

Village of Mundelein

Comprehensive Plan Visioning Session Summary

Prepared February 26, 2010

On February 23, 2010, a visioning session was held with the Mundelein community to work towards establishing an overall “vision” for the Village. The session included small group discussions that allowed participants to review and discuss conditions and potentials within the community. The small “break out” groups worked on developing a “vision” for the future of the Village. The visioning session allowed residents, business owners, and elected and appointed officials to explore, examine and discuss approaches for addressing issues facing Mundelein. It was attended by approximately 50 people, comprised of a mix of residents, property owners, business owners, and elected officials.

This report provides a summary of the results of the Visioning Session. The summary reflects the opinions and comments stated during workshop dialogue and a summary of each group’s ideas. A preliminary Vision Statement, and Goals and Objectives will be created based upon input received during this workshop and previous phases in the planning process.

Group Discussions

Workshop participants were divided into eight (8) small groups for discussion and given a base map of the Village and its planning jurisdiction. To help focus their discussion, each group was also provided with a list of potential topics to consider. The exercise encouraged groups to envision what the future of the Village will be by asking questions related to the following:

- Commercial/Retail/Shopping
- Employment/Jobs/Industrial
- Residential/Neighborhoods
- Community Facilities
- Transportation
- Parks/Open Space/Recreation
- Cultural/Arts/Image/Identity
- Sustainability/Environment
- Other Ideas for Specific Areas in the Village

Group 1

Group 1 focused their discussion on land use and transportation in the Village and also provided recommendations on cultural or environmental issues. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included pedestrian-friendly development and connectivity. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are summarized below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. To improve the appearance of existing commercial areas, *Group 1* indicated a desire for pedestrian friendly retail establishments and restaurants. The Group focused on the Downtown area and expressed interest in creating a new cultural center with a new Village Hall and Town Square. They felt that the Downtown could be further complemented with additional high density residential developments and an increase in senior housing. Tax incentives were cited as a way to generate long-term commitment to the area.

Employment/Jobs/Industrial. *Group 1* expressed a desire for the Comprehensive Plan to identify a well-defined industrial/commercial area in the Village. Additionally, they encouraged the relocation of various industrial uses currently located in the downtown area. It was indicated that these types of land uses, while still desirable in certain locations, are not considered appropriate to the overall plan/vision for the downtown as a pedestrian friendly area.

Residential/Neighborhoods. *Group 1's* primary goal for residential areas in the Village was to improve connectivity through the use of additional walking and bike paths.

Community Facilities. *Group 1* expressed a desire for a new Library and a new Village Hall to be constructed in the Downtown.

Transportation. Transportation appeared to be an important issue for *Group 1* as they provided a number of transportation related recommendations. The group commented that the Metra train schedule is inconvenient and that not enough trains stop in the Village to make public transit convenient. *Group 1* also envisions additional grade separated crossings around the railroad tracks to alleviate traffic congestion in the area.

Parks/Open Space/Recreation. *Group 1* recommended that the Village do a better job of promoting and advertising the existing community events and activities that are held within Mundelein especially within the Diamond Lake area (i.e. Venetian Night). The group would also like to see more green space and gathering areas constructed in the downtown area.

Group 2

Group 2 focused their discussion on commercial, parks and open space, and intersection improvements in the Village. Underlying themes evident in their "vision" included new commercial and retail uses in key areas, potential parking locations in the downtown, and new intersection improvements. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are summarized below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. The group would like to see incentives given to businesses to move out of high profile areas to interior areas. The village should also create architecture standards for different areas to improve the appearance of commercial areas. New commercial uses should be located at the following locations: northwest corner of IL Routes 60/83; on IL Route 60, west of Butterfield Road; Townline Road corridor; IL Route 176/Seymour; IL Route 176/Morris. Specifically, *Group 2* would like to see a movie theater with shops and restaurants located at the current Menards property or the Rubloff property. Other desired commercial development includes a hotel and new retail at the current Garden Fresh property.

