

Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 157)

The Village of Romeoville adopted a revised Comprehensive Plan in 2001 and updated it in 2003. This page contains excerpts from the plan for informational purposes. The full plan can be purchased from the Community Development Department for \$25 by calling 815-886-7203.

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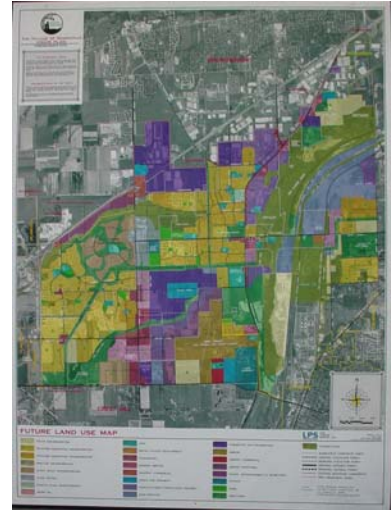
It is the goal of Romeoville residents to create a community wherein families can be provided a safe and secure neighborhood; where there is diversity and respect; where children are provided opportunities for growth and development; and where residents can be assured that the value of their property will be maintained.

The vision for Romeoville includes providing residents with choices and options for housing, travel, recreation, cultural activities and employment opportunities; Providing for their basic personal needs; And where the community is visually attractive and appealing.

Residents want Romeoville to be a place where there is an open exchange of information among its residents, business owners and government; Where the local government is fiscally responsible, yet attends to the community's needs for expanding services; And where they can be filled with pride about calling Romeoville Home.

The Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document intended to help guide growth and development decisions in the Village. The Plan is an expression of the community's expectations and aspirations and identifies the features and amenities desired for future use by the citizens. It recognizes the community's physical, social, political, cultural and economic characteristics are mutually dependent.



The Comprehensive Plan is not a rigid or static set of rules. Rather, it is fluid and dynamic. The objectives and recommendations are intended to allow flexibility in light of new information or opportunities. The Plan is not an attempt to predict the future; it is an attempt to record the basic, core community development values and principles that citizens of Romeoville share and to use them as guideposts in future decisions concerning growth, (re)development, and improvement in the community. It guides deliberations involving land development, land use regulations, and infrastructure investment.

Its timeframe is both the near and distant future. The Comprehensive Plan has no expiration date but it should be revisited on a regular basis to evaluate it against changes in technology, community values, and development practices and to keep the vision current.

The Mayor's Message

We are extremely proud of the effort by Romeoville residents in preparing this Comprehensive Plan, and are excited by the vision residents have for Romeoville in the future. The Comprehensive Plan is truly a product of the residents and business community in Romeoville. The vision reflects their dreams and aspirations.

There was a remarkably diverse mix of resident involvement in the planning process. The ages of participants in the Surveys and the Charrette ranged from 10 years of age to 72 years of age. We had people who've lived in Romeoville for more than 45 years and as little as 11 days participate. The Village Board is grateful for this involvement, and wishes to thank everyone for his or her interest and participation. It was very gratifying to witness the excitement, passion and concern residents had about the future of Romeoville.

However, there is much work to be done after the Plan is adopted. The Village Board is eager, but will need your help to begin implementing the vision the Plan presents. I ask you to remain involved so that the passion that created the Plan and vision may be transferred to its implementation and that we all may be keepers of the vision.

Fred P. Dewald, Jr., Mayor

This is Romeoville

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, areas in close proximity to the Des Plaines River - including the area now known as Romeoville - became popular spots for explorers and fur traders. When plans were made to connect Lake Michigan and the Illinois River, a number of communities were laid out along what is now known as the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Two towns were named after the Shakespearean characters, Romeo and Juliet. Several years after farmers from communities in New York and Ohio settled the town of Romeo in 1932, the city of Juliet changed its name to Joliet in order to honor one of the area's more famous explorers, Louis Joliet. In 1895, residents of Romeo decided to change the town's name to Romeoville, and the community was later incorporated.

Having continued to grow and prosper through the years, Romeoville now ranks as one of the largest communities in Will County. The Village has the second highest industrial tax base per capita in the Chicagoland area due to its excellent location advantages. The Village's location on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the proximity of rail lines and the natural resources of the area made it a desirable location for mineral extraction and basic industries such as oil refining, electric generation, and steel production. In fact, Romeoville is the terminus for numerous transcontinental pipelines, including the Trans-Canadian pipeline.

