately a mile south of the Cal Sag Channel, Posen perhaps more than any other community in the south suburbs can lay rightful claim to this name.

### **The Calumet Harbor Industrial Complex**

The Village sits aside one of the largest urban industrial complexes in North America. This complex is centered on Calumet Harbor, one of the busiest ports and Foreign Trade Zones on the Great Lakes. Besides the surface systems that comprise hundreds of miles of converging freeways and rail lines, southern Cook County also features the Calumet Sag Channel that connects the Great Lakes to both the Atlantic Ocean, via the St Lawrence Seaway, and to the Mississippi River. Any materials being shipped by sea to the nation’s interior from either the Gulf of Mexico or the Eastern seaboard are likely to pass within close reach of Posen. This fact holds equally true of goods being shipped via rail and truck to and/or through the Upper Midwest. Posen is also located approximately equidistant between Chicago’s Midway Airport and a potential new airport at Peotone and is within 35 minutes of the major new intermodal, distribution, and logistics developments in the nearby communities of Joliet and Elwood.

These multiple transportation modes and nearby transshipment points, such as the harbor and the rail yards, present opportunities for value-adding economic activities in Posen. Value-added opportunities include everything from processing raw materials to advanced manufacturing activities. Import/export banks, wholesalers, distributors, legal and freight forwarding services are some of the professional support services of these economic sectors. The office functions associated with these sectors are potential occupants of commercial office space located within easy reach of the related businesses and the regional highway system. Posen has ample land that is ripe for redevelopment and that can provide a convenient location to support these manufacturing and support services.

### **The Golden Triangle (Sibley—I-57—I-294)**

The Village represents one of two places in the nation where major interstates meet without being joined by a system interchange. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is currently evaluating the feasibility of constructing an interchange connecting I-57 and I-294 at Posen, and has evaluated several different design options. This reconstruction is a major urban engineering project that will take millions of dollars and years to complete. To date, no timeframe has been advanced to complete the engineering analysis or to begin construction.

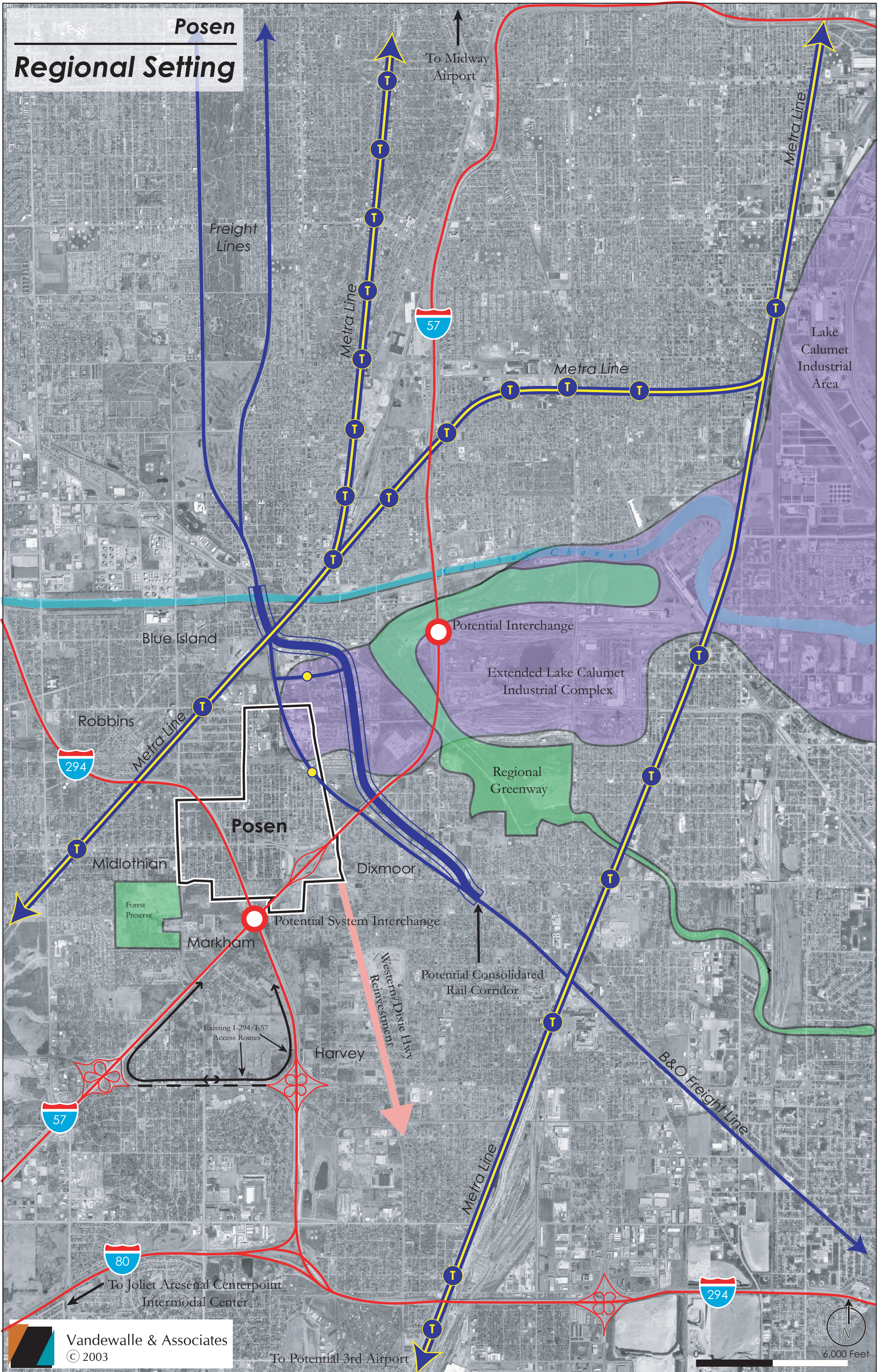
Completion of the I-57 & I-294 interchange project could still be many years away, but it ultimately promises to significantly alter the development potential of the Village, as the proposed interchange will create a convergence of nearly 200,000 vehicles per day near the I-57 & Sibley interchange. Confluences of major urban interstates are generally choice locations for large urban satellite districts that contain regional shopping, public institutions, entertainment complexes, and major office developments. Although the Village has a limited amount of space to accommodate extensive new development of such a scale; several of these uses, particularly office and supporting retail, are a very realistic possibility for the land surrounding the I-57 & Sibley interchange and should be planned.

