

October 15, 2003
ISSUE FOR VILLAGE BOARD

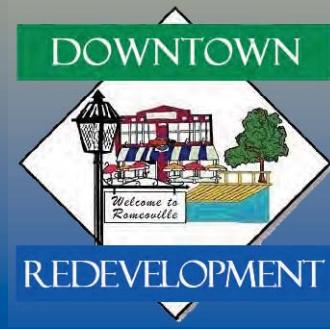
Downtown Master Plan

Prepared by:

Hitchcock Design Group

in association with:

Business Districts, Inc.
Oppermann Bilsland Architects





Honorable Fred Dewald, Mayor

Village of Romeoville

13 Montrose Drive

Romeoville, IL 60441

Executive Summary Letter

Dear Mayor Dewald:

The publication of this Downtown Master Plan marks the end of a thoughtful public planning process that was recommended in your 2001 Comprehensive Plan. More importantly, it represents the beginning of a multi-year implementation process that will clearly establish the study area as the premier live, work, shop environment for the entire community.

This spring, our assignment was clear: Create a long-range master plan for Romeoville's first commercial development, Hampton Park Terrace, known to long-time residents as Romeoville's downtown. But quickly the question really became, "Without the traditional civic and cultural icons usually associated with successful downtowns, can this area really be the center of community life in Romeoville, or is this just a neighborhood shopping district that urgently needs a makeover?"

After extensive public discussion, substantial site and market research and input from dozens of stakeholders, it became clear that the community wants, and can support a distinctive, compact shopping district that emphasizes pedestrian hospitality. And even though the study area is not geographically centered in the village and 13% of it remains vacant more than 40 years after it was initially developed, this area can become the "centerplace" of Romeoville. The master plan is very respectful of existing property owners' interests and rights. But without significant municipal intervention, it will be practically impossible for the private sector to capitalize on this important opportunity by itself.

We believe that, while this area will not successfully compete with the Weber Road shopping district, it can become a destination of choice for both old (east) and new (west) residentsif:

- the village extends Phelps and Essex in order to improve motorist and pedestrian circulation, and
- the village creates a prominently located, landmark-quality park, and
- the village creates tools and standards that promote quality investment and construction, and
- compatible businesses are consolidated into auto and pedestrian oriented clusters, and
- signature multi-family residential development is encouraged, and
- the development process and subsequent operations are actively nurtured and vigorously promoted, then, we believe that this area will become the downtown that the community wants and deserves.

"Hampton Park Terrace played an important role in the early development of Romeoville. Now, more than 40 years after its development, it can become central to its future."

While this level of public participation may seem extraordinary, it has been successfully accomplished in hundreds of other communities by following a systematic and incremental approach. First, the village needs to adopt this master plan and the complimentary zoning, design and financing policies that will be the backbone of the implementation process. Then, it needs to acquire the property that is needed to construct the village square and extend Phelps and Essex. Next, it needs to complete the design, engineering and permitting necessary to construct the park and street improvements and to effectively manage storm water in the downtown. And throughout this initial process, the village needs to actively engage existing property owners and potential developers to facilitate strategic private sector investments in the downtown.

In addition to its leadership and facilitator role, the village will need to invest more than \$12,000,000 in critical acquisition and infrastructure costs. It is also reasonable to expect the village to selectively provide incentives to property owners and/or developers who are willing to invest private capital in ways that advance the community's vision for the downtown. Throughout the process, the village will have to take a lead role in the promotion and operations of the new downtown.

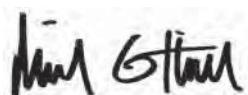
Considering the state of the local and national economy, is this an appropriate use of the village's valuable time, talent and financial resources?

Absolutely! In fact, based on the experience of other communities, we believe that the implementation of this master plan will have a powerful cultural and economic impact in the community. Merely studying the site has created an unprecedented "buzz" in the development community. Just think of the impact once the new village square starts to take shape and redevelopment begins in earnest.

The Downtown Redevelopment Commission has done a great job so far, and the future is sure to be demanding. But, imagine how satisfying it will be, 10 to 15 years from now, to know that this team had the vision, the energy and the diligence to launch and sustain this landmark project.

Hampton Park Terrace played an important role in the early development of Romeoville. Now, more than 40 years after its development, it can become central to its future.

Sincerely,



Rick Hitchcock, Hitchcock Design Group

Terry Jenkins, Business Districts, Inc.

Terry Oppermann, Oppermann Bilsland Architects

Acknowledgements

Mayor and Village Board

Fred DeWald, Jr. - Mayor
Prudence Pukula - Clerk

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Marty Duffels | Steve Spandonidis |
| Dr. Edward McCartan | Dennis Veselsky |
| Linda Palmiter | Thomas Weinrick, Sr. |

Downtown Redevelopment Commission

| | | |
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Letter to the community from the Mayor about why this is an important initiative that deserves the community's time, talent and financial resources

Foreword

Background

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Downtown Master Plan

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Implementation

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Background

In 1961, Hampton Park Terrace was built at the intersection of the Route 53 and Normantown Road, the area's two busiest roads. The high traffic volume and new residential growth provided the population base necessary support Romeoville's first commercial district. Despite the lack of historic architecture, municipal buildings or other cultural anchors, Hampton Park Terrace was soon recognized as Romeoville's downtown. Recently, development has moved westward along Weber Road which, by comparison, has drawn attention to the study area and the need for an urban center-place with community-wide appeal.

In response to revitalization goals set forth in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan for Hampton Park Terrace (aka Spartan Plaza), the Village of Romeoville Board commissioned the Downtown Redevelopment Commission (DTRC) to explore the potential of the area. In January of 2003, the Village hired a consultant team led by Hitchcock Design Group to create a master plan to revitalize Romeoville's downtown.



Hampton Park Terrace 1979

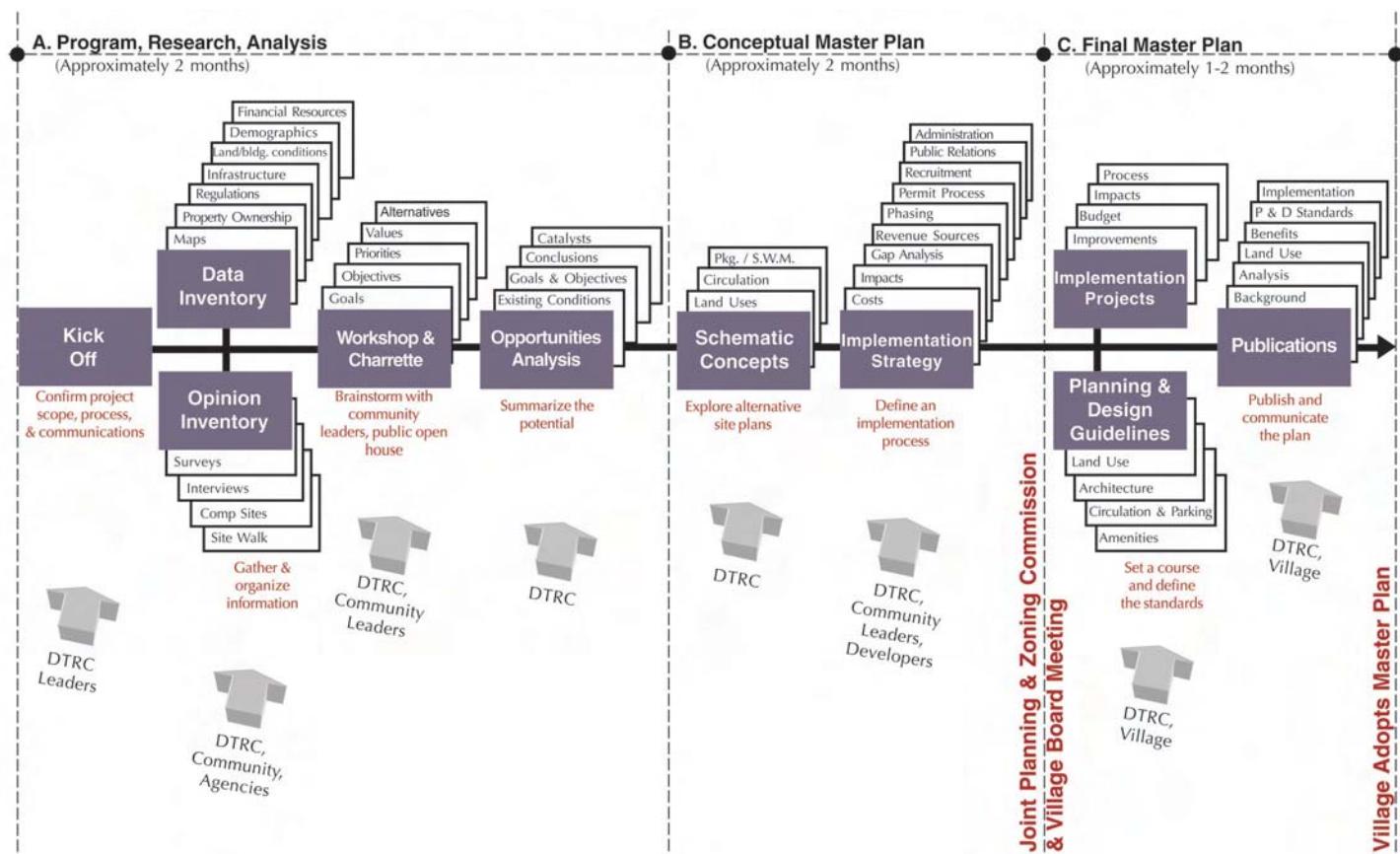
The planning process was divided into three phases:

- Opportunity Analysis
- Conceptual Master Plan
- Long Range Master Plan

In order to understand the community's vision for the Downtown, property owners, business owners, Village officials and residents were engaged through various surveys and interviews; a community workshop; a design charrette and an open house conducted by the DTRC and the consultant team. Their attitudes and opinions supplemented the consultant team's research into the history, economy, image, culture, hospitality and development potential of the study area and the community. The consultant team presented land use and master plan alternatives to the DTRC and the public, culminating in a consensus concept. The consultants' recommendations have been publicly reviewed on a regular basis throughout the process by the DTRC, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Village Board.



The master plan is influenced by many constituent interests.



Romeoville Downtown Revitalization Master Plan Planning Process

Opportunity Analysis

The Downtown holds great promise to become the centerpiece of Romeoville. To understand the full potential of the area, its strengths and its weaknesses have been evaluated. The opportunity analysis has been summarized into six categories:

- Physical Resources
- Marketplace
- Regulatory Environment
- Analysis
- Goals and Objectives
- Alternatives

Physical Resources

Location

Regionally, Romeoville is located in the Southwest Suburbs, approximately 30 miles southwest of Chicago and 9 miles north of Joliet. I-55 travels through the north side of the Village, with Illinois Route 53 (Historic Route 66) and Joliet Road linking the interstate and downtown Joliet. Weber Road has become a major north/south arterial connecting Joliet and Naperville. Waterways, including the Sanitary and Ship Canal, the I&M Canal and the Des Plaines River run along the eastern edge of the Village.

Locally, the Downtown is at the intersection of Normantown Road and Illinois Route 53, known as Independence Boulevard within the Village of Romeoville limits. The study area is bounded to the north by Normantown Road, to the south by Alexander Circle, to the east by Independence Boulevard and to the west by Dalhart Road.

The site benefits from excellent access from two major roadways, the north/south Route 53 corridor and the Normantown east/west corridor. Both of these roads provide high exposure to motorists and link to even greater volumes of traffic along Weber and I-55. However, because they are high volume thoroughfares, exiting the site is often difficult. Left turns onto either roadway are complicated by the lack of signalized or even stopped intersections. Currently, the only stopped intersection in proximity to the site is the Luther/Normantown intersection. Will County is in the process of redesigning this intersection to connect Naperville Road/Luther Drive with Dalhart and providing signals. This will not only provide a much needed signalized intersection for pedestrians, but will also directly link the Downtown with traffic coming south from Naperville Road/Luther Drive.

Direct neighborhood connections from the site occur at two locations, the south end of Dalhart and Spangler Avenue along Independence Boulevard. Currently, there are no direct connections with the neighborhood to the north. The lack of connection or alignment at Essex or Dalhart and Naperville Road/Luther Drive make it difficult to serve the residential population to the north and northwest of the site.

