

Riverdale e-Village Vision

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Riverdale e-Village

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Contents

Introduction	V-4
Riverdale e-Village Initiative	V-5
Area Benefits	V-6
Resident/Business Benefits	V-6
Riverdale Network Station Vision	V-8
Phase 1—Months 1-15	V-8
Activities	V-9
Meetings	V-9
Access to Technology	V-11
Access to Virtual Services	V-13
Phase 2—Months 16 - 24	V-22
Activities	V-22
Distributed Work	V-22
Riverdale e-Village Vision	V-27
Hot Spots in Public Spaces	V-27
New Business Practices	V-28
Riverdale e-Government	V-28
Riverdale e-Library	V-29
Businesses	V-31
New Buildings and Landscaping	V-31
New Business and Residential Tenants	V-32
Supplementary Businesses	V-32
Complementary Businesses	V-32
New Transportation Options	V-33
Vision of the Grand Opening of the Riverdale Network Station	V-36
Key to Success	V-38

Introduction

Riverdale is a 110-year-old village 35 miles south of the Chicago Loop, and contiguous with the southern-most border of the City of Chicago. Its population in 2000 was 15,055, which was 86% African-American with a relatively young median age of 27.5. It is one of 93 mostly small villages included in the South Suburban Region of the Chicago Metropolitan Area.

Riverdale, like many places in the East and Midwest United States, is a former industrial village attempting to make a transition to a post-industrial economic base. The Village leadership is aggressively pursuing a number of economic development initiatives, including street infrastructure improvements, brownfield cleanup, industrial attraction programs, and renewal of its commercial/civic core.

The commercial/civic core of the Village of Riverdale is a compact, charming area but in need of revitalization. While there has not been significant disinvestment, neither has there been much new private investment for decades. Revitalization of the Village core will improve the local economy and overall quality of life. It will also contribute to the Northeast Illinois Planning Commission's long range strategy for congestion management and air quality improvement that involves developing transit villages at stops along the Metra commuter rail system.

With two stops on the Metra Electric line, Riverdale has a potential competitive advantage over many other villages in the South Suburban Region. The Ivanhoe stop, on 144th Street in the heart of the village core, is currently one of the most active Metra Electric line stops. However, the Village core lacks the functions to engage these commuters, or to attract visitors from elsewhere in the Metra system. Without additional functions, the competitive advantage offered by rail is being squandered, both for the Village and the region as a whole.

The Riverdale e-Village Initiative will help realize that potential.

Riverdale e-Village Initiative

The Riverdale e-Village Initiative will contribute to community mobility and economic development, including equitable access to digital technologies. The Initiative will add activities to the commercial core, especially activities that contribute to success in a modern economy – access to production technologies, workforce development programs, and business development assistance. In the long run, the Initiative will foster a *culture of innovation* in Riverdale and throughout the Southern Suburbs. It will do so by building on the examples of innovation that currently exist.

The Riverdale e-Village Initiative, including the bricks and mortar transit oriented development component, involves five significant changes to the existing village core.

Changes in the first six months of the Initiative include:

- A new kind of public communications facility, called a *Network Station*, will be added to provide assisted-access to a variety of digital technologies. This addition to the technology infrastructure will be used to create virtual access to many activities and resources of value to residents and businesses in the market area.
- Public and private enterprise throughout the Southern Suburbs as well as businesses in the village core will begin to adopt a network strategy by incorporating new business practices that make effective use of the digital network infrastructure.

Changes expected sometime in the first three years of the Initiative include:

- New construction will add storefronts, offices, and housing units to the village core to make a more compact built-environment. (See the Farr Associates report.)
- Urban design improvements will widen sidewalks, add landscaping, and generally make the core into a more attractive pedestrian environment. (See the Farr Associates report.)
- A new family of zero-emission, alternative-fuel *neighborhood vehicles* will be introduced to improve physical access to the village core, increase circulation throughout the Riverdale market area, and make more efficient use of Riverdale's parking facilities.

Based on those changes, the e-Village Initiative can be expected to capture economic and mobility benefits both for the area in general and for residents and businesses in the area:

Area Benefits

- Create a new identity for the Riverdale Village commercial core as modern, innovative, and successful.
- Introduce new functions into the Riverdale Village commercial core and make it a more attractive destination to Metra riders and others in its market area.
- Help attract developers who will construct the planned new buildings.
- Help attract businesses and residents to occupy those new buildings.
- Create “spread effects” for the adjacent real estate by attracting visitors to the village core.
- Create “spread effects” for neighboring villages and shopping malls, as widespread use of neighborhood vehicles will improve circulation throughout the market area.
- Develop demand for broadband network capacity, which will attract network providers to the region.

Resident/Business Benefits

- Capitalize small businesses, non-profits, and village governments by providing access to a high-end network infrastructure, and the know-how for using that infrastructure.
- Facilitate access to broad-based participation in electronic commerce.
- Provide workforce-training opportunities ranging from basic computer skills to experience with computer aided design software.
- Provide a platform for a variety of business development programs offered by others such as “how to do business with the federal government” and “how to start a small business.”
- Provide a place to introduce innovations -- from technologies (such as tablet computers) to programmatic innovations (such as the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency’s electronic transfer of funds to recipients of federal entitlement programs).
- Provide a new hands-on experiential approach to selling technology that will help stimulate the private market for digital technologies.
- Systematically address the class and income basis for the “digital divide.”

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- Move virtually into the Village core some of the places to which residents would normally drive.
 - Provide space and technology that will improve the quality of civic participation.

There is also a public security benefit that is unique to the conditions of our time.

- Provide an accessible meeting place with “always-on” regional communications and reliable information to restore order and direct recovery efforts in case a disaster causes widespread failure of the electricity grid or telecommunications services to homes and businesses.

In summary, the Riverdale e-Village will become a place for people to get access to the tools and services needed for success in the 21st Century economy without having to depend on high performance automobiles. This combination of compact transit oriented development, urban design improvements, digital technologies, and innovative automotive technologies define a model *village of the future*.

The Vision section describes what can be expected to go on in the e-Village when the development plan is fully implemented. It is a practical vision in that it could be developed within a three to four year time frame. Although they are closely related, the vision for the Network Station and for the e-Village are described separately.

Riverdale Network Station Vision

The Network Station will be the anchor for the Riverdale e-Village. A Network Station is a new kind of public facility that incorporates parts of a library, cable television public access production center, community technology center, classroom, executive suite, and technology trade show.

Because digital networks will provide virtual access in the Riverdale Village core to physical places elsewhere in the region, the facility is referred to as a *Network Station*, analogous to a train station, which is a portal for physical access to other places.

The specifics in the Vision consist of activities that could occur based on existing capabilities and interests of the institutions in the South Suburban Region and Metropolitan Chicago Area. Commitments to participate can not be collected until implementation funding is secured. The first two phases of development describing the tasks that will occur are presented in the Development Plan Section of the Technical Report.

