



To: Chairperson and Transportation and Safety Committee  
From: Frank Kalisik, Civil Engineer *FK*  
Through: Carl S. Goldsmith, Director of Public Works *CSG*  
Date: January 28, 2009  
Subject: Metra – Union Pacific – West Line Draft Environmental Assessment

Metra anticipates an increase in ridership for the 2011-2030 planning period and has recently completed a draft Environmental Assessment on anticipated infrastructure upgrades to The Union Pacific-West Commuter Line, which serves the Village of Lombard. The report outlines an investigation of preliminary and primary issues Metra will need to consider in their analysis of infrastructure upgrades necessary to meet the expected level of service. Of particular concern, Metra has identified the requirement for an additional 354 parking spaces to service the Lombard Station by 2030 and has suggested seven (7) areas that look feasible for such use, totaling 5.3 acres.

The acquisition of these properties would cause the displacement of one (1) residential property and one (1) commercial property. Table 1-3 on page 1-17 provides an overview of the zoning actions, which would be required for Metra to use the suggested sites for commuter parking.

This Assessment was presented to the Village Board at the December 4, 2008 Village Board Meeting, and was remanded to the Transportation and Safety Committee for review. Comments are expected in March.

## **URS METRA – UNION PACIFIC WEST LINE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW**

### **SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

The Union Pacific West (UP-W) Line Upgrade Project involves transit improvements along the Metra line between Ogilvie Transportation Center and Elburn that will result in additional passenger capacity and reduced travel times. Through Lombard, these improvements include upgraded signal systems, additional crossovers, and expanded commuter parking. The track improvements include additional crossovers to facilitate passing train movements and suburb-to-suburb service and upgraded signals which will allow trains to operate at higher speeds and with closer headways. These improvements would allow for 14 additional daily commuter trains that are intended to meet the needs of the UP-W line through 2030. Some of these 14 trains, including six additional AM peak trains, may be express trains that may or may not stop in Lombard. In Lombard, there are two types of actions proposed: track improvements and parking expansion.

The report states that the improvements are not anticipated to have a noise impact in Lombard, but a total of 25 homes will experience a “moderate” vibration impact from the proposed changes (eight homes on the north side of the tracks between Grace Street and Edgewood Avenue, and 17 homes on the south side of the tracks between Martha Street and Grace Street). A detailed vibration analysis will be performed in the later stages of the project.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Staff offers the following concerns that should be addressed in the analysis:

- The report does not offer any indication to the level of service increase for Lombard commuters that can be expected as part of the track improvements.
- The proposed track improvements allowing more trains, closer headways, and shorter travel times will also benefit freight trains along the Union Pacific tracks. The study does not specify what increase in freight traffic could be anticipated as a result of Metra’s improvements and what the impacts of the additional freight traffic, if any, will be.
- The study does not sufficiently address how the increased train traffic will affect the Grace/St. Charles Road intersection or the Elizabeth Street crossings.
- Further identification of the projected “moderate” vibration impact to single-family homes is needed and specifically what this will mean for the residents.
- Separate from this report, staff has been made aware that the Union Pacific plans to raise the railroad track height by nine inches near the Grace Street crossing. This information is not identified in the report.

- Past staff reviews have found that a significant number of Glen Ellyn residents have utilized Lombard parking spaces in the past. The study does not address the demand impacts of the additional trains on this situation. Staff suggests that the report review Lombard's unique location at the end of a current fare zone range and determine how the service increases impact spill-over parking from other communities.

**PARKING IMPROVEMENTS**

The report identifies seven areas for additional/modified commuter parking facilities, two of which were previously considered by the Village as part of the 2007 Commuter Parking Study and the Downtown Lombard Community Vision. These seven areas would need to be acquired by the Village or by Metra, but the plan does not address who would pay for the acquisition and construction of the parking lots. The study does state that Metra is seeking federal funding, but it does not specify what that funding would cover and if there would be an expected local match. Although the study assumes that the proposed commuter parking spaces would be constructed and in use by 2011, staff confirmed with Metra that there is no timeline established for land acquisition or construction.

The expanded parking is based on ridership forecasts. Lombard was grouped in with all stations between Lombard and Maywood, and it was determined that this zone will need a total of 405 additional parking spaces.

The plan identifies a total of five potential property acquisitions. According to the study, the expanded parking would require variations for parking space dimensions (seven areas), conditional uses for commuter parking (five areas), and one zoning change.

Up to 353 of these spaces could be established, as detailed in the following table and on the attached map:

Parking Area (by priority)	Description	Ownership	Lot Size (acres)	Action Type	# of new spaces
1	11-37 E. St. Charles Rd	Village	0.8	New	70
2	7 E. St. Charles Rd	Bartel	0.3	New	24
3	Parkside-West lot	Village, Metra	0.7	Restripe from 9' wide to 8.5' wide	5
4	Fifth Third Bank	Fifth Third Bank, Village	0.3	New	23
5	Maple Street lot	Village	0.5	New	38
6	24-28 W. Ash St	First Church of Lombard, DuBrovin, St. John's	1.2	New	92
7	324-330 S. Main St; 12-22 W. Willow St	Pontikes, Kovar, Burdeaux, Geroulis	1.4	New	101
<b>Total</b>	-		<b>5.3*</b>	-	<b>354*</b>

\* Metra's totals of 5.3 acres and 354 spaces are slightly higher than the 5.2 acres and 353 spaces detailed in Parking Areas 1-7.

