

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 25, 2018

SENT VIA EMAIL

To: John Sterrett, Planner
Village of Glen Ellyn

From: Michio Murakishi, Senior Associate
Mika Schweizer, Associate

Re: **Comprehensive Plan Update
Workgroup Meeting #1**

On July 19, 2018, Houseal Lavigne Associates met with the Glen Ellyn Comprehensive Plan Workgroup (the "Workgroup") at the Glen Ellyn Civic Center. Seven members of the Workgroup were in attendance and shared their opinions regarding (1) pressing issues within the Village, (2) specific projects they would like to be seen undertaken, and (3) the primary strengths of the community. Though numerous topics were discussed, there was a strong overlap between recurring ideas. The following memo summarizes the feedback received.

Top Issues and concerns

The following were the themes that emerged during the discussion of community issues and concerns identified by the Workgroup.

Housing

Lack of diversity of housing and inability to age in place were two of the top issues mentioned throughout the meeting. The need for a balance between housing options for all age groups and life stages, as well as attracting new residents and retaining current residents, was noted by the Workgroup. Creating new housing options (e.g., rental, townhome, condominiums, and single-family), downsizing options, and sufficient Downtown housing options were other issues shared.

Development

Diversification of the tax base through Downtown development was a major need voiced. It was stated that the property tax base is currently heavily reliant on residential properties, which could be alleviated by attracting new businesses Downtown. Population density was another concern shared—Glen Ellyn is a land-locked community that still needs population growth to support retail.

In Downtown, public parking was a concern frequently stated. Maintaining open space, revitalizing aged buildings, the need to allow for greater building height, creating more entertainment activities for young professionals, constructing a new event space (e.g., public plaza), and making Downtown an 18-hour activity center were all identified as needs. In addition, it was agreed upon that current zoning regulations may be impeding potential development. Other issues identified by Workgroup members included stagnant equalized assessed values (EAVs) in Downtown and the need for more residents to support business growth.

Of particular concern in Downtown, Workgroup members conveyed that there are many great projects proposed, but that few actually proceed to the construction phase. The need for a streamlined process to support proactive development was voiced, as there is currently a generally negative perception of the development-approval process. The fact that multiple major Downtown projects are simultaneously approaching was stated as a concern due to increased construction activity. Another issue shared was a lack of strong community connection between the new annexed areas and the Village's core.

Civic engagement

The need for more civic engagement was also a key theme that emerged from discussions at the Workgroup meeting. The need for wider community participation in the planning process was identified

as a desired outcome of outreach and engagement, so that the plan is not based solely on the negative feedback. The lack of volunteers and the way residents are currently informed of the Village’s planning process and regulations were other concerns expressed.

Transportation

Issues related to the existing train tracks were a frequent concern expressed by Workgroup members, as it divides Downtown and delays traffic. The need for more transportation options (e.g., train, public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle) was stated, as well as better traffic flow through Downtown. One-way traffic in Downtown and improved signage, particularly on Roosevelt Road, were also concerns identified.

Specific projects and actions

The following are specific projects and actions that Workgroup members would like to see completed in the Village:

Community-building

- More “town and gown” projects with College of DuPage (COD); and
- More public art.

Housing and development

- Upgrade existing structures (e.g., pay businesses to improve Downtown building facades);
- Move Downtown fire station;
- Make zoning regulations more flexible to allow more uses (e.g., up-zone Downtown district to allow 85-foot height with on-site parking);
- Increase grant money programs to encourage reinvestment into existing buildings (e.g., sustainable retrofits);
- Develop streamlined process to encourage large-scale mixed-use development;
- Village plaza in Downtown for events;
- Assemblage of property for large-scale projects;
- Parking improvements (e.g., public parking garage behind Civic Center, building a parking garage on both sides of Downtown, and using parking for residential/commercial development); and
- Putting more residents and visitors in Downtown to support businesses.

Transportation and accessibility

- Pedestrian-access improvements around train tracks;
- Better signage and wayfinding;
- Vehicular underpass on west side of Downtown;
- Upgrade of all pedestrian routes and crossings on Roosevelt Road;
- Connecting COD and Downtown via bike and bus transportation link; and
- Discouraging freight-train traffic during the daytime.

Primary strengths and assets

The following were the primary strong points of the Village identified by Workgroup members:

- Reputation,
- Community pride,
- Community with assets and disposable income,
- Financial stability,
- Access to Chicago,
- Topography (e.g., Lake Ellyn, parks, Prairie Path, and verdant aesthetic),
- Local schools and COD,
- Community events
- Great community facilities (e.g., Library and Ackerman Sports & Fitness Center),
- Restaurants,
- The three distinct commercial districts,
- Railroad that created Downtown, and
- Quaint, walkable Downtown with charm.