Internally, the Downtown's street network lacks both pedestrian and vehicular connectivity. Phelps does not connect with Dalhart, making it difficult for Downtown patrons to access the library and vice versa. Sidewalks are limited, end in awkward places, at times are too narrow and lack pedestrian comforts usually associated with a downtown environment. Cyclists, similar to pedestrians, are underserved by a lack of parking and marked routes through the site and into surrounding areas.

Parking in many strip centers is the dominant land use in the study area. The existing parking lots are laid out to encourage automobile use to the detriment of the pedestrian environment. Larger parking lots are grossly underutilized most of the day. The existing streets are wide enough to accommodate on-street parking which is currently prohibited by ordinances. There are currently no off-street public parking lots.

Currently, street signs and large entry pylons for each development area are the only wayfinding graphics being used in the study area. There are no public uses identified and the large entry pylons are dated and confusing.



Site Aerial Photo



Lack of connection to the east side



Unfriendly to pedestrians



Parking is a dominant visual land use



Existing Land Use Diagram

Existing Land Use

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------|------|
| School/Library | 8.6 ac. | 16% |
| Commercial | 28.2 ac. | 52% |
| Vacant | 6.8 ac. | 13% |
| R.O.W. | 10.4 ac. | 19% |
| Total: | 54.0 ac. | 100% |
| School/Library | 128,780sf | 45% |
| Office | 32,880sf | 12% |
| Restaurant | 24,070sf | 8% |
| Retail | 98,050sf | 35% |
| Total: | 283,780sf | 100% |

Zoning B-2, Community Shopping
B-3 Highway/Regional Shopping



July 2003 Storm Event



Lack of pedestrian amenities and comfort

Existing Land Uses

Two public facilities, the elementary school and the library, account for 47% of the study area land mass. Another 12% of the property is vacant and 20% is in the public right-of-way. All of the 27.4 acres that are developed are commercial, auto-oriented businesses including clusters of auto service (5 businesses), food (9 businesses), and personal services, particularly financial services (22 businesses).

Infrastructure Capacity

The Downtown was developed prior to contemporary storm water management (SWM) practices and techniques which was particularly apparent in July 2003 storm when the area received **X**" of rain in a **X** hour period, flooding many streets and businesses.

Additionally, many other utilities, such as gas, water, electric and telecommunications do not follow modern practices and techniques. For example, overhead electrical lines are now buried underground in urban environments. Infrastructure capacity and condition, particularly storm water management, needs to be evaluated early in the process of implementing this master plan.

Appearance and Image

Overall, the study area looks like what it is; a group of small highway oriented businesses and an aging shopping center. There is no cohesion between building types and styles, uses are separated by parking which dominates the landscape. Many of the buildings are still structurally solid, but appear dated. Property maintenance has not kept pace, resulting in litter, cracks in walks and parking lots and loose light fixtures. Currently, many of the service areas are located in highly visible areas. Substandard maintenance practices are easily visible to everyone in the area, lowering their expectations and image of Downtown. Few of the businesses in the Downtown area cater to the pedestrian. The buildings are set back from the property line and parking areas cut pedestrians off from the main entrance.

Walking through the site is a difficult task. Street corridors are not defined by building facades nor street trees. Lighting is placed to serve motorists, not pedestrians and on street parking, which serves to buffer pedestrians from traffic is prohibited. The Downtown lacks the pedestrian amenities many successful downtowns share, such as seating, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, consistent sidewalks, people watching areas, shade and pedestrian scaled parks.

The vacant land fosters the image that the study area cannot support businesses and that the properties are not valuable. Fortunately most of the vacant land is owned by two property owners which can simplify the redevelopment process.

Marketplace

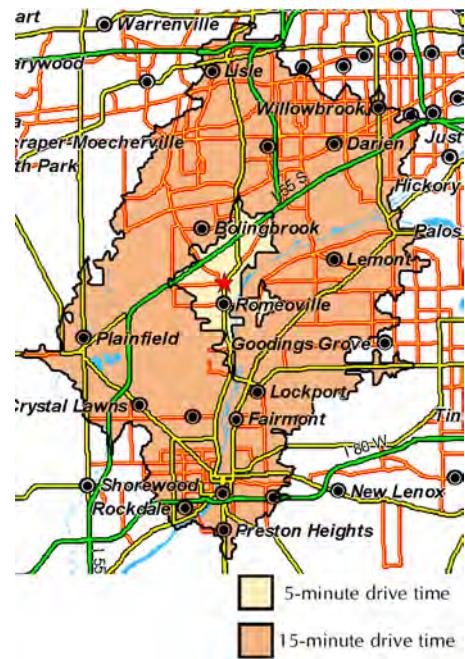
A Neighborhood Shopping Center

Downtown Romeoville, with its grocery store anchor, is a neighborhood shopping center that draws its customers from a relatively close proximity. The Drive Time Map outlines the areas within 5- and 15-minutes of Downtown Romeoville.

Although residents within the 15-minute drive time may occasionally frequent Downtown Romeoville businesses, the residents living within a 5-minute drive are the primary market.

The inner circle on the WalkTime Map illustrates the area within $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile of Downtown Romeoville containing residents and office workers that should be the subset of shoppers who visit very frequently, often as pedestrians. With an enhanced pedestrian environment, active residents and office workers within the outer one-mile ring would also make frequent pedestrian trips to Downtown. With the easy auto access provided by the adjacent arterials, those with a five-minute drive time also are expected to be a core market of frequent Downtown users.

As community centered events are added to the library attraction of the existing Downtown, the community as a whole would be expected to visit Downtown frequently. The Primary Key Market Demographics Chart lists key demographic characteristics of these potential primary markets for the revitalized Downtown Romeoville. The customers from these markets would be supplemented by occasional visitors from an extended 15-minute drive time seeking items at stores not offered closer to home. These populations are the basic expected users for any neighborhood center.



| | 0.5 Miles | 5 Minute Drive | Romeoville |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Population Variables 2002 | | | |
| Total Population | 3,156 | 21,210 | 22,562 |
| Total Households | 1,088 | 6,687 | 7,331 |
| Average Household Size | 2.89 | 3.01 | 2.8 |
| Median Age Total Population | 35 | 32 | 32 |
| Household Income 2002 | | | |
| Average Household Income | \$59,681 | \$62,970 | \$65,996 |
| Median Household Income | \$64,621 | \$68,762 | \$73,527 |
| Household Income \$75,000+ | 37.4% | 44.8% | 48.7% |
| Business Summary 2002 | | | |
| Total Employees | 1,017 | 11,528 | 6,201 |
| Total Establishments | 93 | 737 | 491 |
| Consumer Expenditures 2002 | | | |
| Food And Beverages | \$8,723,584 | \$55,869,885 | \$63,017,276 |
| Food At Home | \$5,132,096 | \$32,926,788 | \$37,058,205 |
| Food Away From Home | \$3,083,392 | \$19,713,276 | \$22,286,240 |
| Total Retail Expenditures | \$22,267,008 | \$139,764,987 | \$158,987,397 |

Demographic data © 2002 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions.

Primary Key Market Demographics

This center has the potential for bonus customers from the traffic volume on Independence Boulevard. This allows an opportunity to intercept nonresident travelers that could be a bonus for businesses in the study area. A well designed suburban commercial district with bonus market potential, often a Metra Station or a major employer, has businesses that sell 10 to 15% more goods than businesses in centers without the enhanced market conditions. That 10 to 15% bonus makes the businesses more profitable and allows the owners to invest in improved appearance and service, for example longer hours.

The listed buying power (see Primary Key Market Demographics Chart) only includes residents. If the study area could capture 1/3 of the grocery spending (\$11 of \$33 million), 10% of the balance of retail spending (\$11 million of \$110 million) and \$5 per week from each nearby employee (\$5x11,528x52=\$2,997,280), the sales would be \$25 million.

Visibility

With daily traffic counts on Independence Boulevard at approximately 31,000 (according to IDOT figures) this area has visibility to a substantial population. Additionally, according to Will County, traffic counts along Normantown Road and Naperville Road/Luther Drive are projected to increase by 145%.

Appropriate Rent

In a commercial district, rents will vary from building to building and use to use. This chart lists the rents advertised in the *Fall 2002 Retail Space Guide* for retail and office developments in Romeoville. In interviews with property and store owners in Downtown Romeoville, gross rents varying from \$12 to \$14 per square foot were reported. These rents appear to be consistent with the regional market and the business opportunity that Romeoville presents.

| | Type | Total Space | Available Space | % Vacant | Rent (/SF) |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------------|-----------------|----------|------------|
| Lakeview Office Center | Office | 18,336 | 1,410 | 7.7% | \$16.50 |
| The Office at Windham Lakes | Office | 47,487 | 38,511 | 81.1% | \$13.00 |
| Bluff Trails Business Park | Office | 24,750 | 0 | 0.0% | \$6.25 |
| | | | 0 | | |
| Romeoville Towne Center | Retail | 121,590 | 3,200 | 2.6% | |
| Taylor Budler Center | Retail | 14,000 | 14,000 | 100.0% | \$17.00 |

Source: Metro Office Space Guide, 2002; Metro Retail Space Guide, 2002

Market Rental Rates and Occupancy

Ownership Mix

Although Downtown Romeoville has national chains - 7-11, Dairy Queen and four auto service businesses - they are not the strong draws like Starbucks and Gap that bring shoppers to a business cluster. With the impressive traffic counts on Independence Boulevard, it should be possible to attract more national chains. However it is important that the national chain sites be designed to integrate with the balance of the businesses so the national chains, most likely a drug store or casual dining business, point customers to the balance of the Downtown retail offerings.

As a regional chain, Sterks represents an important opportunity to be an alternative to the area's national chain grocery stores by offering "butcher" quality meats and specialty food tailored to local ethnicity. The development of strong independent businesses offering unique products depends on the generation of enough volume from the national and regional mix and the continued presence of existing, long-standing local stores and services.

Comparison Communities

To understand the relative strength of the study area's primary market, it is useful to compare it to nearby markets that may be competition for investors considering participating in developing Downtown Romeoville. Interviews revealed that business owners and residents view Naperville's downtown as the region's most successful development and Plainfield as a nearby rapidly growing community with a downtown. The Seven Bridges area was examined as a new development currently marketing opportunities to invest in a planned downtown element.

As the Comparison Communities Chart reveals, the Downtown Romeoville study area currently has a $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile population density equal to Naperville, however it has far fewer employees and businesses. The substantial difference is in the 5-minute drive time populations. Romeoville has less than half the population of Naperville and less than $\frac{1}{3}$ the number of employees. With more rapid growth, Romeoville will narrow the population gap in coming years but the daytime employee market will be more challenging to develop since Romeoville's regional commercial niche is warehouse which has few employees per square foot of development. Compared to Plainfield's downtown, Romeoville has a much larger nearby population and more employees.



Downtown Naperville



Downtown Plainfield

Income for an area determines the type of stores while the total retail expenditures determines the number of stores and their viability

Although the income reported for Romeoville in this chart is lower than the comparison communities, it is important to note that Romeoville has a larger household size. Adding 129 households to Romeoville in the 0.5 mile radius would equal Naperville in total households. Total retail expenditures for Romeoville would exceed \$30 MM.