Near the end of this planning process, IDOT announced plans to construct a north-bound on-ramp and south-bound off-ramp with accompanying toll booths at Sibley/147th and I-294. This development heightens the urgency for the creation of a Village directed Sibley/147th Corridor Plan. Because this corridor is under the jurisdiction of Cook County, a multi-jurisdictional planning effort will be necessary if the project moves forward. Given the potential

increase in traffic that will accompany the provision of a convenient I-57 to I-294 connection, the results of this development will significantly alter the face of the corridor. A proactive approach to managing and directing the ensuing growth will best serve the goals and needs of the community and will help mitigate the potentially negative impacts of additional traffic and development.

Specific attention should be paid to maintenance of strong pedestrian and vehicular access to the neighborhoods to the south of Sibley/147th, as this area could easily become isolated from the rest of the community due to the additional traffic barrier of the corridor. Additionally, as an interstate connector, there will be an increased interest in development opportunities. To avoid underutilization of the properties flanking the corridor, the Village would benefit from carefully assessing what types of development it would prefer, as well as its configuration. Design guidelines and a zoning ordinance specific to the corridor should be adopted to ensure high-quality development in the area.

# Posen Regional Setting



## **Major Corridors and Village Boundaries**

The freeways and rail lines that surround the Village constrict access to the community at a few key locations. The busy rail lines to the north and I-57/I-294 to the south of the community severely restrict north-south movements, and present a psychological as well as physical barrier that separates Posen from its northern and southern neighbors.

### **Dixie Highway/Western Avenue**

Dixie Highway/Western Avenue forms the eastern boundary of the Village. The stretch of Dixie/Western south of the Village in to Harvey has seen some new government office development and some limited retail “strip” development. There has been talk of a satellite campus of DePaul University potentially locating along this segment of the corridor.

The Village’s portion of the corridor contains a mixture of uses including commercial/retail near the intersection at Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>, which transitions into a mixture of residential, industrial, and quasi-industrial uses toward the northern edge of the Village. The Dixie/Western corridor is constrained by the numerous intersecting active rail lines, which deter north-south travel along the corridor between Blue Island and Posen.

### **The B&O Right-of-Way**

The B&O right-of-way that provides direct rail access into the industrial northeast side of the Village could be a key factor in the redevelopment of several of the brownfields that are proximate to the Village Industrial Park. The proposed consolidation of this line with other nearby lines could either hamper or improve the industrial redevelopment of the northeast side, depending on the type of planned activities and their transportation needs. Certainly, potential rail users may be driven away from the Village by its relocation. On the other hand, relocation may improve overall access to the community, thereby enhancing the economic potential of Dixie/Western, and indeed the entire Village, for many types of uses including commercial.

The Village’s position on the relocation should be dictated by community development goals for the Village as a whole. Feedback received during the focus group suggested that the rail line was seen more as a liability than an asset since construction of a Dixie/Western viaduct may eliminate a substantial portion of the Village’s commercial frontage along this thoroughfare.

### **139<sup>th</sup> Street**

139th Street is the northern boundary of the Village, and offers one of the few above grade rail crossings in the area. Once reconstruction of the railroad overpass is complete, access to the Industrial Park via 139th Street will be improved, thereby enhancing the marketability of available industrial lands. The aforementioned consolidation of the B&O rail line with other rail lines in the area could allow for access points to be developed from 139th Street to interior sites of the Village Industrial Park and the areas to the east.

