



MEMORANDUM

TO: David A. Hulseberg, Village Manager

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

DATE: January 21, 2010

RE: Downtown Lombard Planting Report

The Village Board was presented with the Downtown Lombard Landscape Enhancement Recommendations report at the September 17, 2009 meeting. At that meeting, the Village Board directed that the Downtown Landscape Enhancement Recommendations report be presented to various Committees and Commissions for review. Additionally, since there were several issues that were presented by the Village Board that were not subjects addressed in the report, but are ancillary issues to the downtown enhancements, staff identified aspects of the plan that fall under the purview of each committee/commission. The comments in italics were the issues each respective committee was asked to review. The comments in bold reflect their response.

Community Promotion and Tourism

While the Hitchcock report identifies the need for addressing temporary banner signs in the downtown, the report scope, it does not address the use of decorative banners on the light poles in the downtown. This is a matter that may enhance the aesthetic qualities of the downtown. Staff also notes that downtown banners are only a portion of the overall banner program conducted throughout the community and staff historically ordered uniform banners for economies of scale. As such, the Committee has been asked to review the Village's policy on the placement/cycle of banners and American flags, funding and operational costs, the type of material and/or text that may be placed on the banners and the issue of banner sponsorship by Lombard businesses.

Response: The Community Promotion and Tourism Committee recommended that the Village continue with the banner program and that the Village should consider corporate sponsors for the banners.

Economic and Community Development Committee

The Hitchcock report includes costs for the proposed improvements on private property but does not discuss the funding source for the proposed improvements. Staff has recommended that the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds to offset a portion of the cost of the improvements made by private property owners. As the ECDC has approval authority on major TIF grant funding activities, additional input regarding the overall landscape enhancement concept for the downtown is sought. The Committee has been asked to review how the existing Downtown Grant programs can be used to assist with and implement the enhancements. In the event that changes

to the existing programs, or the development of a new grant program, are required, staff will work with the ECDC to make recommendations to the Village Board.

Response: The Committee recommended approval of the report as follows:

- 1. The ECDC supports the use of TIF funds for the landscape enhancements in the public rights-of-way, as outlined in the report.**
- 2. The ECDC supports the use of the Downtown Improvement and Renovation Grant program (Façade Grant) for landscape enhancements on private property, as outlined in the report. The Committee also suggested that if the Village is going to assist with the private plantings and improvements, an ongoing maintenance program should also be considered with any grant request.**

Environmental Concerns Committee

The ECC has been asked to look at the proposed improvements to ensure that the plan looks at the sustainability of the improvements. The Hitchcock report provided a concept for each area, along with a recommendation and the species that meet the site conditions. It is anticipated that a recommendation would be forthcoming from the ECC to the Village Board to make certain that any landscape improvements made on Village property or with Village funds on private property should be designed with sustainability and low maintenance in mind. These concepts will reduce the required water and maintenance, which ultimately reduce the emissions required to maintain and care for the landscaping.

Response: The ECC recommended that the Village use low-maintenance, drought-resistant native plants that would not require watering. The ECC also provided several specific recommendations for many of the sites within the report. Those comments are attached.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is being tasked with a review of the available funding mechanisms for the initial plantings and to recommend the use of funds for long-term maintenance.

Response: The Finance Committee supported the use of TIF funds for the landscape enhancements in the public rights-of-way and on private property. For enhancements on private property, the Committee recommended that ongoing maintenance be addressed and that either the LTC monitor the maintenance or have the property owner pay the Village to maintain it.

Historical Commission

While not spelled out by Hitchcock, the Commission will be asked to provide an accounting of historically significant sites in the downtown. Once the inventory of historic sites was available, the Commission will be tasked with development of means to specifically identify and distinguish historic/significant sites.

Response: The Historical Commission completed their inventory of historic sites in 2006 and recommends that those sites within the St. Charles Road area have metallic markers that recognize their historic significance. Their recommendations include gold markers for sites dated from 1869-1900 and silver markers for sites dated from 1900-1950. They also recommended that the markers be placed within the sidewalk to recognize both business and residential sites. The Historical Commission did inquire about who is going to be responsible for the design, purchase and installation of the markers.

Public Works Committee

The PWC will be looking at the impact that these projects have on the CIP, as well as reviewing issues relative to existing infrastructure. Hitchcock has identified the long-term maintenance of the improvements as a critical component and the need to install irrigation systems may require review of Municipal Code and policies.

Response: The Public Works Committee recommended that the Village consider planting trees that have less dense foliage, such as Honey Locusts, to prevent them from blocking the view of the businesses. They also suggested that the rain gutters from the buildings be directed to the tree vaults. Finally, the Committee recommended that the Village ensure that standard hardscape (benches, chairs, etc) be used by the businesses.

Transportation and Safety Committee

While Hitchcock's scope of work and report did not address the following issues, the Village Board would like the Committee to review and make recommendations of the following issues:

- *Discussion of proposed mid-block crosswalks in the 100 and 200 blocks of St. Charles Road. **The Committee did not support the use of mid-block crosswalks.***
- *Installation of stamped asphalt crosswalks at controlled intersections. **The Committee recommended that stamped asphalt crosswalks be used at all controlled intersections between Crescent and Grace. Please note that as part of the St. Charles Road LAPP, Public Works will be completing some of this work within the core of the downtown.***
- *Plan to develop consistent signage on Village light poles in the downtown. **The Committee referred this issue to their soon to be formed Downtown Corridor Sub-Committee.***

ACTION REQUESTED

Please place this item on the January 21, 2010 Village Board agenda. Staff recommends that the Village Board review the comments from the various committees and adopt the Downtown Lombard Landscape Enhancement Recommendations report. Staff will then incorporate the comments from the various committees into the final document. Please note that the funding for these recommendations will be reviewed as part of the FY10-11 Village and Downtown TIF Budgets. Although those final budgets have yet to be approved, staff still recommends that the Village Board adopt the report for future planning efforts.