The Seven Bridges development site illustrates the demographic conditions underlying a current mixed use development. The attractiveness of that development compared to the study area is its 5-minute drive time market and the potential pedestrian market from full build-out of planned residential. Although this project is designed to serve the development, there will obviously be an important connection to additional markets.

| | 0.5 Miles: Downtown Naperville | 0.5 Miles: Downtown Plainfield | 0.5 Miles: Seven Bridges | 0.5 Miles: Downtown Romeoville | 5 Minutes: Downtown Naperville | 5 Minutes: Downtown Plainfield | 5 Minutes: Seven Bridges | 5 Minutes: Downtown Romeoville |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Population 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| Total Population | 3,425 | 1,853 | 1,902 | 3,156 | 59,626 | 21,518 | 72,165 | 21,210 |
| Total Households | 1,217 | 743 | 792 | 1,088 | 22,104 | 7,267 | 27,747 | 6,687 |
| Average Household Size | 2.21 | 2.8 | 2.67 | 2.89 | 2.65 | 3.03 | 2.59 | 3.01 |
| Median Age Total Population | 34 | 33 | 36 | 35 | 36 | 32 | 35 | 32 |
| Household Income 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| Average Household Income | \$71,057 | \$73,149 | \$91,468 | \$59,681 | \$102,778 | \$83,517 | \$83,389 | \$62,970 |
| Median Household Income | \$72,781 | \$84,988 | \$88,739 | \$64,621 | \$104,339 | \$95,658 | \$82,835 | \$68,762 |
| Household Income \$75,000+ | 48.6% | 57.1% | 57.1% | 37.4% | 64.5% | 65.5% | 54.5% | 44.8% |
| Business Summary 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| Total Employees | 5,203 | 1,210 | 286 | 1,017 | 42,451 | 7,453 | 30,721 | 11,528 |
| Total Establishments | 713 | 121 | 31 | 93 | 3,990 | 654 | 2,298 | 737 |
| Consumer Expenditures 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| Total Retail Expenditures | \$27,813,318 | \$17,357,223 | \$21,604,176 | \$22,267,008 | \$652,090,104 | \$186,260,477 | \$704,551,824 | \$139,764,987 |
| Demographic data © 2002 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions. | | | | | | | | |

Comparison Communities

| | 2000 | 2030 | Change |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population | 21,153 | 51,926 | 30,773 |
| Households | 6,764 | 16,936 | 10,172 |
| Employment | 10,464 | 45,569 | 35,105 |

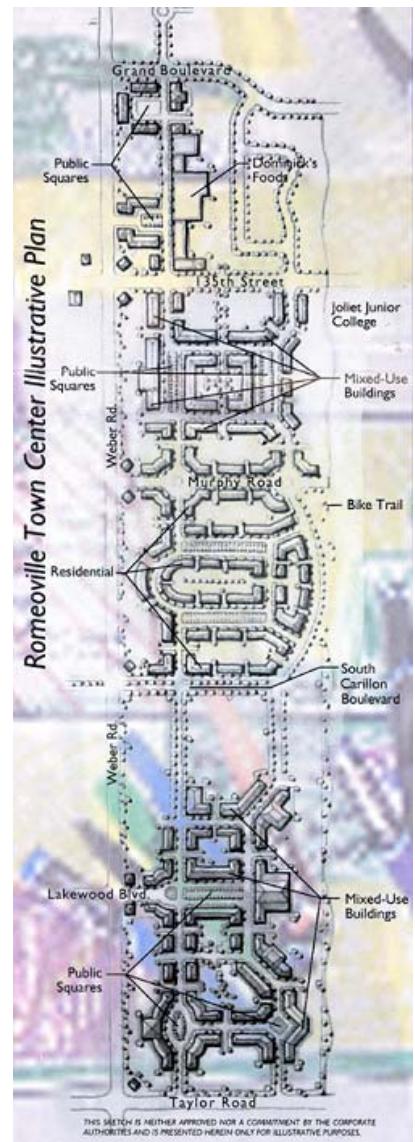
Paint the Town Population Forecast

Regulatory Environment

The study area is zoned B-2, Community Shopping and B-3, Highway/Regional Shopping. This zoning classification allows for some functions of a typical downtown area but severely limits the actual physical construction of one. Required setbacks eliminate the ability for buildings to front the sidewalk and add to the street life of a downtown. According to the Comprehensive Plan completed June of 2001, the study area is designated as the Spartan Plaza Redevelopment. The intent, according to the Comprehensive Plan, for land with this classification is to have the area redevelop "into a traditional mixed-use commercial neighborhood." (Comprehensive Plan, 2001) Ample public amenities and spaces are to be provided paying particular attention to the pedestrian-scale. "This area is also targeted as a location for the new Civic Center" (Comprehensive Plan, 2001).

The Comprehensive Plan also looks to create a second Town Center along Weber Road. Building upon the current growth along the corridor, the Comprehensive Plan designates the land on the east side of Weber Road from Grand Boulevard to Taylor Road as "suitable and appropriate for development of a mix of land uses in a traditional commercial environment with mixed-use buildings, pedestrian scaled buildings, roads and amenities, comparatively high densities, proximity to transit opportunities and generous amounts of public amenities and spaces." (Comprehensive Plan, 2001) Although the Weber Road site has a better demographic makeup to support strong commercial development, the study site is valuable for its location in Old Romeoville and its location along Independence Boulevard and Normantown Road.

Future improvements occurring within the Independence Boulevard right-of-way will need to comply with Illinois Department of Transportation regulations. (ie. landscape, etc.) Additionally, as the Naperville Road/Luther Drive realignment with Dalhart Road at Normantown occurs, we recommend the Village review that road widths and right-of-way widths are consistent with other study area roads.



Town Center along Weber Road
(Comprehensive Plan, 2001)

Analysis



Strength: Large parcel size



Strength: Surrounding Neighborhoods



Strength: Fountaindale Public Library



Strength: High traffic counts on Route 53
Weakness: Pedestrian unfriendly Route 53

The business environment in Downtown Romeoville presents an opportunity for an effective blend of the core concepts supporting successful retail centers. Based on National Planning Standards and in comparison to nearby Chicagoland region downtowns, the daytime population base currently falls short. The potential for employment growth to the east and the rapid growth of the community's population enhances the desirability of this location. Given the size of the site, it may also be possible to add office uses within walking distance of retail/restaurant development. A local population base exists to support a dining and convenience cluster and the visibility from Independence makes recruiting additional food, convenience and service businesses possible. The challenge is preserving the best of what currently serves the market while adding new properties and development which improve the appearance and shopping flow.

In looking toward opportunities for future development, it is important to look beyond the core development concepts to create a marketing plan based on an understanding of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) facing the study area. This SWOT Analysis identifies factors that created the challenging situation that sparked the need for this study.

Strengths

The Downtown Romeoville business climate has been enhanced by the following elements:

- **Traffic on Independence.** High traffic counts mean businesses merely need to entice customers to stop, much easier than enticing them to drive to a less traveled location.
- **Nearby population.** The nearby population allows for a bonus pedestrian customer base above and beyond the expected auto oriented environment.
- **Population growth.** Businesses seek locations where they can naturally grow with an increasing population.
- **Family orientation of the community.** Families spend a higher proportion of their income in retail stores than other lifestyle groups; new residents spend the highest amounts.
- **History as a commercial center.** Longstanding local businesses mean customers are already trained to frequent that area for a variety of goods. When a new business opens, it has a ready made market.
- **Library.** As with the longstanding businesses, the library means potential customers are already traveling to the area.
- **School.** Again, as with the longstanding businesses, the educators, workers and parents are potential customers.
- **Parcel size.** Although there are a number of property owners in the study area, many of them own sites large enough to develop into modern commercial space.

Weaknesses

- **Pedestrian unfriendly Independence.** Ideally a downtown is a place where pedestrians can pleasantly stroll between businesses. With food and beverage as well as family oriented uses like the batting cages on the opposite side of Independence, visitors must use their cars to leave rather than walking across the street. This prevents the synergy of multistop visits from developing, limiting the advantage of locating a business in this area.
- **Competition on Weber Road.** Because the majority of new Romeoville residents live west of Weber Road, they must pass convenience uses like grocery and drug stores to patronize Downtown businesses. They will need to offer a unique reason for consumers to choose to travel farther.
- **One-sided market.** The land to the east of the study area is unoccupied and current zoning/comprehensive planning suggests that it will never contain residential uses, the primary market has limited growth potential. Weber Road, will ultimately have a larger market within its 5-minute drive.



Weakness: Weber Road competition

Threats

- **Deteriorating properties.** As other aspects of this report detail, many of the study area properties are in an obsolete or deteriorated condition. These buildings add a sense of decline to the whole area and deter higher quality businesses from choosing this location.
- **Family unfriendly uses.** Although the cigarette and liquor stores in the study area are well maintained, they do not contribute to creation of a family friendly environment.
- **Lack of landscaping.** The hard, unfriendly, un-green appearance of the study area suggests it is not prosperous enough to support landscaping. This further discourages good businesses from believing this is a location where they are likely to prosper.
- **Confusing, pedestrian unfriendly interior access.** The current configuration - fronts of businesses face backs of other businesses and access between properties is cut off - makes it difficult for customers of one business to see and travel to other businesses without moving their cars. Once customers restart their cars, they are much less likely to re-park and visit another business. Consequently, cross shopping is minimized making each business dependent on its own customers rather than the customers of the area.
- **Lack of community consensus.** Although there is a group of very interested and committed community members supporting the project, business owners and the community as a whole have not demonstrated strong interest in the project through participation in project meetings. Low participation, may lead to a lack of consensus and support for the Master Plan as the Village moves toward adoption of the plan.



Weakness: Deteriorating properties



Threat: Lack of landscaping



Threat: Extreme widths of multiple drive entries discourage pedestrian use



Threat: Confusing, pedestrian unfriendly interior access



Threat: Deep building setbacks and parking lots located directly off the street discourage pedestrian use

Opportunities

As the design elements of this report detail, appearance enhancement is a significant opportunity that will overcome many of the threats mentioned above. The other key is identifying the appropriate new businesses for the area and create a plan to attract those businesses. Good retailers understand who shops at their stores and will only open in Downtown Romeoville if that location promises enough customers to run a profitable store. If their market criteria are not met, neither the perfect site nor substantial incentives will bring the retailer.

Whether a business is appropriate for the area is dependent on the nearby residents, the competition and the availability of the right sized space. Like most downtowns, the commercial mix should include convenience oriented retail, restaurants, personal services and office uses. With the option of preserving existing space that can charge lower rents than new construction, entrepreneurial businesses and creative industries could also locate in Downtown Romeoville. An appropriate commercial mix for Downtown Romeoville includes:

- Convenience Oriented Retail
- Restaurants
- Personal Care
- Personal Services
- Creative Industries
- Office

The key to attracting these businesses is using each business' preferred store location process. For example, most national chains use a preferred developer who finds sites, builds the structure, parking lots and landscaping and then turns the property over to the restaurant on a triple net lease that requires the business owner to pay for all maintenance, insurance, taxes and remodeling. Independents typically want the opposite, a landlord who keeps up the building and landscaping and pays expenses like taxes and insurance.

The Village supports recruitment of each type of business differently. Trade shows like the ICSC's Chicago Dealmaking Event are important to reach preferred developers, while reaching independents can be done through newspaper advertisements or signage on the building.

Goals and Objectives

Community Workshop Process and Results

A Community Workshop was held on March 20, 2003 at the Romeoville Recreation Center to focus on the vision business leaders, Village leaders and the general public had for Downtown Romeoville. The session was interactive and facilitated by the consultant team. Participants were invited to be candid and open about their ideas for the Downtown. Utilizing comparable images, the consultant team introduced design ideas, other downtowns from the area, details and other images to begin to get the participants thinking about things that they would like to see happen in the Downtown.

The following chart gives participants' answers to the question,

“What will Downtown Romeoville look like in 2010?”

The results shown are categorized and prioritized, as they were the night of the Program Workshop. Only voted upon categories are shown:

| <u>Category:</u> | <u>Total # of Points:</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Identity | 16 |
| 2. Fountain | 15 |
| 3. Food & Drink | 11 |
| 4. Entertainment | 10 |
| 5. Landscape | 10 |
| 6. Places to walk | 10 |
| 7. Make it Happen | 6 |
| 8. Office | 6 |
| 9. Retail | 5 |
| 10. Architecture | 3 |
| 11. Facilitated Parking | 3 |
| 12. Mixed Use | 1 |

In subsequent discussions with the DTRC, the goal and a series of objectives were formulated to guide the project through the design process.



Interested citizens and commission members participate in the Visioning Workshop

Create a distinctive, walkable neighborhood that features a variety and concentration of valuable destinations and activities

■ **Program the area for numerous, community activities**

Program the spaces to maintain a lively, 24 hour atmosphere that celebrates the vitality of Romeoville



■ **Feature a specialty “Village Square” type park for everyday socializing and regularly programmed events**

Create a community gathering point which is the focus of the downtown for both residents and visitors



■ **Provide a concentrated mix of shopping, dining, and services**

Use a variety of public and private sector land uses and activities to appeal to a diverse group of residents and visitors, encouraging repeat visits.



■ **Provide superb internal and external connectivity**

Create an environment that improves pedestrian and vehicular access for the entire community.



■ **Set high standards for appearance and hospitality**

Create an environment with appropriate materials that invites residents and visitors alike.



Note: Pictures shown depict local examples from the Chicagoland Region

Alternatives

Following the Program Workshop, the consultant team conducted an all day charrette on March 21, in which the vision and ideas from the program workshop were developed into five quick conceptual site plans.

These concepts were presented on March 22, during an open house held for the public at the Romeoville Recreation Center. Participants at the Open House were asked to comment on the plans and give their opinion as to which concept(s) should be pursued. The concepts fell into four categories:

Status Quo

This concept left the site as is and assumed market forces would eventually develop the site.

