



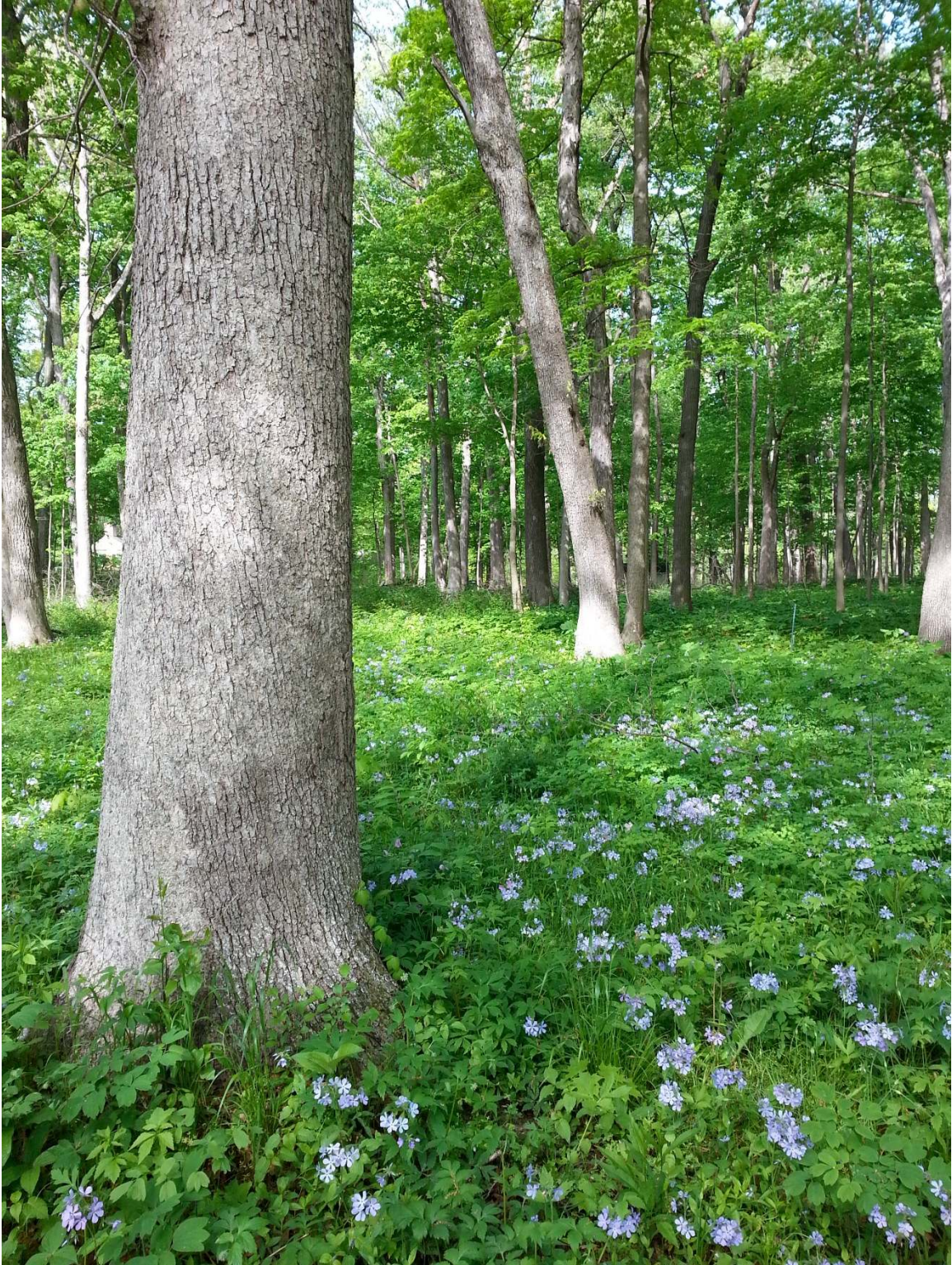
VILLAGE OF  
**RIVERWOODS**

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**THE VILLAGE OF RIVERWOODS  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**Adopted by the President and Board of Trustees  
of the Village of Riverwoods**

**on September 3, 2019**



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**(The appendix materials are available upon request at the Village Hall)**

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose of Comprehensive Plan**

Riverwoods has a rich history of community planning. This 2019 revision builds on the efforts of our predecessors to respect and preserve the distinctive woodland/ riverine environment and low density character of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth land use recommendations for preservation and redevelopment. It considers not only immediate concerns but is forward looking as to the state of the Village in 15-20 years.

By establishing goals for Riverwoods, the Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundation for future community decision making. It is intended to offer a framework by which the Plan Commission and Village Board will evaluate public and private development proposals.

The Comprehensive Plan gives direction for updating Village codes and ordinances as well as a rationale for acquiring or enhancing community amenities, facilities and other public improvements. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan is essential for promoting the unique aspects of living in Riverwoods and defining the character of the community to attract new families and desirable new development to the community. Residents are encouraged to become familiar with the Comprehensive Plan, since it is never static and must be updated to reflect the common desires of our residents.

#### **Character of Riverwoods**

##### **Existing Conditions**

Riverwoods was incorporated in 1959 to preserve the wondrous woodlands that envelop homes adjoining the forest preserves and Des Plaines River. The early residents sought to live in harmony with nature by adopting a scale of land use consistent with preserving the natural environment. Riverwoods is valued by its residents for its character as a community that offers woodlands and privacy, large lots, golf course living and planned communities (such as Ravinia Green, Thorngate and Meadowlake).

Of 1,320 homes in the Village, approximately 900 are located in areas having "Protected Woodlands" which have been so designated by the Riverwoods Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance, which is discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

The population of the Village was 3,660 at the time of the 2010 census. The land area of the Village is approximately 4 square miles. The Village Hall, recently re-built, is located at 300 Portwine Road, Riverwoods, Illinois 60015.

Riverwoods has many one- and two- acre lots. Drainage is usually provided by ditches. Local roads are often narrow, rural streets, winding, hemmed in by trees, and often dead-ends. The local road network is essentially rural with few sidewalks. It is not uncommon for residents to stop or pull over so that a car traveling from the opposite direction may pass. It is not uncommon to stop or slow down for deer that roam throughout the area.

Riverwoods has some office/commercial areas at the periphery of town, but there is no walkable, urban zone with a mix of retail and entertainment. Instead, it has developed as a residential community which has a semi-rural character. Forest Preserves surround many areas of the Village and wildlife is abundant. There is easy access to hiking in the woods or biking along the Des Plaines River Trail. The rural street design encourages many residents to walk and bike in areas of great natural beauty.

### **Projected Changes**

Much has changed since the early years of the Village. Lake Michigan water is now extended to serve over 60% of the homes and the utility backbone of the Village is prepared to accommodate Lake Michigan water service to all remaining areas when the residents of these areas commit to pay for extension of the service. All homes are connected, or have access, to public sewers.

Riverwoods has a tradition of expanding municipal services to neighborhoods only when there is a majority expression of citizen willingness to pay for these services – a tradition referred to as “user-pay”. For example, extending Lake Michigan water into unserved areas has been accomplished by forming special service areas (SSAs) in which residents specially benefitting from the improvement are asked to pay taxes to cover the cost. Residents in parts of town that have already paid for the costs of obtaining municipal water are not asked to pay again.

The Village has chosen not to use this philosophy in certain instances when municipal-wide services are critical to health and safety, such as full-time police protection. Riverwoods outsources services that can be provided more readily by other agencies (such as Lake County Public Works, which makes repairs to sanitary sewer and water systems).

By exercising fiscal restraint, Riverwoods has avoided the long-term liabilities that often constrain other communities. Riverwoods receives contractual services in an efficient manner from other governmental agencies, enjoys a low crime rate, holds significant reserves to pay for unexpected capital repairs and is in excellent fiscal health.

With the exception of possible growth and redevelopment in the commercial areas near Milwaukee Avenue (the “Milwaukee Avenue Corridor”) , including possible annexation in that area, Riverwoods is fully built-out, with only a handful of single family lots that have never been developed, and no large, empty tracts of land left to develop. In the existing stock of housing, the overall number of residents is not expected to change significantly.

The possible redevelopment of the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor presents opportunities and challenges to Riverwoods and is more fully discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Riverwoods Vision – the Planning Process**

In 2016, the Riverwoods Board of Trustees adopted a Strategic Plan after a series of meetings and workshops over the preceding 12 months to consider the opportunities and challenges facing Riverwoods. During this work, focus groups were convened and a survey of residents conducted to assess their views and priorities. The survey questions and results from the Strategic Plan workshops are attached in Appendix A.

The findings from the Strategic Plan highlighted two core values of residents that reinforce each other:

1. The privacy and independence enjoyed by residents living on larger lots, in a low density community, where a number of functions and services are organized by residents rather than by village government and where government services are provided generally on a “user-pay” basis; and
2. The constant presence of the woodland environment enjoyed by residents as they socialize with each other and go about their daily lives.

These values were adopted in the Strategic Plan in the following vision statement:

**Riverwoods is an Independent Woodlands Community.**

The task of balancing the unique woodland environment that contributes so much to the character of Riverwoods while recognizing the needs of the residents is a particular focus of this Plan.

The Plan Commission began meeting to prepare this Plan in the spring of 2018 at the same time as various surveys and focus groups with residents were conducted by consultants engaged to develop a strategic branding program for the Village. At the June 5, 2018 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the findings of the branding program were presented, which reinforced many of the values held by residents as reported in the Strategic Plan. The branding program was subsequently adopted by the Board. The presentation to the Board is attached as Appendix B.

