



SECTION 2

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is a core element of the planning process for the Comprehensive Plan Update. Designed to be carried out throughout the duration of the planning process, public engagement is approached with a multi-faceted strategy comprised of the following components and described in this section:

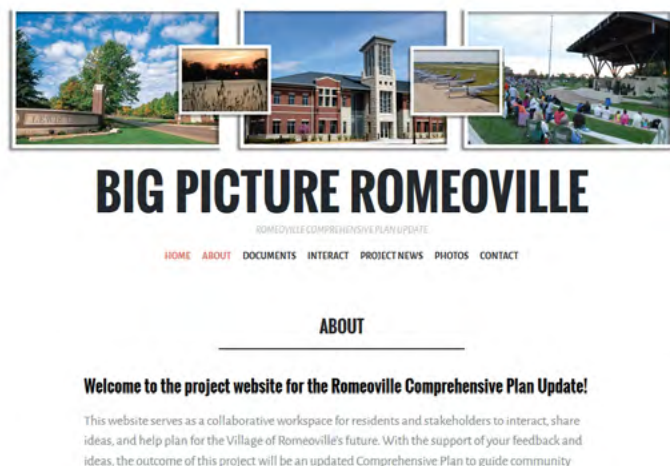
- ☐ Project website
- ☐ App for mobile devices
- ☐ Community survey
- ☐ Online mapping tool
- ☐ Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
- ☐ Stakeholder focus group interviews
- ☐ Public meetings and workshops
- ☐ Community events

A summary of key planning themes that have emerged from the public engagement process so far is provided in Section 1.

PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website serves as a one-stop shop online for Romeoville residents and stakeholders to access information, documents, and resources relating to the Comprehensive Plan Update. Items that can be accessed on the project website include: project news; project timeline; calendar of upcoming meetings and activities; interim project documents; meeting agendas and documents; and Village contact information. The project website also provides various interaction tools, as illustrated in the graphic below.

To ensure residents and stakeholders can visit the website just as easily while on the go as they can on a computer at home or work, the project website is optimized for mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets. The comments gathered from the interaction tools will provide greater community insight into what people like about Romeoville and what they would like to change, which will be integrated into plan recommendations later in the process.



ONE-STOP SHOP FOR PROJECT DETAILS

Project website for the Romeoville Comprehensive Plan Update
<https://www.bigpictureromeoville.com>



WAYS TO INTERACT ON THE PROJECT WEBSITE



IDEA ZONE online form enables the sharing of comments, stories, and ideas, as well as photos.



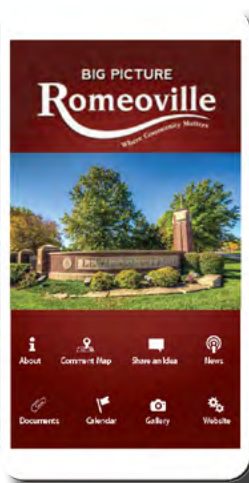
COMMUNITY SURVEY
 The survey allows respondents to share their thoughts on various aspects of Romeoville.



COMMENT MAP
 This tool allows users to provide location-specific comments on a map of Romeoville.

APP FOR MOBILE DEVICES

In addition to the project website, an app for mobile devices was created to provide residents and stakeholders with another means to interact and stay up-to-date on the Comprehensive Plan process. The app is available to download for free on the Apple App Store for iPhones and iPads, as well as the Google Play Store for Android phones and tablets. With functionality similar to the project website, the app is optimized for ease of use on a mobile device. One of the advantages of the app is the ability to receive push notifications, which serve as periodic updates of latest project news, upcoming meetings or activities, or other items to stay active with the project. App users can opt out of receiving the push notifications.



WHY HAVE BOTH A PROJECT WEBSITE AND MOBILE APP?

Just like visiting a popular website like Amazon or Facebook, a mobile app typically has similar functionality as the regular website but in a more streamlined format that is easier to navigate using a smartphone or tablet. The mobile app also enables push notifications so that you get updates like you would with any other app on your mobile device.



PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

To help promote the project, promotional materials like the project cards shown below have been provided at focus groups and given to community leaders to share with their constituents, colleagues, neighbors, and friends. The project cards have the web address for the project website. As the planning process goes on, other promotional materials will be created to help promote meetings and upcoming activities related to the Comprehensive Plan Update. For example, the Consultant Team worked with Village staff to send out an attachment for a water bill mailer to all Romeoville residents to promote the Community Survey, which is described below.



COMMUNITY SURVEY

A web-based Community Survey was administered at the onset of the planning process to help the Village understand how to better serve the needs of Romeoville residents and stakeholders. The survey garnered 299 total responses. General survey findings are summarized in the graphics below.



