

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** David A. Hulseberg, Village Manager

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

**DATE:** April 2, 2009

**SUBJECT: Downtown Lombard Community Visioning Report**

At the September 18, 2008 Village Board meeting, the Village Board authorized and directed staff to initiate a community input process to encourage stakeholder involvement in determining appropriate land uses, site design, bulk requirements and site amenities for the 101 S. Main Street property, the Hammerschmidt Property as well as input on the downtown in general.

Attached for the Village Board's consideration is the Houseal Lavigne consultant report pertaining to the public input visioning process for the downtown Lombard area. This report is intended to synthesize the public comments, thoughts and suggestions raised through this participatory process.

### **BACKGROUND**

Supplementing the internally created *Downtown Lombard Community Vision* report that compiled the various projects that have been proposed or envisioned for the downtown, the latest visioning effort was intended to provide a forum for various stakeholders in the downtown an opportunity to provide input regarding their respective thoughts regarding existing conditions and desired improvements to the downtown.

As set forth within the initial scope of work, a consultant was selected by staff (Houseal Lavigne Associates) that had a demonstrated record of accomplishment in public outreach efforts. Using automated response technologies, the consultant developed a meeting format and process to solicit valuable responses to a number of targeted questions regarding the downtown. Four public community meetings were offered, with each meeting having a selected area of focus. Supplementing the community vision meetings, residents and business owners were also given an opportunity to provide additional comments through the Village's web-site. The culmination of this participatory effort is the attached report for the Board's consideration.

Outreach efforts undertaken included directed letters to all residents in the downtown area (1,300 letters), letters to all businesses and commercial property owners in the

downtown area (300 letters), invitations to all homeowner associations in the Village and numerous press releases throughout the visioning activity.

As the culmination of this effort, Houseal Lavigne has prepared the report and will make a formal presentation to the Village Board regarding this effort.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff notes that the attached report is not intended to serve as the final report and plan for the Village. Rather, it is intended to provide staff and the Village Board with additional input regarding community desires and interests regarding the downtown. As staff noted in the September, 2008 memorandum to the Village Board, after completion of the visioning effort, staff will be seeking direction from the Village Board as to what steps should be undertaken.

To provide direction for the Village Board, staff offers the following recommendations regarding potential next steps in the visioning effort. These include:

#### **1. Prioritization of Suggestions**

The comments included within the visioning memo are far reaching and encompasses a broad spectrum of suggestions. Many of the comments can be reviewed and implemented without significant cost while others are broad goals and objectives that will require additional input and commitment from property owners, developers and other interested parties. In order to give focus to the comments provided by the community, staff recommends that the recommendations offered be prioritized in a manner similar to the process undertaken as part of the previous visioning activities. This task is deemed to be valuable as it will allow definitive goals and objectives for future downtown efforts to be established. This activity can also include additional discussion and recommendations of Lombard Town Centre and other key public and private entities accordingly. Ultimately, many of these goals and objectives would be incorporated into the overall Village Comprehensive Plan update.

#### **2. Economic Development – Feasibility Review**

As noted in the September, 2008 memorandum, a real estate consultant could be hired to prepare and examine a market analysis to identify whether market demands can be served at a price sufficient to induce feasible private investment, or alternatively how much subsidy, if any, would be needed to move beneficial projects to the point of feasibility. This analysis would be intended to take the suggestions and recommendations included within the visioning effort and provide the Board with an “economic reality check” to determine which suggestions can be readily accomplished and those items that may be longer range goals. As previously noted, such an analysis could cost approximately \$25,000 for a basic market study, with costs increasing based upon level of work requested. This study could be for the entire downtown area or for selected properties.

Should the Village Board identify that overall market and economic conditions are such that a study would not be worthwhile, the Board could alternatively direct staff to address

public enhancements and aesthetic concerns and develop goals and objectives to enhance this downtown component. This approach would consist of hiring a consultant to produce a full-scale downtown strategic plan. However, staff notes that the Downtown Lombard TIF has approximately \$485,000 available overall for all projects in FY2009-2010. Should funding preclude large scale review of the economic issues, staff still recommends that the suggestion prioritization activity still be completed by staff.

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