## **Local Opportunities Analysis**

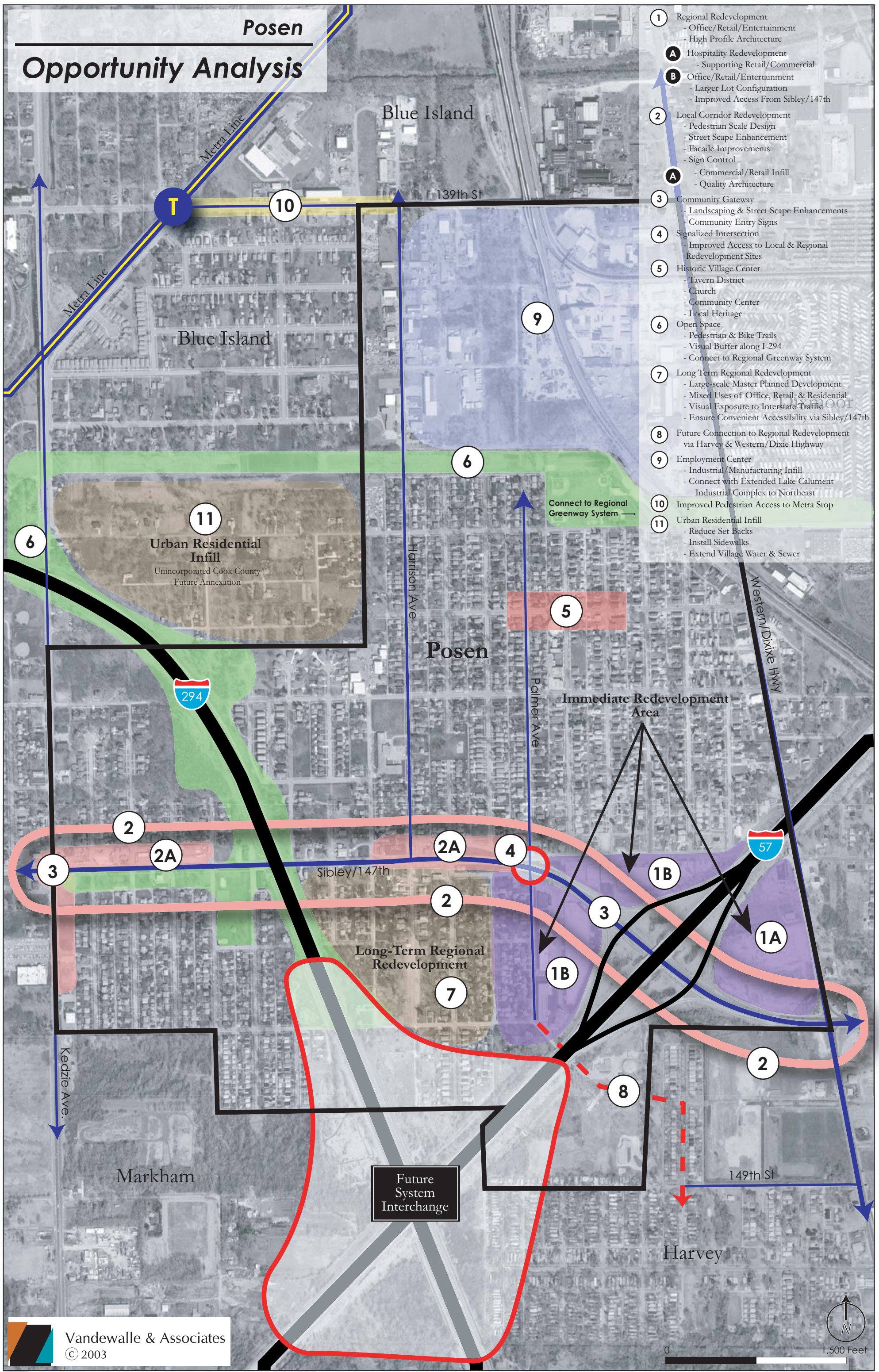
The following analysis is annotated with numbers that correspond with the map on the following page.

### **Opportunity Analysis 1A: East I-57/Sibley Interchange**

Located squarely on the east side of the interchange and flanked by the major intersection at Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Dixie/Western, the Auto Empire site is the Village’s most significant redevelopment opportunity. The superior access, visibility, and size of this site clearly warrant commercial redevelopment that could draw users from the entire south-suburban region. Given the regional commercial/retail potential of this site, taller building(s), possibly a hotel or a sizable retail facility, would anchor both the I-57& I-294 interchange and the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Dixie/Western intersection, and could help spawn new development along these major thoroughfares. New development at this location will affect, and be affected by, development on the west side of the interchange; therefore it must be planned with the new I-57 & I-294 interchange in mind.

# Posen Opportunity Analysis

- ① Regional Redevelopment
  - Office/Retail/Entertainment
  - High Profile Architecture
- Ⓐ Hospitality Redevelopment
  - Supporting Retail/Commercial
- Ⓑ Office/Retail/Entertainment
  - Larger Lot Configuration
  - Improved Access From Sibley/147th
- ② Local Corridor Redevelopment
  - Pedestrian Scale Design
  - Street Scene Enhancement
  - Facade Improvements
  - Sign Control
- Ⓐ Commercial/Retail Infill
  - Quality Architecture
- ③ Community Gateway
  - Landscaping & Street Scene Enhancements
  - Community Entry Signs
- ④ Signalized Intersection
  - Improved Access to Local & Regional Redevelopment Sites
- ⑤ Historic Village Center
  - Tavern District
  - Church
  - Community Center
  - Local Heritage
- ⑥ Open Space
  - Pedestrian & Bike Trails
  - Visual Buffer along I-294
  - Connect to Regional Greenway System
- ⑦ Long Term Regional Redevelopment
  - Large-scale Master Planned Development
  - Mixed Uses of Office, Retail, & Residential
  - Visual Exposure to Interstate Traffic
  - Ensure Convenient Accessibility via Sibley/147th
- ⑧ Future Connection to Regional Redevelopment via Harvey & Western/Dixie Highway
- ⑨ Employment Center
  - Industrial/Manufacturing Infill
  - Connect with Extended Lake Calumet Industrial Complex to Northeast
- ⑩ Improved Pedestrian Access to Metra Stop
- ⑪ Urban Residential Infill
  - Reduce Set Backs
  - Install Sidewalks
  - Extend Village Water & Sewer



It is important that the Village recognize this site's role as a community signpost and its potential to spawn and complement other commercial development in the immediate area. Single uses such as gas stations, car washes, or strip-malls that have very little economic spillover potential or visual interest should be avoided. The Village should require that all new construction on this site be two stories at a minimum.

*Recommendation:*

- Re-zone the area between the intersection of Sibley and 147<sup>th</sup> and the interstate underpass to commercial (office-retail) mixed use.
- Specific design standards that require buildings of at least two stories in height should be enacted.
- Large-lot single uses that have little tax base or job creation potential, such as mini-warehouses, car washes, car lots, and strip malls should be prohibited.

### **The Village Yards**

As the Village's supply of redevelopment sites with reasonably good access and visibility is depleted, relocating Village Yards and redeveloping this site may take on greater urgency. Over the long term, the Village should consider relocating the yards to the undeveloped Village owned tract of land between the B&O rail corridor and the Village industrial park off of Cleveland Avenue.