Romeoville is a mere thirty miles southwest of the Chicago Loop and conveniently located along the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) and close to the North-South Tollway (I-355) and I-80. Metra commuter rail service is available on several different lines in and near the community. Scheduled rail freight service is also available on the Burlington Santa Fe, the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern, and the Illinois Central railroads that cross the Village.

Romeoville is located on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal which provides water transportation to Chicago harbors, the Great Lakes, and the Illinois-Mississippi waterways. The Village is in close proximity to O'Hare International and Midway airports. Lewis University Airport, located in the Village, boasts one of the longest runways in northeastern Illinois and serves host to a growing corporate fleet.

The community lies in the Illinois and Michigan Canal Historic Corridor. The historic US Route 66 runs through town and was, for most of Romeoville's history, its Main Street. The prairies, forests, and wetlands in the Des Plaines River valley provide an ecological and recreational wonderland.

In the past four years, the Village has experienced unprecedented growth and development. More than four million square feet of industrial space was added during this period and the Village recently approved plans for a business park that could provide as much as 20 million additional square feet of industrial space. The population swelled from 14,000 person in 1990 to more that 21,000 in 2000 with a projected population of 40,000 persons by 2020, plus the 10,000 residents of Carillon and Lakewood Falls in unincorporated Will County.

Romeoville is unique in its commitment to both small-town caring and big city development. In Romeoville, residents still believe in old-fashioned concern for their neighbors, and although many of the Village's residents work and socialize in Chicago and surrounding suburbs, they come home to Romeoville to enjoy the area's natural beauty, peace, and quiet.

Methodology

A Comprehensive Plan is often characterized as a community's blueprint providing the general direction for decisions concerning growth and related physical improvements in the community. With its boundaries all but fixed, Romeoville's decisions about growth and development will be less about adding territory and become more qualitative in nature, thus, requiring the Comprehensive Plan to provide more than telling us where development should

occur. Village officials wanted the Comprehensive Plan to describe the kind of community residents want in the future, what it should look like, what features and amenities will be available to its residents, and what life in Romeoville should be like in the years ahead. Village officials recognized community participation in the planning process was essential in order to achieve this objective.

Several techniques permitting residents to participate in the development of the Comprehensive Plan were used in conjunction with three specific events: a Community Attitude & Preference Survey, and Image Preference Survey, and the Community Design Charrette.

Community Attitude & Preference Survey

The Community Attitude & Preference Survey was mailed to every household (more than 4,000 in all) in the Village. More than 400 households responded to the lengthy questionnaire revealing invaluable insight into the attitudes, preferences and opinions of Village residents about all aspects of development of the community.

Image Preference Survey

An Image Preference Survey was constructed showing images of all types of development - good, bad and otherwise - in Romeoville and from other areas in the region and elsewhere. In all more than 360 images were used in the Survey. The Image Preference Survey was broadcast on Romeoville Public Television over a period of several weeks in November 2000 and was placed on the Village's web site for the convenience of residents. More than 300 individuals participated in the Image Survey.

The technique allowed residents to express preferences for various forms of development, without requiring extensive technical discussions of complex and often abstract planning concepts. It measures the community's preferences for various built forms and environmental features and despite the wide diversity of participants quickly leads to a consensus as to community preferences. The findings from the Survey identified the type of development that is favored and disliked by Romeoville residents, and enabled residents to articulate their vision for Romeoville.

The Image Survey uncovered three overriding community values about development in the Village.

- First, residents have a strong preference for attractive, well-designed development and public facilities, including parks and streets. High levels of property maintenance and copious amounts of landscaping are well received by people. Building architecture that provided visual interest and was harmonious with its surroundings and contributes to people's comfort was well received.
- Second, residents prefer land uses and physical design that reflect order and clarity. Confusing architecture, roads, signage, and mis-matched land

uses are to be avoided. Neatness and simplicity are development attributes that residents find most appealing.

- Lastly, residents have an overwhelming preference for pedestrian-friendly development and places where people can gather and enjoy themselves. Residents want to be able to walk along a shaded street lined with shops and restaurants. Residents want to be able to walk or bike to nearby parks and shopping. Residents want to be able to walk along a street and feel comfortable and safe from traffic.

Community Design Charrette

The next event was the Community Design Charrette. At the Charrette residents were given the opportunity to develop their own plans for Romeoville and formulate their recommendations for development or improvement of the community. The Charrette revealed residents are highly sophisticated in their expectations, particularly with respect to the character of development in the Village, and uncovered a well-spring of creativity and imagination with respect to use or re-use of land in the Village.