Phase 1—Months 1-15

The Network Station will be developed in two phases. The first will last approximately 15 months and will include implementation planning, physical development of the facility, and the first 9 months of operation.

Phase 1 of the Network Station will occupy 5,000 square feet in one of the currently unused buildings immediately east of the Metra tracks, about 50 yards from the Ivanhoe platform stop. The space will be allocated to:

- Foyer, administrative area, and storage – 1,000 square feet
Includes reception desk, small comfortable sitting area, and a variety of kiosks.
- Meeting Suite – 3,000 square feet
Space will have movable walls and mobile furniture in order to flexibly reconfigure from a single large room to as many as 6 smaller rooms to accommodate different purposes and varying group size. The large room will be equipped with 7.1 surround sound, large center screen and computer projector, several TV monitors for side screens, and video cameras and microphones. Each of the smaller rooms will be equipped with speaker phones, video conference units, flat screen TV monitors, computers on movable carts, and smart white boards.
- Digital Production Suite – 1,000 square feet
A working/learning environment that will accommodate a small presentation space and 16 semi-private cubicles (at 50 square feet each) with adjustable sides that can be raised for private work or

lowered for group instruction. The room will be equipped with multi-media computers, smart white board, wireless personal networks, and wireless local area network (LAN).

Activities

Phase 1 of the Network Station will:

- Function as a center for meetings and presentations.
- Provide access to the technologies that are essential to participating in a 21st Century economy.
- Provide access to virtual services that are not physically present.

Meetings

The meeting center will offer parties the opportunity to meet electronically rather than always travelling for a face-to-face (F2F) experience, or to ride Metra to the meeting rather than always driving.

The meeting center will also have economic impacts as routine use of meeting and presentation technologies has the potential of making the meetings more effective. Electronic meetings also save valuable time wasted in transit to a central meeting site. In the long run, exposure to electronic meetings should result in more businesses and government agencies assembling their own conferencing infrastructure, and F2F meetings becoming a purely local phenomenon.

The meeting center will accommodate 6 types of meetings:

- Face to face meetings
Meetings purely local to Riverdale, sponsored by organizations such as neighborhood watch associations, the Village administration, chamber of commerce and the local investment club, can be held at the Network Station. The Riverdale Network Station can also host F2F meetings for businesses, governments, professional associations and community-based organizations from elsewhere in the Southern Suburbs.
- Technology-assisted F2F presentations
Many meetings are held in order for one or more people to present information to an assembled group. Presentation technologies have become much more complex and powerful than the days of the overhead projector and pointer. Multi-media slide shows requiring a computer, presentation software, computer projector and screen have become the norm. “Smart” white boards provide additional capabilities. They can display anything running on a computer from video to PowerPoint, use electronic pens to write notes on the screen, hide and reveal the mark-up layer, or save the notes to a

computer file. The Network Station will offer an array of presentation technologies.

- Audio conferences

Audio conferencing is the least expensive form of electronic meeting and the easiest to manage. The Network Station will provide quality speaker phones and access to an audio bridge so that a couple of dozen sites can be included in a single meeting if necessary. Nearly every organization in the Southern Suburbs is a candidate to routinely participate in audio conferences.

- Live-interactive video conferences

This type of video conferencing is most appropriate to applications involving teaching or training, visual information, people of substantial political stature, meetings where body language and facial expression are critical, and meetings too long for an audio conference. Such electronic meetings require at least one “far-side partner” with compatible equipment. The Illinois Video Education Network (described as part of the description of distance education in the Access to Virtual Services Section) with similar equipment on all Southland college campuses can be used as the infrastructure for multi-site, live, interactive video meetings within the South Suburban Region. There are however other video conference rooms in the Chicago Metropolitan Area that can be accessed using ISDN service from the public switched network – the U.S. General Services Administration located in the Loop and the Charles Hayes Family Investment Center, at 4859 South Wabash Avenue.

- Downstream video, upstream audio meetings

National organizations such as the League of Women Voters or the National League of Cities often hold national legislative or policy briefings from Washington D.C. via satellite. Similarly, national corporations brief regional sales teams on plans to introduce new products. Satellite distribution allows one-way video from the central organization simultaneously to many audiences across the country. Each receiving audience uses the regular telephone network as the return channel to ask questions and make comments.

- Web meetings

The Internet will, over time, become the medium of choice for conducting electronic meetings. Microsoft’s NetMeeting software is being used today for meetings that range from keyboard-based participation to video conferences, and can even connect smart white boards so that remote meeting sites can see on their computer screens the original Powerpoint presentation and the hand written annotations.

Access to Technology

In order for technology to lead to economic and transportation benefits, it must be *used* for those purposes. Even with an abundant regional network infrastructure, there are six barriers-to-use that the Network Station will be designed to overcome. The barriers are:

- **Fear**

There is a group that experiences anxiety when in proximity to digital technology. Encountering these devices in a friendly neighborhood environment with technical assistance can help many people overcome those fears and use the tools to become more productive.
- **Awareness**

Another group is simply unaware of their own needs, and doesn't know what digital technology can do for their home or business. The Network Station will expose the members of this group to what is possible.
- **Knowledge**

Some people and small businesses are aware of their needs, but innovation moves so quickly that it is hard for them to stay current about how to satisfy those needs. This group needs an introduction to new technologies as they come available. They can benefit from a hands-on encounter with the new devices in order to find out which technologies satisfy which needs, and which brands are the most cost-effective. The Network Station will provide a vendor-neutral environment for this group to actually try-out a variety of tools.
- **Skill**

Many users don't master the machines they already own and a substantial portion of the capabilities goes unused due to this lack of mastery. This idea was captured by a joke popular in the 1980s that most people had VCRs with 12:00 blinking because they could not set the timer and therefore could not have the machine record automatically. The staff at the Network Station will provide basic training on all the tools, and specialized organizations throughout the Southland will provide more in depth training.
- **Demand**

Many consumers require only occasional use for many technologies, where purchase would be uneconomic due to significant idle periods. For example, some consumers will, no matter the circumstances, only occasionally surf the Web. For these people, high-speed data service at home would result in extremely high per-hour costs. A slide scanner (and related

software) or computer projector are examples of devices for which demand would be no greater than sporadic for many people.

- Cost

No matter the price decline, there will always be those who can't afford to purchase the new technologies that they could productively use.

Here are a few examples that illustrate the benefits of access to this technology platform:

There is a vast amount of technical training available online. The Network Station's high speed network access, multi-media computers with headphones, semi-private carrels, and catalogue of online resources will make it easy for motivated individuals to pursue their interests.

The Network Station will facilitate a region-wide program for businesses to develop multi-media marketing materials (in the form of CDs or DVDs for example) or for rich media Web pages. Web authoring tools will be available to do-it-yourself entrepreneurs, free lance designers, and individuals in training with South Suburban College or other institutions in the region that offer Web design programs. In this environment, development costs of a quality Web page should not be a barrier to any Southland business.

