

Village of Long Grove Comprehensive Plan Update Project¹

Planning Policy Issues Extraction Prepared By: Trustee Sarlitto – UPDATE 10/28/2016²

1. Policy Consideration #1 for Board Discussion (Discussion Date: May 24, 2016)

“Future Land Use/Development: Growing Sales Tax Revenue vs. Growing Resident Population?”

Considerable discussion has been devoted to balancing remaining parcel development to align with Village priorities... the need for additional sales tax revenues (commercial retail development) versus residential development targeting a perceived housing gap of higher density/lower maintenance housing products. Additional housing without an offsetting plan to grow primary revenue sources to the Village may only serve to burden an already stressed infrastructure with additional costs (fire, police, schools, transportation, etc.)... Likewise, additional housing may create greater demand for home-grown services boosting retail sales tax revenues.

2. Policy Consideration #2 for Board Discussion (Discussion Date: June 14, 2016)

“Is There Need for Higher Density Housing Options to Attract/Retain a Changing Demographic?”

Long Grove’s long-held legacy of being a historic and pastoral community that places a premium value on open space and environmental preservation including a deliberate bias to large lot size residential zoning which has been a primary catalyst that has molded the Village’s current Comprehensive Plan. However, the next 30 years will see Long Grove’s predominant workforce retiring and possibly downsizing into lower maintenance properties. Should the Village consider offering services and amenities needed for older populations desiring to age in place? In addition, we have a growing millennial age group, now equal to baby boomers. Should, and if so, how does the Village contemplate retaining and attracting new residents/investors to replace an aging community, but who may also have different values/attitudes toward housing, recreation, municipal services, taxation, etc.?

3. Policy Consideration #3 for Board Discussion (Discussion Date: September 13, 2016)

“How Big... Is Big Enough? Balancing a Building Size Cap with Emerging Market Demand and Preservation of Precious Open Space Can Be a Challenge”

An excerpt from our Comprehensive Plan...

“Out-of-character building scale has been a problem in Long Grove. The scale of newer residential structures is much greater than the older buildings. In general, a community may have occasional buildings that are out-of-scale with the remainder of the community, but they should be buildings of importance to the general public so that their difference has a symbolic meaning.” [1991]

¹References: Community Assessment Report - Draft 3/31/2016

²Original Issue: 5/7/2016; Subsequent Updates: 6/10/2016, 8/24/2016, 9/28/2016, 10/28/2016

A recent variance request to the long-standing 13,000 sq. ft. building size cap brought on a series of questions for board consideration:

- How many permit requests for a “McMansion-Sized” home does Long Grove forego annually as a result of its current cap policy? What is the current/future market demand for such buildings? What is the current inventory of vacant homes of this size within the Village, surrounding communities and Lake County?
- How do we identify, assess and adjust (as necessary) policies such as this that may enable the Village and builders to provide additional housing options that fit Long Grove, with particular attention to preserving its legacy of building with nature and preserving open space?
- Would a high vacancy rate with larger sized residential housing (similar to other surrounding communities) give impressions that our Village is in growth stagnation?

A clear understanding of the national, regional, and local housing markets is key to developing a comprehensive plan that supports existing uses, particularly in providing a diverse housing stock that meets the needs of residents. Ever since the 2008 crash that brought about the first housing value decline in the collective memory of most homeowners, there has been uncertainty in the national housing market. Do we need additional discussion of this policy, a policy that heretofore seems to have served the Village well in baselining the “Community Scale” concept... a concept that addresses how a building or space relates both to its inhabitants and to other buildings or spaces... is a change really needed?

4. Policy Consideration #4 for Board Discussion (Discussion Date: October 10, 2016)

“A Self-Sufficient Community: Providing Services to a Community with Limited Municipal Resources”

From individual well and septic systems, private roads, and self-education about property maintenance issues like pest control and landscaping, many HOAs, neighborhood groups, and individual residents have a long history of taking it upon themselves to be self-sufficient.