The proposed 354 parking spaces would add 907 new trips to Main Street and St. Charles Road. This would mean an increase in average daily traffic of 5% to Main Street (south) and St. Charles

Road and an increase of 8% to Main Street (north) for the 2011 design year. The study states that in 2011, all roads will be at acceptable service levels (LOS D or higher).

### **PROPOSED PARKING AREA COMMENTS**

The environmental assessment is intended to identify those properties that could be acquired and utilized for commuter parking purposes. Therefore, the Board should review each of the properties and determine whether each should or should not be included as part of this analysis. Staff offers the following comments regarding each parking option:

#### **Parking Areas 1 & 2**

The study states that Parking Areas 1 and 2 are Metra's highest priorities. In 2007, the Village applied for a Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) grant for Parking Areas 1 and 2, which estimated 92 spaces at a cost of \$1.6 million. Although the original Hammerschmidt lot was built using FY2004 CMAQ funds, the lot expansion was deemed by the CMAQ Project Selection Committee to not have a sufficient cost-benefit ratio. In October, 2008, the Village re-acquired Parking Area 1. However, discussions by the Village Board suggest that the Board may not wish to see the property developed as a surface parking lot. If this is the case, there may be a potential conflict between the report and the Board's desire.

#### **Parking Area 3**

The proposed restriping of the Parkside-West lot (Parking Area 3) would be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, which allows publicly-owned commuter parking spaces to be no less than 8.25 feet wide. Although there is a minimal benefit to be obtained (five additional parking spaces), this is a nearly zero-cost option that could be implemented immediately.

#### **Parking Area 4**

This site consists of a small portion of Michael McGuire Drive and the landscaped area separating McGuire Drive from the Fifth Third Bank and Sprinkler Park properties to the north. A buffer should be maintained between the Sprinkler Park and any commuter parking lot.

#### **Parking Area 5**

It is unclear why Parking Area 5 is included in this study, as it already owned by the Village and operated as a Lombard resident-only commuter parking lot with ancillary parking for the Historical Museum. Additional capacity could be created through restriping and the use of the drive aisle on the adjacent Calvary Episcopal Church property (as detailed in the Downtown Lombard Community Vision and 2007 Commuter Parking Study). However, Calvary has not been receptive to this concept in the past.

#### **Parking Areas 6 & 7**

As both of these areas involve numerous private property owners and existing structures and are furthest from the station itself, these are the most challenging of the proposed options.

Parking Areas 6 and 7 abut residential properties, so special concern is warranted with regard to parking lot design, landscaping, and lighting and impacts on adjacent uses. Area 7 is adjacent to Main Street and the Illinois Prairie Path.

Area 6 is currently improved with a single-family residence and portions of both First Church of Lombard and St. John's Lutheran Church, each separate planned developments. Staff raises concerns about the impacts of additional commuter parking on the daily operations of each of these institutions, which was not identified in the report. Parking Area 6, along with Area 5, has also been envisioned as a potential location for off-site library parking in the event that the Helen Plum Library expands at its current location. Given these issues, staff recommends that the report state that while an opportunity may present itself for additional commuter parking in Area 6, no acquisition efforts should be undertaken without additional dialogue with the Village regarding our long range intent for the area.

#### Additional Parking Option

Another parking area could be considered in the Parkside Avenue right-of-way to the east of the existing Parkside-East commuter lot. In the 2007 Commuter Parking Study, staff estimated that an additional 63 spaces could be created at a minimal cost since no land acquisition would be necessary.

#### OTHER ITEMS FOR CORRECTION/CLARIFICATION

The information in the study about Lombard's zoning designations and regulations is not entirely accurate. No variation would be needed for publicly-owned commuter spaces to be 8.5 feet wide, but variations would likely be requested for parking lot and transitional landscaping and open space. Also, Parking Area 6 stated that the property is zoned B5 (it is actually B5A), and Parking Area 7 does not mention the R5-zoned property that is included on the map.

As a last item for concern, the report identifies Metra's land acquisition and displacement authority procedures. While the report states their authority to acquire property, it also notes their statutory authority to condemn property if deemed necessary. Staff raised its concern that the report's identification of the properties, while denoting their condemnation authority, does not send a favorable message. The report should denote that it is the intent of Metra to work collaboratively with the Village to select appropriate locations for commuter parking and that acquisition efforts must also be consistent with local plans.

# Proposed Commuter Parking Areas



NOT TO SCALE



Potential Parking Area 8 (63 spaces)

Parking Area (by priority)	Description	Ownership	Lot Size (acres)	Action Type	# of new spaces
1	11-37 E. St. Charles Rd	Village	0.8	New	70
2	7 E. St. Charles Rd	Barfel	0.3	New	24
3	Parkside-West lot	Village, Metra	0.7	Reshape from 9' wide to 8.5' wide	5
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