The Network Station will also provide much of the same software that its primary collaborators use in their onsite training programs. For example, the Business and Career Institute at South Suburban College (discussed below) teaches courses that involve the Microsoft Office suite of programs, Adobe Photoshop, and AutoCAD. By offering the same software, the Network Station will allow advanced students to complete their class work or produce work freelance.

The Network Station will also provide access to entire technological systems, such as digital photography. The system includes introductory lectures by experts drawn from the Southland, loaner cameras with different capabilities, photo editing software, color printers of varying qualities, presentation software, computer projectors, and presentation space.

The actual programs and systems will be chosen to satisfy the needs of the community as determined initially during implementation by the Initiative's Steering Committee, and subsequently by the Board of Directors of the non-profit corporation which will be formed to operate the network station.

Access to Virtual Services

Providing access to services which people normally drive to reach is another way the Network Station will reduce the need for automobile travel. The Network Station will facilitate access to a variety of activities from elsewhere that will appear *virtually* near the Ivanhoe Metra stop.

Kiosks provide one avenue for delivering remote services. Kiosks do not require staff and are generally user friendly, allowing people lacking the skills or the time to sit down at a computer the benefits of computer processing. Here are a few examples that range from the significant to the frivolous:

- ATMs can use biometric technology to verify the identity of the consumer, such as by Iris recognition (which is then known as an EyeTM). Biometric recognition eliminates the need for a bank card which makes the device more secure, quicker, easier and more reliable than a normal ATM. One planned application is for cashing checks by individuals who do not have a regular bank account.
- ATMs that connect to the Internet become full-fledged financial kiosks, not just cash dispensers. Customers will be able to get news headlines, stock quotes, conduct limited e-commerce such as buying concert tickets or applying for a credit card.
- In 2000, HUD developed “Next Door” kiosks which display information about buying homes with the help of FHA insurance, locating affordable rental housing, finding homeless shelters, learning about HUD programs in the community, getting job training, and economic development assistance.
- PRESSPOINT is a kiosk supported by a satellite network that, no matter where it is located in the world, can receive and print on-demand the latest edition of 65 newspapers from 35 countries 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Current rollout is in Asia.
- Eastman Kodak offers the Picture Maker Digital Print Station. It is a low cost booth at which consumers can order prints of new pictures, enlarge pictures, or generate a print from flash memory, CD, or floppy disc in 25 seconds. It can also burn pictures to a CD.
- Body scanning kiosks measure and size individuals so that they can buy clothes online that fit well. It replaces the measuring tape and fitting room.
- Power Photo Kiosk allows customers to create photo portraits of themselves with sports stars or other celebrities in dramatic or comic settings.

Beyond kiosks, there are a variety of services can be made to virtually appear at the Network Station. Six types, discussed below, are feasible and have broad appeal.

- Education
- Social services
- Business assistance
- Workforce preparation
- Entertainment
- Retail shopping

The Network Station will not compete with or duplicate technology training programs offered by other organizations in the Southland. The Network Station will collaborate with as many organizations as possible in order to help market their products and services, and to offer off-campus options for service delivery.

Education

In Riverdale, the Network Station can potentially provide virtual access to all 11 post-secondary institutions in the South Suburban Region and to 8 others elsewhere in the Metropolitan Area which are affiliated with the South Metropolitan Regional Higher Education Consortium (SMRHEC).

There are three delivery mechanisms available. The first is a traditional in-person teacher or speaker which will be deployed occasionally, perhaps complemented by virtual resources. The second is the Internet since many educational institutions throughout the U.S. and beyond use it to offer distance education courses. The third is the state supported Illinois Video Education Network (IVEN), a two-way interactive video network.

The South Metropolitan Regional Higher Education Consortium's IVEN includes 34 nodes and a 24 port video bridge that can support up to 15 remote sites participating in a single class. The State's purpose for funding the IVEN is consistent with the uses planned by the Network Station -- to facilitate sharing unique courses and programs between campuses, avoid duplication of effort and resources, and reduce travel time for students and faculty to attend and conduct classes.

Both the Internet and the IVEN can be used to deliver knowledge resources and educational products previously available only on a school campus or library to the Riverdale Network Station in the e-Village core. South Suburban College, located in the Riverdale market area, is expected to be a key participant.

Campuses not well served by public transit might find it beneficial to create a virtual presence for their educational products at the rail-accessible Riverdale facility. This project will demonstrate a way to use

technology to improve consumer access to and possibly expand the market for the following:

- classes; such as academic credit courses for enrolled students, adult education/extension, continuing education, and contract education;
- presentations, seminars, and classes originated by campus-based organizations involved in workforce preparation.
- presentations, seminars and classes originated by campus-based organizations involved in small business assistance.
- library information and other appropriate library resources.

Business Assistance

Assisting businesses to grow is one of the most important functions of the Network Station. As evidenced by the robust business development community, it is also a high priority for the South Suburban Region.

The Network Station will contribute to the regional business development effort in three ways. The first is access to a digital technology infrastructure so that small businesses, free lance workers, and entrepreneurs will not have to own and maintain the tools in order to use them. This aspect was discussed previously in the Technology Access Section.

The second is by collaborating with the organizations engaged in developing workforce skills so that businesses in the region have access to a trained and technologically literate workforce. This aspect is discussed below under Workforce Preparation.

The third is by collaborating with the existing business assistance organizations in the region to cost-effectively deliver their services and programs to target businesses.

The primary collaborators will be CenterPoint at Governors State University (a designated center in the State's Small Business Development Assistance network), and the various business and trade associations in the Southland. The Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, the Southland Small Business Association, and the Calumet Manufacturing Association are examples. Through them, other organizations such as SCORE and the U.S. SBA will also collaborate.

Like the education institutions, the business assistance organizations will be able to deliver their programs in person at the Network Station, via switched ISDN video conferencing, or through the Internet as streaming video or video Web meeting. These technologies can be used to make CenterPoint's basic courses such as "Starting and Managing a Business," "Writing a Business Plan," and "Getting a Loan" appear at the Network Station.

CenterPoint also schedules appointments with SCORE counselors. These advisers could similarly meet at the Network Station or meet over the IVEN with entrepreneurs at the Network Station.

The Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce has about 2,000 members in 71 communities, and has a relationship with 33 local chambers of commerce including the Riverdale Chamber. The goals include increasing chamber membership throughout the region, strengthening the working relationship with the 33 local chambers, introducing new business contacts to members, providing quality education programs, developing a technology infrastructure to enhance competitiveness, fostering an effective workforce development program and contributing to a growing regional economy.