The redevelopment of the existing yards site should be coordinated with improvements to, and the extension of, Palmer Avenue to 149<sup>th</sup> Street to the adjacent residential neighborhood in Harvey (Opportunity Analysis #8). The extension of this street would capitalize on the existing freeway underpass (which now dead-ends at the yards), improve access to the entire south side of the Village, and improve security of the area by allowing for a flow of users and passers-by.

Redevelopment of this site may require a significant amount of environmental work. In consultation with IEPA and County officials, the Village should begin environmental investigations of this site in order to gauge the scope of the cleanup effort and the feasibility of long-term redevelopment.

*Recommendations:*

- Conduct preliminary environmental site investigations.
- Enroll the site in the Illinois EPA Site Remediation Program (voluntary clean-up program).
- Evaluate feasibility of relocating yards to northeast side of Village to a site that has limited marketability or reuse potential.

### **Opportunity Analysis Area 1B: West I-57 & Sibley Interchange**

The revitalization of the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> corridor will require the long-term redevelopment of the 1950s-60s era warehouse and retail buildings that bracket the west side of the interchange. This area includes the former Montgomery Ward service center and smaller adjacent buildings and the large block of older commercial space on the opposite side of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> Street, between 147<sup>th</sup> and Walter Zimny Drive. Many of these buildings are either vacant or underutilized, and they neither offer any special architectural character that would warrant saving them or adapting them to some other use, nor do they capitalize on the high visibility and traffic counts offered by the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> corridor and the adjacent I-57 overpass. Further, they do not present the Village's main entrance and most visible street in a favorable light that would encourage investment and redevelopment.

Long-term redevelopment of these sites should be of a scale and intensity that would anchor either side of the interchange and the entire eastern edge of the Village. New construction should be tall enough to *announce* the Village, and give it a visible presence from the interstate. Commercial office and retail are the most appropriate land uses for these sites as they maintain excellent visual access from, and proximity to, the interstate. The unused scraps of green space between the freeway ramps and the overpass should be landscaped to accent the entrance to the village and the curvature of 147<sup>th</sup>/Sibley as it passes under I-57 (Opportunity Analysis #3).

To facilitate this vision and to help create a more legible street pattern, the frontage roads that service these sites need to be shortened and vacated in places to allow for a new side street crossing at Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Palmer Avenue. This realignment would require a new signalized intersection (Opportunity Analysis #4). In addition, the existing westbound exit lanes from southbound I-57 currently prevent an efficient reconfiguration of the land on the north

side of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>; however, all southbound traffic exiting at Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> could be accommodated by widening the existing eastbound exit ramp with separate left and right turn lanes for eastbound and westbound traffic respectively. IDOT will need to be consulted to make sure that intersection spacing and vehicle stacking space is adequate in all directions.

Regardless of whether the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and I-294 on/off ramps are realized, reconfiguration of the frontage roads at the I-57 interchange should be pursued to allow increased access to the valuable redevelopment areas that surround the interchange.

*Recommendations:*

- Re-zone all lands between Walter Zimny Drive and Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> east of Palmer Avenue to mixed-use commercial (retail/office).
- Enact special design standards for building placement and height in this area. Buildings should face the street and be no less than three, or more than five, stories in height, and parking should be placed to the rear or side.
- Realign a street crossing at Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Palmer Street.
- Consolidate the southbound I-57 exit ramp to accommodate both east and westbound traffic to Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>.

### **Opportunity Analysis Area 7: Neighborhood Transformation**

Given the likelihood that the interchange system will occur within the next several years, and the changes in traffic patterns and neighborhood character it will bring, the Village would be wise to do detailed, long-term land use planning for the large triangular area formed by I-294, I-57 and Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> Street. The plan should recognize the value of land that maintains excellent visual and physical access to the interstate system, and should rethink the current quasi-industrial land uses on the Village's "doorstep" (areas 1A and 1B) as they squander the real estate value of these sites and neither invite outside investment into the community nor present an attractive community entrance.

A significant portion of the land that surrounds the I-57 & Sibley interchange should be planned and re-zoned for mixed-use development with an emphasis on regionally oriented commercial office and retail (Opportunity Analysis Areas 1A, 1B, and 7). The need for such planning is especially critical for the areas closest to the existing interchange. New development in this area should be suspended indefinitely until the final design of the I-57 & I-294 interchange is announced and any needed changes to Posen's existing interchange at Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> Street are determined. This construction moratorium also applies to any new on/off ramps to and from I-294 that may be planned elsewhere in the Village. Failure to halt current development that will be in the path of the I-57 & I-294 interchange construction may further delay and complicate long-term redevelopment efforts.

In the near term, everything from the east side of Blaine Avenue, south of Sibley/174<sup>th</sup>, to Dixie/Western should be re-zoned to mixed use commercial with the expectation that the area immediately surrounding the I-57 & Sibley interchange as this area has potential to redevelop within the next several years. Such a redevelopment will require the re-zoning of a portion of the residential neighborhood south of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>. The same zoning treatment should also apply to the aging commercial development between Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Walter Zimny Drive east of Palmer Avenue.

The redevelopment of these two key sites will likely require the assembly of some additional land and reconfiguration of the awkward switchback frontage roads. Higher density buildings should be allowed in these areas so that new buildings can at least rise to the height of the freeway or above. Ideally, to enhance marketability and community image, new structures should be of higher architectural design and should be at least partially visible from I-294. Generally, anything between three and six story buildings are desired here because of the scale of the elevated freeway, and because they frame the key eastern entry to the community, and would otherwise be shadowed by the freeway.

The Village should *plan* for development in this triangle *as though the interchange is already in place*. Failure to do so now may result in new development that will not fully capitalize on the access and visibility of the area once the system interchange is completed. Such oversight could result in lost opportunities for development of regional significance. In the meantime, new development in the triangle will make it more difficult and expensive to relocate residents and businesses that the final IDOT may require.