While receiving comments from residents at Plan Commission meetings throughout the year on topics in this Plan, the Plan Commission also considered comments provided by residents at several village town hall meetings, to consider the possibilities for developing open space next to the Village Hall as a “town square” with playgrounds, community space, and educational exhibits to promote environmental awareness. The discussions about this project were conducted in connection with the submission of an application for an Open Space Land Acquisition, Land Acquisition and Development Grant (OSLAD) to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Public meetings were held, on September 12, 2018 and September 15, 2018. The discussions centered on the character of the community, what type of village space is needed and why the amenities that residents felt were and were not important – in terms of supporting the branding program, promoting village identity and improving community connectedness.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY**

#### **Protected Woodlands**

Riverwoods takes its identity from the presence of native woodlands and rivers. The Des Plaines River and the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River run through the Village. The floodplains of these rivers and their tributaries and presence of abundant wetlands create unique ecosystems. The rivers and floodplains present unique issues. The capacity of the soil and trees to absorb runoff and reduce the danger of flooding is essential to residents. The presence of deer, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and small predators such as coyotes are important attributes of living in Riverwoods.

The location and ecological health of native woodlands have been documented through scientific surveys. In 2015-2016, Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES), serving as Village Ecologist, conducted inventories of the vegetation communities within the entire Village and mapped the vegetation community boundaries, such as native woodlands (mesic savanna, northern flatwoods, mesic woodland, dry-mesic woodland, and floodplain forest), wet prairie and marsh complexes. The resulting “Riverwoods Natural Community and Green Infrastructure Report” dated May 2016 summarizes these inventories, the location and current ecological condition of each vegetation community, and green infrastructure benefits. Maps of the Riverwoods Natural Plant Communities and Green Infrastructure Network are included as Exhibit A and Exhibit B, respectively.

In addition to overall mapping of Village natural communities, detailed floristic quality analysis was completed for all Village owned lots. Floristic quality refers to an assessment



of the integrity and significance of the natural vegetative communities, the composition and diversity of species and their health. The assessment considers the loss or threats to Protected Woodlands from land use practices, real estate development, wildlife management (or lack thereof), absence of natural fires, changes in hydrology, introduction of invasive species and other factors.

It is clear from the overall vegetation community inventory and assessment conducted to date that many of the woodlands are reaching a point where invasive native and non-native species are beginning to outcompete the highly valued native species such as oak trees that define the health and quality of the woodlands. Without proper stewardship of the woodlands, ecological health will continue to decline and forever change the character of the woodlands.

In 2017 Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES) used multi-spectral aerial imaging of the entire Village to delineate the boundaries of all woodlands. Information and mapping created from this imagery is used by the Village to help enforce sections of the Riverwoods Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance specifically as they relate to woodland removal. The Riverwoods Woodland Delineation Map at the village-wide level is attached as Exhibit C. These woodlands are now defined as “Protected Woodlands” pursuant to the Riverwoods Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance.

## **The Threat to the Woodlands**

Increased population growth and new development in Riverwoods have had a negative ecological impact. The Village is working to share knowledge and resources with residents about the woodland stewardship practices necessary to maintain the health of the native woodlands.

The most serious disturbance to Protected Woodlands typically occurs when an owner removes the ground and shrub layers of the woodland down to ground level. In most cases, residents believe they are only removing what appear to be weeds or scrub brush. The removal is typically followed by the attempt to install turfgrass lawn. If the vegetation is removed and soil is disturbed, the complex interaction between microbes, rhizomes, fungi, plants and nutrients is disrupted (or worse, covered with newly imported soil and turf grass), and the essential qualities necessary for regenerative woodlands are essentially lost – and are difficult to re-establish.

The challenge is to make new and existing residents aware of the fragility of the land they own and occupy and the various ordinances and cost share programs the Village offers to help ensure the health and sustainability of the woodlands in the future.

## Riverwoods Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance

The Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance, revised in March 2018, protects against the increasing peril to the survival of the Protected Woodlands from human induced factors. In Riverwoods, the removal of Protected Woodland, which likely also includes removal of protected trees and shrubs, is strongly discouraged and may require implementation of an Ecological Mitigation Plan or payment of a tree mitigation fee.

**The removal of more than 20% of Protected Woodlands (which includes native trees but also the herbaceous, shrub, and understory layers of the woodland) is prohibited.**

While the woodlands are wondrous and all residents experience them in some way, they are not a “village commons”. With the exception of a few village-owned lots, the ownership of the woodlands is diffuse and in many private hands. The remarkable challenge in Riverwoods is to preserve the woodlands for future generations by depending on the concerted, individual efforts of our residents.

Under the Ecological Cost Share Programs, Riverwoods reimburses residents for up to a pre-determined share of the costs incurred to implement a variety of woodland stewardship practices in furtherance of the recommended goals set forth in the Natural Community and Green Infrastructure Report referred to in the Introduction.

No quality better expresses the spirit of Riverwoods than the sentiment that our residents hold their properties in trust for future generations. We are temporary stewards of a permanent resource.

## Surface Water -- Wetlands

Many residents become concerned when they see ponding water after a rainy season or a heavy rainfall. This condition is typically not a Village drainage problem, instead it is a natural condition which results from the very flat, slow-to-drain topography in the Village. When you see standing water in a woodland setting, you may be viewing a rare plant community know as Northern Flatwoods. Diverting water or altering drainage routes from these areas requires a site development permit from the Village.

**Residents should consult with the Village before undertaking any land clearing or water diversion projects. These actions may be in violation of many important regulations, they may endanger other downstream properties and they may threaten the survival of important plant communities which have evolved over thousands of years to the water conditions that you are observing.**

The wetland communities in Riverwoods have been carefully mapped. Vegetation communities that typically support wetlands and surface water include Floodplain Forest, Wet Prairie, Emergent Wetland, and Northern Flatwoods (see Exhibit B). Northern Flatwoods makes up a large portion of Riverwoods. This community is rare and considered globally threatened. All wetlands throughout the Village are protected either by local, county, or federal law.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan attached as Exhibit D is the comprehensive land use map for Riverwoods. The Land Use Plan identifies general land use categories to guide future development decisions.

Zoning districts are not the same as land use categories but are adopted as more specific legal constraints on land use, to implement the guidance provided by this Plan. The history of zoning districts, however, illustrates how the general land use plan has been realized over time and does suggest possible changes in the zoning ordinance.

The land use categories shown in the Land Use Plan are explained more fully below.

#### **Single Family Residential**

A desirable character of most village residential neighborhoods depends on the health of the native ecosystems and on the actions and commitment of residents to the stewardship of their lands. The Single Family Residential land use category in these neighborhoods should be understood as integral to the health of the community.

Approximately 900 homes in the Village have Protected Woodlands. The low density, single family classification of a large part of the Village was adopted as a focused strategy to tread lightly, avoid damage to the natural environment and minimize intensity of use. The low density, single family residential neighborhoods in Riverwoods are responsible for the fact that the Protected Woodlands exist today, for which we can thank the decisions taken in early days of the Village.

The residential areas in the Village are classified in the following zoning districts:

- 1-R 42,000 square feet single-family (inclusive of road easements);
- R-1 42,000 square feet single-family;
- R-1A 60,000 square feet single-family;
- R-2 80,000 square feet single-family;
- R-3 200,000 square feet single-family; and
- R-4 Golf course and country club.

In the Village, the R-2 district corresponds to two-acre zoning, and the R-1 district corresponds to one-acre zoning, even though one acre is actually 43,560 square feet. The size of lots is measured (except in the 1-R District) by excluding the portion of the lot subject to a street easement, which is common with private streets.

In the early 1960's, the Village annexed Country Club Estates Subdivision into the R-4 golf course and country club district, which limits lot coverage to 25% of each lot. The district was formulated with one-acre lots (rather than the two-acre standard then prevalent in the Village) because counting the golf course land abutting the lots provided a total land area of two acres per house.

In 1980, the Meadowlake Subdivision was developed west of the Des Plaines River in the 1-R zoning district. This district is limited to contiguous developments of 50 acres or more, lot coverage is restricted to 15% of the lot area, and detached accessory buildings are prohibited.

In 1993, to assert control over impending redevelopment of the Thorngate Country Club, the Board of Trustees voted to annex that property in the R-1 district, as a special use for residential planned unit development. The planned development restricts lot coverage, establishes conservancy areas, and mandates a master landscape plan.

In 1994, to control development on its north border and to solve health concerns with older septic systems, the Village annexed approximately 40 lots, east of the intersection of Riverwoods Road and Duffy Lane. This area predominantly contains lots of less than one acre, which are now classified as legal non-conforming lots in the R-1 district.

Except in unusual circumstances (such as the Duffy Lane annexations), the Village has attempted to offset the density of lots of less than two acres by requiring open space, conservancy areas and restrictions on building lot coverage.

The R-1 zoning district also includes certain facilities classified as special uses, such as: the Orphans of the Storm, an animal rescue center; the Center for Enriched Living, a facility serving the needs of persons with developmental disabilities; and the Brentwood North Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center.

### **Business and Business Compatible**

The main business nodes of the Village include retail, restaurant, banking and service businesses. The primary retail district is located at the northeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Deerfield Road where there are two shopping centers, the Colonial Court Shopping Center, and the Shoppes of Riverwoods, classified as special uses (mixed-use planned developments) in the B-1 District.

North of these shopping centers are two properties that were annexed on Estonian Lane and classified to the B-2 Business Compatible District. Estonian House, a cultural center for persons of Estonian descent, operates a private dining facility and social hall for members, while the facility can be rented out for a restricted number of events to non-members. The Comprehensive Plan also shows business activity as the primary use for the properties at the southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Deerfield Road

The southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Deerfield Road has been improved with a self-storage facility, now operated by Cube Smart.

A service station/convenience store is located at the southeast corner of Deerfield Road and Saunders Road, and the next door building (formerly a bank) has been re-purposed into a coffee shop. There is an adjoining parcel that was recently annexed to create a harmonious site plan with the coffee shop. This small node of commercial activity is convenient to the Illinois Tollway however as a result of it being built out to its maximum capability should see no further enlargement.