The Chicago Southland Chamber sponsors mixers, educational forums, state and federal lobbying, symposia, and other events. The Network Station can help promote any and all of them and extend their reach by having them appear virtually or F2F in the Riverdale facility. The Network Station will also provide meeting facilities, computing resources, and special programs such as the regional Web development effort to help make the members more productive, competitive and agile. Chamber members could also be given privileges at the Network Station such as free use of facsimile and photocopy service.

Most business assistance organizations provide some portion of their services and resources online through their Web pages. Some of these Web pages are user friendly and some are not. The Network Station will sponsor F2F presentations by many of these organizations, particularly by organizations that lack a presence in the Southland, on navigating their respective Web pages.

Here are a few examples of Web-based opportunities that could be presented:

- The Prime Contract Program provides assistance obtaining federal government contracts. See the SBA Office of Government Contracting Home Page at www.sba.gov/gc.
- PRO-Net (www.pronet.sba.gov) is a virtual one-stop procurement shop for government contracting; makes small business profiles available to federal, state and local government contracting officers, as well as to private-sector businesses looking for contractors, subcontractors, teaming arrangements and partnerships.
- SBA – ACE-Net (www.ace-net.org) is for entrepreneurs seeking equity financing from angel investors in the range from \$250-000 to \$5 million, amounts too low to attract most venture capitalists.

- The General Services Administration is the civilian purchasing agent for the Federal government and has a Business Service Center Regional Office in the Loop. To become an approved vendor for the Federal Supply Schedule Contractor see www.fss.gsa.gov. Federal procurement opportunities are at www.fedbizopps.gov. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration also purchases large amounts of goods and service at www.nasa.gov and www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codek for small and minority owned businesses seeking NASA contracts.
- Prospective defense contractors must be registered in Central Contractor Registration at www.ccr2003.com.

In addition to those federal opportunities, there are also State and private Web resources that the Network Station can introduce, explain and host. They include:

- Access to live and archived Webcasts of programs sponsored by the Illinois Small Business Development Association at www.isbda.org.
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce uses www.partnerpoint.org for small businesses to assemble creative partnerships.

Federal contracts require the ability for computer-to-computer exchange of information about the business and the particular transaction. This is referred to as Electronic Commerce – Electronic Data Interchange (EC/EDI). The basic requirement is the ability of the business to process credit card transactions. The Network Station will host presentations that explain how to meet the EC/EDI requirements.

The Charles Hayes Family Investment Center is a potential far-side partner for interactive video conferences. It will be possible to hold meetings between the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, Southland Small Business Association and Chicago-based business associations gathered in the Hayes Center. Candidates include the Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, the Asian American Alliance, Women's Business Development Council, and the Mexican American Chamber.

The purpose would be to establish new business relationships between members. They could collaborate, subcontract, share labor, jointly purchase goods, share technical advice and experience, share product recommendations, and share vendor presentations on technologies from bar codes to smart cards.

It will even be possible to periodically hold business development meetings between Riverdale and business and trade associations in Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia, extending operating hours to 24 hours on those days.

Workforce Preparation

The Network Station's primary collaborator will be the Business and Career Institute (BCI) at South Suburban College. BCI instructors could use the same channels described above – F2F, interactive video, or the Web – to create a presence at the Network Station. As mentioned, students can have access to the same software available at the BCI in order to complete assignments or work free lance.

The BCI offers a number of certificate programs, including: Novell Certified Website Designer, Novell Netware System Administration, Microsoft Certified System Engineer, A+ Certification, and Cisco Certified Networking Associate. Preparatory and certificate classes could appear at the Network Station.

Classes are also taught on desktop publishing, project management, AutoCAD, digital photography, Adobe Photoshop, network cabling, database software, spreadsheet software and more. Those who gain proficiency in the various software packages can offer those skills to clients without privately assembling the requisite digital infrastructure.

In cases where student interest cannot be satisfied by the BCI, other institutions in the South Suburban Region will be recruited, or others in the Chicago Metropolitan Area such as the Illinois Institute of Technology (currently an affiliate of the SMRHEC).

Social Services

The Network Station will collaborate with the South Suburban Council on Homelessness, an umbrella organization that includes community based non-profits and government agencies responsible for a wide range of services such as health care, mental health care, foster children care, substance abuse counseling, food, legal aid, transportation, and employment in addition to shelter. Other networks or coalitions of human service providers will also be recruited

With the addition of ISDN telephone service and an inexpensive video conferencing unit, one or more of the many organizations in the system south and west of Riverdale could become a far-side partner for holding two-site system-wide meetings. That would allow staff members of the participating organizations to attend the closest site, thereby saving time without sacrificing content. The same arrangement could be used to conduct training or legislative briefing sessions. The staff at Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, located in Riverdale, will be able to use the Network Station for their own purposes, accessing online training for example.

The umbrella organization also maintains an online presence at www.mrsh.net where people and families in need can locate the resources

they need. The Network Station will offer an additional but limited opportunity to access that information.

The federal government also provides a variety of social services through the Veteran's Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Social Security Administration (SSA). In one example, the SSA's Southland field office for benefits counseling is located in Chicago Heights and is not Metra accessible. The Network Station will demonstrate the delivery of benefits counseling originating in Chicago Heights and appearing virtually using interactive video conferencing in the Riverdale Network Station.

Art, Entertainment, and Culture

The Network Station will offer a combination of art, entertainment and cultural programs in order to attract a cross section of the community, not just those oriented to business applications. This will also ensure that the facility's capacity is fully utilized, add functions to the e-Village core and, during evening hours, create demand for parking spaces usually used by Metra commuters during the day.

Essentially the same infrastructure used for meetings can also be used for the following activities, which would take place in the Meeting Suite.

- Viewing DVDs provided by the Riverdale Library, the South Suburban Community College, the local video rental store, or individual members of the Network Station.
- Viewing selected programs available over the cable television hookup.
- Viewing multi-media Web pages available over the Internet.
- Conducting a computer game competition.
- Providing group introduction to online game competition.
- Viewing programs of digital photography produced by local institutions or individual artists.

In addition, there are *Virtual field trips* available from educational institutions, zoos, museums, research institutes, and National Parks located throughout the nation. These programs are a combination of education, culture and entertainment. In each case, the program originator walks through an exhibit or locale with a live video camera allowing the remote audience to enjoy a near-first hand experience, ask questions, and even direct the camera. The programs can appeal to anyone, young or old.

The following is a brief list to illustrate what are literally hundreds of options:

- Ocean Institute of Dana Point, California offers “Safari into the Intertidal Zone” (a walk into the Marine Life Refuge), and “Careers in Marine Science.”
- Zoo Atlanta offers “Rattlesnake Roundup” and “Giant Pandas.”
- NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio offers “Apollo Moon Landings – Fact Not Fiction.”
- Museum of Television and Radio in Beverly Hills, California offers “The Civil Rights Movement and Television” and “Planet Earth.”
- Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, California offers programs on the dynamics of racism and prejudice.
- Museum of Modern Art in New York City offers “You Call that Art?”
- Jazzschool at the Knitting Factory in New York City offers performance and interviews with noted jazz artists,
- Elephant Sanctuary in Hohenwald, Tennessee offers views of an elephant’s daily life.
- Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Georgia offers “Discovering Puppetry in Other Cultures” and “Mexico/Mexican Flag.”
- Conner Prairie Museum in Fishers, Indiana offers “Native Ways” and “Healing Hands: Medicine in Early Days.”
- COSI Columbus in Columbus, Ohio is a science center that offers “Dot Dash to Dot Com” and “Gadget Works.”