Residential/Neighborhoods. *Group 2* noted that enforcing existing codes and ordinances would improve existing residential neighborhoods. Locations for new residential developments were also identified by the group including the area to the north of the Del Webb development and mixed-use residential near the tracks from IL Route 176 to Courtland. This would require moving the public works facility.

Community Facilities. The group recommended that the existing public works and Josephson's move to a location along Tower Road. *Group 2* would also like to see Village Hall moved north of the Park District.

Transportation. Regarding transportation issues, the group identified several potential locations for grade-separated crossings to improve both vehicular and pedestrian crossings. Specific crossing improvements at the railroad tracks were noted for IL Route 176, IL Route 60, Diamond Lake Road, and IL Route 83. *Group 2* would also like to see a complete intersection improvement at US Route 45 and IL Route 176 with a grade-separated crossing. To improve parking in the downtown area, the group stated that the Village should construct a parking garage on the existing Olerich, Burger King, and apartment complex properties north of Hammond Street and west of Seymour Avenue.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation. The group stated a number of locations where new parks, open space, and recreational features should be located in the community. Specific locations noted by the group included the southeast corner of IL Route 176 and IL Route 83 behind Shell, and the creation of a new Village Green.

Group 3

Group 3 focused their discussion on commercial, transportation, and cultural issues to address in the Village. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included redevelopment ideas for downtown, transportation improvements, and new cultural arts opportunities. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are summarized below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. *Group 3’s* comments for new commercial and retail developments focused on the downtown area. A key recommendation of the group was to create a promenade in the center of the downtown. Other key elements of an improved downtown should include: a cultural arts center, shops (Trader Joe’s), restaurants, office space, green space, new village hall, and museum. To support the new development, the group noted that a parking garage be constructed that blends in with the downtown. A brick façade and tree lined landscaping were recommended for the new garage. The group also recommended that the water tower be removed to allow for new development opportunities. *Group 3* would also like the Village to pursue protecting existing historic buildings. On IL Route 60, across from Medline, the group would like to see more restaurants and some townhomes.

Transportation. The group identified several ideas for improving transportation and circulation within the community. Grade-separated crossings along the railroad tracks were recommended by the group at Hawley Street, Allanson Road, IL Route 176, and IL Routes 60/83. To improve capacity and circulation throughout the community, the group would like to see new lanes added along IL Route 176, with improved intersections at the intersections of IL Route 60/83 with IL Route 176, and IL Route 60/83 with Midlothian Road. The group would like to see roads in the Diamond Lake area improved. Allanson Road should also be connected to Diamond Lake Road to improve circulation. The group also noted that Hawley Street should be beautified to create an attractive gateway into the village. To improve public transit service, *Group 3* would like to see Pace bus service to run from downtown to the library.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation. To improve bicycling in the community, the group would like to see more bicycle facilities installed throughout the village. A specific project would be a new multi-use path down IL Routes 60/83 to connect to Midlothian Road and the County Fair Grounds.

Cultural/Arts/Image/Identity. *Group 3* envisioned downtown Mundelein to be considered a “little Evanston”. To work towards their vision they recommended a cultural arts center in the downtown, possibly in the Anatol building. The center should include an orchestra, Kirk Players, and art galleries and classes. The group also recommended that a movie theatre be located in Rogan’s center.

Sustainability/Environment. The village should continue to work with the park district to improve and/or add facilities. Bikepaths should be extended throughout the community to improve bicycling opportunities.

Other Ideas for Areas in the Village. *Group 3* presented specific ideas for improving the Diamond Lake area including constructing a walkway and adding a lane at the Diamond Lake Sports Complex to improve circulation.

Group 4

Group 4 focused their discussion on commercial, employment/industrial, transportation, community facilities and parks and open space. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included redevelopment ideas for downtown, transportation improvements, and new cultural arts opportunities. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are addressed below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. To maintain the character of downtown, *Group 4* would like the Village to promote the reuse of existing buildings in the downtown instead of constructing all new buildings.