As a result and by strategic design, Long Grove has focused on providing only those services deemed by its residents as critical to ensuring a properly functioning Village in trade for maintaining a zero property tax position. In fact, in our recent village-wide survey conducted a short year ago boasting an uncharacteristically high 42% response rate, 82% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the Village maintaining its long standing tradition of not charging residents a property tax and roughly the same numbers of 81% and 80% respectively, expressed a need for our government to live within its means and actually cut services if necessary to maintain the no-tax position.

Goal Statement excerpts from our current Comprehensive Plan include...

- Community Facilities Goal: Improve the Village’s community facilities in accordance with the wants and needs of the present and projected population (Section 03, Page 7)
- Fiscal Responsibility: Avoid the establishment of public service facilities which are not necessary in a low density community (Section 03, Page 8)

How does the Village strike a seemingly “knife’s-edge” balance emphasizing economic development objectives as a priority guiding future land-use development projects while considering potential expansion of the “public” service needs of our future residents simultaneously with contemplating potential incorporation of higher density housing products in our residential mix? Clearly, continued outreach to existing, new and target market residents in exploring ways to get them more “invested” in the community will be important.

5. Policy Consideration #5 for Board Discussion (Planned Discussion Date: November 8, 2016)

“What policies would encourage downtown Historic District property improvement?”

In our recent village-wide survey conducted a little over a year ago boasting an uncharacteristically high 42% response rate, the number one written-in comment provided by responding residents centered on a need to renovate our quaint downtown. Although a specific plan was adopted for the downtown in 2008, changes in the post-recession economy have resulted in the need to reconsider basic strategic policies to revitalize this special place.

As noted in the Draft Community Assessment Report issued by Teska (the Village’s Comprehensive Plan Update Project Manager) March 31, 2016...

- “There is little question that the Village needs to pursue economic growth, particularly for a community that lacks property taxes, relies heavily on sales tax, and has a quaint downtown area that has a local charm, but would benefit from modernizing its experience.” ...
- “However, there are differing perspectives as to how to achieve economic growth. There is little argument that Downtown needs some rejuvenation, but there is some fear that recent changes risk transitioning downtown from a family-oriented destination to a place that families find less attractive to bring their children.”

And finally...

- “There is concern that property owners, the Village, and business owners do not share a vision for rejuvenating Downtown in a manner that truly fits the community.”

Village leadership has established improving the Downtown as a critical priority in its strategic planning workshop held earlier this year (February) and follow-thru has included development of a Downtown investment incentive program. A key challenge/question that the current revision to the Comprehensive Plan will need to address: How does the Village strike a balance between the high quality Downtown development opportunities it seeks while preserving our established community character?

Appendix A

Key Themes & Community Profile

1. **Maintaining Long Grove's Legacy & Community Character:** "You can't build another Long Grove." Long Grove's Legacy: Long Grove's long-held legacy of being a historic and pastoral community that places a premium value on open space and environmental preservation was a primary catalyst that molded the Village's current Comprehensive Plan.
2. **Providing Opportunities for Economic Growth: Limits to Economic Growth in Long Grove** – There is a perception that there are obstacles that limit economic growth in Long Grove: stringent PUD conditions; limited daytime population; scant communication between Village and merchants; high downtown rent levels; and limited land for new development.
3. **Changing Values: Balancing a Community of Long-Time Residents & New Families** – While many long-time residents place high value on maintaining the integrity of Long Grove's legacy of open space conservation and environmental stewardship, there is the view that residents who are newer to the Village favor other values more, such as the strong school system and lack of property taxes. There seems to be a need to find a balance in the community's values.
4. **A Self-Sufficient Community: Providing Services to a Community with Limited Municipal Resources** – From individual well and septic systems, private roads, and self-education about property maintenance issues like pest control and landscaping, many HOAs, neighborhood groups, and individual residents take it upon themselves to be self-sufficient when the Village cannot provide certain services. Outreach to new residents and exploring ways to get them more invested in the community will be important.
5. **The next 30 years will see Long Grove's predominant workforce retiring and possibly downsizing into lower maintenance properties.** The Village should consider offering services and amenities needed for older populations desiring to age in place. In addition, we have a growing millennial age group, now equal to baby boomers. Village needs to contemplate how to retain and attract new residents/investors to replace an aging community, but who may also have different values/attitudes toward housing, recreation, municipal services, taxation, etc.
6. **With almost all of its residents holding jobs beyond the Village, Long Grove is considered a bedroom community.**