The same caveat about enlargement cannot be said, however, for the properties in the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor, which is discussed in more detail below.

### **Office Campus and Office Compatible**

Riverwoods is home to the office campuses of Wolters Kluwer (formerly CCH) and Discover Financial Services, at the southeast corner of the Village, and smaller office/hotel developments peripheral to these campuses. At the west end of the Village, the Colonial Court and Shoppes of Riverwoods shopping centers provide retail and convenience shopping.

The corresponding zoning districts are the Office and Research One (O & R<sub>1</sub>) district and the Office and Research Compatible District (O and R/C).

The O & R<sub>1</sub> District is intended to permit low-intensity office and research uses "in such a way as to enhance and protect the woodland character of the village".

Wolters Kluwer NV (which acquired CCH, Inc.) occupies a 50-acre campus. Discover Financial Services occupies an 80-acre corporate campus. Both tracts have addresses on Lake Cook Road and are used as headquarters office buildings rather than as multi-tenant office parks. On the west side of the Village, the Federal Life Office Building located on Deerfield Road is classified in the O & R<sub>1</sub> District. The district relies on extensive building setbacks, the use of native and other landscaping plantings, and the retention of open space to realize the office campus concept.

In the late 1990's, the remaining smaller tracts located along Saunders Road and Lake Cook Road, at the edge of the office campus, came under development pressure. The

Riverwoods Board of Trustees recognized that applying setbacks and other standards that were appropriate for a larger office campus tract would not prove practical with a smaller parcel. The Board therefore approved the creation of the Office and Research Compatible District. In this district, special uses can be granted for hotels (on sites of between 6 and 10 acres) and small office buildings (on sites of between 1 and 8 acres) that would complement the office campus.

### **Mixed Use Overlay**

Mixed-use developments often combine uses such as office, business and residential, including multifamily. The old division of zoning districts into uses all of the same character is no longer generally accepted as the best solution in all cases to land use conflicts. Retailers and businesses benefit from the presence of customers living nearby. Residents may prefer to live and work in the same neighborhood, thus avoiding lengthy commutes. Prospects for retail brick and mortar stores have altered due to the growth in Internet commerce.

Demographic trends point to continued demand for more housing to be constructed in locations that lessen dependence on the automobile or provide more live/work options. The Mixed Use Overlay category, introduced for the first time in this Plan, indicates areas for which a mixture of such uses might be appropriate in the future. An overlay zoning district should be considered that would be coterminous with areas already located in a business (B-1 or B-2 district) or office and research district (O&R-1 district). The underlying uses of those zoning districts would continue to be permitted, but the expanded uses defined for a mixed-use district could then become available to such properties.

Some residents express a desire for empty nester housing, especially as the resident population ages. Such housing is often at a density that is incompatible with preserving the Protected Woodlands. However, the possibility of attractive multifamily development, especially if combined with or near retail, restaurant and entertainment uses, provides new housing options. Riverwoods should also take advantage of the scale of larger developments to create affordable housing units.

### **Governmental**

The P-1 Public Lands District applies to the Village Hall and Police Station properties.

### **Open Space**

Tracts in this classification could be classified to the P-2 Wildlife Preserve District, which states that "Lands in this use district shall be devoted to the preservation of wildlife, flora and fauna, in their natural habitats and shall not be used for recreational facilities."

## Forest Preserve

The Lake County Forest Preserves located in Riverwoods are indicated on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals describe end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. Goals represent an end to be sought, although they may never be achieved. Objectives describe more specific actions that should be undertaken to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

Goals and Objectives should be advanced with respect for the spirit of independence, privacy and flexibility that are important values in the community by ensuring that any ordinance and regulations when adopted are drafted as narrowly as possible for the purpose at hand. In addition, the pursuit of goals and objectives (or at any rate the pace of implementation) will at times remain dependent on the available financial resources in keeping with the goal of financial stewardship.

#### **Goal: Ecology**

The goal is a balanced and healthful relationship between people and nature's life support systems.

#### ***Objectives***

1. Respect the natural topography, soils and geology.
2. Protect the Des Plaines River and the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River and streams and wetlands from pollution and degradation.
3. Create and retain adequate stormwater drainage capacities of drainage basins, floodplains and waterways.
4. Promote increased stormwater absorption through the use of bio-retention areas and encourage residents to maintain wetlands, ponds and retention areas on their properties in a sound ecological manner.
5. Review Flood Hazard Insurance Mapping as it affects residents and promote

awareness of the means to obtain a letter of map amendment from FEMA in individual cases.

6. Conserve groundwater supplies and protect underground aquifers from contamination, overuse and misuse.
7. Encourage and promote groundwater recharge and protect recharge areas.
8. Enforce the Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance and other ordinances and periodically review and update them to ensure they are properly functioning to remove invasive species and conserve and enhance native trees and plants and other compatible vegetative cover, especially the Protected Woodlands.
9. Monitor the quality and/or deterioration of native woodlands and assess the conditions of the ecological assets of the Village. Intervene to reduce the spread of disease and pests (for example, by annual monitoring of Dutch Elm Disease and evaluating the need to control for pests or infestations, such as the gypsy moth and emerald ash borer.) Intervene when feasible to control tick and mosquito populations when necessary to reduce the danger of West Nile virus, Lyme disease and other diseases in the community.
10. Work to achieve in general a favorable balance among human activity, conservation of native trees and plants and the protection of wildlife habitats.
11. Mitigate adverse impacts of air pollutants, pesticides and fertilizers, odors, sounds and artificial lights.
12. Encourage and promote site planning and building design for green buildings, using building guidelines such as those recommended by the U.S. Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or other similar organizations, while ensuring that new materials and technology are incorporated in a manner that respects the Village's character.
13. Promote sustainable practices at the Village Hall, police station, fire station and Village-owned properties, and actively encourage residents and businesses to pursue the same. As used in this Comprehensive Plan, "sustainable practices" means using resources responsibly and eliminating waste. It encourages the integration of sustainable practices into daily activities.



## **Goal: Residential Character**

The goal is the retention of the existing semi-rural, low density land-use, which is predominantly a single family residential woodland community.

### ***Objectives***

1. Assure that the scale, arrangement and appearance of residential development or in-fill development will be compatible overall with a semi-rural residential environment and the advancement of the Ecology Goal.
2. Encourage sharing the values and benefits of living in Riverwoods with newcomers, including the effort to educate about the Village's Ecological Cost Share Programs and the role that each resident might play in preserving the natural resources of the community.
3. Promote the Ecological Cost-Share Programs to achieve the widest participation among residents and seek participation with increasing levels of commitment (removal of invasive plants, such as buckthorn and garlic mustard, native seeding, native tree and shrub planting, canopy and subcanopy tree thinning, and prescribed burning), consistent with the financial resources of the Village, and modify such Programs as the Village feels may be desirable or necessary.
4. Provide, retain, encourage and enhance open spaces such as forest preserves, parks, conservation areas, and golf courses.
5. Give special attention to the desired semi-rural character of all public and private roadways and utility rights of way, consistent with their intended function, desired levels of safety, and a reduced environmental impact.
6. Encourage new residential development (tear-downs and undeveloped land) to be of high quality while observing ordinances impacting development, including, without limitation, the Tree and Woodland Protection Ordinance.
7. Flexibly apply zoning standards in appropriate instances and when prescribed by law to make reasonable accommodation when such standards unfairly prevent persons with special needs and disabilities from gaining access to housing, while balancing the accommodations in a manner that preserves the character of the residential neighborhoods.
8. Encourage development in Mixed Use areas that can supply a variety of housing

stock otherwise lacking in the Village but with a sensitivity to the natural environment characteristic of other housing in the Village.

9. Apply the Riverwoods Development Ordinance, as a consolidated review process for development, with the objective of retaining woodlands, preventing unnecessary loss of trees, protecting wetlands and drainage channels, preventing flood damage to properties, and protecting the capacity of floodplains to accommodate 100-year storm waters in the Des Plaines River watershed and the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River watershed. Enforce code requirements that the lowest level of new construction be located not less than two (2) feet above the base flood elevation established by FEMA.

### **Goal: Community**

The goal is to improve communications with residents, encourage participation in activities and events in furtherance of a sense of community.

### ***Objectives***

1. Establish an identity for Riverwoods through branding practices and coordinated communications, identifying its strengths and amenities.
2. Create a central gathering space (Village Campus) for residents that consists of the Village-owned property, including the Village Hall. Adopt plans for this campus area so that it functions as a space that contributes to a sense of community, increases property values, positively impacts the health and well-being of Village residents, and protects and retains public access to the important natural resources on these lands. Plan for the Village Hall and campus to be settings where social and educational exchanges take place, where friends run into each other, and where cultures mix.
3. Work with Wolters Kluwer in designating wetland and woodland areas adjacent to the Village Campus to be protected and made accessible from the Village Campus.
4. Encourage community programs for the Woodland Preserve at the intersection of Deerfield and Saunders Roads, and encourage resident use of that site, or consider other uses for the Woodland Preserve consistent with the advancement of community education, recreation and interaction.

## **Goal: Services**

The goal is the provision of essential services for the health, safety and general welfare of the residents.

### ***Objectives***

1. Coordinate planning and decision-making between the Village Board and various planning bodies of other governmental units which have overlapping jurisdiction of Riverwoods and its planning area.
2. Establish and maintain intergovernmental agreements with adjacent municipalities regarding municipal boundaries, land uses, water purchase agreements, and public services.
3. Provide special municipal services by special service areas only when supported by a majority expression of citizen desire and willingness by those asked to pay for the proposed expanded municipal services.
4. Provide effective public water supply and sanitary sewer systems serving those parts of the Village where use of individual on-site systems is prohibited by public health standards or undesirable to a majority of residents in the affected area.
5. Provide a system of safe roadways which route traffic around the community, rather than through the community when feasible. To the extent that non-local traffic must use roadways within the Village, make use of street design, traffic calming measures, appropriate speed limits and enforcement, and landscape screening to ensure that non-local traffic respects the residential character of the area at all times.
6. Support private ownership and maintenance of existing private streets and lanes.
7. Promote the annexation of contiguous properties to develop the Village's tax base while protecting the Village from forms of development that would otherwise detract from the desired character of the community.
8. Coordinate the conservation and improvement of the Des Plaines River, the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River, and adjacent forest preserves with the Lake County Forest Preserve District.
9. Provide for an adequate system of police, fire, and emergency medical care.

