Item #7C:

Village President Underwood

IBC, University Of Illinois Downtown Study

10/08/14

Village of Long Grove

Project Objective Statement

The historic downtown business district in Long Grove has experienced a recent decline in foot traffic and retail activity. The Village of Long Grove needs to find a way to stimulate the historic downtown business district. Illinois Business Consulting will analyze the current brand of Long Grove, the needs of existing and potential patrons, and develop a strategy to expand product and service offerings to meet these needs.

Client, Context & Stakeholders

The historical downtown business district of Long Grove provides a unique shopping and dining experience to nearby residents and out of town tourists. A commercial cross roads for the local agriculture industry during its mid-19th century inception, the business district's historic image has been preserved through business owners' cooperation with strict building codes and permitted uses while the surrounding area has developed into an upscale community 30 miles northwest of Chicago. A troublesome trend of declining foot traffic and sales revenue, as well as frequent closings of small businesses has materialized over the past decade.

Our primary stakeholder is the Village of Long Grove, which will be represented by Angie Underwood, the Village President, who will also serve as the client contact. Another key stakeholder will be the Long Grove Business and Community Partners, and non-profit organization that represents the interests of business and property owners in the historic business district. It would be very helpful to this project to engage business owners directly, since they have hands on experience with commerce in Long Grove, and also because have the potential to make immediate changes. The preceding interests would likely view a successful project as one in which the final deliverable can be a tool used to attract more shoppers and diners to downtown Long Grove.

Others that will be effected by this project include nearby residents, and existing and potential patrons of Long Grove businesses. A reinvigorated downtown area could mean a new source of entertainment, shopping, and dining for residents as well as non-residents. Residents are also particularly interested in seeing life return to the downtown business district as it is a source of pride in Long Grove.

Problem Statement & Key Issues

The presenting problem is a decline in sale revenue, decrease in foot traffic, and frequent small business closures in the historical business district of Long Grove. We believe this is a symptom of a larger issue, and may be the result of a failure to reach potential customers who have different needs than current Long Grove business owners have identified. Factors holding Long Grove back could be related to the lack of organization and resources on the part of current business owners, or restrictive Village of Long Grove regulations. Illinois Business Consulting will use its research to explore opportunities for downtown Long Grove to attract a wider customer base.