Minimal Municipal Intervention

This concept designed improvements only in public areas, creating a Village Square and streetscapes along the major roads while relying on market forces alone to redevelop the surrounding properties.

Significant Municipal Intervention

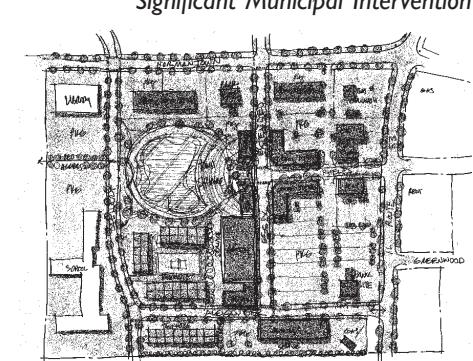
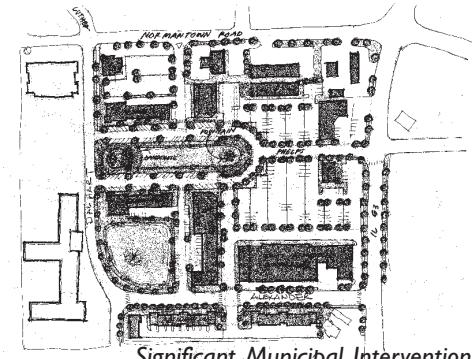
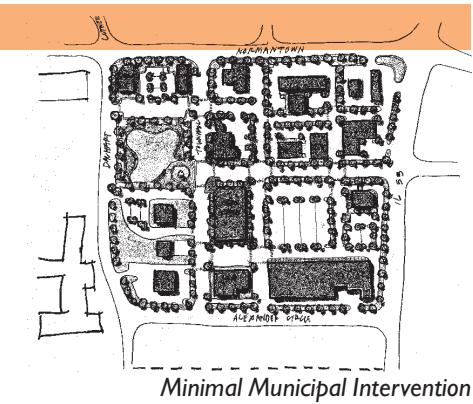
This concept accomplishes the objectives of the project in an exciting, but respectful manner. It sought redevelopment through a balance of Village improvements and intervention.

Aggressive Municipal Acquisition and Redevelopment

This concept would achieve many of the goals of the downtown project, but is simply too ambitious, adversarial and expensive.

Following multiple DTRC meetings, a joint public presentation to the Village Board and Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), and subsequent presentations to the PZC and Village Board, the consultant recommended *Significant Municipal Intervention* concept was chosen. All of the representatives wanted to pursue a concept that would allow municipal intervention to guide, support and play a role in the process, but not force it.

The consultant team also developed a potential future vision for the downtown looking into the year 2025. This bold concept looks at redevelopment east of Independence Boulevard making Independence Boulevard the center of the downtown with a mix of commercial, housing, and public open space occurring all the way to the river corridor.



Future Redevelopment Concept

Downtown Master Plan

Concept

The concept for the Downtown Master Plan ties the goals and objectives into a geographical place. It introduces the spatial element and synthesizes the strongest ideas from various early concepts and ideas into a dynamic and comprehensive plan. In its simplest form, the concept embraces these initiatives:

- Create a more viable, walkable shopping experience
- Introduce additional residents to the area
- Create a compelling space for socializing and community events
- Improve resident and visitor hospitality
- Improve overall appearance
- Program and promote the downtown

Foreword

Background

Opportunity Analysis

Downtown Master Plan

Planning & Design Guidelines

Implementation

**Create a more viable,
walkable shopping experience**

by consolidating businesses into auto-oriented and pedestrian-oriented clusters, focusing on the intersection of Phelps and Essex as the nucleus of the Downtown.

**Introduce additional
residents to the area**

by developing distinctive, owner-occupied mid-rise housing and townhouses.

**Create a compelling space for
socializing and community events**

by creating a landmark, centrally located Village Square park.

**Improve resident
and visitor hospitality**

by extending key streets and sidewalks into and through the Downtown, providing convenient public on- and off-street parking and clear, coordinated gateway and wayfinding graphics.

**Improve and maintain
overall appearance**

by renovating key existing buildings, developing handsome new residential and commercial buildings and landscaping parking lots and public spaces.

**Vigorously program
and promote the downtown**
as the premier live-work-shop environment in the area



Long Range Master Plan

The Long Range Master Plan illustrates the community's vision for the study area by giving additional form and character to the underlying concepts. The plan includes exciting redevelopment recommendations that will transform the area into a genuine pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use destination. Yet the plan is carefully crafted to foster an incremental implementation process that respects the interests of existing property owners.

The recommendations are organized into four sections:

- Existing Public Facilities
- Edge Businesses
- Core Businesses
- Residential Area

| Land Use | Existing | Proposed |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| School/Library | 8.6 ac. | 8.6 ac. |
| Commercial | 28.2 ac. | 22.6 ac. |
| Vacant | 6.8 ac. | - |
| R.O.W. | 10.4 ac. | 12.8 ac. |
| Residential | - | 7.5 ac. |
| Storm Water Mgmt. | - | 1.0 ac. |
| Park | - | 1.5 ac. |
| | | |
| Total: | +/-54.0 ac. | +/-54.0 ac. |
| | | |
| Commercial | 155,000 sf | 227,000 sf |
| Mid-Rise Housing | - | 300-350 units |
| Townhome | - | 20 units |
| Public Parking | - | 3-4 spaces/1000 sf |

Land Use Comparison



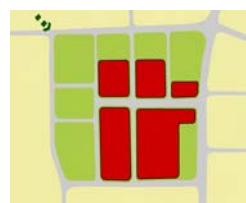
Long Range Master Plan



Existing Public Facilities



Edge Businesses



Core Businesses



Residential Areas



Village Square

These diagrams and colors are used to correlate the recommendations to physical areas within the Downtown.

Existing Public Facilities

The Fountaintdale Public Library and Robert C. Hill Elementary School provide stability to the area and should be maintained and improved over time. Library patrons, in particular, have great potential as a customer base for local businesses and as users of the public spaces. If, for any reason, the school district should choose to close the school, the Village should work aggressively to recruit a college to redevelop the site as a satellite facility.

In addition to the re-alignment of Naperville/Luther and Dalhart, streetscape improvements should be made to encourage shared use and access to the Library and School parking lots while delineating drop-off and pick-up zones. Continued aesthetic improvements to both campuses will raise the quality level of associated developments.

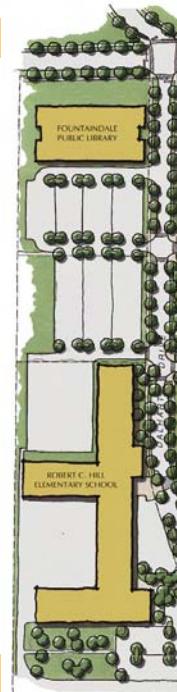
Edge Businesses

Normantown Road Businesses

As these properties redevelop, their spatial and aesthetic focus must shift to ensure that they are also catering to the increased pedestrian traffic due to their proximity and direct connection with the Core Businesses. This is especially true for the properties at the intersection of Essex and Normantown. This gateway into the Downtown will require a higher level of style, pedestrian comfort and maintenance. As new properties are built, the building types and details should compliment the downtown structures and meet the *Planning & Design Guidelines*.

Independence Boulevard Businesses

The existing Independence Boulevard businesses are auto-oriented destinations; their primary customers convenience. As such, maintaining their auto-oriented focus is crucial to their ability to remain in business. Whenever possible, site access and circulation need to be coordinated to improve safety and convenience. Although classified as edge properties these businesses should visually integrate with the Core Businesses to maintain a consistent character and enhance the sense of place. As individual property renovations take place, the building types and details should compliment the downtown structures and meet the *Planning & Design Guidelines*.

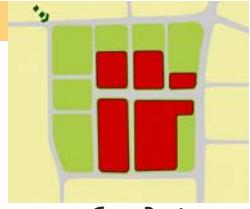


Potential Single-story Downtown Core and Edge Development building styles

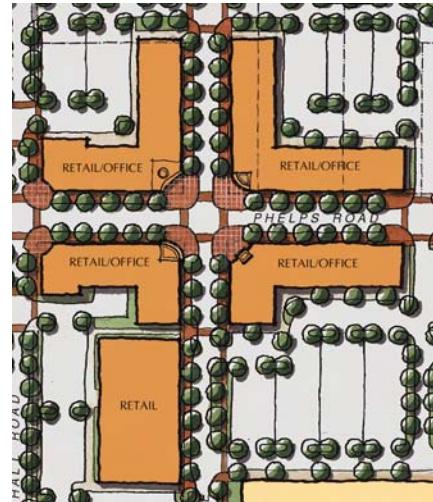
Core Businesses

Interior Commercial Properties

The interior commercial properties form the backbone for the pedestrian-oriented urban environment along Phelps Road with the focus at the corner of Phelps and Essex. These properties are to be comprised of compatible clusters of retail and office establishments, such as restaurants, boutique stores, book stores, clothing stores, and professional offices. The Core Businesses must be completely integrated with the proposed residential development, Village Square and streetscape environment to provide the synergy needed to maintain high activity levels. The structures located along Phelps should appear as a distinctive "streetwall," created by placing a continuous row of commercial buildings at the sidewalks edge in order to provide an uninterrupted shopping experience.



Core Businesses



Perspective of the intersection at Phelps and Essex



Potential Multi-story Core Businesses buildings along Phelps and Essex

Grocery Store, related tenants

The grocery store is an important retail anchor to the downtown environment and should be maintained and enhanced. Like the school and library, it generates potential customers for downtown stores. The grocery's proximity to the proposed residential is an attractive amenity for potential residents, and can be seen as a win-win for both the grocery store and the residential developers. A strong pedestrian connection from the proposed residential developments and Core Businesses will contribute to the success of the existing businesses. Aesthetic improvements consistent with the architectural style recommended in the *Planning & Design Guidelines* will integrate the grocery and other mall tenants into the Downtown.



Potential renovated facade



Mid-Rise Housing Facade along Town Hall

Residential Land Uses

Mid-Rise Housing

Residential land uses are important in maintaining vitality in a downtown setting. They create a 24 hour presence increasing safety, customer base and spending power. High quality, mid-rise housing is recommended North and South of the Village Square because:

- It will increase the property values and tax base.
- The market will support this type of housing.
- 300-350 units creates a customer base that supports the Downtown businesses
- The architecture for this type of development would be a signature element for the Downtown.

Direct access to the library, elementary school, Village Square and Downtown businesses gives the units a desirable location and promotes the walkability of the neighborhood. For this reason, pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding area is crucial to its success.



Townhomes

To the south of the condominium units, along Alexander Circle, townhomes will be a transition between the mid-rise housing and the surrounding neighborhoods. Reduced coverage of the building footprint on the lot and the single-family home style architecture also contribute. These should be high quality, well designed units that exhibit a distinctive character, while maintaining the aesthetic of the Core Businesses and neighboring mid-rise housing. The area can accommodate approximately 20 units stretching from Dalhart on the west to Essex on the east.



Pedestrian connectivity is important to link townhome residents to Core Businesses and promote walkability. Rear entry parking puts focus on the townhome facades creating a 'streetwall' and adding character to the streetscape.