Appendix B

Policy Items for Board Discussion

Economic & Market Analysis

1. Is the data infrastructure sufficient to support omni-channel retailing?
2. What is the impact of telecommuting on rush hour traffic?
3. How should the community view home-based businesses?
4. Is Long Grove interested in promoting a mix of commercial uses that allows showrooms, offices, and distribution in one development?
5. How can the community provide a robust framework for internet-based businesses? (e.g. high capacity data lines, , easy delivery truck access)
6. Does the stable Average Daily Traffic suggest opportunities to invest in multimodal access rather than higher volume roads?
7. Although it was outside the scope of the Infrastructure Funding Analysis, the Comprehensive Plan Update should consider the following issues to determine how best to proceed in verifying specific possibilities for the Lake Cook Road and Route 53 properties:
 - a. What is the best way to engage the other communities in a boundary agreement discussion to determine exact acreage to possibly annex into Long Grove?
 - b. How would an annexation agreement be written to encourage property owners to support joining Long Grove?
 - c. What is Lake County's interest in allowing access across their 100 foot scenic buffer? How would incentives promote development of this land and impact annual revenue/
 - d. How does the interest in increasing revenue balance with upscale image goals of the Village?
8. Where could the businesses of most interest to residents be located?
9. Should village resources be used to attract highly desired uses even if they provide little revenue?
10. How should the interests and needs of residents be balanced with market support and revenue growth? (Market support makes changes happen faster while patience may not result in desired products)
11. How many units could reasonably be added within walking distance of downtown Long Grove?
12. Assuming the potential additional units would still leave Long Grove far short of the populations associated with vitality, are there other changes that could compensate for its very low nearby population? (bike trails or other exercise/open space that attract from longer distance, activities such as classes, routine smaller festivals)
13. What policies encourage property improvement?
14. How can water and sewer infrastructure be provided?

Housing

1. Should redevelopment be encouraged by designating areas built in 1980 or earlier as locations where replacement homes can be on smaller lots? This policy might also require or provide the bonus only when the property connects to municipal or private but extensive sewer and water service.
2. What housing price points best position Long Grove in the regional market, and how can Village policies impact price points? Elements like lot sizes, finishes, private roads, infrastructure access, and open space are influential factors.
3. Does serving a retiring population require a different type of unit?

4. Can Long Grove identify space for at most 100 units of housing targeted to active seniors?

Land Use & Transportation

1. Since the inception of its 1999 Comprehensive Plan, Long Grove has promoted the “green community” concept, which is recognized more commonly today as a sustainable approach to community development. The Village places a particular emphasis on maintain large lots and limiting the size of residential homes.
2. Protecting the Character of Long Grove – With a majority of the Village built out and significant land devoted to parks, conservancy areas, and other open space, there is limited opportunities for new development that will significantly alter the existing character of Long Grove.
3. The Comprehensive Plan Update for Long Grove will identify potential impacts associated with the proposed Route 53/120 project on the Village, particularly in terms of the transportation network, land use, natural environment, and character of the community.

Facilities & Utilities

1. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the community facilities that serve Long Grove residents, businesses, and property owners. Aside from the municipal government, all community facilities run independent of the Village. Municipal government services consist of administrative, police and limited public works, and other community services provided by others consist of schools, fire/EMS, parks, library, and limited utilities (sewer and water).
2. Consultant suggests considering expansion, improvement or relocation of administrative facilities, particularly as part of new development proposals.
3. A summary of changes to each community facility since the adoption of the current plan can be found in Section 7 of the Draft Summary document.