97%

Percentage of survey respondents are identified as homeowners, which is reflective of the high homeownership rate in Romeoville overall (78% in 2016)



19%

Percentage of survey respondents who stated they visit destinations in Uptown Square and along Route 53, as opposed to 76% along Weber Road



74%

Percentage of survey respondents who indicated that home prices in the Village was the most important factor in decision to move or stay in Romeoville



66%

Percentage of survey respondents who indicated that access to I-55 was the second most important factor in decision to move or stay in Romeoville



47%

Percentage of survey respondents who rated access to a variety of full service restaurants as being poor in Romeoville



47%

Percentage of survey respondents who rated access to cultural institutions (e.g., arts, music, theater, etc.) as being poor in Romeoville



79%

Percentage of survey respondents who indicated that the diversity of housing types available in Romeoville is sufficient



25%

Percentage of survey respondents who indicated that there are too many rental units available in Romeoville



59%

Percentage of survey respondents who stated support for more senior living options, including age-restricted active adult units and assisted living facilities



75%

Percentage of survey respondents who stated support for recreation or tourism oriented uses as a potential reuse of the coal power plant along the Des Plaines River



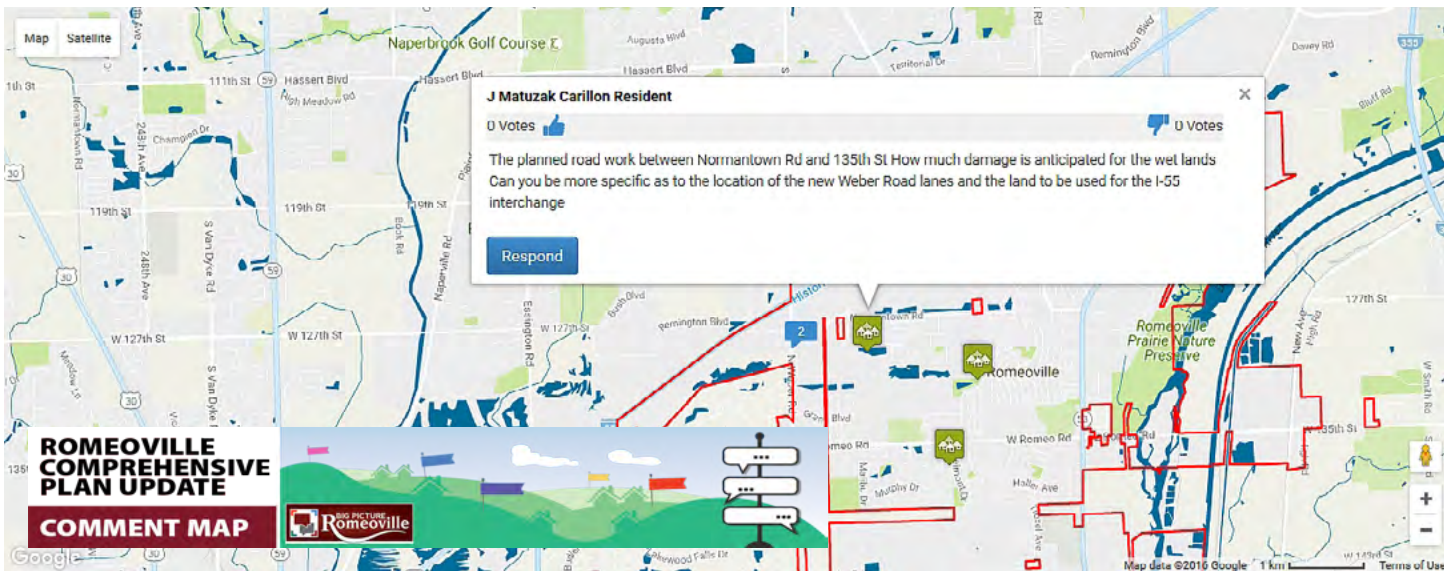
24%

Percentage of survey respondents indicating insufficient access to transit options in Romeoville, including Pace and Metra



97%

Percentage of survey respondents who stated they experience traffic congestion, most notably at Weber Road and I-55



ONLINE MAPPING TOOL

The web-based Community Remarks® mapping tool is available on the project website, which enables users to share comments by spatially mapping them on a Google Map of Romeoville. By mapping comments in a visual manner, comments and concerns regarding specific places in Romeoville will help to identify potential recommendations to resolve certain issues, whether specifically for a certain location or more broadly across the Village. Another advantage of using the online mapping tool is that it allows users to view comments from others to get a feel for what other users are saying. The map shown in the graphic below illustrates a sampling of the comments received so far from the Community Remarks® mapping tool.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

An ad-hoc Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) has been organized to help guide the planning process in collaboration with the Consultant Team and Village staff. Comprised of community leaders and partners in Romeoville, the CPSC will review and provide feedback on interim documents, offer their insights on visioning and strategy development, and promote meetings and other project activities among their constituents.