Townhomes along Alexander Circle

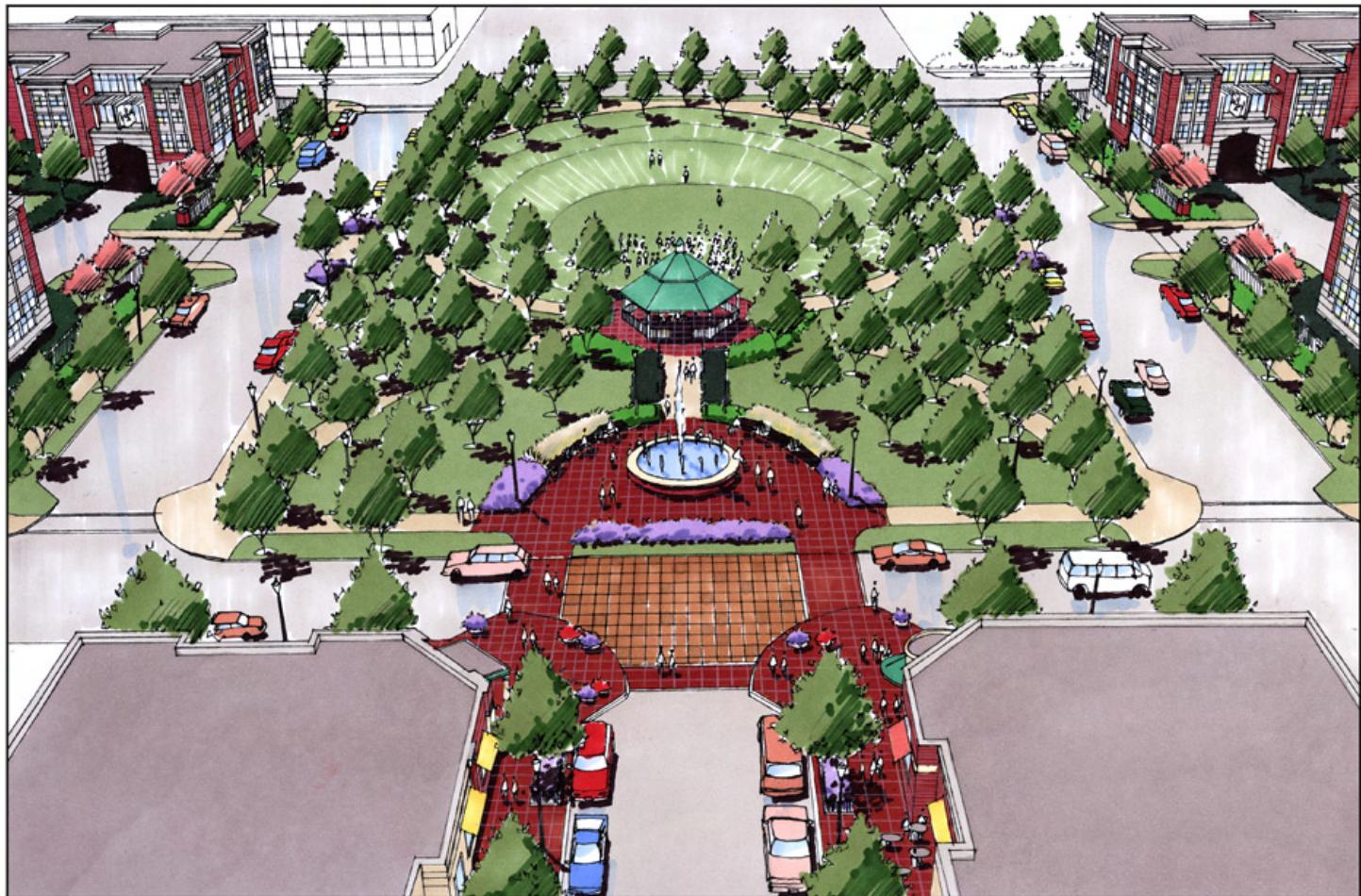
Village Square

One of the largest public projects outlined in the master plan is the creation of the Village Square. The Square is the centerpiece of the live-work-shop-dine environment and is centrally located to the land uses it supports. Integrated into the streetscape of the Downtown, the Square promotes complete pedestrian accessibility to the Downtown businesses.

This is the gathering place for the community, requiring not only a distinctive design, but also a higher standard of maintenance. Major elements of the space include a Grand Lawn, pavilion structure, plaza space, and distinctive water feature at the terminus of Phelps Road. Residences to the North and South provide a 24 hour security presence as well as potential users to populate the space.



Village Square



Perspective of the potential future Village Square

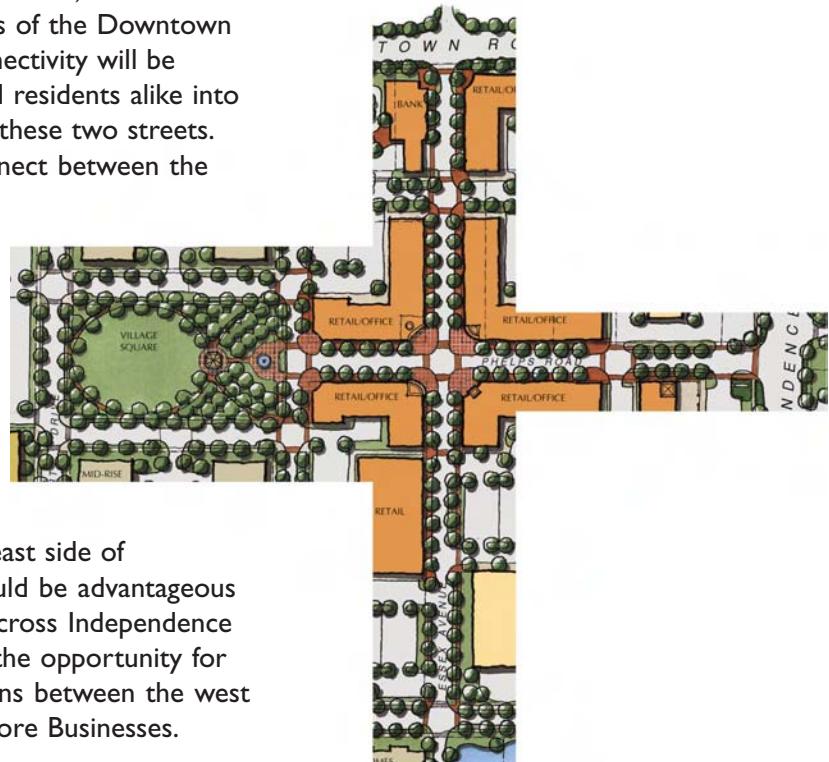


Perspective of the potential future Downtown Romeoville

Improved Streets, Parking and Sidewalks

Essex and Phelps extended

To encourage connectivity within the Downtown, it is vital that Essex and Phelps be extended to the edges of the Downtown area. Logical pedestrian and vehicular connectivity will be immediately improved, focusing visitors and residents alike into the Core Businesses at the intersection of these two streets. Extending Essex also eliminates the disconnect between the neighborhood North of the site.

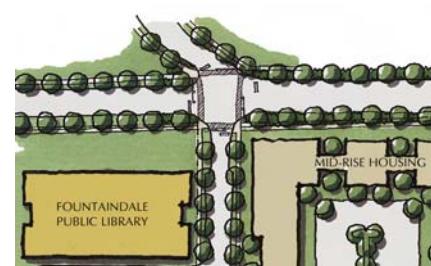


In the future, as redevelopment along the east side of Independence Boulevard progresses, it would be advantageous to study the possibility of aligning Phelps across Independence Boulevard. This significant change creates the opportunity for further pedestrian and vehicular connections between the west side of Independence Boulevard and the Core Businesses.

Realigned, signalized Luther/Dalhart

Will County has plans to realign Luther and Dalhart at Normantown. They also plan to signalize this intersection. The benefits of these plans are threefold:

- Pedestrian connectivity across Normantown is dramatically improved
- Vehicles are required to stop for longer periods of time, increasing the potential marketing impact this corner can have for the downtown
- The residents north of the site now have a direct point of contact for walking into Downtown



The Village must ensure that these plans are compatible with the design standards set forth in the *Planning & Design Guidelines* and maintain the physical and visual aesthetics recommended for pedestrian comfort. Streetscape standards should be applied within the ROW along Dalhart and Normantown and direct, meaningful pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks should be provided in all directions at the intersection.

Public on- and off-street parking

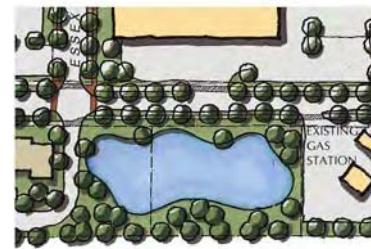
Providing close, efficient parking opportunities is vital to the success of any downtown retail area. Downtown Romeoville is no different. The auto-oriented retailers on the edges of downtown rely on parking as a part of their property, allowing customers quick, efficient access to the store for single purchases. The more urban, pedestrian-oriented Core Businesses rely on centralized off-street parking and efficient, close on-street parking. This variety provides customers with the ability for quick purchases as well as longer shopping visits with multiple stops and window shopping. In the core area, public parking facilities allows for larger lot coverages and the creation of a “streetwall” along Phelps and Essex. It is recommended, if available and feasible, that the Village purchase land and construct a public off-street parking facility, centrally located to serve Downtown businesses. The Village shall be responsible for operations and maintenance.



Storm Water Management

The Hampton Park Terrace commercial district was developed prior to contemporary storm water management techniques and regulations. For this reason, the study area has, at times, seen issues arise from improper storm water detention and retention. Proper storm water management (SWM) is essential so the effects of large storms do not impact the site, surrounding residents and businesses and downstream users.

The scope of this study did not include detailed SWM recommendations, but does realize the significance of this potential land use. In order to understand the extent of SWM the recommendation of the master plan is for the Village to hire a consultant to review, study and design a SWM plan that can be adapted and integrated into the Downtown master plan.



Economic Impacts

Investments

In order to create the Downtown that is envisioned in this master plan the Village will probably need to invest more than \$11,000,000 in critical infrastructure and amenities. In addition, the Village will need to acquire property for the park and for the extensions of Essex and Phelps, the construction of public off-street parking and the construction of storm water management facilities. Property acquisition may cost more than \$1,500,000.

It is also likely that the Village will be asked to participate in financing the pioneer redevelopment projects in order to cover potential financing gaps and to mitigate the developer's financial risk. The nature and extent of that participation is unknown at this time and deserves additional scrutiny. Lastly, it is reasonable to assume that the Village will have to cover the initial promotional and operational costs of the Downtown until redevelopment is well underway.

Together these investments may seem intimidating, particularly at a time of economic uncertainty, but they are crucial.

Without a clear signal from the Village that the Downtown is an important place, it will be difficult to attract the attention of serious private sector investment. And it will be impossible to meet the community's expectations for the creation of a genuine and lasting center-place.

| | | | |
|--|-------------|--|-----------|
| Land Acquisition Acquire land for public parking, right-of-way, park and storm water management | \$1,500,000 | Storm Water Management Includes earthwork, landscape and aerator improvements shown on plan | \$500,000 |
| Existing Conditions/Removals Remove existing conditions (i.e. buildings, roads, parking lots, etc.) for proposed public improvements | \$1,000,000 | Entry/Gateway Features Includes pedestrian amenities, signage | \$300,000 |
| Streetscape Improvements Includes roadway, pedestrian amenities, signage, landscape and electrical improvements | \$5,400,000 | Development Incentives Based on available resources through the TIF, Facade Improvement programs, grants and other sources | TBD |
| Village Square Includes roadway, pedestrian walks, Square structure, fountain, site furniture, landscape and electrical improvements | \$1,700,000 | Maintenance and Operations Rises as development occurs and the Downtown becomes a priority within the various Village departments | TBD |
| Public Parking Includes parking surface, pedestrian walks, signage, landscape and electrical improvements | \$900,000 | Other School and Library improvements | TBD |
| Utilities/Infrastructure Includes sanitary, storm sewer and water main improvements | \$1,600,000 | <i>*Please Note: costs are approximate and include Design and Engineering Costs and Construction Services Costs plus a 25% Design and Bid Contingency.</i> | |

Revenues

In addition to meeting the community's cultural objectives, we believe that the Village's strategic investment in the downtown should lead to private sector redevelopment that will, in turn, generate an increase in both property and sales tax revenue. When built out, we believe that the downtown will have a market value of over \$80,000,000 and generate municipal real estate and sales tax revenues of more than \$750,000.

Property Tax

| Commercial | Square Footage | Estimated Value | Comment |
|---|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Remodeled Retail | 86,000 | \$9,600,000 | rent \$10/sf, 9% cap rate |
| New Retail | 126,000 | \$19,600,000 | rent \$14/sf, 9% cap rate |
| New Office | 15,000 | \$2,000,000 | rent \$12/sf, 9% cap rate |
| Total Commercial | 227,000 | \$31,200,000 | |
| Residential | Units | Estimated Value | Comment |
| Mid-rise Condo (+/-5.6 ac.) | +/- 300 | \$45,000,000 | \$150,000 per unit |
| Townhome (+/-1.9 ac.) | 20 | \$4,500,000 | \$225,000 per unit |
| Total Residential | +/- 320 | \$49,500,000 | |
| Total Estimated Value (market) | | \$80,700,000 | |
| EAV (.33 x market) | | \$26,631,000 | |
| Municipal Tax Rate (2002) | | 0.9054/100 | |
| Total Estimated Property Tax Revenue | | \$241,000 | |

NOTE:

Rents are an average and assume normal vacancy is 10%.

