

**VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
INTER-DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

TO: Lombard Plan Commission

HEARING DATE: February 21, 2011

FROM: Department of Community
Development

PREPARED BY: Jennifer Henaghan, AICP
Senior Planner

TITLE

PC 11-03: Comprehensive Plan Amendment: The petitioner, the Village of Lombard, requests the approval of amendments to the Village Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the downtown area.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Petitioner: Village of Lombard

DESCRIPTION

The Downtown Lombard area is a major focus of the current Comprehensive Plan, approved in 1998. The Comprehensive Plan has numerous references to the downtown area scattered throughout a number of sections pertaining to residential and commercial land uses, transportation, and community facilities and services. The draft Lombard Downtown Revitalization Project Guidebook (the “Plan”) aims to provide an all-inclusive look at the Village’s policies and resources related to the downtown.

Note: Although the Comprehensive Plan has specific standards with regards to modifications to the Land Use Plan map, the Plan does not have any standards for amending other components.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Background

In June 2009, the Village Board adopted a framework for downtown planning efforts. This framework included an Action Plan that established specific actions and a timetable to achieve the five goals adopted by the Village Board (relating to economic development, design and image, partnerships, compatible development, and access and circulation). As part of the Action Plan, a market study and property inventory were completed in 2009. The timeline states that all other Action Plan items (including recommended code changes, access and circulation improvement recommendations, comprehensive marketing strategy, parking inventory, and exploration of possible future development sites) should be completed by Fall 2010.

To accomplish these remaining Action Plan items, the Village submitted an application for an RTA Community Planning Grant, which was approved by the Village Board in January 2010.

The Village was awarded an 80% matching grant (up to \$100,000 for a \$125,000 study). Since that time, staff has worked closely with the RTA to develop a Request for Proposals that accomplishes all of the stated Action Plan items. After a lengthy review and interview process, the consultant team led by Teska Associates was ultimately chosen.

The Teska Associates team was guided throughout the eight-month planning process by the Downtown Plan Working Group, which consisted of Trustee Gron, Trustee Moreau, Plan Commission Chairperson Ryan, Lombard Town Centre, Pace, Metra, the RTA, and staff. Public input on the plan was extensive, including a full day of stakeholder focus groups during which the consultants met one-on-one with 45 Lombardians, an August open house attended by more than 70 residents, business owners, and property owners, a staff meeting with 10 East St. Charles Road property owners, and an October open house attended by 60 interested parties. Seven Village committees and commissions also reviewed and commented on the Plan.

The Plan includes development concept plans for seven sites within the downtown core as well as six sites along East St. Charles Road. Other items addressed within the plan include strategies for streetscape enhancements, façade enhancements, visual identity and signage, and transportation. The Plan also includes a preliminary implementation plan that calls out specific actions that can be taken to obtain short-term results.

Public Input

The following is a summary of the public input received during the downtown planning process:

June 16, 2010 Stakeholder Meetings

In June, the Teska team sat down with 45 residents, business owners, and property owners to get their thoughts and ideas about issues and concerns that are facing the downtown. These focus group discussions led to the preliminary development concepts that were discussed at an open house in August.

August 25, 2010 Open House

Comments from more than 70 attendees at the open house were used to select the development concepts that are included in the Downtown Plan, which covers the Central Business District as well as the East St. Charles Road area from Garfield to Grace Streets.

October 14, 2010 Stakeholder Meeting

Village staff met with East St. Charles Road property owners to discuss the preliminary development concepts for that geographical area.

October 27, 2010 Open House

The draft Plan was discussed by 60 interested citizens at an October open house held at the Helen Plum Library.

November 18, 2010 Village Board Meeting

The draft plan was next discussed by the Village Board on November 18. The Board referred the Plan to all standing committees for review.

January 3, 2011 – February 14, 2011 Village Committee & Commission Comments

In January and February, the draft Plan was presented to seven Village committees and commissions for their review and comment. The Plan was revised to incorporate their suggestions. A summary of their recommendations and comments are attached as Appendix A.

Lombard Downtown Revitalization Project Guidebook Recommendations

The plan document is divided into seven main sections, which are summarized as follows:

1. *Development Concept Plans for the Core Downtown Area, and*
2. *Development Concept Plans for the East St. Charles Road Area*

Sections 1 and 2 provide development concept plans for various sites within the core downtown area and the East St. Charles Road area. In addition to a detailed site plan, each site also includes analyses of the recommended development program, financial feasibility, and parking capacity. Also included in Section 1 is an overview of public art opportunities and potential art programs that can be established for Downtown Lombard. Programs such as a sculpture park, pop-up art, incentive programs, and an arts consortium are explored.

3. *Streetscape Enhancement Strategies*

Strategies to enhance the downtown streetscape are explored in Section 3. Recommendations for improving pedestrian areas, identifying materials, and creating public spaces are the core of the streetscape enhancement strategies. Streetscape treatments vary between West and East St. Charles Road, and also follow a categorical series of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Improvement Zones.

4. *Façade Enhancement Strategies*

In addition to public improvements along the downtown streetscape, improvements to private properties are encouraged in the form of façade enhancements, which are detailed in Section 4. While the façade enhancements described in this section are site-specific to certain downtown blocks, many of the design recommendations can be applied to other properties throughout Downtown Lombard.

