

March 3, 2011

Mr. William J. Mueller,
Village President, and
Board of Trustees
Village of Lombard

Subject: PC 11-03: Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Dear President and Trustees:

Your Plan Commission transmits for your consideration its recommendation regarding the above-referenced petition. The petitioner, the Village of Lombard, requests the approval of amendments to the Village Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the downtown area.

After due notice and as required by law, the Plan Commission conducted a public hearing for this petition on February 21, 2011.

Chris Stilling, Assistant Director of Community Development, began a PowerPoint presentation on the petition, which was submitted to the record. He summarized the Village's downtown planning activities from approval of the 1989 TIF District to the present and explained the geographical area covered by the proposed plan. He noted the five goals adopted by the Village Board in 2009 and explained how the Village obtained a \$100,000 grant from the RTA for the downtown plan. He summarized the planning process and mentioned who had been involved in the development of the plan. He also explained the financial analysis that was used throughout the plan and mentioned several factors that are part of the relationship between property owners and buyers.

Mr. Stilling then discussed the development concept plans for the core downtown area. The 101 S. Main Street site has a short-term concept with a temporary building and a long-term concept with a permanent multi-story building. The Hammerschmidt parcel concept shows a pair of commercial office buildings. The 7-Eleven site concept includes a new commercial building on the corner and enhancements to the existing train station access. The buildings at 10 and 14 W. St. Charles Road would have façade enhancements including new all-season outdoor dining areas. The development concept for the 100-130 W. St. Charles Road block face includes building consolidation and a new infill retail/office building. The Fifth Third

Bank/Praga site shows a new outlot building, new infill building, and relocated bank drive-through lanes. The 100-108 S. Main Street site concept shows a new two-story office building and bus shelter.

Mr. Stilling then discussed several opportunities for public open space and public art. He noted that artist Richard Hunt was part of the project team and mentioned several of his suggestions for art programs.

Mr. Stilling then discussed the development concept plans for the East St. Charles Road area. The Garfield/Martha site concept shows a 15,000 sq. ft. grocer. The Martha/Craig site has two options: one that expands the existing strip center, and one that replaces it with a new three-story building. There are also two concepts for the Grace and St. Charles Road site, both of which feature uses that could be supported by market demand. The site north of Lombard Veterinary Hospital would have either single-family homes or a park. The Allied Drywall property concept has been previously presented to the Plan Commission and involved 10 single-family homes. The plan also includes a concept for a neighborhood park on the westernmost portion of the Allied Drywall property.

Jennifer Henaghan, Senior Planner, then stated that she would be discussing the sections of the plan pertaining to streetscape, façades, visual identity, and transportation. She summarized the general recommendations pertaining to streetscape and outlined the actions proposed for each of the three improvement zones, emphasizing the improvements to the Park and St. Charles intersection and the Main Street underpass.

Ms. Henaghan then discussed the façade enhancement strategies for three specific areas, noting that the recommendations could also be applied to other properties within the downtown. Suggested improvements included new awnings, signage, gooseneck lighting, and restored façades.

Ms. Henaghan explained the development of the lilac symbol that is proposed to be a signature for Downtown Lombard. She also explained the proposed signage system.

Ms. Henaghan then discussed the proposed transportation and parking strategies. She noted the plan recommendations for improved access and circulation, including road narrowing, pedestrian improvements, bicycle routes and parking, and transit amenities. She summarized the plan's analysis of existing parking resources and the projected parking needs that would result if the development concepts were implemented. She stated which recommendations would occur in the short term to address existing deficiencies and which recommendations would occur in the long term to address future development and projected increases in Metra ridership. She concluded by summarizing the transportation and parking recommendations for East St. Charles Road, including road narrowing, a new crosswalk, minimized curb cuts, and bike trail connections.

Bill Heniff, Director of Community Development, spoke about the implementation of the plan and the need to make something tangible happen within a short timeframe. He referred back to the five goals set by the Village Board in 2009, noting that the Village will be flexible with regard to compatible development. In the short term we can look at pedestrian access and circulation to improve access and circulation within the Downtown. The Village will pursue additional partnership outreach to downtown property owners to fill vacancies. Marketing efforts will ensure that the area has a distinct feel.

Mr. Heniff identified recommended short-term and long-term actions. The Village can take a leadership role with small public streetscape improvements to enhance the downtown area. Façade improvements are highly visible and will give people a sense of investment. The proposed signage will feature Downtown Lombard's unique branding on kiosks and directional signs. There have been many public comments pertaining to transportation, and this issue will continue to be discussed and analyzed as new developments occur. He added that much of the implementation of the plan will come down to funding, and he then summarized various funding sources that the Village has and can utilize.

He concluded by stating that staff is recommending approval of the downtown plan as an amendment to the Village's Comprehensive Plan. He introduced consultant team members Konstantine Savoy of Teska Associates, Bridget Lane of Business Districts Inc., and Cindy Fish of Fish Transportation Associates.