Although much will depend on the final design of the I-57 & I-294 system interchange, the area within the triangle may cease to remain an attractive residential neighborhood due to the added ramps, noise, and traffic that will accompany the interchange project. Again, depending on the final interchange design, the Village may want to consider the entire triangle a long-term (30-40 year) redevelopment area, and put restrictions on new development so as not to further delay or complicate what may be an inevitable and difficult transformation process.

*Recommendations:*

- Work with surrounding communities and the Metro Southwest Alliance to coordinate land use planning along Village boundaries and especially near the Sibley & I-57 interchange.
- Place moratorium on development in the triangle until final design of the I-57 & I-294 interchange is determined.
- Rezone the areas surrounding the I-57 & Sibley interchange for mixed use commercial.
- Increase the allowable building density for the areas surrounding the I-57 & Sibley interchange.

### Opportunity Analysis Area 2: The Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> Corridor

The Village is bisected by the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> corridor, which is a major transportation artery that carries approximately 22,000 vehicles per day and forms the ‘hypotenuse’ of the aforementioned triangle. It is a collector for a large amount of traffic from neighboring communities bound for I-57 and the Midlothian Metra station. It is also the primary east-west arterial to and through the community, and it is served by public transit.

West of the tollway overpass, the corridor contains a good deal of vacant land that is owned by the Village or is otherwise available for sale (Opportunity Analysis area 2A). This land presents an opportunity to create a more traditional downtown retail district centered on the Kedzie and Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> intersection, with Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> functioning as the Village’s “main street”. The frontage lots are relatively narrow, which would require a lot configuration with traditional storefronts that are built up to the sidewalk, directly facing the street with shared parking lots to the side or behind, accessed by a shared rear drive. Complementary streetscaping and a similar development pattern continued on the Village owned lots south of Walgreen’s would create a handsome western entry to the Village. Such development would also provide a walled buffer between the traffic along Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and the residential neighborhood to the south.

Alternatively, the Village could save this land for a generously landscaped green belt. This scenario would provide a welcome contrast from the unrelieved strip of commercial development that stretches the length of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>, and it would also make for an attractive western approach to a central business district that would focus on the area surrounding the existing freeway interchange. Redevelopment of vacant parcels on the north side of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> should also consist of infill commercial development that would add physical definition to the street, and provide an effective backdrop to the greenway on the opposite side of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>. Again, such infill should employ a development pattern that is compact, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use, and built up to the sidewalk. Further to the east, the redevelopment of Iggy’s Furniture site could extend the “main street” vision for Sibley/147<sup>th</sup>, ultimately connecting the community “main street” with the regional development at the I-57 & Sibley interchange.



*Building is set at sidewalk and parking is tucked to the side*



*Residential units above commercial space*

*Recommendations:*

- Determine and pursue a coordinated redevelopment strategy for the Village owned and otherwise vacant properties along Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie Avenue.
- Establish design standards that recognize the real estate value of the parcels located on and immediately adjacent to the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie Avenue intersection.
- Encourage a “main street” feel for this area through design standards that provide for a pedestrian feel to development and tuck parking either to the rear or side of businesses.

**Opportunity Analysis Area 2A: Kedzie Avenue**

Kedzie Avenue forms the Village’s western border, and is a major north-south spine connecting the south suburbs to the metropolitan core. The street carries approximately 24,000 vehicles per day where it intersects with Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> Street.

The new Walgreen’s at the southeastern corner of Kedzie and 147<sup>th</sup> anchors one side of the intersection, but there is little surrounding development to create commercial synergy. Coordinated redevelopment of the Village owned and otherwise available properties along the east side of Kedzie and the south side of Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> could ‘wrap’ the intersection, and provide a strong commercial edge to the Village’s west side. Other opportunities for infill development should be pursued on the many scattered, vacant lots along the east side of the street, specifically on those owned by the Village.

Mixed-use development, including residential units on a second story over first floor retail, would be suitable for these infill areas, as it provides a 24-hour presence with residents on-site when businesses are closed, and business operations while residents are working during the day. This type of development also presents opportunities for shared or reduced parking and co-location of residences and daily services such as drug stores, coffee shops, and news stands, which allows for access to these services without driving.

Immediately south of the Village along Kedzie is the Midlothian forest preserve. Any new development in the southwestern quadrant of the Village should provide recreational access to this amenity.

*Recommendations:*

- Determine and pursue a coordinated redevelopment strategy for the Village owned and otherwise vacant properties along Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie Avenue.
- Establish design standards that recognize the real estate value of the parcels located on and immediately adjacent to the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie Avenue intersection.
- Encourage a “main street” feel for this area through design standards that provide for a pedestrian feel to development, and tuck parking either to the rear or side of businesses.
- Enhance connectivity of recreation and park areas in the southwestern portion of Posen to the Midlothian forest preserve.

**Opportunity Analysis Area 5: Historic Village Center**

The historic Village center is located along 144<sup>th</sup> Street between Campbell and Blaine Avenues (Opportunity Analysis Area 5). This area contains some of the Village’s oldest and most unique housing and also contains several of the community’s major gathering places and landmarks. These landmarks include the community center, St. Stanislaus church, several pubs, and a popular bakery. The housing in this neighborhood is very well kept and represents the Village’s major periods of development. Polish Flats (residences with partial basement flats), bungalows, converted storefronts, and later generation ranches and cottages are all found in this area.

The Village should seek to preserve the historic flavor of this area by encouraging home renovations and discouraging random tear-downs and



rebuilt. The neighborhood should be given a special name and identity. The Four Crowns (with reference to the neighborhood's four taverns), Old Town, The Polish Quarter, or The Flats, (in reference to housing types as well as topographical characteristics), are all possible names for this neighborhood. Annual street fairs and other civic events held here could help reinforce the neighborhood's special identity. Special street and neighborhood signs along 144<sup>th</sup> Street should be used to accent the neighborhood.