Image Preference Survey

As part of the public involvement process for the preparation of the Romeoville Comprehensive Plan, residents participated in an Image Preference Survey to create a consensus about choices that affect the future of the community. The images (and their cumulative scores) indicate core community values and lay the foundation of the vision citizens have for Romeoville. From this vision, principles to guide growth and (re)development strategies are derived. The most positive images, in effect, are the building blocks for the Comprehensive Plan and future investments in Romeoville.

Images that incorporate pedestrian-friendly designs, proportions, amenities, well-designed buildings, and landscaping scored higher than those that did not. Favorable images were not limited to old or "historic" scenes. The use of land or buildings did not influence scores as much as the appearance of the pedestrian or public realm.

During the follow-up workshop after the image Preference Survey, residents identified the following attributes as particularly desirable:

Commercial and Office Images

- Well-maintained buildings with more traditional architectural styles, rather than big-box stores and unarticulated facades and roof lines
- Color, architectural detail, and landscaping which add to visual appeal
- Shopping areas with pedestrian-friendly areas and opportunities to walk outside and to window shop
- Lighting which is visually attractive during the daytime and at night
- Outdoor dining areas along street sidewalks

- Multi-dimensional appearance of the buildings and 'homey-feeling' in commercial settings'
- Restrained use of signs and emphasis on well-designed signs
- Landscaping including flower beds and shrubbery
- Places designed for people to gather and linger
- Absence of "Corporate" architecture where the building is a sign
- Absence of bizarre shapes, materials, and colors
- Three stories as a comfortable building height limit; with four stories being considered for unique or special locations or purposes
- Amenities such as benches, fountains, gardens, and sculpture
- Facilities designed to invite and welcome people

Multiple Family Residential Images

- Well-maintained buildings and more traditional architectural styles, rather than monolithic structures and unarticulated facades and roof lines
- Color, architectural detail, and landscaping
- Buildings with easily recognizable front doors/building entrances
- Window and door proportions and rhythm appropriate to the architectural period
- Parking which is diminished in scale and from view
- Buildings that are smaller in scale and relate to the street, not to the parking lot
- Garages that are less dominant on buildings
- Three stories as a comfortable building height limit
- Architecture that reduces building mass
- Cleanliness and order
- Curb appeal along with pedestrian comfort

Industrial

- Well-maintained buildings and more traditional architectural styles, rather than big box buildings with no detail and/or articulation of the facades
- Color, architectural detail, and landscaping
- Amenities such as water features and walking trails
- Well-designed buildings
- Parking that is diminished in scale and from view
- Architecture that reduces building mass

Parks

- Active and passive spaces, including formal open spaces
- Safe places for kids to play

- Accessible places
- Parks having streets rather than backyards along their edge
- High levels of landscaping and park maintenance
- Amenities such as seating, drinking fountains, shelters and playground equipment

Street and Alley Images

- Streets lined with shade trees
- Narrow streets on appropriate thoroughfares
- Boulevard streets
- Improvements in the appearance of major roadways (such as Route 53 and Weber Road)
- Landscaped, well-lighted, and having accessory dwelling units above garages
- High levels of landscaping and park maintenance

Mixed-Use Images

The overall scores in this category indicate a fairly positive response or reaction to the concept of mixed-use building types and development which is significant given there are no examples of this building type within the Village of Romeoville.

- Well-maintained buildings and more traditional architectural styles, rather than plain buildings and unarticulated facades and roof lines
- Color, architectural detail, and landscaping
- Mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods having pedestrian-friendly areas and opportunities to walk outside and window shop
- Lighting which is visually attractive during the daytime and at night
- Multidimensional appearance of buildings and pedestrian-scale
- The restrained use of signs and emphasis on well-designed signs
- Landscaping including flower beds and shrubbery
- Cleanliness and order
- Curb appeal and pedestrian comfort
- Places designed for people to gather and linger
- Absence of "Corporate" architecture where the building is a sign
- Absence of bizarre shapes, materials, colors
- Three stories as a comfortable building height limit; with four stories for unique or special locations or purposes

Single Family Images

- Porches

- Avoidance of garage-scape by recessing garage behind front of wall of house or removing them altogether
- Architectural variety
- Well-maintained buildings and more traditional architectural styles
- The use of color, architectural details, and landscaping
- Single family environments which encourage pedestrians
- Tree-lined streets
- Investment in older homes in older neighborhoods
- Creation of an environment appropriate for upscale, executive housing

Summary

The Image Preference Survey demonstrated that citizens desire and prefer pedestrian-friendly commercial development, pedestrian-friendly parking lots, streets and sidewalks, and generally, a high quality public realm, including civic spaces and buildings, parks and open spaces. Interestingly, many of these characteristics are present in Romeoville, today, but not in a concentration that contributes to a critical mass. It would appear efforts by the Village to provide these characteristics in its developments and redevelopments would be consistent with the expectations of residents and would likely find support among much of the citizenry. The survey results, and comments by residents during the follow-up discussions, indicate a mismatch between what the community expects and prefers in new development and what the Village's land use and development regulations can deliver.