Sales Tax

| | Square Footage | Sales/SF | Total Sales | Municipal Sales Tax |
|--|----------------|----------|--------------|---------------------|
| Remodeled Retail | 86,000 | \$200 | \$17,200,000 | \$172,000 |
| Newly built property | 141,000 | \$240 | \$33,800,000 | \$338,000 |
| Total Estimated Sales Tax Revenue | | | | \$510,000 |

NOTE:

Sales were adjusted to reflect the presence of non-sales tax generating businesses in 20% of the commercial space.

Total Estimated Tax Revenue **\$751,000**

Even in the best economies, it is challenging to finance redevelopment projects of this scale and complexity out of the Village's general fund. In today's fragile economy, the competition for capital is even more difficult. Fortunately, there are many financing tools available to the Village to implement this master plan including partnerships with other agencies, grants, Tax Increment Financing, Special Service Areas and even private sector philanthropy. Every dollar that the Village invests should promote an equal or greater development investment from the private sector.

The Implementation Team will need to thoroughly explore partnership opportunities with Federal, State and County agencies to construct transportation and other infrastructure improvements. With the re-appropriation of the Federal Transportation Legislation, formerly known as ISTEA, TEA21, and now known as T3, the Village will want to position enhancements to Normantown Road and Independence Boulevard for consideration.

Wisely, the Village has already begun to explore the TIF option by engaging URS/TPAP to evaluate the Downtown and Independence Boulevard corridor. Fortunately, the consultant's first phase of work indicates that the study area may qualify for a TIF district. While sometimes controversial because of the deferred revenue streams to taxing bodies, the TIF is probably the ideal way to leverage the Village's bonding power and promote the private sector investment. Then, as new development occurs, the debt is retired and when the district expires, the taxing bodies receive greater revenues than they may have under the pre-TIF development scenario. The next phase of TPAP's work will provide additional detail to evaluate this exciting potential.

One of the most effective ways for the Village to distribute some of the risk and cost of redevelopment to the downtown property owners who will benefit the most from the new public improvements is to create a Special Service Area. As new improvements come out of the ground and redevelopment begins to occur, the SSA can be used to partially finance the increased cost of maintaining and promoting the downtown. This is also an excellent way engage property owners and merchants in decision making and management, and to provide higher levels of service than would ordinarily be expected.

Private sector philanthropy should not be overlooked for high visibility projects like the Village Square. Corporate and individual contributions can significantly supplement the revenue necessary to construct a landmark status project, and widespread community financial support is a powerful tool available when seeking assistance from all levels of government.

A Conservation Area is "an improved area in which 50 percent or more of the structures in the area have an age of 35 years or more and there is a presence of a combination of three or more of the thirteen factors defined in the Act. Such an area is not yet a blighted area, but because of a combination of three or more of these factors, the area may become a blighted area."

Tax Increment Financing
Redevelopment Project, URS-TPAP,
July 2003

A Vacant Blighted Area designation is "based on the finding that the sound growth of the redevelopment project area is impaired by a combination of two or more factors, each of which is (i) present, with that presence documented, to a meaningful extent so that a municipality may reasonably find that the factor is clearly present within the intent of the Act and (ii) reasonably distributed throughout the vacant part of the redevelopment project area."

Tax Increment Financing
Redevelopment Project, URS-TPAP,
July 2003

For more information on the TIF, please consult the Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment Project prepared by URS-TPAP

Planning and Design Guidelines

The implementation of the Downtown Master Plan will be a long and continuous process. These guidelines represent the vision of the Village of Romeoville and Downtown Romeoville Commission for the development and redevelopment of the Downtown site based on the approved goals and objectives of the Master Plan. These serve as a guide for public officials to evaluate proposals upon and as a reference for potential developers to create development appropriate for, and in line with, the Village's vision.

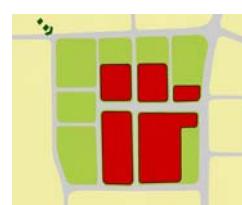
These are, as the title implies, guidelines. The Village may alter or adjust any part of these to serve the community's needs. If at any point guidelines are unmanageable or place an undue burden on potential developers, they can be modified as needed on a case by case basis.

Private Properties

Use

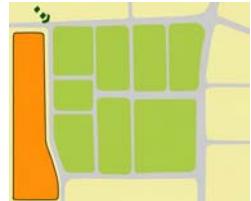
Retail, Entertainment, Commercial and Office are all appropriate uses. Potential specific uses can be summarized as found below (*existing businesses are italicized*):

- Convenience Oriented Retail
 - a. Small Grocery/Convenience Store (Sterks, 7-11)
 - b. Drug Store (CVS)
 - c. Variety/Gift Store (Tuesday Morning, Big Lots, Family Dollar)
 - d. Cell Phone (Verizon, other national carriers)
 - e. Video Rental (Pick-a-Flick, Family Video, Hollywood Video)
- Restaurants
 - a. Quick Service (Subway, Dairy Queen)
 - b. Quick Casual (Portillo's, Panera or independent)
 - c. Casual dining (Ruby Burritos, Lost Acres, Outback Steak House, or Independent)
 - d. Banquet Facility



Core Businesses

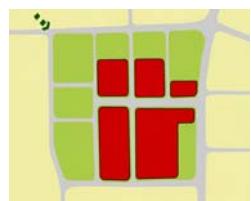
- Personal Care
 - a. Hair care (*Chicago Style II Barber, La Mirage Hair Design, Borics, Hair Cuttery, or Independent*)
 - b. Nail Care (*existing or new independent*)
 - c. Dry cleaner (*Family Seven Cleaners, Mrs. Clean Laundromat plus laundromat*)
 - d. Medical/Dental Practices
- Personal Services
 - a. Banks
 - b. Accountants
 - c. Lawyers
 - d. Real Estate Agents
 - e. Insurance Brokers
 - f. Mailing Centers
- Creative Industries
 - a. Paint-it Pottery
 - b. Scrapbook stores
 - c. Dance studio
 - d. Martial Arts Studio (one existing)
- Office
 - a. Consultants
 - b. Manufacturer's Reps
 - c. Insurance Processing
 - d. Mortgage brokers
 - e. Municipal/Services



Existing Public Facilities



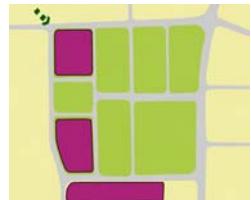
Edge Businesses



Core Businesses

Residential Areas

- Multi-family, multi-story owner occupied condominiums
- Single-family, multi-story owner occupied townhomes
- Private or Public office space



Residential Areas

Retail, Entertainment, Commercial and Office are all appropriate uses. Potential specific uses can be summarized as found below

- Convenience Oriented Retail
 - a. Drug Store (add to Sterks or CVS)
 - b. Dollar Store (Family Dollar, Big Lots)
 - c. Video Rental (*Pick-a-Flick, Family Video, Hollywood Video*)
- Personal Services
 - a. Banks
- Restaurants
 - a. Quick Service (Subway, Dairy Queen)
 - b. Quick Casual (Portillo's, Panera or independent)
 - c. Casual dining (*Ruby Burritos, Lost Acres, Outback Steak House, or Independent*)



Village Square

Organization and Access



Rear entry commercial buildings



Efficient wayfinding systems



Rear entry residential buildings



Townhomes fronting the street with a minimal setback

Strong organization and direct access to commercial buildings is vital to the manner in which businesses sell their products. Both are important aspects of walkable downtown environments. To accomplish both of these objectives, the following guidelines are recommended:

General:

- High intensity, dense land uses and buildings should be focused in the Core Businesses, stretching along Phelps to Independence; along Essex from Alexander to Normantown.
- Edge uses should be focused along Independence and Normantown except at the gateways of Essex/Normantown and Phelps/Independence intersections.
- Face building fronts to the street. Angled or irregular layouts should be avoided.
- Consolidate entry points and driveways to serve multiple developments while minimizing traffic congestion and conflicts.
- Maintain appropriate distances between major traffic entrances for ease of traffic flow.

- Maintain a grid style street layout system focusing building fronts to the street or onto public open spaces.
- While main entrances should be at the front of buildings, rear entrances should be provided to buildings where parking is behind or adjacent to stores or offices.
- Provide high quality, direct pedestrian linkages to Phelps and Essex from parking areas.
- Mark pedestrian crossing areas through all drives with a material appropriate with the adjacent streetscape.
- Utilize efficient wayfinding systems to highlight parking areas and important destinations in the Downtown.

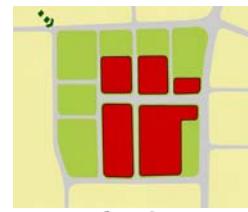
- Orient buildings along Phelps toward the Village Square.
- Limit vehicular access to the rear of buildings to preserve the integrity of street-facing facades.
- Minimize the number and width of drive cuts off of public streets.
- Mark pedestrian crossing areas through all drive areas.

- Limit the number and width of drive entries and drive

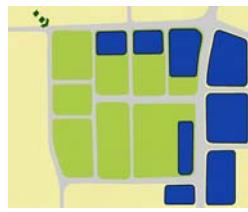
cuts off of Normantown and Independence.
Height, Bulk and Setback

To create the look and feel of Downtown as renovations are made to existing buildings and new construction takes place, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Vary building heights between two and three stories along Phelps and Essex. Maintaining a consistent vertical scale establishes the area as a 'district', with slight changes in height occurring at corners.
- The maximum building setback line from the 60' R.O.W. line along Phelps and Essex is 8'.
- The minimum building setback line is 3'.
- Corner buildings should take advantage of their location by angling or articulating their entry architecturally to serve as gateways and create a distinction for the Downtown.
- Small buildings on narrow parcels (under 40' wide) should maximize frontage on the lot while large buildings housing smaller businesses should subdivide their facade architecturally, keeping individual business facades at a similar width along the street.
- A continuous building street frontage is important to maintain, any breaks in the buildings should be used for pedestrian access or plazas.



Core Businesses



Edge Businesses



Residential Areas



Corner buildings accentuate their position of importance architecturally and serve as gateways

- Building height should be maintained at a 3 story minimum, 5 story maximum for the mid-rise housing developments.
- Building height should be maintained at two to three stories for the townhome developments, allowing the Downtown to 'step down' in intensity into the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Setbacks should be minimized to provide for a small front yard area, varying between 10' and 15' from the R.O.W. This area should distinguish the units from public areas with quality landscaping, hardscape and ornamental fences.
- The bulk of the buildings should be concentrated in the front of the lot, leaving room for rear entries and well maintained private backyard gardens/spaces.



Buildings with varying setback allowing room for outdoor seating and dining



Minimal setbacks and architecture in edge development areas compliment the downtown



Existing Public Facilities



Village Square



Landscaping in parking lot islands



Lush landscaping screens parking areas from pedestrian corridors



Service area screening

Private Off Street Parking

Providing adequate amounts of parking in convenient locations without sacrificing the 'streetwall' are hallmarks of downtowns. Many different parking techniques can be utilized to provide the maximum benefit for the area.

Private parking requirements for the Core Businesses will be integrated into the Village's Public Parking facilities located throughout the Downtown.

- Require rear loaded parking for the townhome area.
- Mid-rise housing development should allow for enclosed parking at one space per unit minimum. Additional surface parking as required or allowed by municipal code.
- Screen parking areas with high quality landscaping where parking can be viewed from pedestrian or main vehicular routes.

- Locate parking on the side or rear of buildings where applicable, allowing the structure to define the corner or street edge. If parking must be in front of buildings, allow one row of two-sided parking.
- Screen parking with high quality landscaping, hardscape or column and ornamental fence consistent with the Core Businesses streetscape.
- Establish maximum parking numbers for those developments which cannot participate in shared parking strategies or take advantage of public parking areas.

Service and Loading

The quality of service and loading areas can have a great impact on the aesthetic of a downtown area. Utilizing progressive strategies can minimize their visual and noise related impacts.

General:

- Reduce service and loading hours to non-peak times of day.
- Screen from the view of nearby streets and walks with high quality landscaping, hardscape and/or columns and ornamental fence consistent with the streetscape amenities.
- Maintain clean, organized service and loading areas free of trash and debris.
- These areas should be repaired and updated as needed to

Storm Water Management

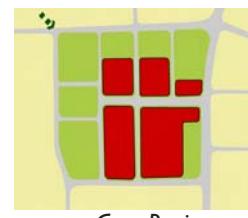
Storm Water Management will be planned for, designed and engineered by the Village of Romeoville. The system will be designed to control storm water from both public and private development within the study area. See *Public Properties - Storm Water Management* for further information.