10. Provide access to the most efficient methods of telecommunications to the Village, while limiting the location of any unsightly wireless communication facility only to municipal property or non-residential areas.

### **Goal: Finances**

The goal is a financially sound and equitable municipality.

### **Objectives**

1. Coordinate growth of the Village with the level of public services that can be provided at reasonable cost.
2. Consider utilizing financial and legislative incentives to attract and implement desired forms of commercial development in the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor as a means of expanding and diversifying revenue sources for the Village.
3. Consider ways to share costs with other municipalities and units of government.
4. Provide for adequate funds for the maintenance and repair of Village infrastructure.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **POLICIES for PLANNING TOPICS**

The planning topics in this chapter identify areas of special concern and include recommended strategies for realizing general goals and objectives:

Drainage and Flooding  
Gateway Streets and Paths  
Milwaukee Avenue Corridor  
Village Services and Finances  
Village Land – Open Space

### **Drainage and Flooding**

The Village is impacted by riverine flooding from the Des Plaines River, the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River, Thorngate Creek and from localized flooding due to storm water runoff following rainfall events.

Riverine flooding occurs mostly as a result of past development decisions in areas tributary to these rivers, before stricter codes were adopted by Lake County in the Watershed Development Ordinance (WDO). The WDO restricts the rate of flow from new development to account for the loss of wetlands and other natural areas that formerly would absorb storm water. Since 1991, all new development in the Village has complied with (or exceeded) the requirements of the WDO, which the Village is required to enforce as a certified community.

Localized flooding within the Village is partly a function of the topography of the Village, which is very flat and provides little gradient for storm water conveyance (most of which heads toward the Des Plaines River and North Branch of the Chicago River). Most localized flooding in the Village is of the “nuisance” variety (i.e., standing water in yards) and residents’ homes have not been impacted. The older “open ditch” system conveying storm water through much of the Village was largely developed before the stricter WDO guided development, but the nature of this system is that it retains a capacity to handle very large flows in major storms (surpassing what a system of buried pipes alone could accommodate).

However, much of the storm water management infrastructure is in need of maintenance. Many driveway culverts are past their useful service life, and over time the ditches have filled with sediment and debris.

Repairing and restoring the storm water infrastructure in the Village while remaining sensitive to ecological factors can assist in limiting the extent of localized flooding.

Thus, the preservation of the Village’s ecosystems requires ongoing efforts. The following policies are recommendations for advancing the goals of the Village, especially with respect to the character and ecology of the Village:

- Encourage residents to maintain wetlands, ponds and retention areas on their properties in a sound ecological manner.
- Review Flood Hazard Insurance Mapping as it affects residents in the Village and promote awareness of the means to obtain concurrence from FEMA that a parcel (or portion) is not located within the regulatory floodplain (such re-mapping is known as a letter of map amendment).
- Maintain the low density land use, single-family residential and open-space character of the area.
- Require land planning design for the platting and development of vacant parcels which is compatible with the character of the Village.

- Implement storm water management strategies to clear, restore and maintain drainage courses in the Village, including adopting stormwater management fees and developing cost-share programs with residents to fund such operations.
- Coordinate with other governmental authorities to promote storm water planning and management.
- Promote awareness of green infrastructure techniques, encourage residents to be stewards of the natural green infrastructure areas on their properties and use Village cost share programs to facilitate such improvements.

Form a Village-supported Drainage Committee to study and make recommendations regarding stormwater, flooding and other drainage needs throughout the Village.

### **Gateway Streets and Paths: Deerfield Road Corridor**

The Village has historically sought to maintain the two-lane rural, wooded character of Deerfield Road and Portwine Road. These narrow, tree-lined roads announce the character of the Village to all passing through. They run past the properties of many residents, who consider them local streets. However, Deerfield Road, under the jurisdiction of Lake County, is the primary east-west thoroughfare in the Village. Portwine Road and Riverwoods Road are major north-south streets and points of entry to the Village. There are signs posted on these streets to indicate Village boundaries.

Deerfield Road carries approximately 19,450 cars per day. Most of the traffic is through-traffic by non-residents. To plan for the impact of growth in vehicular traffic on Deerfield Road and the need to reconstruct the road, Lake County Division of Transportation began a study of the traffic improvements that may be needed to meet current standards and maintain acceptable levels of service on Deerfield Road through 2040. At the time of this writing, the phase I study is underway, and county officials in meetings with the public have presented an initial, preferred alternative for the reconstruction of Deerfield Road, increasing the width from two lanes to three lanes in the portion of Deerfield Road between Saunders Road on the east to the Des Plaines River bridge on the west. The reconstructed portion of Deerfield Road is expected to have curbs, gutters, and storm sewers to replace or supplement the existing ditches, thus minimizing the overall width of the improvement compared to the existing cross section.

From west of the Des Plaines River to Milwaukee Avenue, Deerfield Road is also slated for major improvements, with additional lanes added to match significant intersection improvements underway at Milwaukee Avenue and Deerfield Road, largely driven by the new commercial development of Woodman's Market at the northwest corner of Deerfield Road and Milwaukee Avenue.

A significant element in planning for the reconstruction of Deerfield Road concerns the continuation of a multi-use path on the south side of Deerfield Road. The current county path runs from the Des Plaines River Trail to Thornmeadow Road. Another portion of path resumes at the intersection of Deerfield Road and Saunders Road, nearly a mile and a half away. If the missing segment on Deerfield Road is completed, pedestrians and cyclists will have a continuous path from one end of the Village to the other, on an east-west axis. The linkage of the bike path would promote regional transportation connectivity and open up trails extending in many directions.

For this reason, Lake County places a high priority on constructing the missing 1.5 miles of multi-use path along Deerfield Road as part of the reconstruction project.

In 2004, the Village commissioned Schreiber/Anderson Associates to prepare a master plan for a shared use path and bike system, identified as a "Master Bike Plan". That plan is attached as Exhibit E and deemed a part of this Comprehensive Plan. The Deerfield Road corridor serves as the main east-west linkage in the Village for pedestrians and cyclists and this path extension is assigned the highest priority under the plan. The Master Bike Plan also recommends extensions of paths on Riverwoods Road, Saunders, Portwine Road and Duffy Lane.

For residents with property frontage along portions of Deerfield Road, installation of the bike path will lead to a loss of trees and buffer between their homes and Deerfield Road, a condition which should be addressed if the path is constructed. The Village should investigate methods to achieve successful landscape buffering that is consistent with the character of the Village while providing road and bike path safety.

The following policies are recommended for advancing the goals related to this planning topic:

- Work to achieve a final plan with Lake County for the reconstruction of Deerfield Road and for the installation of the last segment of the Deerfield Road bike path, consistent with the goals of the Village to minimize the width of the roadway and loss of trees.
- Continue to seek funding for and improvement of other paths as indicated in the Master Bike Plan. Promote the construction of bike lanes on Riverwoods Road by Lake County in connection with street resurfacing programs.
- Investigate adding a bike path on Portwine Road from Deerfield Road south to the Village Hall.

- Encourage the placement of bike racks in convenient, well-lighted locations in existing and new shopping areas and continue to promote the linkage of paths and shopping areas to better utilize paths and lessen dependence on automobiles.
- Promote signage and traffic street warnings for marking paths in order to improve safety.
- Sponsor bicycle safety and education programs.
- Establish a continuing intergovernmental program with neighboring villages to coordinate land uses, transit and traffic and roadway improvements throughout the Deerfield Road corridor.

### **Milwaukee Avenue Corridor**

A map of the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor is attached as Exhibit F. The corridor extends north of the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Deerfield Road, to include the shopping centers which constitute the bulk of the Village's retail district. The corridor extends south along Milwaukee Avenue to include a vacant tract that lies partly within the Village and partly in unincorporated Lake County containing approximately 37 acres. The vacant tract was formerly operated as a landfill and has been closed since 1975 (the "37 acre site").

The Milwaukee Avenue Corridor also is defined to include the commercial properties located on Deerfield Road, west of the Des Plaines River.

Taken individually, the properties in the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor present several difficulties. Redevelopment of these properties is made difficult by their elevation (often within the 100-year floodplain). Raising the elevation of new foundations to be two feet above the base flood elevation will require fill, and replacing the storage volume that is lost when the fill is added will require creating compensatory storage under the Lake County Watershed Development Ordinance. Some sites individually are not likely to have a suitable area in which to locate compensatory storage.

The individual sites are also challenged by access issues.

A major challenge (or opportunity) faced in this area stems from the redevelopment of the northwest and southwest corners of the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Deerfield Road, of land lying in the Village of Buffalo Grove. The Woodman's Market and related retail development have added approximately 325,000 square feet of space and necessitated substantial traffic lane widening and signalization improvements.

These road improvements present major challenges to customers attempting to access



Colonial Court Shopping Center and Shoppes of Riverwoods and the nearby uses in the Village. The resulting street barriers necessary to regulate turning movements into and out of these shopping centers has made customer access more difficult.

Additional traffic improvements are planned for the intersection of Deerfield Road and Milwaukee Avenue by Lake County (see discussion under Gateway Streets and Paths) and the widening of Deerfield Road will result in the expansion of right-of-way and the loss of parking areas currently serving properties in the corridor.