The Romeoville Top 10

The 10 most popular community characteristics residents would like to see in Romeoville in ten, twenty, or thirty years from now:

1. Well-maintained homes and yards
2. Neighborhood schools/entire public school systems a key community asset
3. Well-designed and landscaped development
4. Well-designed public buildings and projects.
5. Citizen participation in all levels of community decision making
6. Easy to understand road network
7. Small town atmosphere
8. Tree-lined streets
9. Wide choice of sit-down restaurants
10. Central business district with pedestrian friendly streets.

Source: Romeoville Attitude & Preference Survey

Implementing the Vision

In order to achieve the Romeoville Vision, citizens prepared recommendations and ideas that fulfill the vision. These recommendations represent specific

actions to be undertaken by the Village, directions to influence future decisions, and ideas to stimulate creativity among landowners, developers and investors wishing to do business in Romeoville.

The recommendations are divided into five categories: circulation; community development; recreation, civic and cultural development; community appearance; and, economic development.

Circulation

Interstate Improvements

- Work with IDOT to develop a new interchange at I-55 and Airport Road.
- Develop intergovernmental partnerships to seek expedited programming and priority funding of improvements to I-55.
- Reconfigure the I-55 - Weber Road interchange to improve traffic flow and accommodate increasing traffic volumes on both traffic arteries.
- Work with state representatives, IDOT and Will County highway officials to program and expedite construction of necessary road network improvements in Romeoville.
- Continue to support local efforts to construct the I-355 extension from Bolingbrook to New Lenox.
- Exploit the 135th Street access to the proposed I-355 toll way extension.

Arterial Improvements

- Make Village thoroughfares more attractive by requiring landscaping, landscaped medians, attractive lighting, and other visual amenities.
- Establish a continuous north-south local collector street system parallel to Weber Road, such as Pinnacle Drive and Budler Road, from Normantown Road to Renwick Road.
- Encourage transit-capable development along the Weber Road and IL 53 corridors in the Village.
- Realign Airport Road to connect to Taylor Road near IL 53.
- Establish a bridge along the Taylor Road right-of-way which extends over the Material Services Quarry and water ways to connect with 143rd Street.

Local Road Improvements

- Connect neighborhoods to one another with streets, sidewalks, and paths
- Keep truck traffic out of Village neighborhoods.
- Encourage the application of traffic calming techniques in Village streets.
- Develop an interconnected network of thoroughfares in the Village and throughout Village neighborhoods.
- Improve safe traffic flow.
- Make village thoroughfares bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- Promote interconnectivity between neighborhoods.

Public Transportation

- Work with the RTA to develop the proposed Metra commuter station at 135th Street into the hub of a convenient village-wide transit system.
- Provide for bus access to shopping centers.

Trails

- Develop an extensive interconnected off-street recreational trail system linking regional recreational facilities and Village neighborhoods.
- Physically link Romeoville's neighborhoods to Heritage Corridor recreation trails.

Waterways

- Investigate the feasibility of flooding the I&M Canal to allow canoeing or paddle boating on the canal.
- Develop a public marina on the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal at 135th Street.
- Develop Rock Lake as a public recreational facility.
- Improve access to river resources.

Recreation, Cultural, Civic and Appearance

Public Art and Cultural Amenities

- Promote youth-oriented programs in the Village.
- Develop a new civic center such as a museum, band shell, courthouse, or municipal complex.
- Develop relationships with Lewis University to increase exposure of the University's cultural and performing arts programs to the community, generally, and particularly oriented to the community's youth.
- Encourage the infusion of cultural amenities in new development throughout the Village.
- Incorporate pieces of Romeoville's heritage in public and private development, buildings, and public spaces.
- Encourage the provision of prominently displayed public art and monuments in new development and in connection with public uses in the Village.

Parks

- Assemble and acquire land to establish and maintain a community festival area.
- Preserve and protect the natural areas in the Village.
- Identify sites for developing specialized recreational facilities, such as ice rinks, swimming pools, indoor soccer, golf courses, and skateboard parks.
- Provide more park space in individual neighborhoods.