Character, Materials and Landscape

As Romeoville begins the transformation of the Downtown, it has true flexibility in establishing a 'look' for the downtown as new buildings are constructed and existing ones renovated.

General:

- New buildings should be primarily masonry materials, ie. stone, brick, and acceptable forms of man-made masonry.
- Limestone has a rich history in the area and should be utilized when possible on building exteriors.
- Building styles do not need to be limited to one era. A mix of styles can create the appearance of a downtown built over time. Buildings should be urban in character.
- Large building footprints should be subdivided vertically along the street facing facade to convey the effect of a smaller cluster of buildings.
- Utilize high quality, well maintained landscaping to effectively screen undesirable locations from pedestrian areas and compliment the streetscape.
- Utilize lower monument signs in place of pylon signs.
- Signage should be reviewed during development, using consistent illumination techniques, size and materials.



Core Businesses



Edge Businesses



Residential Areas



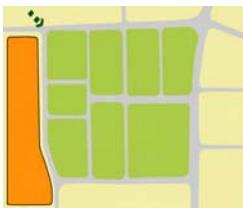
Limestone has historically been a local building material in this area



Vertically divided building footprints



Central courtyards open up onto public spaces but are defined as private



Existing Public Facilities



Village Square



Mid-Rise Housing



Townhouses

a long facade.

- On facades facing off street parking areas, attention should be given to avoid blank walls. The scale and a form of articulation of the building materials should provide continuity around the building.

- Buildings should compliment the Downtown architectural style.
- Focus the residences outward to the street.
- The townhouses should be developed in a traditional attached row house configuration with no more than 8 units and no less than 4 units combined.
- The first floor should be at least 2 feet above grade for privacy from the close proximity of the sidewalk.
- Well articulated front door stoops, porches, bay windows and balconies shall be allowed to encroach within the front and side yards.
- The facades of respective townhouse units shall be otherwise simple and straightforward. Material changes, including brick, siding and trim colors should not be repeated within a combined building.
- Roof forms and materials should provide a distinct separation from its neighbor without creating unnecessary complexity.
- Front facades should utilize brick and/or stone as their primary material. Accent features including columns, balusters, railings, cornices, bays and dormers are encouraged and may be painted or stained wood in traditional color tones.
- Create a pedestrian scaled streetscape in front of residential buildings complimentary to the Downtown streetscape.
- Create high quality foundation and accent plantings consistent with the Downtown landscaping.
- In the mid-rise housing development areas, central courtyards should connect into the Village Square.

- Buildings should compliment the character and materials of the Core Businesses.

- Construct a high quality, well maintained pedestrian friendly streetscape along Independence which compliments the Downtown streetscape.

- Improve pedestrian connections into and out of the grocery store and retail mall, integrating pedestrian areas with the

Public Properties

The Village Square serves as a community gathering place as well as a functional event space for coordination of Downtown and Village wide events. This space should be designed and maintained through the Village Recreation Department.

- Design the park with the community's involvement and input.
- Create a traditional Village gathering space integrally connected with the Downtown businesses, streetscape environment and complementary of its styles.
- Celebrate Romeoville's unique aspects through material and deliberate design decisions.
- Create visual links with the proposed residential developments to the North and South.
- Provide a large plaza space for event staging.
- Provide open space for informal gatherings and concerts.
- Provide a distinctive structure to serve as the stage for both small and large performances.
- Provide a distinctive water feature to serve as the terminus to the commercial Downtown experience and focal point of the plaza space.
- The park design shall provide barrier-free access as outlined by the Illinois Accessibility Code.
- Continue the streetscape around the park to provide access from areas outside of the park's boundaries
- Utilize high quality landscape and hardscape materials consistent with those used in the Core Businesses district and other streetscape areas.



Village gathering space integrally connected with downtown businesses



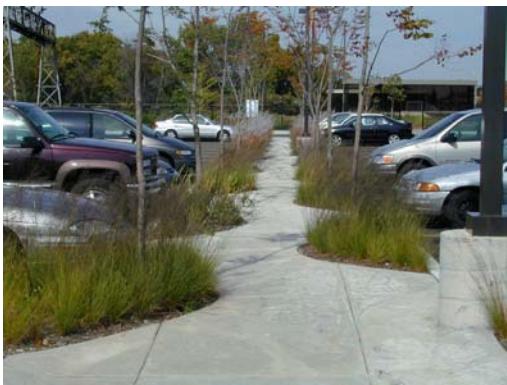
Design spaces for programmed events in the Village Square



Create a focal point that is as popular in the day...



...as it is in the night



Safe, well lit pedestrian walks in off-street parking lots



On-street parking buffers pedestrians from the street

Off Street Parking

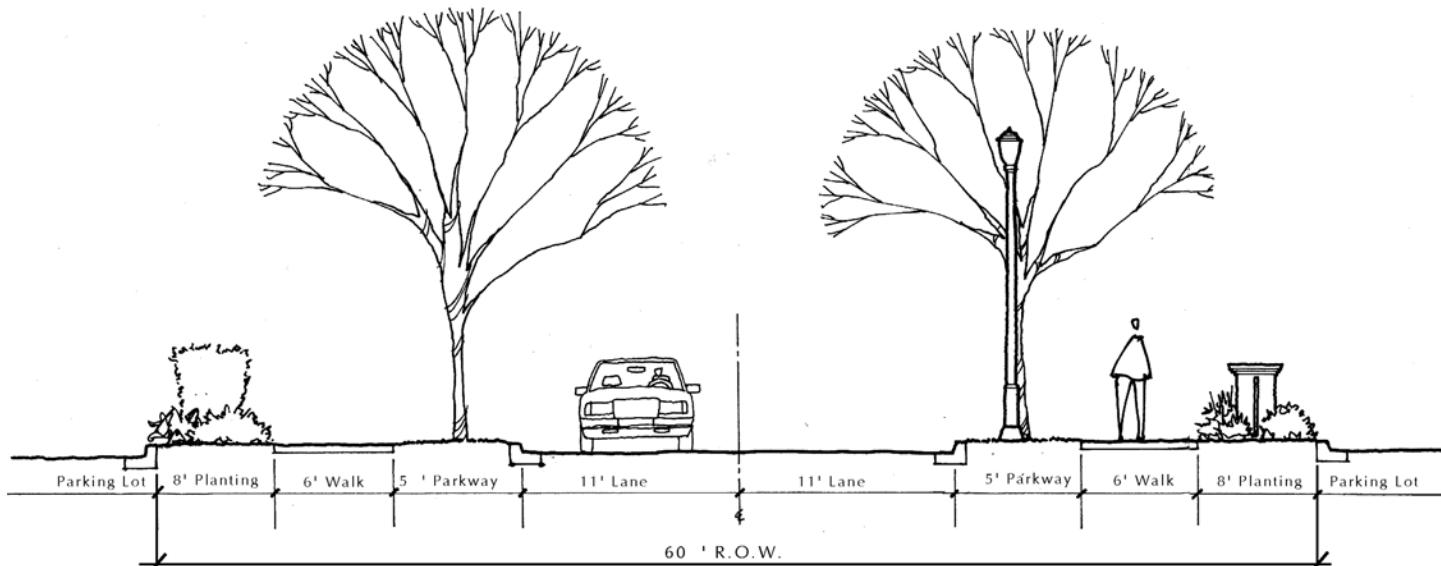
Public off street parking in downtowns is essential to allow dense development to occur. Off street parking must accommodate both public and private parking requirements for the Core Businesses.

- Create publicly owned and maintained parking areas located with centralized access to Core Businesses and access to Edge Businesses.
- Parking areas shall be located in the rear or side of buildings in safe, efficient areas that do not disrupt the scale and character of surrounding buildings.
- Screen all parking areas from view with high-quality landscaping and/or column and established Downtown ornamental fence.
- Break up large expanses of parking surface with planted islands every 10 spaces or where rows of parking abut drive lanes.
- Provide well lit, safe areas that allow for comfortable pedestrian ingress/egress.

On Street Parking

Public on street parking allows customers quick, convenient access to the Core Businesses. On street parking should be maximized in the Core Businesses to supplement use of the off street parking facilities.

- On street parallel parking stalls shall be 8' wide x 22' long.
- Streets along the north and south edges of Village Square should be designed to allow for angled parking.
- Dalhart, Alexander and Town Hall should be designed to allow for parallel parking in front of the residential developments.
- Core Businesses streets should be designed to allow for parallel parking in front of the commercial development.



Parking Screening along roadways

Streets

Streetscapes are the backbone of a downtown area, providing access and convenient parking for vehicles and establishing direct links for pedestrians. Downtown streetscape elements provide a high level of comfort for pedestrians and shoppers, buffering them from traffic and unsightly views while providing places to sit and lighting for safety. The following guidelines are recommended on all public streets in the Core Businesses.

- Width of roadways should be minimized to slow traffic and reduce the lengths of pedestrian crosswalks. Through lanes should have a maximum 11' width.
- Major intersections, such as Luther/Dalhart, should be designed with wide, well marked pedestrian crosswalks.
- Sidewalks should provide for comfortable, continuous access throughout the Downtown, connecting edge developments and along Independence and Normantown.
- In the Core Businesses, sidewalks should allow pedestrian movement from the back of curb to the building face with an 8' minimum through route alongside buildings.
- Residential Areas and Edge Businesses sidewalks should be a minimum of 5' wide (6' preferred) with a 5'-6' parkway.
- All streets shall provide for barrier free access as outlined by the Illinois Accessibility Code.
- Create gateways either in conjunction with private developments or as a part of a coordinated public improvements program as key entrances to the Downtown
- Each streetscape should provide a uniform appearance based on the area in which it is located.
 - Core Businesses streetscape should include Essex and Phelps extending from both Normantown and Independence and surround the Village Square.
 - Residential Area streetscape should include Dalhart, Alexander and Town Hall.
 - Edge Businesses streetscape should include Independence, Normantown and ancillary streets not defined in the Core Businesses.
- Seating areas should be provided.
- Pedestrian scale ornamental lighting should be used to replace taller, vehicular lighting while still maintaining safe roadway lighting levels.
- In the Core Businesses, a small scale, non-slip paving unit should be used, such as brick, granite, concrete paver or stamped concrete.

The Village should utilize the following streetscape sections to establish a standard to be applied in the various parts of Downtown. As the first phase streetscape is being designed, allow that process to set standards for finishes, materials, signage and plants so that decisions are based on real world situations instead of as a 'package' which then needs to be applied to various parcels without regard for site conditions.