*Recommendations:*

- Work with area businesses, Village officials, and the church to dedicate and name the neighborhood and to sponsor annual block parties.
- Install streetscape elements such as banners and special street signs to mark the neighborhood.



### Opportunity Analysis Area 6: ComEd Utility Corridor

The existing ComEd utility corridor cuts a wide swath through the north side of the Village, Opportunity Analysis Area 6. This right-of-way could accommodate a linear park and trail spur that could potentially tie the Blue Island Recreational Center and Posen's Little League fields to the Burnham greenway system to the east. If the existing B&O rail spur is consolidated and relocated with other nearby lines onto a single, shared right-of-way, the vacated portion could be used to extend the trail farther to the east.

Additionally, the forested areas, which flank I-294, that are currently undeveloped should be acquired by the Village to create a green buffer between the adjacent residential areas and the interstate and provide a connection from the ComEd corridor to Village parks just west of the I-294 overpass.

*Recommendations:*

- Work with IDOT and railroad companies to consolidate the area's rail lines into a single, grade separated corridor north of the Village. Consolidating these lines will vastly improve traffic flow along Dixie Highway and provide a more direct connection to Blue Island and points north.
- Work with the local utility to place a paved or gravel trail, skateboard park, or soccer fields within the utility right-of-way. Seek Community Development Block Grants funds to fund the improvements.
- Acquire forested, undeveloped land flanking I-294 for buffer and connection to southern Village parks.



### Opportunity Analysis Area 9: Employment Center

In light of the relative shortage of buildable industrial lands in the south Chicago area, as well as the economic development initiatives in the region, it is important the Village work to protect and enhance its remaining industrial base. More than any other, this sector has the greatest potential to provide family supporting jobs to Village residents.

The Village Industrial Park and area to the east have fair access to interstate and rail corridors and many small, vacant parcels that could be consolidated into larger redevelopment sites. To bolster the marketing potential of this area, conflicting land uses, such as residential and scattered retail commercial uses, should be prevented from encroaching into this area, and the smaller parcels should be consolidated to create larger sites that offer greater development flexibility. The potential of the Village Industrial Park has thus far gone unrealized as it is (1) cut-off by multiple rail lines, (2) is only partially served by public infrastructure, and (3) has questionable access to buildable lots.

Relocation of the B&O rail line and installation of a street in its place would improve vehicular access to the interior sites such as Shay Kiewit and the Village-owned property immediately to the west. These connections may also help preserve the viability of existing industry along 136<sup>th</sup> Street.

*Recommendations:*

- Work with property owners and the Chicago Southland Development Corporation, and other economic development entities to develop a master planning strategy for the industrial lands in the northeast quadrant of the Village. Seek to redevelop the area for continued industrial/quasi-industrial use.
- Facilitate redevelopment through TIF, and U.S. EPA, and IEPA assistance with brownfield assessment/remediation.
- Use the strong edges formed by the freeway overpasses and rail corridor to mark significant transitions in land use (i.e. regional commercial south of overpass, residential/neighborhood mixed-use between the overpass and rail corridor, industrial/quasi-industrial north of the rail corridor.)
- Protect the industrial re-use potential of far northeast side by preventing scattered commercial re-zonings along Dixie/Western, especially if the rail corridor remains in its current location.
- Improve pedestrian access to and from the 139<sup>th</sup> Street Metra Station to the Village Industrial Park to expand commuters' options for travel to work.

**Opportunity Analysis Area 11: Unincorporated Cook County Annexation Area**

Cut off by freeways and rail lines, and surrounded by other incorporated municipalities, the Village is boxed in both physically and jurisdictionally. There are few opportunities for the Village to expand its municipal boundaries or to accommodate large-scale residential infill development. The large tract of unincorporated Cook County land on the Village's northwest side presents a rare opportunity for expansion and development. The Village should continue to aggressively pursue annexation of this land and the extension of full public services to it. Development density in this neighborhood should ultimately approach common residential densities in the area—typically 6-9 dwelling units per acre.

*Recommendations:*

- Annex unincorporated Cook County land.
- Zone property for single family residential development with minimum/maximum lot sizes of 6,000/10,000 square feet respectively.
- Require basic subdivision standards with specifications for lot size/shape, pavements, curb and gutter etc.

## **BROWNFIELD SITE IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION**

A multi-step process designed by VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES for SSCBC members was used to identify and prioritize Village Brownfield sites and is outlined below. The prioritization process conducted with Posen was refined from the earlier process conducted with the five original South Suburban Chicago Brownfields Coalition members; therefore the scores that resulted from the process with Posen cannot be directly compared with those of the original member. However, given that the goals and methods used are identical, general comparisons can be made. The final section of the report provides the results of this process for the Village. The scoring matrices from both the Redevelopment Feasibility Outcome and the Community Values Analysis can be found in Appendix A and profiles of the priority sites can be found in Appendix B.

### **Identification and Prioritization Process**

The first step of this process involved working with the Village to identify potential redevelopment target areas. After the target areas were identified, a series of evaluation criteria was applied to the properties in these areas.

VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES first conducted a redevelopment planning analysis of the key redevelopment sites within each target area to determine which sites have the greatest redevelopment potential. This analysis produced a *Redevelopment Index Outcome* score for each property. Next, the sites were assessed to determine which would be most likely to have the greatest redevelopment success in the near term based on current ownership status and a cursory environmental review. The result was a *Redevelopment Feasibility Outcome* score for each property.