Community Facilities. When the Village Hall is eventually relocated elsewhere in the downtown, *Group 4* suggested using the existing building as a new fire station. The new village hall should be the center piece of the downtown redevelopment and should be in a building near the rail line. The group also would like to see the village improve the open space at the intersection of Seymour Avenue and Park Street.

Employment/Jobs/Industrial. The group suggested that the Village provide tax relief to support existing businesses and to attract new employment into the community. Overall, the group would like to see many of the existing businesses cleaned up to help improve the appearance of the village. The appearance of the existing industrial business near IL Route 176 and Seymour Avenue and the vacant industrial building across the rail line should be improved.

Residential/Neighborhoods. To improve the existing residential areas, *Group 4* recommended new sidewalks and “dark sky” street lights. For new residential developments the group would like to see new single-family homes priced around \$300,000 near IL Routes 60 and 83.

Transportation. *Group 4* would like to see the village work to improve transportation for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. An interconnected bike trail system throughout the village would benefit the entire community. The group had a vision to create a bike trail system that connected all lakes in the village. To improve public transit, covered bus stops should be installed at existing bus stop locations.

Parks, Open Space and Recreation. To improve safety within parks system, *Group 4* suggested installing lights and cameras in all parks. The group would also like to see a senior center constructed near the recreation center. As the community grows, and new residential subdivisions are built, the group recommended new parks be acquired within each neighborhood.

Cultural/Arts/Image/Identity. To improve the appearance of the gateways leading into Mundelein, the group recommended that new trees be installed within the right-of-way. Overall, especially as it relates to sustainability, *Group 4* would like to see the village “go green” and to think more environmentally. Another group idea was to attract a new “place to gather” in the Diamond Lake area.

Group 5

Group 5 provided thoughts and recommendations for all potential topic areas, especially in terms of overall land use recommendations. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included a new downtown, grade-separated crossings, cultural amenities, and environmental practices. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are summarized below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. *Group 5* provided a vision for three unique commercial and retail areas in Mundelein: downtown; the *Piggly Wiggly* area; and the Metra station area. For downtown, the group first established their boundaries for the downtown along Courtland to Park on Seymour and US Rout 45 to Fairhaven down Hawley Street. The group would like to see a “town center” development in the downtown which would include additional parking spaces. The group noted that as the downtown is developed, the village should maintain its hometown feel. In addition to the commercial redevelopment ideas for these areas, an overall recommendation of the group was to locate restaurants in areas easily accessible to workers in industrial areas.

Residential/Neighborhoods. The group does not want the village to annex any more properties in the Quig’s and Diamond Lake areas. Their thoughts were that residents in those areas do not want to be part of Mundelein. In addition, the group was concerned that the village may already have the maximum amount of residential uses it could support. *Group 5* indicated that they were concerned that community facilities like schools and city services would be stressed if additional residential development were to occur.

Community Facilities. The group recommended using Libertyville to provide fire protection on the east side of the rail line, or to construct new grade-separations to improve response times. In addition to fire protection issues, the group also discussed the need to provide more entertainment in downtown such as live theatre, movies, fine arts, etc... Related to this, the group recommended that the village improve its promotion and marketing of the museum.

Transportation. The group recommended several grade-separated crossings to pass underneath the rail line throughout the village including Allanson Road, IL Route 176, Park Avenue, and IL Routes 60/83. To improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation, the group would like to see wider sidewalks installed that connect to all multi-use trails in the community.

Cultural/Arts/Image/Identity. According to the group, the village can improve the its image and identity by supporting existing cultural services such as the Museum, and by attracting new uses such as live theatre, movies, and fine arts. The group noted that they felt the village currently does not have an identity and that one needs to be established. One suggestion was to focus the village’s image on prairie style architecture or some other architectural style moving forward. The group recommended the area adjacent to the Metra station as a future cultural hub that should also include a public gathering place to hold summer concerts. In general, the group also recommended that the appearance of the G and G Used Car lot and the Kentucky Fried Chicken be improved.

