

**Village of Cary Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan
Business Workshop
Wednesday December 11, 2013**

On Wednesday, December 11, 2013, the business workshop for the Village of Cary Comprehensive Plan process was held. The workshop was the first of many opportunities for business owners and operators to share their opinions concerning the Village of Cary's strengths and opportunities. The workshop also set the foundation for the planning program and reviewed and discussed the overall direction and policy issues facing the Cary business community. The workshop followed a questionnaire exercise to solicit the views of the business community regarding their concerns and aspirations for the Village. The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions voiced in response to a questionnaire exercise that concluded the meeting.

It is important to note that the items identified below are not recommendations or observations of the consultant, but rather the feedback and comments received by business owners and operators who participated in the workshop.

Workshop Questionnaire

The workshop included a questionnaire that solicited participants' input regarding issues and concerns in the Village. The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions obtained during the workshop.

Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the Village of Cary

Responses in this category were generally in agreement with one another, and some common themes or areas of concern emerged throughout. Highlighted below are the issues most commonly cited by workshop participants.

US Route 14 as an attractive 1st impression: new development, signage, building design, etc.

Many business owners identified this topic as a priority concern. The business community feels that the US Route 14 corridor could be a fantastic opportunity to create a good first impression for both outsiders and residents, but that the area needs new development, cohesive signage, and better building design standards.

Improve/maintain a vibrant Downtown

Workshop participants also share a desire to maintain the downtown as a vibrant central business district. Comments identified vacancies and business competition as factors contributing to a perceived lack of activity in the downtown that may be impacting existing business owners and operators. The workshop participants cited a significant need to ensure that the downtown area stays alive a well.

Destination type retail (for example: Trader Joe's)

Business owners and operators expressed a desire to incorporate destination-type retail within the Village to serve as an anchor to additional business development. They feel that specialty retailer such as Trader Joe's, capable of attracting residents from nearby communities, would help to revive the business climate and perhaps bring in new, smaller businesses to fill in the gaps.

Increased local retail

Business workshop participants see an opportunity to increase the local retail throughout the Village of Cary. Adding more businesses would increase competition within the business community, and therein bring more visitors and customers to their shops. This would also improve and ensure the maintenance of the downtown.

Not enough parking in Downtown

Many workshop participants shared a concern for the perceived lack of parking available within the downtown area to accommodate their employee and customer needs.

Flood control

A number of business workshop participants share a concern for flooding issues within Cary and participants would like to see this addressed in some way.

Keep community feel

Many business owners and operators expressed a concern for the community feel within Cary. Participants who expressed this concern feel that Cary has a great sense of community and would like to ensure that this continues to be the case in the future.

Need more dining options

A number of participants at the business workshop also expressed a desire to add more dining options within the Village in an effort to diversify the customer base of the commercial and retail areas of the Village of Cary.

Other issues

Other issues and concerns raised by business workshop participants included the following:

- Clear definitions versus staff interpretations of permitted uses: outdated code
- High taxes
- 15-acre site near Metra lot
- Need new business centers (for example: Route 31)
- Establish a balance between retail, residential, and manufacturing
- Pedestrian safety to train on US Route 14
- One-sided US Route 14 due to rail line

Identify three (3) specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken within Cary

While a range of projects were identified, some of the more frequently cited actions concerned: the redevelopment of US Route 14; an increase of wayfinding signage for businesses within the Village; and the increased positive impressions as visitors travel through the Village. The range of projects and actions are identified below.

- Rezoning near and around Main St. & Route 14 to be business only with the exception of new apartments and condominiums
- Develop a Hotel
- Attractive signage that shows what businesses are downtown
- Better water run-off
- On-call workers to monitor culverts before/during heavy rainfall and to keep clean of debris which blocks water run-off
- Recruit major destination retailer
- Recruit major company for headquarters
- Recruit major auto dealership to town
- Traffic control improvements
- Renaissance of downtown/train station area, similar to what Palatine, and Arlington Heights have done
- Development of land on Route 14
- Update both entrances to the Village
- Downtown train station needs improvement
- More brick style buildings/accents
- Build condominiums with retail in downtown area
- Entice new businesses with financial incentives
- Annex route 31 properties
- Rebuild downtown so more appealing to small businesses
- Low-cost loans for site improvements
- Buildings with store on 1st floor/residential on 2nd floor

What are the primary strengths and assets of Cary?

While much of the workshop focused on opportunities for improvement within the Village of Cary and the business community, workshop participants were asked to identify those things that they like about the Village of Cary. Below is a complete list of the responses.

- Lack of development along the River
- Close knit community
- Natural open space to enjoy
- Location on Route 14 & train
- Good neighborhoods
- Quality schools
- Strong community
- Friendliness/small town feeling
- Promote/support of small businesses
- Parks
- Great place to raise a family
- Unique small businesses
- Involvement of citizens in Village government
- Architecture of downtown buildings
- Personal contacts with other businesses
- Can talk to the administrators
- Economic strength