A parallel process occurred while the consultant team was engaged in redevelopment plan analysis. Community values discussions were held with a few groups organized by the Village. In a focus group, a series of goals for redevelopment, such as creation of property and sales tax base, blight elimination, and the creation of new jobs, were discussed. Each of these values was given a priority rating by the focus group to create a unique *Community Values Analysis Outcome*. The focus group also ranked each criterion from most to least important.

Final Recommendations for sites that should undergo Environmental Assessment were derived by applying all of these criteria to target area properties by overlaying weighted community values upon the sites that were prioritized according to the planning analysis developed by VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES. The results of this two-tiered prioritization process provide each of the coalition communities with a prioritization of potential brownfield sites that is based upon both a professional planning review and the community's redevelopment goals.

The results of this analysis and the final recommendation for sites to be assessed under the Illinois EPA Brownfields Redevelopment Grant program are summarized below.

### **Redevelopment Index Outcome**

Twelve sites in the Village—labeled on the map on the following page—were evaluated using a series of redevelopment criteria. Three of these sites ranked fairly high with regard to their immediate potential to have a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood and community as a whole, and with their immediate potential to remove visual blight. The Auto Empire site ranked the highest due to its location at the highly visible I-57 and Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> interchange and the Sibley/147<sup>th</sup> and Western/Dixie intersection, and due to the site's large size. Iggy's furniture and Matthew Lumber also ranked well with respect to the redevelopment criteria, as improvement of these abandoned properties, which are located on major community thoroughfares, could immediately impact their surroundings.

### **Redevelopment Feasibility Outcome (Refer to table in Appendix A)**

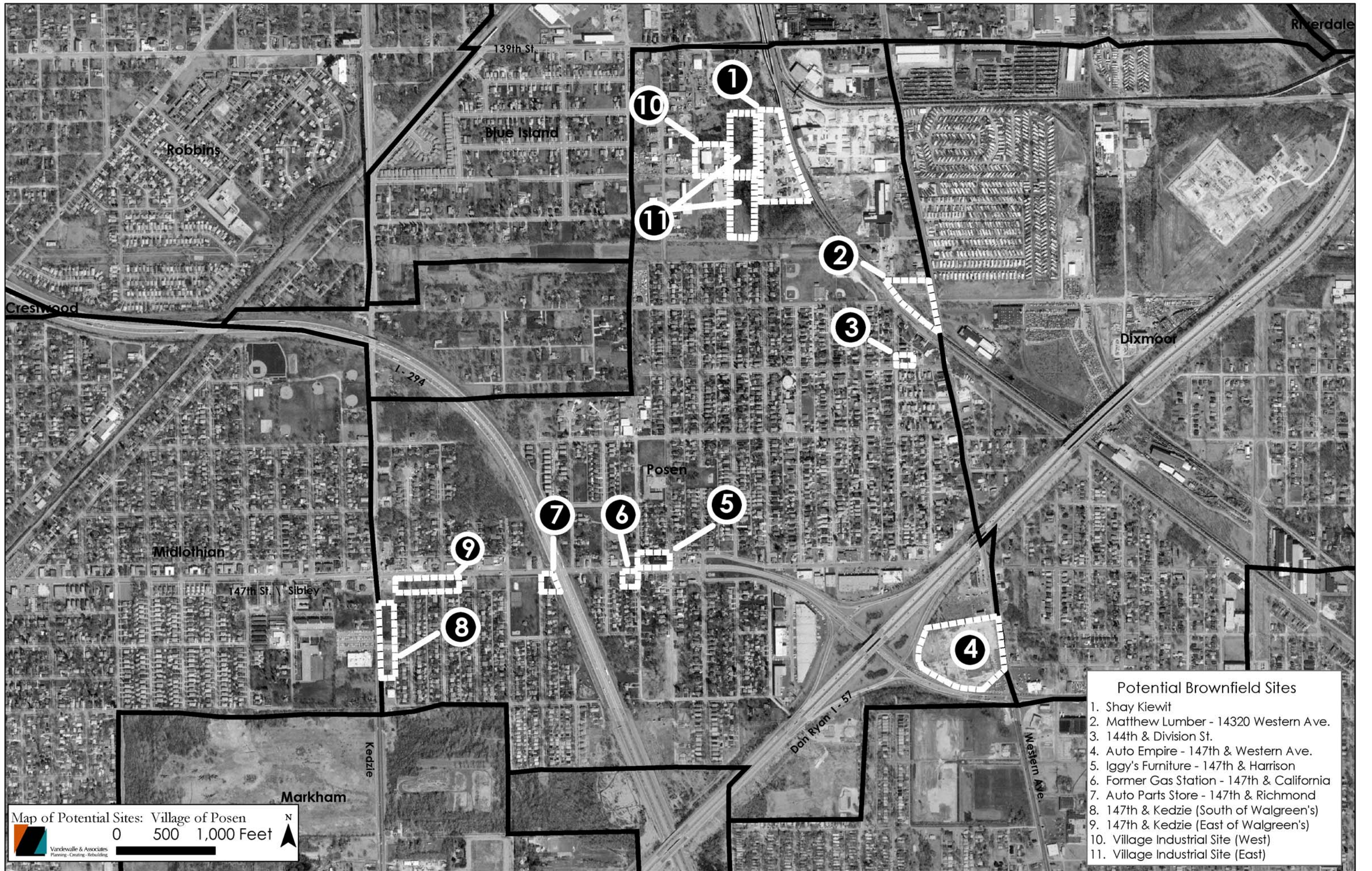
VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES further analyzed these 11 sites to determine the cursory environmental status, the site ownership status, and the potential market feasibility (from a professional redevelopment perspective of each site). This analysis showed that six of the 11 sites may have, or are likely to have, significant environmental conditions and that many of the sites are privately owned or have with multiple owners.

