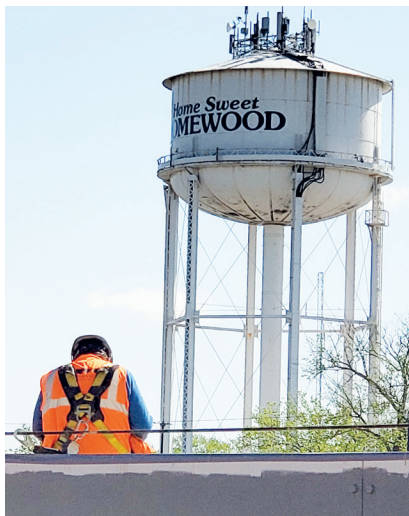




The enclosed ramp on the west side of the Homewood train station will provide better access for passengers, especially those with mobility challenges.



A worker takes a break on the roof of the boarding platform canopy with the Homewood water tower in the background.



Construction crews work on a snowy day in January 2021, rebuilding the Amtrak boarding platform. The completion of the two-year project will be celebrated June 25.

drainage and ventilation. A graffiti-resistant finish will be applied.

Metra spokesman Michael Gillis said the agency expects to seek bids within the month.

"The contract would likely be awarded in the late fall and work would start in 2023," he said.

The Pace Suburban bus station adjoining Metra's downtown Homewood station also will be reconfigured.

The train station is key to the village economy, and it is especially important to the health of the downtown area, according to village officials.

The village's 2005 Downtown Master Plan emphasized transit-oriented development (TOD), a mix of residential/commercial uses that create more population density in the area and fuel growth of ancillary businesses.

A 2016 housing market study concluded that Homewood should add about 200 more units in the downtown area to make the most of the adjacent rail and bus services.

The Hartford Building, which is under construction at the corner of Ridge Road and Martin Avenue, is one TOD development that will contribute to that goal. The building will have three floors of apartments. The village has two more in preliminary stages: one on the site of the former Savoia T'Go restaurant at the corner of Dixie Highway and Hickory Road, and one on the site currently used as the village hall parking lot at 2024 Chestnut Road.

"We're bringing in people. That's what we want to do," Homewood Mayor Richard Hofeld said. "We're making it a livable downtown."



Amtrak made major interior and exterior improvements to its Park Avenue station, including a new tile roof and improvements to make the century old station ADA compliant.

Marilyn Thomas/H-F Chronicle