5. *Visual Identity Standards & Signage Concepts*

To support the brand promise for Downtown Lombard, recommendations for Downtown visual identity standards and signage concepts are outlined in Section 5. Visual identity standards include elements such as standard signatures, a color palette, typography, and usage of the Lombard lilac symbol as a design motif. These standards are then utilized to develop a conceptual signage system for Downtown Lombard.

6. Transportation Strategies

Positioning Downtown Lombard as a true multi-modal transportation district is the focus of Section 6. Parking strategies are a primary component of the transportation analysis. While maintaining the efficiency and functionality of the downtown roadway system remains critical to downtown viability, creating a more inviting and safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists are also integral to revitalizing Downtown Lombard. Transit elements for train and buses are also explored.

7. Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is the core piece of the Lombard Downtown Revitalization Project Guidebook, as specific strategies are outlined to guide revitalization efforts for Downtown Lombard. In addition to the early action projects highlighted on the previous page, the Implementation Plan outlines a complete inventory of short term (1-3 years) and long term (4+ years) projects that the Village and its partners can implement as opportunities present themselves. Phasing, responsibility, and estimated costs/financing options are identified for each strategy. A detailed listing of funding opportunities and support resources is also provided to indicate available support to help implement the strategies.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee recommends that the Plan Commission make the following motion recommending **approval** of this petition:

Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, I move that the Plan Commission accept the recommendations included within the Lombard Downtown Revitalization Project Guidebook and accept the findings of the Inter-Departmental Review Report as the findings of the Plan Commission and recommends to the Corporate Authorities that the report be adopted as a supplement to the existing Village Comprehensive Plan.

Inter-Departmental Review Group Report approved by:

William J. Heniff, AICP
Director of Community Development

c: Petitioner

Appendix A – Village Committee and Commission Comments

Transportation & Safety (January 3, 2011)

- The overall circulation and traffic patterns in the downtown area
- Impacts of any traffic lane reductions on other streets in Lombard
- Consideration of peak hour flow adjustments to traffic, with additional parking available during off-peak hours
- Crosswalks improvements should be done only if needed and based upon redevelopment plans.
- Readability of proposed signage

Economic & Community Development (January 5, 2011)

- The Village should focus on the immediate actions. Items such as the implementing the temporary use at the former DuPage Theater site or Main Street underpass improvements should be explored first.
- Members supported many of the transportation and pedestrian improvements such as mid block cross walks.
- Building upon the public input process, the Village should increase the awareness of the plan and its recommendations.
- The Village should explore a “Shop Local” campaign.

Public Works (January 11, 2011)

- Improving all the façades simultaneously could have a dramatic impact.
- Downtown infrastructure should be improved.
- The Police Department could be moved to 101 S. Main Street.
- The “road diet” could be taken all the way to the Prairie Path to eliminate the need to have the path cross another four-lane road.

Historical Commission (January 18, 2011)

- On p. 94, add the following under Task 1, Hold property owner training session: “i. Local landmark process and benefits”
- The Village should implement the historic site markers program as recommended by the Historical Commission as part of the 2009 Landscape Enhancements Plan. The Village should decide if the Historical Commission should develop a site markers system for historic sites and/or buildings and determine who will be responsible for the design, purchase, and installation of the markers.
- Public open spaces should be utilized as starting points for walking tours of historic sites.
- Future redevelopment projects should recognize and build upon Downtown Lombard’s history as a destination for the arts through the addition of a performing arts center or theater.
- Celebrate Lombard’s heritage by creating public art that connects viewers to our village history: i.e. a Little Orphan Annie sculpture (possibly at the southwest corner of Parkside and Main).

- The Village should promote its historic resources as a way of bringing additional visitors to the downtown.
- The proposed pedestrian improvements to enhance the walkability of the downtown area will also benefit several significant historical sites that adjoin the redevelopment area but are not within its boundaries: The Maple Street Chapel, Lilacia Park, The Victorian Cottage Museum and the Sheldon Peck Homestead.
- The proposed lilac blossom symbol is overly modern and does not adequately reflect Lombard's historic character.

Finance (January 24, 2011)

- Property owners could be incentivized to help businesses get in at lower rates.
- Opportunities should be explored to get corporate partnerships engaged in underwriting the costs of implementation.
- Larger corporate entities could be encouraged to consider downtown Lombard.
- Tax incentive agreements or other incentives could foster activity.
- Most successful downtowns have anchor stores such as Trader Joes or Barnes & Noble.
- The plan should capitalize on historic aspects of the downtown.

Environmental Concerns (January 25, 2011)

- Parking is an issue during special events.
- New mixed-use buildings should have larger first-floor commercial spaces.
- More open space amenities are needed to bring people downtown, possibly on the Hammerschmidt property.
- The character of the downtown should not be changed and the Village's historic buildings and façades should be used rather than torn down for new construction.
- Recycling bins should be added at the train station.
- Better traffic control for pedestrians and more decorative intersections and permeable pavers are needed.

Community Relations (February 14, 2011)

- Senior housing
- Youth and senior activities
- Transportation
- Walk ability
- Pop-up retail (book store)
- Downtown free Wi-Fi
- Meet/greet space
- Amenities proximate to senior housing
- Grocery store