PUBLIC MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS

In addition to the web-based interaction tools like the project website, mobile app, and survey, the general public will have multiple opportunities to participate in the planning process. The first public meeting will be the Envision Romeoville Public Workshop set for November. Other public meetings will be planned.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Part of the public engagement approach is being out in the community to converse with residents and allow them to share their thoughts in a more public and interactive setting. For example, the Consultant Team set up a booth at RomeoFest on August 6, 2016, to gather the ideas of community members on how to improve the future of Romeoville. A collage of photos on the next page illustrates the interaction and creative ideas that emerged from RomeoFest.





COMMUNITY OUTREACH

ROMEOFEST | AUGUST 6, 2016

This photo collage provides a visual overview of the Consultant Team's interaction with community members to gather their ideas and feedback regarding the future of Romeoville.

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

A series of stakeholder focus group interviews were conducted on July 11, 2016, with a broad subset of the Romeoville community. A few one-on-one interviews were also conducted via phone. From residents, Village officials, and municipal staff to public agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders, the focus group interviews gathered a wide array of comments and insights regarding the strengths, challenges, and opportunities that characterize Romeoville. Much of the feedback received from these interviews corroborate the key planning themes that define Romeoville's planning efforts for the future, as summarized in Section 1. As summarized below, the key issues and opportunities that arose from the stakeholder interviews are consistent with the key planning themes outlined in Section 1.



EXPAND THE APPEAL OF ROMEOVILLE

Romeoville is transforming from a primarily working industrial town to a municipality that provides a greater range of services to the family-oriented community. The Village should also expand its appeal to young professionals and Millennials.

- ❑ Attract the Millennial generation by expanding housing options, particularly high quality rental options, and creating greater diversity of recreational and entertainment opportunities for a mobile, tech-savvy, and experience-seeking generation. Need to have more reasons for young people to make long-term investments in the Village.
- ❑ Continue to expand incentives for local entrepreneurs, with emphasis on technology-oriented businesses. Provide local management and financial support to help grow new business ideas, and expand opportunities for solid middle income jobs.
- ❑ Expand active recreation and education opportunities, particularly in partnership with local colleges; and improve pedestrian and bike access to local institutions.
- ❑ Partner with local schools to improve performance to retain families, reduce student mobility, and better prepare students for college and the workforce.
- ❑ Expand community events to promote civic involvement, e.g., local concerts in park, more focus on family and fun.
- ❑ Provide more transit options that help to reduce the reliance on cars.

PROVIDE MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

Expand housing options for all income and age ranges, with particular focus on high quality rental projects for young professionals and older empty nesters seeking to leave the single-family home. Reduce the high rental rates by assisting residents with transitioning from renting to homeownership through programs, such as down payment assistance and rent-to-own programs.

DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Village has a strong track record in attracting new businesses over the past 15+ years as a result of good communication through various social media sources and proactive economic development programs.

- ❑ The Village has established a positive working environment for local businesses and developers. Staff is experienced in getting projects done, but layers of approvals and changing rules and expectations can cause unnecessary delays.
- ❑ The Village benefits from the presence of a strong, diverse workforce with high-skilled jobs and good retention. Opportunities to expand the local job base with more workers with higher technology skills will attract new tech-oriented businesses. Local businesses can attract workers from the larger region and access larger markets.
- ❑ The Village is reaching its development capacity for industrial uses. Future economic development programs should consider traditional, mixed-use retail, and other types of non-traditional or hybrid business uses:
 - Office
 - Retail warehouses and manufacturing
 - Craft or specialty manufacturing, such as breweries (e.g., Two Brothers brewery in the Warrenville industrial park)
 - Retail/warehouse/manufacturing establishments, (e.g., Ashley Furniture and Weathertech)
 - Other uses regarding the growth of e-commerce
- ❑ Expand local business and convenience shopping opportunities on the east side of town, as is occurring in Uptown Square.



EXPLORE PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL COLLEGES

Promote Romeoville as a regional center for higher education, particularly with three colleges serving the community. This will create efficiencies and provide greater benefits to the community, and be a key attraction for young professionals, families, and high-skilled job seekers and business entrepreneurs.

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