Whatever programs the Network Station acquires can be shared with Riverdale’s public secondary schools.

Retail Shopping

The Network Station will provide a couple of variations for shopping online. Face-to-face shopping in bricks and mortar storefronts is discussed below in the *e-Village Vision Section*.

In the mid-1990s, an online shopper ordered goods from a purely electronic retailer such as Amazon.com. Recently, the trend has been toward the *bricks and clicks* model where a storefront retailer also uses the Internet sales channel. In either case, the order is routed to a warehouse for fulfillment and delivered to home or business by either the USPS or a private mail service such as UPS.

The Network Station will hold for pick-up the goods ordered online by those consumers not home during delivery hours. This is easy to arrange and will reduce one of the barriers to online shopping.

A more significant service is possible with some development of current capabilities. The Network Station will work with mall owners in the Riverdale market area in order to establish a virtual presence on the Internet. In this case, order fulfillment would occur off the retail floor rather than from a regional warehouse, and goods would be delivered by a local service to the Network Station for pick-up.

The idea would be for Metra riders or greater Riverdale residents to order from the mall Web page on one day, or in the morning on the way to work. Orders could be placed from the Network Station, a home computer, or a handheld wireless device.

The consumer could pick-up the goods at the Network Station or elsewhere in the e-Village on the way home from work or the same or the next day. This could be accomplished by a delivery service that would collect the orders placed by noon for delivery to Riverdale by 5PM.

The leading candidates to participate in this service are the malls along Torrence Blvd, about 4 miles from Riverdale. The River Oaks Center, among the most popular, is one possibility. Assuming participation by the Center's owner, the Simon Co., and many of the tenants, it would be possible for Metra riders and others with easy access to the Riverdale e-Village to obtain goods the same day ordered without actually travelling to the River Oaks Center. The following stores would be the most likely candidates to begin the service since they each currently have a Web presence.

- Rave Girl (children's clothing)
- Hallmark Card
- K-B Toys
- Auntie Anne's Pretzels
- Mrs. Fields Cookies
- J.C. Penny
- Sears
- Marshall Fields
- Carson Pirie Scott

Phase 2—Months 16 - 24

The second phase of the Network Station will be developed in 10,000 square feet in a building not yet identified in the village core, within ½ mile of the Ivanhoe platform stop. The first choice is to expand at the same location as the first phase but availability of space at that location cannot be guaranteed.

The second phase facility will include:

- Reception, administration, storage – 1,000 square feet
- Distributed Work Suite (a mix of private offices and collaborative work spaces) – 9,000 square feet

Activities

Phase 2 will expand the activities of the Network Station into both training for distributed work teams, and hosting members of practicing distributed work teams. It could also function as a temporary work place during a period of post-disaster recovery, or extend its facilities to include some aspect of multi-media production for Web pages or CD catalogues such as music/audio production.

Distributed Work

Distributed work is an important practice for the Network Station to develop because the journey-to-work accounts for a large percentage of all trips taken and of total vehicle miles traveled. But it is important also because the distributed or de-centralized business model is being adopted by leading organizations across the nation for business rather than environmental reasons.

Distributed work teams require less office space, experience less employee turnover, provide a contingency against disruption of the central office, are more productive, and are compatible with most e-business practices.

Distributed work occurs whenever the structure of the workplace causes employees to interact with others on their work team without actually being together in the same place. In the late 1980s distributed work took the form of what was then called *telecommuting*, usually implemented as a work-at-home program for selected employees.

Today, distributed work is a reality for most employees engaged at least part of the time in information or knowledge processing rather than materials handling. Given contemporary telecommunications tools, work is often conducted on different floors of the same building, in cars, in a satellite office, at the office of a client or a partner organization, in a meeting room, on a Metra train, in a shared work facility, or at home.

Unfortunately, policy makers have not yet harnessed these tendencies to capture transportation benefits and place-based economic benefits.

Successful distributed work depends on:

- Management
- Technology
- Remote Facilities

The Network Station will facilitate distributed work by addressing each of those factors.

Management

There are a number of experts in the nation who specialize in some aspect of developing management capacity to oversee distributed work teams. There are specialists in planning, conducting demonstrations or pilots, forecasting outcomes, training management and employees, evaluating programs, implementing alternative officing practices, advising on labor agreements, and so forth. The Network Station will work with established organizations such as the International Telework Association and Council (ITAC) to provide technical resources, speakers, and lists of technical advisors.

Technology

The sophistication of new tools has been enabling a more mobile, distributed work force. Here is a short list of technologies that the Network Station might acquire or otherwise be able to share with Southland businesses.

- Software to create secure access to a desktop PC from any remote Web browser. Expert City's GoToMyPC is one of the leading products because it provides a cost-effective alternative to a virtual private network (VPN).
- Collaborative tools that allow distributed work team members to fashion products in a shared electronic space. This essentially goes significantly beyond e-mail as a device for online communications. Products include MangoMind, Xdrive, Driveway, My Docs Online, and groove workspace.
- Online data backup repository to assist remote workers protect and recover their data. Connected TLM (Total Lifecycle Management) is an example.
- A service that lets remote workers and clients share applications software, documents and presentations through voice, data and video channels. For example, WebEx allows distributed employees and their customers to browse the Web together, chat,

record meetings for later playback, and provide instant feedback through electronic polls.

- A Web-based office reservation system that allows efficient allocation of space when employees work at a remote location. AgilQuest's OnBoard dynamically allocates office space and other resources such as phones for mobile workers across multiple office sites.

Remote Facilities

Phase 1 of the Network Station will provide a Hot Spot for wireless access to the Internet from anywhere in the e-Village core (described below as part of the e-Village Vision), and meeting space equipped with innovative technologies and flexible furniture (previously described).

The Phase 2 development will add a suite of one- to three-person offices and spaces for F2F collaboration. Innovative furniture such as the Haworth "Cube" could eliminate the need for desk sharing. The Steelcase "Harbor" can provide complete privacy in a crowded room or become a collaborative work space when coupled with other "Harbors."

Previous research has found that about 60 work stations are needed to capture operating efficiencies. A facility of this size requires a corporate anchor client, and must also accept local self-employed, free lance workers, and entrepreneurs in order to ensure its capacity is utilized. Training in distributed work practices will use some of the capacity.