Sustainability/Environment. *Group 5* would like to see the village do more to promote recycling. The group also recommended that the village offer green tax credits.

Group 6

Group 6 focused their discussion on commercial, employment/industrial, and transportation issues. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included redevelopment ideas for downtown, more industrial and employment opportunities, transportation improvements, and ideas for the Diamond Lake area. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are summarized below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. *Group 6* provided many recommendations for improving the downtown area including the addition of more small shops, boutique stores and coffee shops. Overall, the group noted that there needs to be a purpose, or a reason, for people to come to the downtown area. To improve walkability in the winter, the group would like to see the village keep the sidewalks clear of snow. Other ideas for bringing people downtown include attractions for youths and a live theatre. The village should also providing more parking opportunities downtown, especially if these attractions become popular.

Employment/Jobs/Industrial. To support existing businesses and to attract new businesses into the community, the group recommended that the village and the state need to list employment opportunities on the website for local businesses. Specific types of industry that the group would like to see locate in the village include technology industries, medical uses, and research offices.

Residential Neighborhoods. The group agrees with the proposed street and curb improvements being proposed by the village. *Group 6* would also like to see the village improve its code enforcement especially to improve the appearance of residential areas.

Transportation. The group recommended that a senior transportation service be created to improve public transit for seniors in the community and provide seniors connections from their homes to shopping areas and community facilities.

Other Areas within the Village. The group recommended that the area along the east side of Diamond Lake Road, and across IL Routes 60/83 be annexed into the village. They would also like to see Diamond Lake patrolled by village police. As an overall economic development strategy, the group recommended that the village build upon the existing golf courses in the area and provide visiting golfers places to eat, shop, and stay.

Group 7

Group 7 focused their discussion on commercial, employment/industrial, parks and open space, cultural, image, and transportation issues. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included redevelopment ideas for existing commercial centers, additional corporate offices, grade-separated crossings, and ideas for the existing village hall. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are addressed below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. *Group 7* identified a number of recommendations for improving the existing commercial centers throughout the village. Specific areas mentioned included the existing Menards shopping center and the downtown area. Projects recommended to improve the business climate in downtown included adding a new parking garage near Seymour Avenue and Hawley Street and demolishing the vacant Burger King. The group noted that a 1992 plan was created for the downtown area that recommended the creation of a market square that would create a downtown center. To assist businesses, the group would like the village to resurrect a loan pool program and provide educational resources.

Employment/Jobs/Industrial. The group would like to see a new corporate/business park constructed near Ivanhoe on the Rubloff property which would consist primarily of corporate office buildings. In the downtown area, the group recommended relocating the existing recycling business.

Residential/Neighborhoods. To improve the residential areas in the village, the group recommended closing IL Route 176 from Hawley Street to US Route 45 and extend the bike path through the area. New multi-family homes (high-quality) were recommended for Patriot Plaza. Many existing rental properties have deteriorated and their appearance and maintenance needs to be improved. *Group 7* indicated a desire for a higher proportion of owner-occupied units than rental units.

Community Facilities. *Group 7* does not recommend demolishing the existing village hall. Instead, the group recommends turning the village hall into a museum. They also recommend keeping the current post office, but expanding their parking. The new village hall should be located next to the police station in the old fire station.

Transportation. The group recommended grade-separated crossings over the rail line at Hawley Street and Allanson Road. In addition to these improvements, the group would like to see more sidewalks installed throughout the community that connect residential neighborhoods with shopping and community facilities.

Parks/Open Space/Recreation. *Group 7* recommended a new park on the southeast corner of Maple Avenue and Morris Avenue.