- Make use of the water-filled quarries in the Village for recreation purposes.
- Increase the amount of ball fields and soccer fields in the community.

Gateways

- Incorporate recreational, civic and cultural features and amenities in gateway development and improvement programs in the Village.
- Develop gateways for the Village at the I-55 / Weber Road interchange area and the Joliet Road / IL 53, Weber Road / Renwick Road, and IL 53 / Renwick Road intersections to provide a sense of arrival in Romeoville and a positive community image.

Tourism

- Exploit the tourism opportunities presented by the recreational facilities and environmental resources in the Village.
- Develop the eco-tourism opportunities in Romeoville presented by the natural areas, cultural and recreational amenities in and near the Village.

Property Maintenance

- Enforce property maintenance codes and ordinances. Provide resources to increase the effectiveness of the program.
- Recognize property owners who exhibit high standards of property maintenance. Search for ways to increase participation and interest in this program.

Community and Economic Development

- Community Character
- Make neighborhoods more visually appealing by controlling the locations of garages, parking and signs, and by requiring more landscaping.
- Develop a uniform Romeoville identification program that can be applied to all Village neighborhoods to reinforce people's attachment to the community and project a positive community image.
- Encourage the design and construction of commercial and industrial development to provide a hospitable pedestrian environment, mixed-use buildings, public amenities, and more visually attractive appearance.

Community Services

- Develop land around the I-55-Weber Road interchange for travel, entertainment and commercial recreation purposes.
- Exploit the economic development opportunities connected to the proposed Metra commuter station and other land lying east of the waterways.

- Become a full-service community.
- Maintain a reliable level and quality of water, sanitary, road maintenance, police and fire protection services.
- Develop recreational and cultural activities people of all ages from youth to seniors.

Residential Development and Revitalization

- Provide more parkway trees throughout the community.
- Provide the widest choice of housing opportunities possible in the Village.
- Encourage mixed-use neighborhoods, development, and buildings in the Village.
- Develop estate neighborhoods north of Donovan Road and in the vicinity of Big Run Golf Course on 135th Street.
- Develop an aviation-related residential neighborhood southwest of the Lewis University Airport.
- Exploit the proposed Metra commuter station by developing a transit-oriented neighborhood east of New Avenue.
- Disperse or scatter multiple family housing throughout neighborhoods and across the Village; Avoid large concentrations of attached housing.
- Develop and implement a systematic infrastructure repair and replacement program, focusing on curb and gutter and sidewalk repair and replacement in the Hampton Park neighborhood and a storm water management plan.

Commercial and Industrial Development

- Create a pro-active economic development program.
- Exploit Weber Road for commercial and industrial development.
- Maintain a dialogue with the business community to remain responsive to the needs and requirements of business operations in the Village.

Town Centers

- Develop a mixed-use transit oriented Town Center at Weber road and 135th Street that would exploit its commercial development opportunity and its proximity to Joliet Junior College and the community festival park.
- Redevelop and transform the Spartan Plaza into a new Town Center with retail, office and civic uses and public spaces on pedestrian friendly streets.

Zoning Regulations

- Designate Route 53 as a Business I-55 Corridor.

- Investigate the community benefits of annexing unincorporated subdivisions in the Village's planning area such as Carillon, Lakewood Falls, Collegeview, and Christine subdivisions.
- Revise Village land use and development regulations to be consistent with the Romeoville Vision and Comprehensive Plan recommendations.
- Formulate land use regulations that will achieve higher standards of architectural design, landscaping, and urban design in the Village.

Corridors

- Exploit the economic development opportunities that lie along the IL 53 corridor, particularly in connection with the Heritage Corridor and the historic US 66 scenic by-way.
- Redevelop the IL 53-Joliet Road Corridor, with an eclectic design that facilitates traffic-oriented business.
- Develop corridor improvement plans for each of the primary corridors into Romeoville to address building placement, landscaping, signs and general appearance of development and thoroughfare improvements along Weber Road, IL 53, Joliet Road, 135th Street, Normantown Road, Airport Road, Taylor Road, and Renwick Road.
- Develop and implement design guidelines for (re)development and thoroughfare improvements in the Weber Road and IL 53 corridors.

Lewis University Airport

- Reserve land around Lewis University Airport for airport-related and time-sensitive enterprises to exploit the airport infrastructure.
 - Reserve land near the entrance to Lewis University Airport for airport-related and travel-related commercial uses.
 - Reserve land south of Lewis University for expansion of the University or development of University-related uses.
 - Exploit the economic development opportunities of Lewis University Airport.
-