The purpose of the distributed work program is to increase, over a period of time, the capacity among employers to manage distributed work. However, there are several potential candidates to anchor the Distributed Work Suite when it opens.

One is the federal government. There are 170 federal agencies with 78,000 employees in the 11 county Chicagoland area. The Social Security Administration could become the lead client by virtue of the fact that it has 6,000 employees working out of 226 field offices with headquarters in the Loop, and currently deploys a virtual private network (VPN) to facilitate remote work. Substantial lead-time will be required before the SSA could participate because a key issue like "work conditions" is subject to union negotiation.

Within the private sector located in the Chicago Metropolitan Area, a firm such as CNA Financial Corp. should be approached to participate in the Network Station on the strength of the fact that it was among a roster of companies considered to provide the "Best Workplace for Finance Professionals" in 2002. These firms were recognized "for their dedication to provide satisfying and innovative work environments that attract and retain top-notch finance talent." United Stationers Inc. headquartered in Des Plaines is included on Computerworld's list of the 100 best places

worldwide to work in information technology, based in part on the firm's telecommuting work option. Other Chicago-based firms in some aspect of the digital technology business, such as IBM and Ameritech, should also be approached.

Beyond the Distributed Work Suite, there is another Phase 2 option for providing access to digital technology. This is through expansion of one or more specialized technology systems into its own space, either attached to the Network Station or at a separate but nearby site.

A music production and recording studio is one option that has been discussed. Digital technology has greatly reduced the cost of the requisite equipment making grass roots music production feasible. Hypothetically, the facility could be developed as a collaboration between the Network Station and the Music Department at South Suburban College which would staff the facility and train student engineers. In addition to functioning as a training facility for engineers, the facility would also benefit musicians seeking to record their performances, from the faculty string quartet at the college to jazz ensembles and garage bands throughout the South Suburban region. The Riverdale e-Village would become a gathering place for these and related musical artists such as composers, arrangers, and teachers.

Post-Disaster Recovery and Safety

It is increasingly apparent that reliable transportation may not always be available in the future. A number of events could dramatically disrupt the social order for periods of time, or shut down certain parts of the Metropolitan Area, certain roadways, or the Metra system. These include:

- Terrorism or threats of terrorism
- Natural disasters such as blizzards, tornadoes, floods
- Gasoline shortage
- Cyber attacks that shut down urban control systems
- Power outages
- Crime – from local gangs to the Montgomery County sniper
- Labor disputes
- Flu epidemic
- Partial shut downs through public policy, such as some places that prohibit vehicles in central cities on certain days as an air quality reduction tactic
- System maintenance or construction activities
- Routine severe congestion.

The Riverdale Network Station, if equipped with its own back-up power generator (or alternative energy source such as photo-voltaic cells), will provide an accessible place for restoring social order, obtaining needed services, and reinstating minimal business operations, assuming the capability for distributed work has already been developed. It will be both a familiar meeting place and the place with the best chance to have reliable up-to-date information about conditions elsewhere.

Administration

While many administrative issues will need to be addressed during implementation, the Vision includes two key areas:

- **Staffing**

The facility will be staffed by between 2 and 5 full time professionals, depending on the hours of operation which will be a function of the initial budget. This professional staff will be supplemented by community volunteers (docents), technology vendors, staff of government agencies, and local entrepreneurs who form partnerships with the Network Station.

- **Ownership**

A non-profit corporation will own the facility with a board composed of local leaders chosen to direct operations in a way that responds to community needs. This form of ownership will make the facility independent of government control and will not burden the Village administration with financial responsibilities.

Riverdale e-Village Vision

Transition from a traditional village to an e-Village involves changes to the core beyond the new functions added through the Network Station.

The Riverdale e-Village will have the following characteristics:

- Hot Spots in public spaces
- New business practices
- New buildings and landscaping
- New business and residential tenants
- New transportation options

Hot Spots in Public Spaces

A short range wireless technology known as Wi-Fi (for Wide-Fidelity) is being used to create wireless broadband access to the Internet in a variety of public and private spaces, referred to as *hot spots*. An antenna with appropriate electronics can be used to create a *hot spot* with a radius of up to 100 yards from the antenna, with the range expected to increase to several hundred yards in the near future. The *hot spot* allows users with wireless devices equipped with Wi-Fi cards to seamlessly jump on the Internet. Appropriate wireless devices include portable computers, personal digital assistants, and Web-enabled cell phones.

Coffee shops, airport terminals, and hotel lobbies are some of the places being retrofit as *hot spots*. In some cases, the facility charges for the access service (e.g., Starbucks), but in many cases the *hot spot* is provided free as a source of competitive advantage or as a public service.

One of the first implementation steps at the Riverdale Network Station will be to create a *hot spot* to serve as much of the commercial core along 144th Street as technically feasible.

A WiFi network at the Network Station will allow people to check email from the platform while waiting for a train. People can sit in the park or on restaurant patios on moderate days and nights throughout the year. In addition to their normal social activities, they can play interactive games, check stock prices, shop online, answer email, read salon.com, check latest sports scores in order to argue strategy among friends, etc.

This will require public spaces with a mix of seats and tables, open space, and recreation fields. The Farr Team Report contains the plan for the redesign of the adjacent public and private spaces.

New Business Practices

The Village administration, Riverdale Public Library, School District 148 administration, and 37 businesses are currently located in the core. Just like an upgrade of current visual merchandising practices is part of the transit oriented development plan, an upgrade in digital practice is part of the e-Village plan. Consistent with the theme of the transition to a *culture of innovation*, businesses and institutions in the village core will become users of the Network Station and adopt business practices and procedures consistent with network strategy.

The following is a vision of what each could accomplish.

Riverdale e-Government

An e-government has several dimensions. One of which is that it uses its Web page to:

- Distribute passive information
- Exchange interactive information
- Process applications
- Collect online payments
- Webcast policy meetings
- Conduct bidding and procurement

The Village of Riverdale has already begun a transition to an e-government with its existing Web page and GIS data base. The City Clerk identified the following priorities for continued development, and they generally follow the emerging model for Web use:

- Online access to public records and information such as accident reports, fire incident reports, housing inspection reports, agenda and minutes of Board meetings, zoning code and other ordinances, landlord/tenants rights, list of qualified contractors for home improvement, and links to residential and commercial realtors for property available in the Village.
- Online requests for service, such as a street light outage, appointments for Public Works staff repairs, reconnect water service, report trash or litter problems.
- Process applications for a bus pass or passport.
- Conduct online surveys.
- Collect payments online such as bills, ticket fines, renewal of parking permits, vehicle tags, pet tags, liens, or arrange for release of liens.
- Webcast Board of Trustees and committee meetings.

- Use the Network Station to get briefings with state officials in Springfield and federal officials in Washington DC.
- Use the Network Station to videoconference the testimony of police officers to County Court rooms.