The Village should encourage master planning for the entire corridor. A master plan would offer the opportunity for more creative planning and a strategy for overcoming the impediments to redeveloping individual sites. Compensatory storage should be located in the most efficient manner and access improvements should be coordinated.

A development that uses multiple sites within the corridor would more likely achieve the scale necessary to incorporate high quality planning. Such a development could offer the concept of a mixed-use project as the highest and best use for the area, offering a range of office, multifamily and business uses. When planning for this area, care should be taken to establish buffers between such new development and adjoining residential areas. For example, the height of a mixed-use development should step down as it approaches the boundary with adjoining residential areas and/or appropriate setbacks and landscape buffers should be included. When planning for this area in general, the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan should be used as guiding principles.

To pursue master planning needed in this corridor, the Village should encourage the annexation of the unincorporated portion of the 37-acre site. If this annexation occurs, the Village should consider whether additional annexations of contiguous properties would be helpful in promoting the goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

The owner of the 37-acre site has enrolled the site in the Illinois EPA Site Remediation Program (SRP) and is implementing clean-up objectives to achieve a No Further Remediation Letter. These efforts should be encouraged together with exploring viable uses for the entire tract.

Development in the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor that provides additional retail, office and commercial development would promote a sound fiscal base for the Village, which is an important goal of this Comprehensive Plan.

The following policies are recommended for advancing the goals related to this planning topic:

- Encourage the annexation of the balance of the 37-acre site and support the necessary environmental mitigation and related site development costs with tax increment financing when appropriate.

- Prepare and adopt the Redevelopment Plan required under the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act to establish the general mix of uses, desirable tenants and uses, and an overall strategy for development of the redevelopment project area.
- Promote more unified planning for traffic movements, appearance and landscaping, and regulation of uses for the entire Milwaukee Avenue commercial corridor.
- Ensure a unified approach to the development of the Milwaukee Avenue corridor, whereby a mix of uses, public and civic spaces, site amenities and creative site planning is required in return for zoning flexibility.
- Consider accepting land donations or easements within larger developments to improve accessibility to Forest Preserve trails and multi-use paths or to provide sites for public services.
- Promote the provision of an adequate supply of conveniently located parking to serve all commercial and retail areas.
- Provide opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle movement and access to open spaces, and other parts of the Village, to capitalize on the high quality open space provided by the Lake County Forest Preserve.
- Enhance the appearance of the shopping areas by creating coordinated gateway features and signage, as well as promoting an improved and unified appearance of the shopping areas that is consistent with the woodland character of the Village.
- Ensure high standards in the building, site design and construction of new structures and landscape features in the Milwaukee Avenue corridor.
- Require appropriate landscape buffering and screening between residential uses and any commercial development.
- Promote cooperation with state, county and local units of government and existing and potential developers on Milwaukee Avenue for solutions designed to reduce the excessive congestion and safety hazards which exist currently and may be exacerbated in the future.
- Execute intergovernmental agreements with other villages regarding annexation, land-use development standards, and traffic in the Milwaukee Avenue corridor.

## Village Services and Finances

The Village has maintained a semi-rural character and has organized its functions so that it is not presently called upon to furnish extensive municipal services. The organization is simple: an administration department, building department and a police department. The Village does not have a public works department. It uses private contractors to maintain and snowplow Village-owned streets.

### Other Agencies

Residents are served by three elementary school districts and two high school districts. The majority of young students attend Wilmot Elementary School in Deerfield. Older students attend Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, or Deerfield High School in Deerfield, among the highest rated schools in the state.

A portion of Riverwoods is served by the Vernon Area Public Library District, and residents living in this district pay property taxes to support the library and are entitled to use this library system. Anyone not resident in this library district may purchase annual library cards from either the Vernon Area Public Library or the Deerfield Public Library.

The Lincolnshire-Riverwoods Fire Protection District serves the west 2/3rds of the Village; the Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Protection District serves the east 1/3rd of the Village. Under a mutual aid agreement, the two districts coordinate responses to emergency calls.

A portion of Riverwoods is served by the Deerfield Park District, and residents living in this district pay property taxes to support the park district and are entitled to participate in its programs. Anyone not resident in the Deerfield Park District may enroll in district programs but in some cases will be subject to non-resident rates and may not enjoy the same priority as residents.

Riverwoods is currently a member community of the North Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA). The NSSRA is an intergovernmental association of districts and municipalities in the northern suburban area of Chicago that provides and facilitates year-round recreation programs and services for children and adults with disabilities who live in the member communities. Residents can learn about programs at the NSSRA website: [info@nssra.org](mailto:info@nssra.org).

### Water and Sewer

Riverwoods operates reservoirs and a water distribution system to distribute Lake Michigan water. In 2006, Riverwoods entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Northbrook for a term to September 30, 2036 (possibly extending to

September 30, 2056) for the purchase of Lake Michigan water. Riverwoods can also purchase water from the Village of Deerfield using an emergency interconnect.

In 2008, Riverwoods entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Lake County for an initial term of 20 years for the treatment of sewage and performance of routine maintenance and emergency repairs on Village-owned sanitary sewer and water mains. Lake County bills Village residents for sewer services, retains its share of user fees, and remits a portion of the user fees to the Village.

Under these arrangements, the Village is presently positioned to continue providing sanitary sewer and water services to its residents without the necessity of having a separate public works department or undertaking large scale capital projects, except in connection with replacement of aging infrastructure.

### **Police Services**

Riverwoods has a police department. Furnishing police services is one of the major costs in the Village budget. The department is supported in part by a referendum-approved property tax levy for police protection. Most of its funding comes from the General Fund of the Village, which derives revenue from a number of non-property tax sources.

### **Private Streets**

Many private streets have been organized into a road association to take care of snow removal and street maintenance and storm water drainage. Some road associations have been around as long as the homes on a street have existed and often depend on the volunteer efforts of neighbors to plan for road maintenance, snow removal and repairs. For some road associations, it has become more practical to petition the Village to form a special service area, under which the cost of maintenance can be collected through real property taxes and allocated to designated special service area funds.

The policy recommended for advancing the goals related to this planning topic is that:

- Riverwoods should continue to balance the growth and level of public services that can be provided at reasonable cost with keeping the goal of a financially sound and equitable municipality.

### **Village Land – Open Space**

The Village owns various properties as shown in Exhibit G. Some of the properties are reserved for conservation and open space. Open spaces within Riverwoods promote a more livable community and a higher quality of life. Open spaces are a fundamental element in retaining the character of Riverwoods. There is a limited amount of open

space remaining in the Village. In addition, access to some or all of the remaining open space may provide a variety of activity opportunities for residents while also helping to preserve wildlife habitat, and natural resources.

The following policies are recommended for advancing the goals related to this planning topic:

- Preserve natural resources. Preserve natural areas, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and visual corridors. Place a particular priority on areas ranked as high or medium quality in the Natural Resources Inventory prepared by the Village Ecologist and those areas that contribute to Green Infrastructure. Consider adding open space opportunities as they arise based on available funds.
- Provide Connections. Provide linkages and trails, access to woodlands, streams and other usable lands, and scenic corridors along existing roadways.
- Provide for Low-Impact Recreation Compatible with Resource Protection (Ecology) Goals. Consider creating areas devoted to low-impact recreational uses for residents of all ages on suitable Village-owned property when opportunities arise based on available funds.
- Provide Urban Shaping Buffers and Buffer Zone. Provide buffer zones between surrounding municipalities and between residential and non-residential development.

## CONCLUSION

Long-range planning has been an on-going function of the Village since its incorporation. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Village Board in 1961; major revisions were adopted in 1975, 1980, 1987, 1994, 1999, 2006 and 2011. These plans were prepared consistent with authority granted to municipalities by Illinois Municipal Code and have served the Village well. They have responded to the goals of Village residents, and to changing conditions and trends.

In keeping with this tradition, the Village Board and Plan Commission have caused this latest revision of the Comprehensive Plan to be prepared.

This Comprehensive Plan text, land use plan and other exhibits were recommended by the Plan Commission on July 11, 2019. Both were adopted by the Village Board by Ordinance No. 19-09-14 on September 3, 2019.

