

MEMORANDUM

TO: David A. Hulseberg, Village Manager

FROM: William J. Heniff, AICP, Community Development Director

DATE: September 17, 2009

RE: Downtown Lombard Planting Report

As part of the Downtown Lombard community visioning effort that was completed earlier this year, the final report noted that the overall appearance and image of Downtown Lombard was identified as an area of concern from most participants. The majority of people felt that the rehab/reuse and streetscape could contribute the most to the image of the downtown. Many participants noted that desirable downtowns had a better streetscape and pedestrian environment. They also indicated these improvements were lacking within Downtown Lombard. At the same time, Lombard Town Centre, Lombard's Illinois Main Street Organization, completed an initial review of the existing planting areas within the downtown area and they offered a number of suggestions that they believe would enhance the downtown's overall appearance.

Given these comments and activities, Village staff solicited the services of a planning/landscape design firm (Hitchcock Design) to undertake a planning effort to beautify Downtown Lombard with enhanced landscape design. The result of this effort is the attached Downtown Lombard Landscape Enhancement Recommendations Report.

The report attempts to address the following issues:

1. Identify key locations in which enhanced landscape design can contribute to improving the overall design aesthetic of the downtown;
2. Develop recommendations as to appropriate landscape features on public property, public rights-of-way and private property;
3. Offer a narrative and recommendations as to appropriate plant materials and structures for each of the identified locations;
4. Offer cost estimates for implementing each of the identified elements; and
5. For sites not specifically identified within the report, identify common design elements that should be carried through the downtown area.

The estimated costs for implementation are provided on a site-by-site basis and are further denoted and identified as a public project (requiring Village commitment) or private (requiring private property owner approval).

The report is also meant to serve as a longer-term guide to the Village in a number of respects. It is important to note that additional plantings within the downtown area will require additional funding (typically through TIF contributions) and/or staffing and funding commitments. Should the Village Board direct staff to proceed with the report's recommendations, staff can incorporate the report into future goals, budgeting and staffing justifications in the implementation of the report.

The report identifies public and private landscape improvements. For private properties, the report can also serve as a guide to private property owners and staff in developing landscape schemes that advance downtown goals. Additionally, the report can also serve as a guide should grant applications be made by affected property owners in the future. Lastly, as with all landscape improvement projects, ongoing maintenance and care will be required to fully achieve the desired result. Private improvements will be addressed as part of future grant or redevelopment opportunities.

The report denotes a number of public improvements that the Village could undertake in the short-term, provided that funding allocations are provided through the budget process. Staff notes that the public landscape improvements range from \$78,800 to \$92,800, exclusive of ongoing maintenance costs. However, excluding the sculpture garden along St. Charles Road (Area 11), the public costs would range from \$23,800 to \$32,800 and would include enhancements along Orchard Terrace, the Metra Embankment, the Volunteer Plaza, the 7-Eleven Plaza and the Hammerschmidt Lot. As these five areas would create a high impact at the lowest cost, staff recommends that these areas be addressed first.

Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars can be used as a funding source for this phase. However, as noted within the report, costs associated with the ongoing maintenance of the plant materials would also need to be addressed and would become the responsibility of the Public Works staff and/or its designated contractor. The ongoing maintenance costs would need to be incorporated into future Public Works budgeting. Staff does note that the final design of the five planting areas noted above can be completed by existing in-house staff this winter.

ACTION REQUESTED

Please distribute this correspondence and the attached report to the Village Board for consideration at the September 17, 2009 meeting under "Items for Discussion". Hitchcock Design will present an overview of the report and will offer its findings and recommendations.

Staff recommends that the Village Board consider the following 3 options with implementing the recommendations of the Downtown Lombard Landscape Enhancement Recommendations Report:

Option A- Direct staff to implement and complete all the recommended enhancements within one year, excluding the Lombard Plaza signage (Area 1) and the sculpture garden along St. Charles Road (Area 11).

Option B- Direct staff to implement and complete all the recommended enhancements within three years, excluding the Lombard Plaza signage (Area 1) and the sculpture garden along St. Charles Road (Area 11).

Option C- Accept the findings of the report, but do not proceed with funding any of the improvements.

Staff recommends that the Village Board proceed with Option A. Staff will then incorporate the recommendations into the Village's upcoming Downtown planning, budgetary and capital improvement program activities.

If you have questions, please contact me.