The Village of Riverdale could partner with adjacent villages to deliver electronic services to residents and businesses through a single, integrated Web site. For example, five small cities in the State of Washington have formed the E-Gov Alliance to jointly develop a Web portal for their online services. The priorities for the Alliance include allowing citizens to apply online for building permits, register and pay for recreation programs, and reserve recreation facilities in parks.

E-government partnerships between the Village of Riverdale, the State of Illinois and federal government agencies are also part of the vision. For example, the State is developing a digital signature infrastructure for use in various e-government applications where a hand-written signature is required. The State is offering to make the digital signature infrastructure available to local governments in Illinois with Web sites capable of electronic transactions. The Village of Riverdale would allow citizens to register through its Web site and obtain a State of Illinois digital certificate. This would allow those citizens to electronically “sign” documents with the Village, state and federal agencies with whom they are doing business.

Examples where digital signatures could be used with federal agencies include filing: Student aid applications with the Department of Education, permit applications to the EPA, and Medicare claims or report annual wages to the Social Security Administration. Similar opportunities with the State of Illinois include tax filing, business wage reporting, pollution permitting, discharge reporting, Medicaid eligibility and claims filing, and filing professional license applications.

Riverdale e-Library

The Riverdale Library is already digitally sophisticated but lacks funds and space to implement projects. For example, the Library applied for and received 4 computers from the Gates Foundation in 2002. They are available for public use and Internet access in a multi-purpose meeting room.

The Library has high speed network service from the Illinois Century Network and has access to electronic data bases and community networks such as NorthStarNet, a regional network that supports government service delivery.

The Network Station will incorporate a number of projects desired or being planned by the Library:

- meeting rooms/conference rooms with electronic white boards,
- teleconferencing,
- networked computers, etc for distance learning,
- career center,
- learning to use computers,
- social services classes
- town meeting capabilities;
- English as a first language (diction to fit into the business world);
- Internet kiosks to check email,
- village services & events,
- job listings,
- welfare services and referrals;

There are a two others that probably will appear at the Network Station sometime in the future:

- pay telephones
the Network Station will experiment with Internet-telephony and may in the future provide access to long distance and international calling over the Internet.
- medical services
access to medical services is a priority community need. Unfortunately, the South Suburban Hospital, the only hospital associated with the SMRHEC, dropped off the IVEN in 2002. Part of the reason was a low utilization level. The Network Station will look for other hospitals or medical clinics in the Southland and the Chicago Metropolitan Area willing to create a virtual presence in Riverdale.

Although additional funding will be required to accomplish needed developments, in the short run it should be feasible for the Library to add computer capacity. The added capacity will position the Library to more significantly address the entry-level computer needs of the community by offering many machine-hours of public access, and hosting some of the basic training in computer skills.

In the three to five year period it should be feasible for the Library to develop the capacity to provide business-oriented online services and partner with the Network Station on special projects. Special projects could include:

- Working with electronic publishers to provide the Library with a large stock of e-books for lending purposes.
- Developing F2F programs for children between 3 and 13 based on access to the International Children's Digital Library recently introduced by the University of Maryland and the Internet Archive.
- Developing smart card applications or a text messaging service for patrons.

Businesses

The 37 businesses located in the Village core include a mix of food/beverage, personal services, retail, financial services, medical, and convenience stores. All could benefit from an informational Web page and some should pursue online transactional capabilities. The personal services, retail, and food services need to comprehensively offer point-of-sale processing capabilities so that customers can be certain of their ability to shop and dine in the e-Village core with nothing but credit, debit or smart cards.

The video rental store has a couple of kiosk options. One is the "FastTake" kiosk, which runs movie trailers in order to give an introduction to consumers interested in renting or buying a video. It allows consumers to search for movies based on minimal information such as partial title, name of actor, etc.

The video store might also be interested in extending into the online music market segment. Computer Automation Systems, Inc. manufactures a kiosk, which could be added to the store that uses infrared ports to download mpeg files to portable devices.

New Buildings and Landscaping

See the Farr Associates plan.

New Business and Residential Tenants

Once the Riverdale e-Village Initiative has been funded, the Village administration could issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for developers interested in building the physical TOD plan, and for businesses interested in becoming e-Village tenants.

These new tenants should be either businesses that supplement technology in some fashion, or that complement virtual activities by being strictly F2F in nature.

Supplementary Businesses

- Computer hardware and software sales
- Computer hardware repair
- Telephone instrument supply – including cellular and paging
- Consumer electronics sales and service – TVs, VCRs, video cameras, stereo, still cameras
- Book retailing
- Stationery store
- Government Printing Office Branch Store
- Photocopy service

Complementary Businesses

- Health club
- Day care center
- Food and beverage service
- Personal services – men's and women's hair styling, nails
- Drug Store
- Grocery

Food and beverage businesses that locate within the Hot Spot should be encouraged to provide outside service and accommodations in appropriate weather conditions, and casual inside accommodations compatible with conversation, social uses of personal computers, as well as private activities such as answering e-mail.

All businesses locating in the e-Village core should fulfill the *culture of innovation* theme by incorporating some digital network innovation. For example, a *bricks and clicks* grocery service that will accept telephone and Internet orders for pick-up and fast check-out. This will allow Metra riders to place orders for pick-up after work. Or, grocery stores that offer

self-scanning at checkout could be recruited. The Ralphs and Alberstons chains both offer such options at certain facilities.

ATT Broadband's public access facility currently located in Dolton could be asked to relocate into the e-Village core.

Although retail banking is not on the list, a bank is expected to move into the e-Village.

Driven by the need to maintain customer service and reduce costs per transaction, banks have been pioneers in electronic commerce. After all, the first ubiquitous "kiosk" was the bank ATM.

Bank ATMs have evolved into complex devices. There are now ATMs that work on biometrics – iris recognition – rather than plastic cards. Other ATMs are Internet enabled in order to transition from simple cash dispensing to full-fledged financial kiosks.

The vision on the near horizon is a relationship between banks and mobile telecommunications operators that will allow consumers to securely transfer funds from one account to another from a wireless device. For example, bank customers will use a mobile handset to re-charge a pre-paid debit card, pay for theatre tickets, or buy flowers for home delivery.

A bank that has adopted one or more of these systems should be recruited.

New Transportation Options

The *culture of innovation* that characterizes the e-Village will also embrace new transportation options. The Metra Electric Line is a strong asset upon which to build, but more options can and will be added.

One issue is the current lack of parking at the Ivanhoe Station. According to Fish Transportation Group of the Farr Team, the ridership at the Ivanhoe Station with 415 parking spots has been declining while ridership at the 147th/Sibley (one stop further south) with 1200 parking spots, has been increasing. Another is that there currently is no Pace bus line serving the Ivanhoe Station and the Riverdale Village core.