Cultural/Arts/Image/Identity. To improve the overall image and identity of the village, *Group 7* would like to see cultural events and concerts held in the downtown area. Specifically, the group would like to see the car show continue and the village improve its marketing and promotion of the event.

Group 8

Group 8 focused their discussion on downtown, transportation, and potential growth/annexation issues. Underlying themes evident in their “vision” included redevelopment ideas for the downtown area, improvements to the transportation system, and future land use recommendations for the growth areas. Their responses to each of the potential areas for discussion are addressed and summarized below.

Commercial/Retail/Shopping. The group provided several ideas for improving the appearance of existing commercial properties and attracting new commercial businesses to Mundelein. Overall, to attract new businesses into the community, the village should consider incentive programs. Specific improvements for downtown included the addition of identification markings to announce arrival into downtown and to improve the appearance of all buildings and properties. To assist businesses in the downtown, parking should be improved to allow for more parking spaces. Existing commercial shopping centers in the southside should be improved through parcel consolidation, mixed-use developments, and overall beautification. Existing westside commercial shopping centers need to have an improved connection with the rest of the village. A new office development should also be located near Midlothian Road and IL Routes 60 and 83.

Employment/Jobs/Industrial. *Group 8* identified a desire for new mixed-use industrial and commercial projects near the Schaul/Ropelt area.

Residential/Neighborhoods. The group would like to see more residential uses added to the downtown area. More residential, possibly for seniors, should be developed on the Quigg’s property.

Community Facilities. The village should work towards relocating the village hall into a new location within the downtown redevelopment. *Group 8* recommended that the village work more with the seminary to ensure that it is an asset of the community. The village should work with the seminary to create bike trails through the property. The group also recommended that the village explore the potential of locating a new fire station on the east side of US Route 45.

Transportation. *Group 8* provided several recommendations for improving transportation flow and circulation within the village. Several of the ideas focused upon providing improved connections and linkages such as: connecting the Metra station with Courtland Street; connecting Allanson Road and Diamond Lake Road; connecting Tower Road with Lake Street; connecting Allanson Road with downtown by extending Chicago Avenue; and extending Chicago Avenue to Hawley Street. The group would also like to see IL Route 53 extended with limited access. However, IL Route 53 should not be designed as a traditional interstate, but instead should have landscaping and accommodate pedestrians and transit such as a Pace bus route. The village should also work with Metra and Pace to improve public transit service and schedules for the community. A connected bike path system should also be planned for and constructed throughout Mundelein. Other transportation improvements included widening IL Routes 60, 83 and 176; and the addition of several grade-separated crossings where the rail line meets IL Route 176, Allanson Road, Butterfield Road, and IL Routes 60 and 83.

Cultural/Arts/Image/Identity. To support and improve the culture and identity of the community, *Group 8* would like to see a children's museum, theatre, public art displays, and more landscaping in Mundelein.

Sustainability/Environment. The village should continue to think "green". New projects should be encouraged to use LEED principles, and new buildings and renovations should be constructed with LEED certification as a goal.

Parks/Open Space and Recreation. To enlarge and improve the existing Parks and Recreation District beach property, the group recommended moving Diamond Lake Road away from the lake to create a greenway. The group also recommended that a greenway be developed along the creek that runs through that area.

Other Ideas for Areas within the Village. In addition to the ideas and vision for each of the potential discussion areas, *Group 8* also provided several recommendations for specific areas within the village. One of those recommendations was to annex to the northwest to include the Ropelt property and to encourage mixed-use development in that area. To improve the image and identity of the village, *Group 8* recommended installing gateway features along all major roads in the community at the following entry points: before Del Webb; on US Route 45 north; on Midlothian Road; at Rubloff; Allanson Road; Hawley Street; IL Route 176; and on US Routes 60 and 83. The group also recommended a new fire station be constructed east of US Route 45, and that all "dead end" streets in the community, wherever possible, should be connected to improve traffic flow and circulation.