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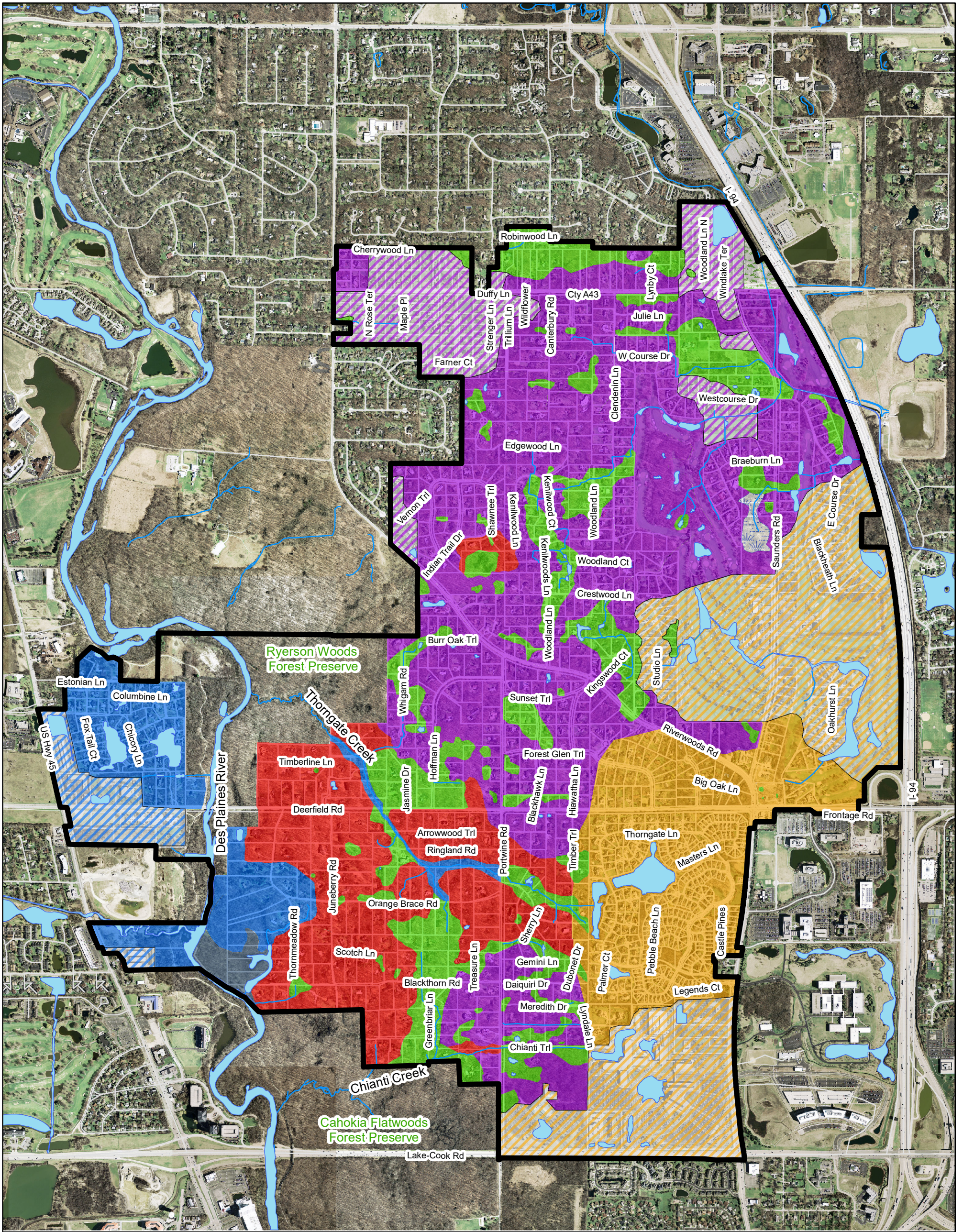
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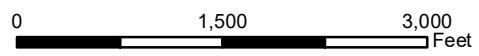
## **VILLAGE CLERK**

Daphne Paras

Assistance in preparing this Comprehensive Plan was provided by Patrick Glenn, P.E., CFM., Director Municipal Services, Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., Steve Zimmerman, Senior Ecologist, Applied Ecological Services, Inc., and Robert Durning, CBO AICP, Director of Community Services, Village of Riverwoods.



### Exhibit A: Riverwoods Natural Plant Communities Map



#### Legend

- Village of Riverwoods
  - Waterbodies
  - Streams/Drainages
  - Parcels
- Existing Natural Plant Communities**
- Marsh (6.2 ac)
  - Wet Prairie (6.0 ac)
  - Wet Floodplain Forest (17.4 ac)
  - Wet-Mesic Floodplain Forest (149.5 ac)
  - Northern Flatwoods (295.6 ac)
  - Mesic Woodland (276.4 ac)
  - Dry-Mesic Woodland (785.9 ac)
  - Mesic Savanna (271.8 ac)

- Historic Natural Plant Communities - Currently Developed (602.4 ac)**
- Wet-Mesic Floodplain Forest (52.2 ac)
  - Dry-Mesic Woodland (150.3 ac)
  - Mesic Savanna (399.9 ac)

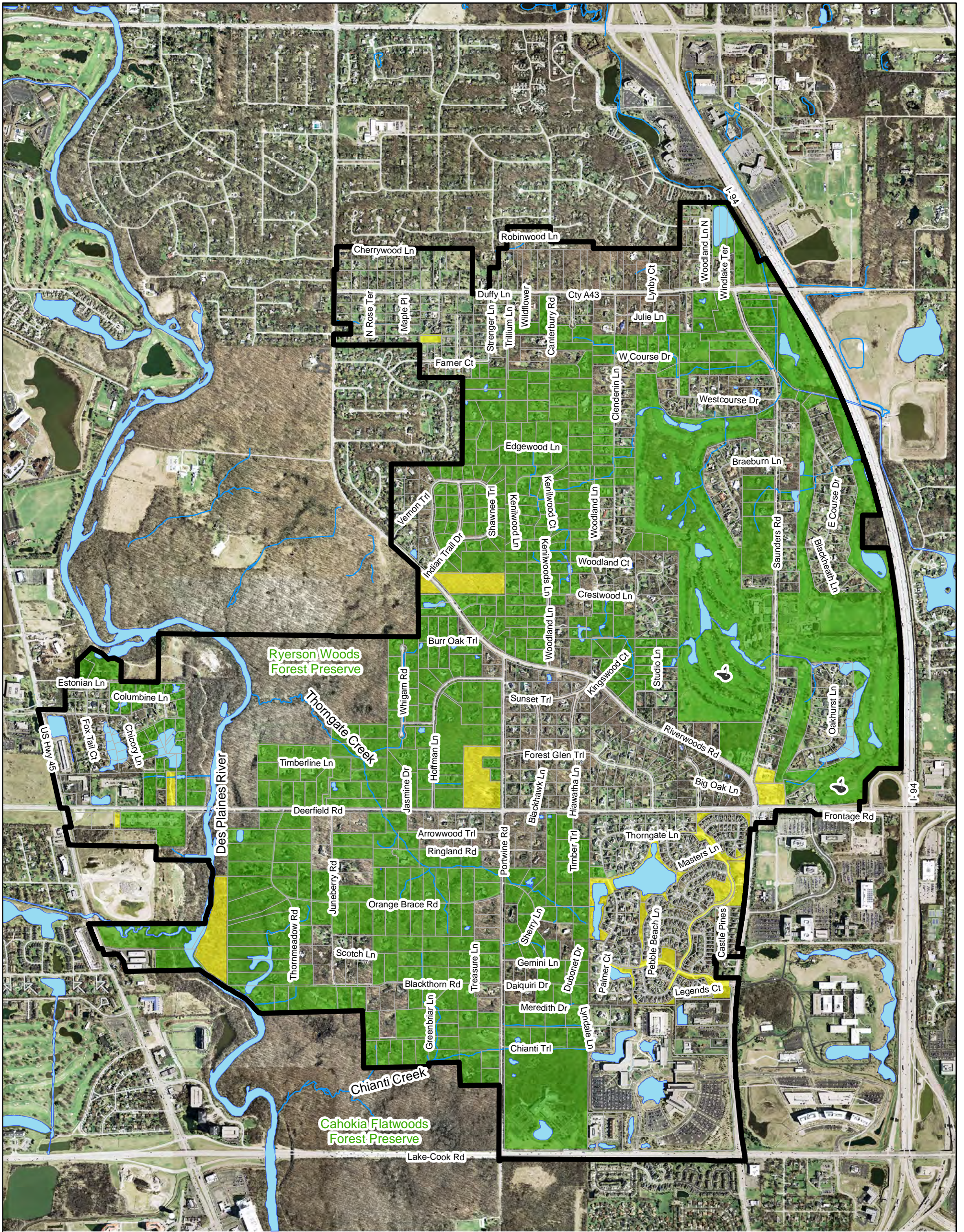
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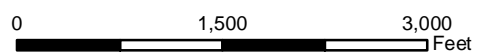




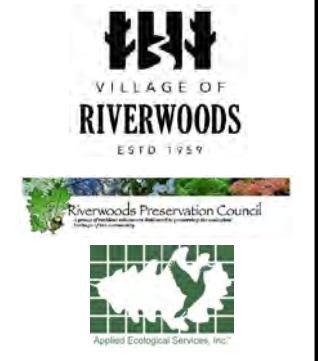
### Exhibit B: Riverwoods Green Infrastructure Network

#### Legend

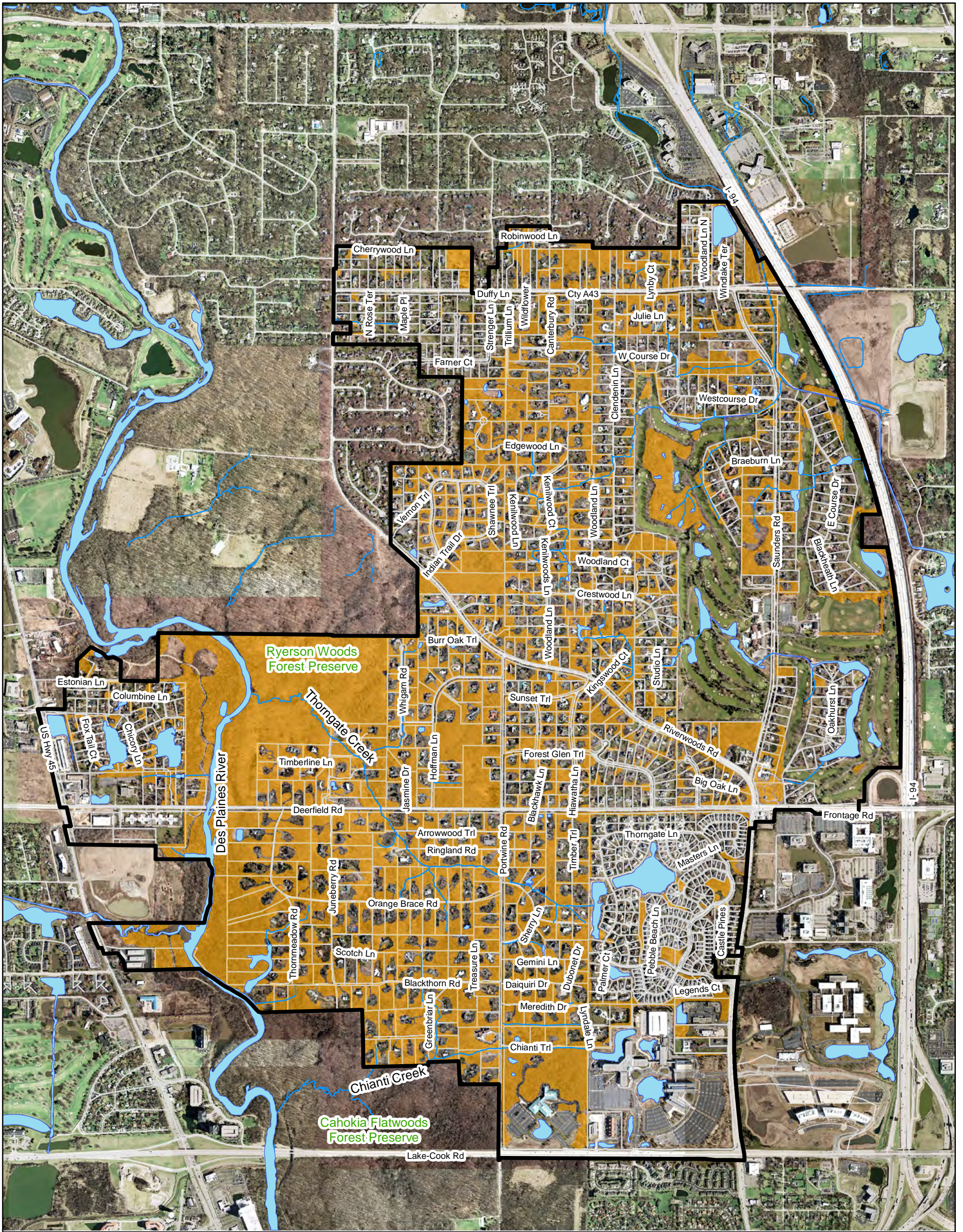
- |                       |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Village of Riverwoods | Green Infrastructure Network   |
| Waterbodies           | Green Infrastructure           |
| Streams/Drainages     | Protected Green Infrastructure |
| Parcels               |                                |
| Golf Course           |                                |