**Community Values Analysis Outcome (Refer to table in Appendix A)**

The Village's weighted values of redevelopment were overlaid upon the five sites recommended by the consultant team following the redevelopment analyses. Again, Auto Empire scored the highest based upon the Village's high ranking of certain redevelopment goals, such as the potential for sales tax, tax base, and job creation, and a quick (3-5 year) redevelopment potential. The community also ranked the 147<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie sites well due to the potential to meet these objectives.

**Final Recommendation for Assessment and Planning Under the IEPA BRG Program**

The results of both the redevelopment analyses and the community values analysis suggest that the IEPA Brownfields Redevelopment Grant funds should be used to conduct Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment activities at Auto Empire (as the relations with the current owner improve), Matthew Lumber, the 147<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie sites as well as at Iggy's furniture. Based on VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES' professional evaluation, these sites have the most potential to invoke the results prioritized by the community, and to be most easily absorbed into the market.



## **APPENDIX A – REDEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY MATRICES AND COMMUNITY VALUES MATRICES**

# Priority Site Redevelopment Feasibility Analysis

	Potential Site	Ownership Status	Environmental Score	Redevelopment Feasibility Score
2	Matthew Lumber Site	PO	2	17
4	Auto Empire Site	PO	3	13
5	Iggy's Furniture Site	PO	1	17
8	147th and Kedzie (South)	MO	1	19
9	147th and Kedzie (East)	MO	1	19

**Ownership Status:**

- VO: Village Owned
- PO: Privately Owned
- MO: Multiple Owners

**Environmental Ranking:**

- 1 No Concern
- 2 Possible Concern
- 3 Likely Concern

**Redevelopment Feasibility Score**

is based on a three pronged professional analysis of the redevelopment potential of the site, the lower the score, the higher the potential.

# Community Values Analysis

## Village of Posen

Respective Criteria Weighting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
	3.7	4.6	2.5	3.8	5.0	6.8	2.1	5.3	7.0		
Sites	Job Creation Potential	Blight Elimination	Tax Base Creation Potential	3 - 5 Year Redevelopment Potential	Contribution to Civic Development	Meets Recreation/ Open Space Needs	Sales Tax Creation Potential	Contributes to Community Character	Contributes to Historic Preservation	Nominal Totals	Weighted Totals
1 Auto Empire	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	5	17	96.0
2 Matthew Lumber	1	1	1	2	3	5	1	3	5	22	120.4
3 Iggy's Furniture	3	1	2	1	1	5	2	1	5	21	108.0
4 147th & Kedzie (East)	3	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	5	20	105.5
5 147th & Kedzie (So.)	3	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	5	20	105.5

Ratings are on a five-point scale — from 1 to 5 (1 indicates the highest importance or most potential.)

## **APPENDIX B – PROFILES OF PRIORITY SITES**

## APPENDIX B – PRIORITY SITE PROFILES

The Community Values Score is based on the Villages priorities for redevelopment, the lower the score, the higher the priority of the site.

The Redevelopment Feasibility Score is based on a three pronged professional analysis of the redevelopment potential of the site, the lower the score, the higher the site's potential.

Site Name	Auto Empire
Site Address	14840 Western Avenue (Dixie/Western & Sibley/147 <sup>th</sup> )
Site Number	4
Size (Acres)	~11 acres
Community Values Score	96.0
Redevelopment Feasibility Score	13
Recommended Next Step	Conduct Phase I and II ESA and enroll in IEPA SRP
Notes:	Excellent access to, and visibility from, I-57. Site is zoned for business development, and is within a TIF district. Site is in a property trust.

Site Name	Matthew Lumber
Site Address	14320 Dixie/Western Avenue
Site Number	2
Size (Acres)	~3.4 acres
Community Values Score	120.4
Redevelopment Feasibility Score	17
Recommended Next Step	Conduct Phase I ESA and work with property owner to conduct Phase II ESA if necessary, enroll in IEPA SRP.
Notes:	Proximity to I-51/Sibley interchange, and adjacent to transmission line. Site is zoned for industrial use and is in a TIF district. Site is owned by a single party.

Site Name	Iggy's Furniture
Site Address	2750 W. 147 <sup>th</sup> Street
Site Number	5
Size (Acres)	~.35 acres
Community Values Score	108.0
Redevelopment Feasibility Score	17
Recommended Next Step	Continue efforts to facilitate redevelopment, encourage future owner to enroll site in IEPA SRP.
Notes:	Sibley/147 <sup>th</sup> access, adjacent to Post Office. Site is zoned business and is within a TIF district. There are two liens on the property: one for back taxes and one for demolition costs.
Site Name	14719 to 14747 and 14816 to 14830 Kedzie (from Walgreens south to the Church)
Site Address	
Site Number	8
Size (Acres)	~.90 acres
Community Values Score	105.5
Redevelopment Feasibility Score	19
Recommended Next Step	Conduct Phase I ESA and Phase II if necessary, enroll in IEPA SRP. Consolidate parcels to allow for more substantial redevelopment opportunity.
Notes:	Excellent access to Kedzie and Sibley/147 <sup>th</sup> . Site zoned for business and in within a TIF district. Sites are shallow and maintain multiple owners.

Site Name	3121, 3119, 3113, 3041, 3021, 3019, 3017, 3015, 3013, 3003, and 3001 West 147th (from Walgreens east to Village Park)
Site Address	
Site Number	9
Size (Acres)	~1.25 acres
Community Values Score	105.5
Redevelopment Feasibility Score	19
Recommended Next Step	Conduct Phase I ESA and Phase II if necessary, enroll in IEPA SRP. Consolidate parcels to allow for more substantial redevelopment opportunity.
Notes:	Excellent access to Kedzie and Sibley/147 <sup>th</sup> . Site is zoned for business and is in within a TIF district. Sites are shallow and maintain multiple owners.