The increase in traffic associated with economic success could potentially become an issue. With traffic counts on 144th Street reaching 14,000 vehicles per day (see the Farr Associates Report), the Village core already experiences congestion, although concentrated in the morning and evening commute windows. Assuming success of the e-Village development, including construction of new residential and commercial units, the challenge will be to keep Riverdale from needing expensive street infrastructure improvements. The narrow rail bridge underpass is an immediate concern.

New transportation options will address both current and potential issues.

Fortunately, innovations in private transportation options have been occurring elsewhere, and can be imported into the Riverdale e-Village. One is development of a new family of vehicles at the opposite end of the market from the gasoline-powered SUV. Neighborhood vehicles are smaller, do not use fossil fuels (or are a hybrid), operate at slower speeds, travel a shorter range, and are competitively priced with decreases expected as production increases.

The car-sharing alternative to ownership of personal vehicles is the second significant innovation in private transportation. Car sharing has appeared in two locational variations – as an option for an urban neighborhood or at a rail station. In some cases, neighborhood vehicles and car-sharing programs are combined. It is that synthesis that will be sponsored by the Network Station for the Riverdale e-Village.

The following paragraphs describe recent innovative initiatives elsewhere:

I-GO is a not-for-profit car-sharing membership organization active in the greater Chicago area, developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Consumers pay a one-time membership fee, reserve a car (all are 4-door Honda Civics) online or by phone with as little as 1-hour notice, and pay only for the hours used and miles driven. Flexcar is the name of the car sharing service in the Seattle area, and there are similar operations in San Francisco, Portland, Boston, and Washington D.C.

ZEV-NET (for Zero Emission Vehicle – Network Enabled Transport) is a pilot project operating at the Irvine Transportation Center, a train and bus modal interchange in Irvine, California. The Pilot, sponsored in part by Toyota Motor Sales, USA, uses 50 Toyota vehicles including the ultra small e.com, the RAV-4, and a single Highlander, a hydrogen fuel cell/electric SUV.

The system allows an in-coming commuter to use one of the vehicles to drive to her Irvine workplace where it is made available to other employees at the site to use during the day for personal or business trips. The commuter returns it to the Irvine Transportation Center on her journey home, where it is available for a returning Irvine resident to use to drive home. He returns it to the Center the next day as part of his journey to work.

Chrysler-Daimler's Global Electric Motors (GEM) recently agreed to provide an integrated transportation system to Playa Vista, a 10,000 person new town being developed at the western edge of Los Angeles. The key vehicle in the system is GEM's neighborhood electric vehicle. It will be used as a station car to connect residents with transit hubs, as utility vehicles for grounds keeping and maintenance, as pickup/delivery vehicles for the commercial businesses, and for all trips internal to the Playa Vista "campus."

GEMs have a top speed of 25 mph (the speed limit in most neighborhoods) and a range of 30 miles with zero emissions. A GEM wholesales for \$4,000 for a 2-seat model, costs pennies per mile to operate, is charged through a standard 110-volt outlet, and complies with applicable federal safety laws.

Other types of zero or low emission vehicles range from a single person Segway scooter to compressed natural gas 15 passenger vans.

Some combination of neighborhood cars and car sharing practices, will help reduce the current and potential circulation problems in the e-Village. Parking congestion can be reduced by allowing Metra riders living in Riverdale and Dolton to drive neighborhood vehicles to the Ivanhoe Station. Some vehicles will be used by people visiting the e-Village or to drive to some location in the market area, such as South Suburban College. Vehicles that remain in the parking lot will take up less than half the space of a full-sized vehicle. The smaller and slower vehicles will reduce congestion, increase the number of on-street parking spots and reinforce the pedestrian environment evolving in the e-Village core.

Eventually, some variation of the zero-emission van can be used as a short hop Metra feeder serving Dolton and Riverdale. Perhaps the same vehicle can be used to pickup the goods ordered online from the River Oaks Mall and deliver them to the Riverdale Network Station.

As a result of these changes, the Riverdale e-Village will gain a competitive advantage over the 147th/Sibley Station and all others on the Electric Line.

Vision of the Grand Opening of the Riverdale Network Station

One of the benefits of a Network Station is that it can be deployed quickly and affordably compared to bricks and mortar improvements. This is a vision of the grand opening event as it might occur about 9 months after securing funding for the e-Village Initiative.

The first six months will be spent on implementation planning and making tenant improvements to the facility. About three months of operations are required as a beta test of the facility.

Assuming that implementation funding could be realized by July 1, 2003, the grand opening event could be held on a spring day, 2004 after daylight savings time begins.

Some landscaping and lighting improvements have been completed. 144th Street is closed for the day, and incentives have been given for visitors to park at another station and ride Metra to the event in the Riverdale core.

There are many information tables outside the Network Station in the parking lot and to the east along 144th Street. They are staffed by representatives of the following organizations:

- Car sharing organization signing up members
- SSHEC and participating members marketing classes at the Network Station and on campus
- Federal, state and county agencies marketing their programs
- Metra selling passes
- NIPC distributing regional plans and its schedule of planning workshops
- Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, and the Southland Small Business Association distributing literature and soliciting new members

A neighborhood vehicle manufacturer and regional distributors are offering test-drives of several different models. There will be a drawing of names of Riverdale and Dolton residents for inclusion in the neighborhood vehicle pilot.

Vendors are demonstrating the Hot Spot with lap top computers, personal digital assistants and Web-enabled cell phones – all for sale at the event.

There is an exhibit in the park of entries in the competition to design the logo and other graphics for the Network Station and e-Village that has been led by South Suburban College.

Speakers include:

- Mayor Evans and other elected officials, especially those responsible for funding
- Representative of Illinois Office of Technology
- Program culminates with announcement of design competition winner

A high school band and ensembles from the South Suburban College music department provide music in the park and on the street.

The Riverdale Library is offering tours and initiating a fund raising campaign to pay for some needed technology improvements.

Inside the Network Station, there are:

- Representatives of project Steering Committee
- Vendors demonstrating the use of their respective technologies
- Demonstrations of various elements of the Network Station
- Video conferences with Springfield and Washington DC
- Distance education demonstration from Governors State
- Video conference demonstration with federal agency in Chicago
- Internet demonstrations –
- Federal agency Web pages
- Entertainment or game sites
- Free international voice calls demonstrating Internet telephony
- Table signing up members

The main conference room is being used to demonstrate online cooperative entertainment. This might be a round of Sims Online, or *There*, an example of what are known as “massively multi-person persistent online games” or MMPOG. *There* is based on cooperative social interaction to build a graphical three-dimensional world, not battles and competition. Tens of thousands of people worldwide are simultaneously participating.

Key to Success

Ultimately the success of the Riverdale e-Village – the ability to realize this vision -- will be determined by the colleges, universities, hospitals, government agencies, businesses, trade associations, community-based organizations, and citizen groups that become users of the Network Station. The most significant barriers to participating in the Network Station will be cultural, not technological nor financial. The key to success will be leadership – by elected officials, institutional directors, and private executives.