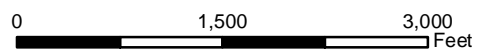
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





**Exhibit C: Riverwoods Woodland Delineation Map (April 8, 2017)**



**Legend**

-  Village of Riverwoods (2,569.4 Acres)
-  Waterbodies
-  Streams/Drainages
-  Parcels
-  AES Delineated Woodlands (April 8, 2017) (955.3 Acres)

AES Project #: 16-1011

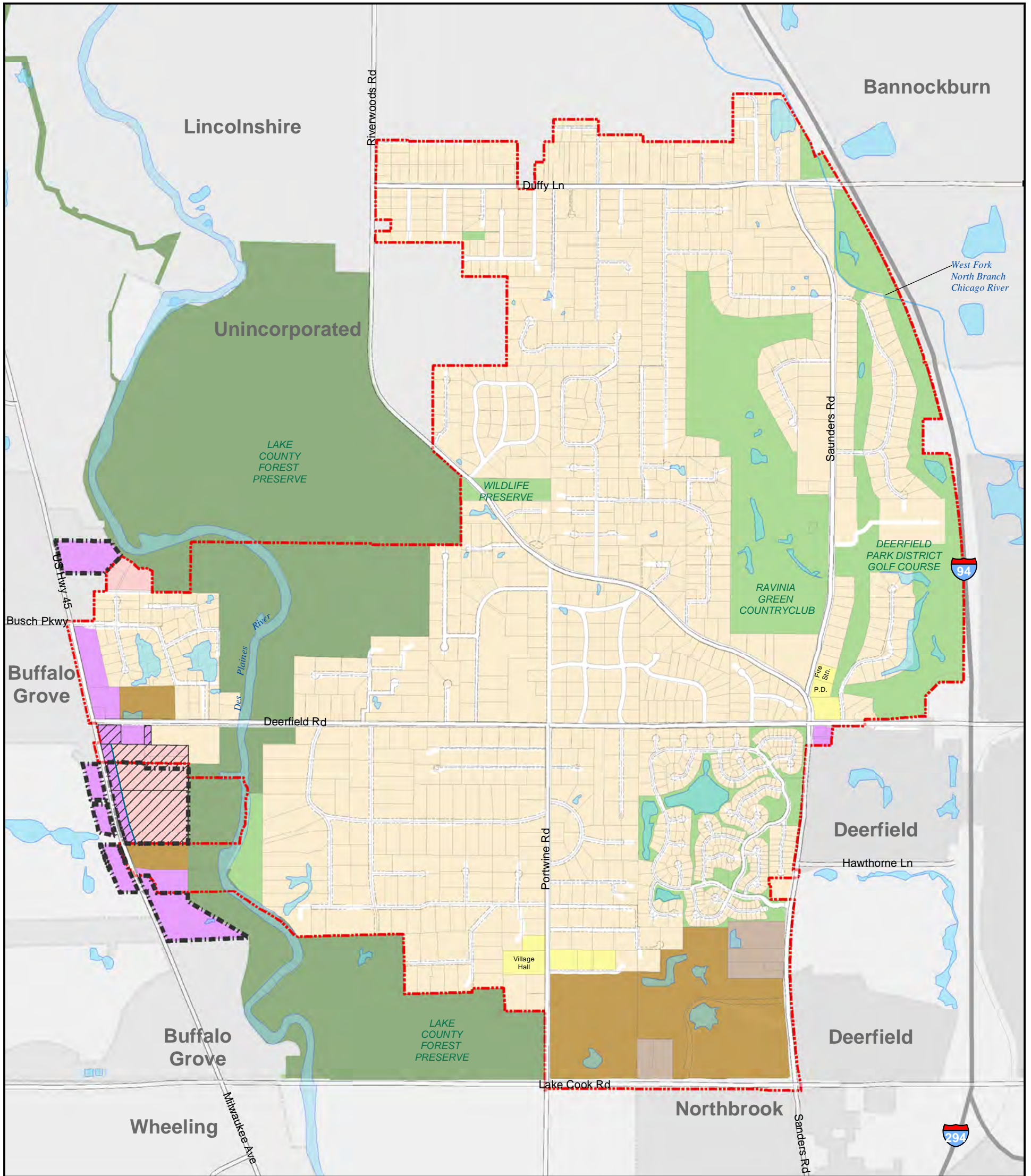
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Date: 8/13/2019

Coordinate System:  
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File: 16\_1011\_Riverwoods\_Woodland\_Delineation Map





- Legend**
- Areas Suitable for Annexation
  - Single Family Residential
  - Business
  - Business Compatible
  - Office Campus
  - Office Compatible
  - Governmental
  - Open Space
  - Forest Preserve
  - Mixed Use Overlay

## Village of Riverwoods Comprehensive Plan

### Exhibit D Land Use Plan

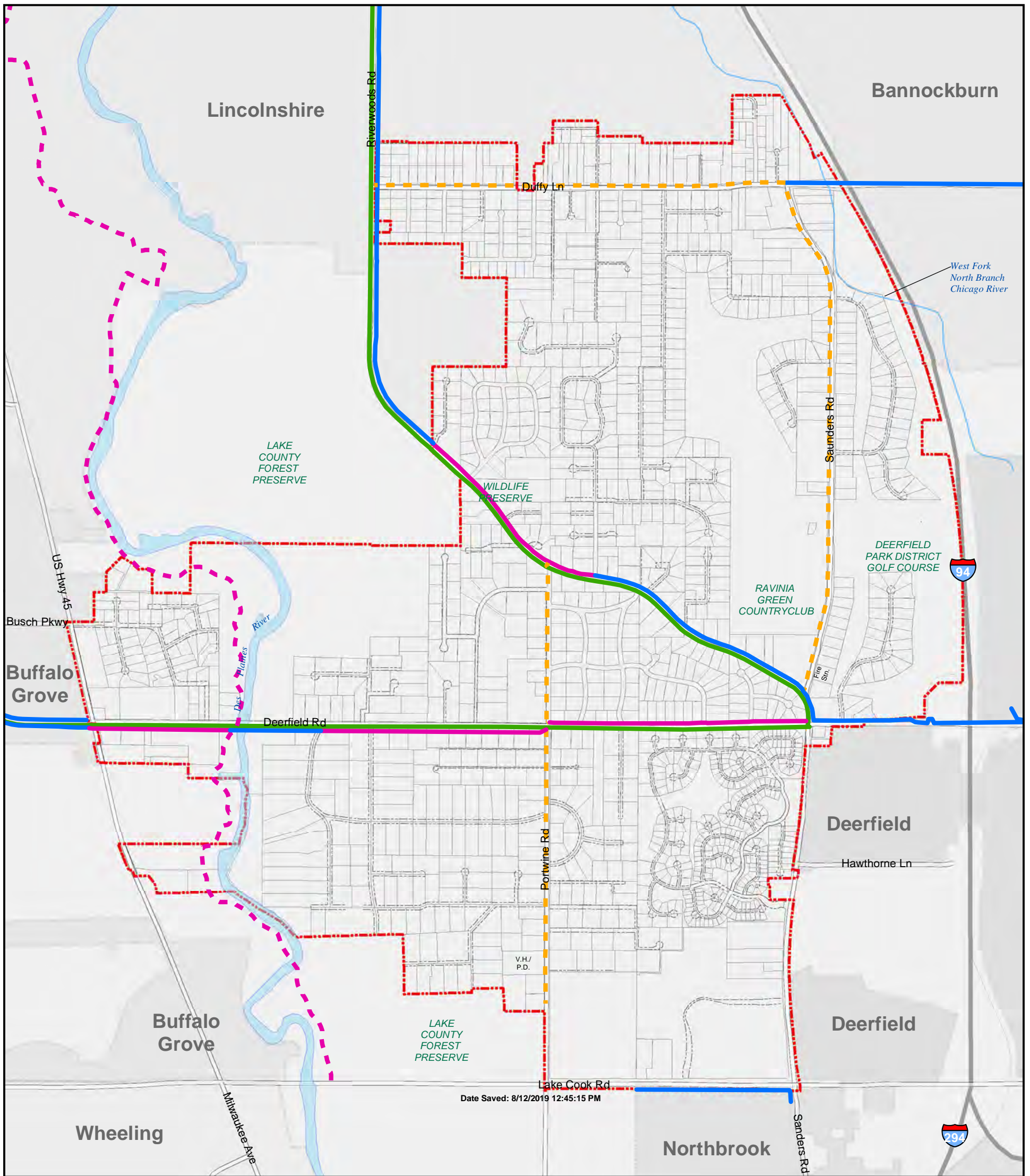
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 0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet



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 625 Forest Edge Drive Vernon Hills, IL 60061  
 Tel: 847.478.9700 Fax: 847.478.9701  
 www.gha-engineers.com

Sources: Lake County; Cook County; NIPC

Updated: 8/12/2019



Date Saved: 8/12/2019 12:45:15 PM

## Village of Riverwoods Comprehensive Plan

1 inch = 1,500 feet  
 0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

### RECOMMENDATIONS LEGEND

- Existing Path
- Proposed Improved Lake County DOT 8' Path
- Proposed Improved Riverwoods 8' Path
- Proposed Lake County DOT Bicycle Friendly Shoulders
- Proposed New Riverwoods 8' Path
- - - Existing Des Plaines River Trail

Adopted From Plan Prepared By Schreiber/Anderson Associates

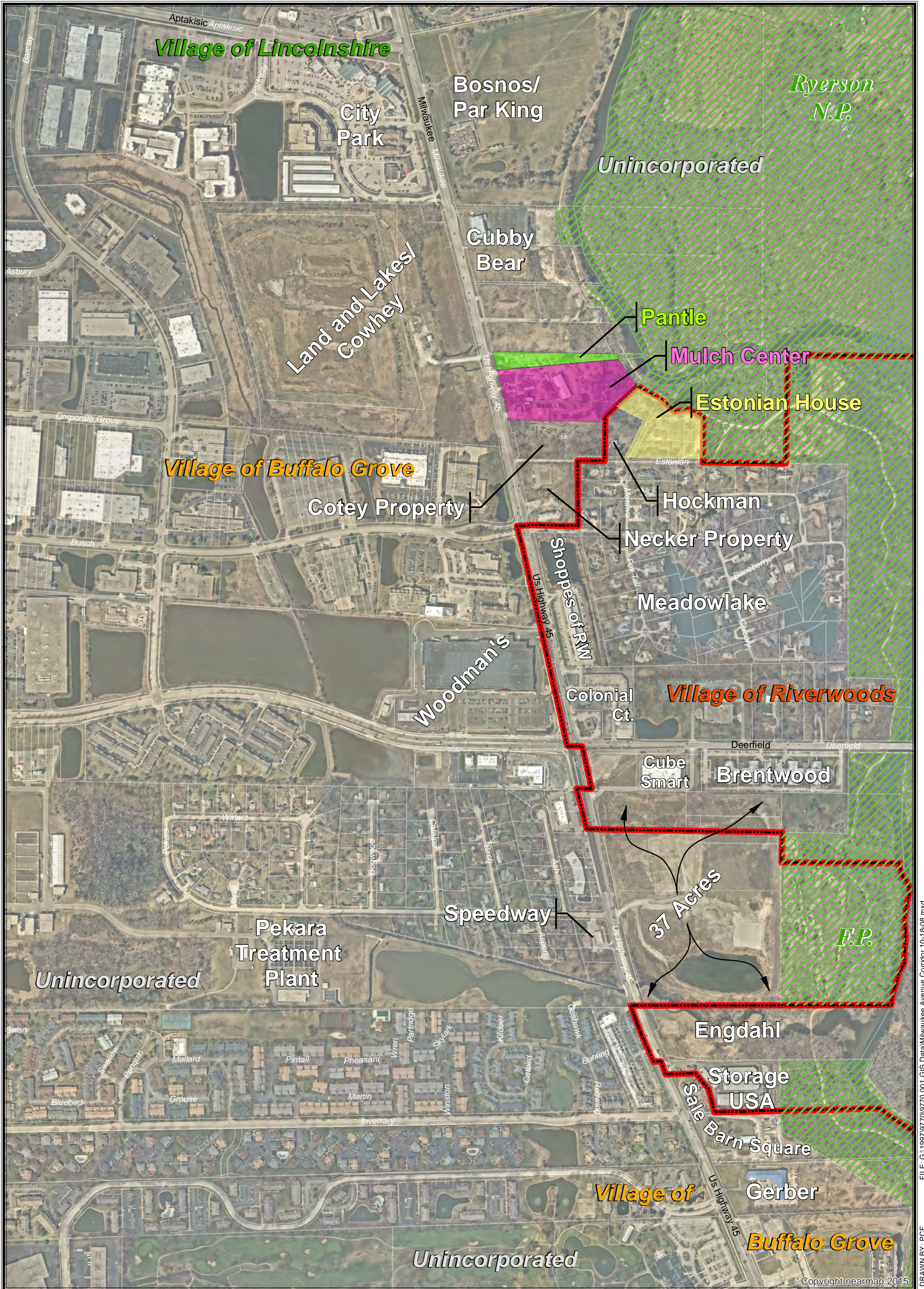
## Exhibit E Master Bike Plan



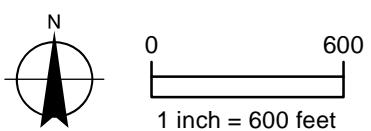
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Sources: Lake County; Cook County; NIPC

Updated: 8/12/2019



Sources: Lake County  
Image Capture Date: 2009



## Village of Riverwoods Comprehensive Plan

### Exhibit F Milwaukee Avenue Corridor



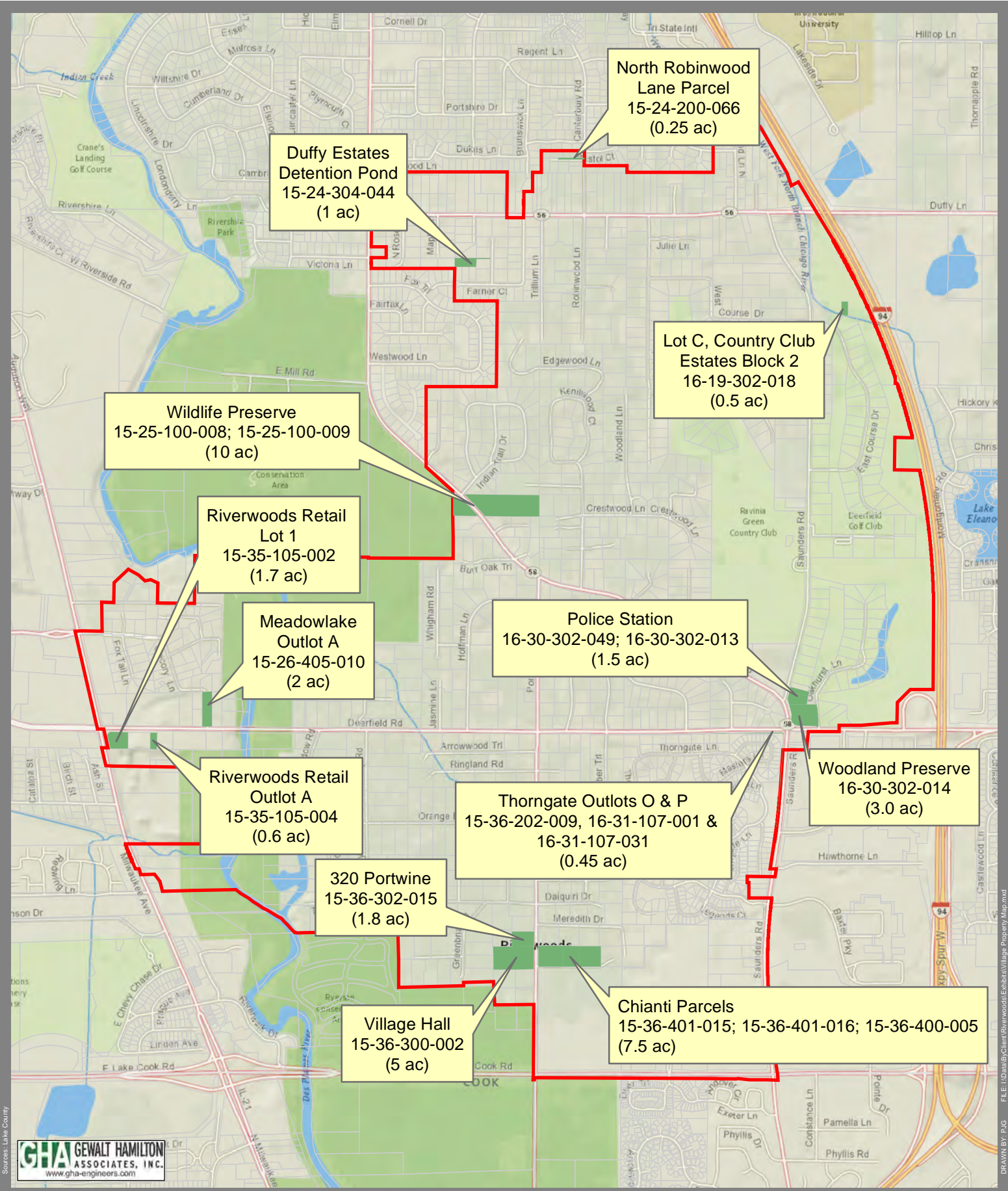
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Project: 9770.001

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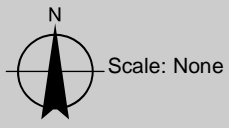
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**Village of Riverwoods Comprehensive Plan**  
**Exhibit G**  
**Village-Owned Property**