Mr. Savoy stated that he is a principal with Teska Associates and served as the project manager. HE stated his appreciation for the opportunity to work in Lombard and said he sees tremendous opportunities for the downtown. He then introduced Nicole Nutter of the RTA and Ryan Richter of Metra. He noted that the team involved people working from many different disciplines to address the issues. He stated that plan identifies 130,000 sq. ft. of new, long-term development opportunities within the downtown core area and 60,000 sq. ft. of development potential along East St. Charles Road. The overall goal and theme of the plan is to reclaim Downtown Lombard as a pedestrian-oriented place, which is a fundamental idea to guide the work going forward.

Chairperson Ryan asked if anyone was present to speak in favor or against the petition. No one spoke in favor or against.

Art Frierichs, 248 N. West Road, asked about the Great Western Trail bridge project. Mr. Heniff stated that this project was advanced approximately 10 years ago and is currently in the final engineering stage. This project received federal funding and is scheduled to begin later this year. While the bridges are not a part of the downtown plan, the plan does include numerous connections to the Great Western Trail.

Mary Mae Meyer, 414 W. Windsor Avenue, explained the development of the lilac symbol proposed in the plan and attested to its authenticity. She stated that it is a fabulous marketing opportunity for the downtown.

Paul Henry, 350 W. Grove Street, asked why no large-scale projects were included in the plan. Mr. Heniff stated that the plan is designed to be a flexible document so that the Village can respond to favorable development opportunities as they present themselves. Mr. Henry noted that the plan focuses on private investment and asked if the Village would take a lead on any projects. Mr. Heniff states that the seven sites included within the plan represent a wide range of property and projects types, and that the Village could extend TIF dollars in support of making a development happen.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for comments among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Cooper commended the team that worked on the plan for their speed and dedication. The last page sums up what this plan is creating and we have so many options with out street grid, amenities, and businesses. She agreed that the heart of downtown is the Park Avenue & St. Charles Road intersection and asked if the Metra underpass would be constructed this year. Mr. Heniff briefly explained the project and stated that work may begin this year but construction will largely occur in 2012.

Commissioner Cooper stated that she liked the volunteer plaza being moved to a better location and she likes the options shown for improving the viaduct, specifically the plans for lighting and art. The mural and the gateway signage could be implemented quickly. Mr. Heniff noted that the Village will need to work with Union Pacific as they are the owners of the viaduct.

Commissioner Cooper expressed her support for the road diet concept and explained how it would mitigate the hazards experienced by pedestrians on Main Street between the Prairie Path and downtown. The road diet concept on St. Charles Road would be outstanding. She asked about the intended audience for the sculpture park. Mr. Heniff stated that it would consist of larger pieces for viewing by people on the train and driving by on St. Charles Road, but small pieces can be incorporated elsewhere in the downtown.

Commissioner Cooper explained an ordinance in Ann Arbor, Michigan that requires a percentage of all public improvements be dedicated to the arts and noted how this had had a visual impact on the community. Mr. Heniff stated that the Village has previously negotiated with business partners to acquire art pieces rather than pursuing a mandate.

Commissioner Cooper stated that the proposed streetscape improvements are good, but there is an issue with the species of tree that is currently being planted within the downtown. Mr. Heniff stated that the Village Arborist will look at the type of tree to ensure it is appropriate.

Commissioner Cooper asked why the site at the northeast corner of St. Charles and Elizabeth was not called out in the plan. Mr. Heniff stated that there is a standing approval for a mixed-use senior housing development on the site.

Commissioner Cooper suggested that the plan make greater mention of environmental awareness such as the mention of permeable pavers. Mr. Heniff stated that the plan's focus on reusing existing buildings and infrastructure and enhancing transit is very green. Mr. Savoy stated that they can add in language to the plan to strengthen the Village's support of green issues.

Commissioner Burke commended staff on the plan, stating that it is thorough and well-presented. He noted concerns about the road diet concept due to the Village's limited north-south roadways. He believed that reducing lanes will increase congestion and discourage people from coming downtown. Mr. Heniff stated that the road diet has been made less prominent within the plan and noted that a traffic analysis would need to be completed to determine what its impact would be. He added that there might be greater opportunities for increasing on-street parking and sidewalk width along East St. Charles Road.

Chairperson Ryan noted that traffic within the downtown area is impacted by the inability to make left turns onto or off of IL Route 53. Mr. Heniff stated that the Village Board recently authorized a study of the Madison and Route 53 intersection for a possible traffic signal, which could relieve traffic on St. Charles Road.

Commissioner Flint complimented the work of the project team and the community on the plan. He stated that it is important for the document to be flexible and implementation of the plan should begin quickly.

Commissioner Cooper asked what strategies would be used to create a safe sidewalk environment on South Main Street if the road diet concept is not advanced. Mr. Heniff stated that additional green space could be added to separate pedestrians from vehicles.

On a motion by Commissioner Burke and a second by Commissioner Flint, the Plan Commission voted 4 to 0 that the Village Board **approve** the Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Respectfully,

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD

Donald Ryan, Chairperson
Lombard Plan Commission

c. Petitioner
Lombard Plan Commission