Roadway width is kept to a minimum to allow for slower traffic, parallel parking and a generous walkway width



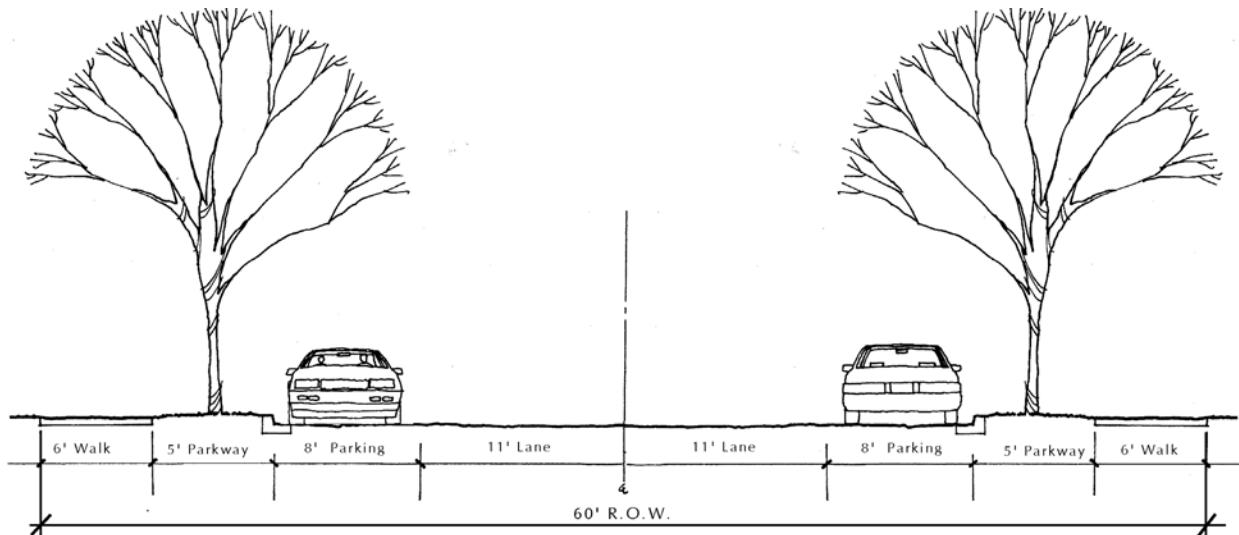
In the residential area walks are wide, buildings slightly set back and the spaces are well defined



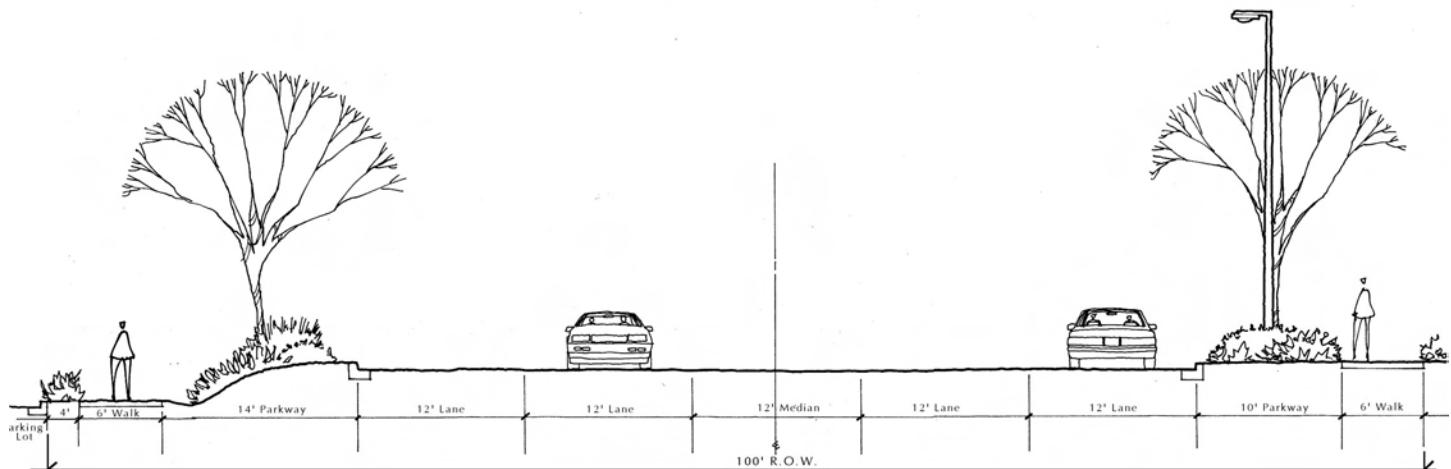
Pedestrian amenities in a downtown environment



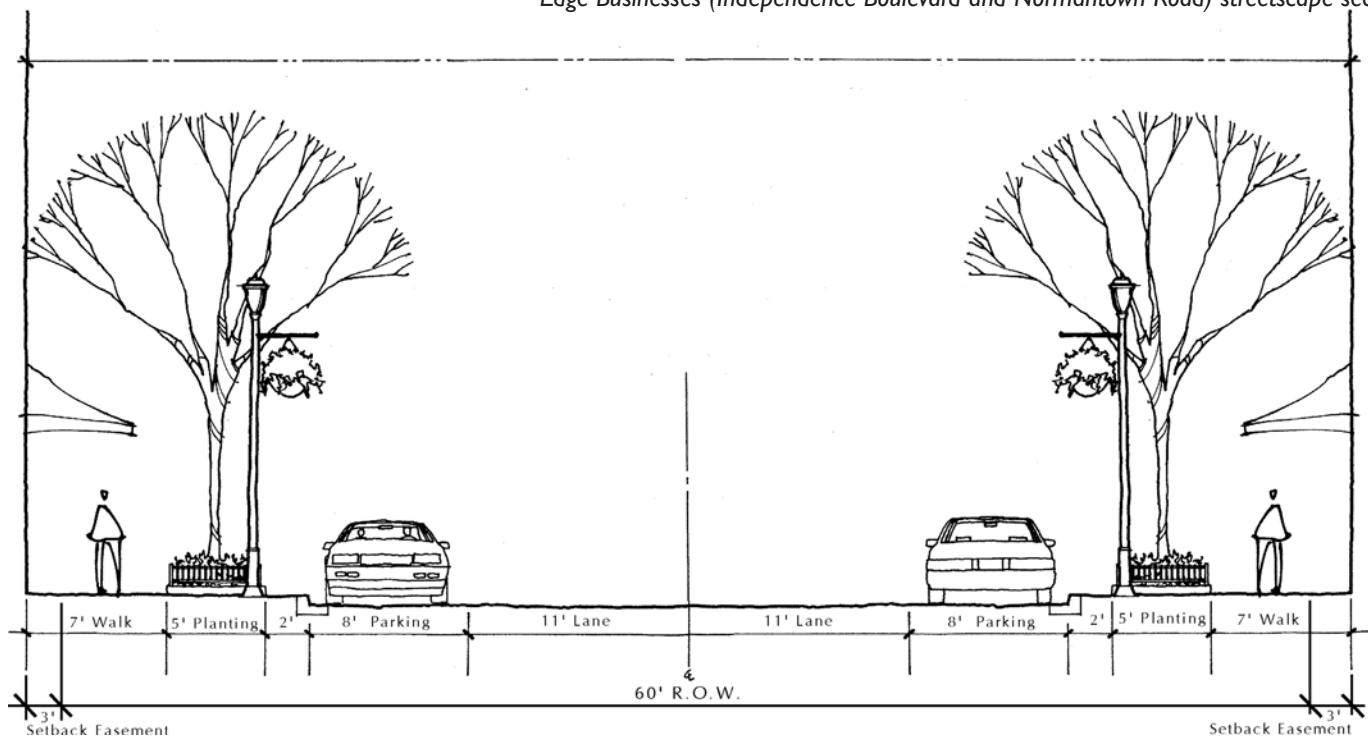
Streetscaping standards applied to a major thoroughfare



Residential Area streetscape section



Edge Businesses (Independence Boulevard and Normantown Road) streetscape section



Core Businesses streetscape section

Storm Water Management

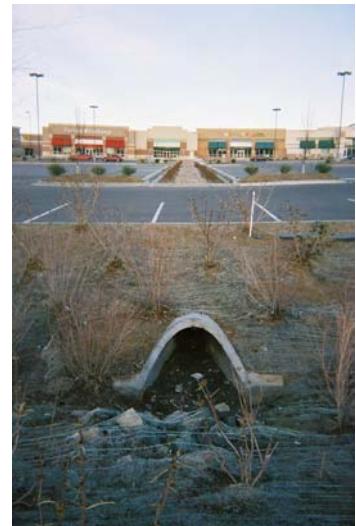
Effective SWM limits the potential for flooding and water related losses. Contemporary techniques have made dense urban development a possibility while controlling storm water related problems. As recently seen, the study area is in desperate need of a storm water management system. As the Village addresses this issue, the following guidelines are recommended as redevelopment occurs and the storm water management system is designed.

General:

- Seek alternative methods for storm water entrapment and release, such as underground detention to allow for dense, compact buildings to be constructed without the need for open retention/detention ponds.
- Utilize, where applicable, bioswales and filtration systems in larger parking areas, allowing the water to be treated and temporarily stored on site in smaller detention basins.
- Where possible, use storm water as a feature in the development, recycling and cleaning water for use in fountains and other focal points.
- Utilize green roof technologies if feasible to reduce the amount of water running off roofs.
- Establish urban storm water management requirements which allow for the type of dense development anticipated.

Publicly funded SWM can be viewed as a positive incentive for development. The Master Plan creates a publicly funded and maintained SWM area which will compensate for the incremental new development occurring as the Plan is implemented. In order to maintain the high quality level of the Downtown, the following guidelines are recommended.

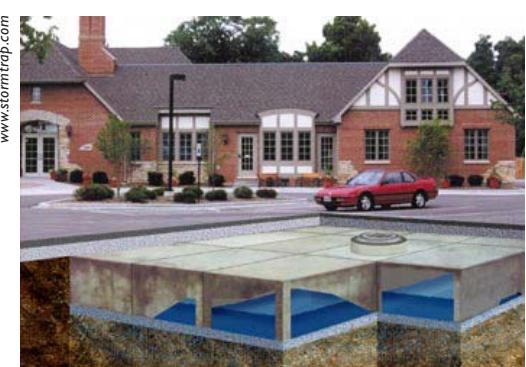
- Provide storm water management for the Downtown as a whole, rather than individual parcel mitigating their own.
- Utilize storm water management as an incentive for development.
- Landscape the site with high quality landscape materials consistent with the Downtown to provide clear views into and out of the area, minimizing potential safety problems.
- Implement alternative storage methods if the result is more developable land.



Alternative parking lot storm water management systems



Design SWM ponds as a feature with pedestrian amenities



Underground storm water management systems

Implementation Recommendations

This master plan outlines an exciting and ambitious strategy that will transform the Downtown into one of Romeoville's most treasured places. However, years of neglect cannot be undone in a year or two by sprucing up a few streets. The key to the success of this plan is to create a classic public/private partnership that passionately, continuously and systematically improves every aspect of the downtown from its land uses to its infrastructure to its image.



Implementation Process

The process may seem overwhelming, but it really isn't. This is a systematic process that has been time tested by countless other communities and specifically adapted for this master plan.

Public Policy

- Adopt this master plan as the official plan for the study area.
- Prepare and adopt the appropriate zoning tools, including districts and regulations, that will entitle the property to be developed as described in the master plan.
- Refine and adopt the design and engineering guidelines that are outlined in this master plan that will establish the standards for private sector development and public improvements.
- Prepare and adopt a development incentives review process to be followed by public officials and land developers when considering appropriate opportunities for public financial incentives.

Implementation Team

- Establish a standing team of property owners, elected and appointed Village representatives and respected community leaders, who, in collaboration with the consulting planners, designers and engineers, will guide the redevelopment process.
The team should include leaders experienced in:
 - a.) development and/or construction
 - b.) public relations
 - c.) government relations
 - d.) finance and/or fund raising
 - e.) retailing
- Structure the team to include executive, public relations, private sector fund raising, operations/management and design/construction committees.
- Provide the team with appropriate operational resources such as dedicated village staff, administrative assistance and funding.
- Create prioritized annual work plans that will advance the implementation of the master plan. Please refer to the Draft Work Plan recommendations that follow for an outline of the 2004 and 2005 priority projects.
- Proactively and reactively advise public officials and Village Board regarding all aspects of downtown development, management and policy.

Funding

- Establish a 5-year capital construction budget for public improvements.
- Establish a TIF redevelopment district as recommended in the Summer 2003 URS/TPAP study.
- Seek private sector contributions from foundations, the general public and corporations, to partially fund the most visible components of the Village Square.
- Establish appropriate types and levels of incentives including infrastructure development and risk mitigation that can be used to facilitate development consistent with the master plan.
- As redevelopment gains momentum, establish a Special Service Area (SSA) for the management and promotion of the Downtown and the maintenance of the Village Square, streetscapes, public parking and storm water management areas.

- Discuss grant opportunities and appropriations with other public agencies such as Will County, IDOT, IDNR for applicable portions of the master plan.

Property Acquisition

- Acquire property for the Village Square.
- Acquire rights-of-way for extensions of Essex and Phelps
- Acquire property for off street parking and storm water management
- Facilitate, when necessary, the acquisition of property for private sector redevelopment that is consistent with the master plan

Owner / Developer Liaison

- Work with existing owners and tenants to improve property, buildings and business promotion.
- Recruit and qualify new developers.
- Respond to developer inquiries.
- Facilitate deal-making between property owners and developers.

Design, Engineering, Permitting

- Design the storm water and utility improvements that will be needed to support the redeveloped Downtown consistent with the master plan.
- Finalize the design and engineering of the initial Village Square, street extension and streetscape improvements.
- Facilitate permitting with appropriate jurisdictional agencies.
- Review the design of new development and redevelopment proposals prepared by others.

Construction Coordination

- Determine the most appropriate project delivery method, either general contractor or construction manager, for bidding and constructing the public improvements.
- Coordinate the construction of public improvements with operational, promotional and development activity to minimize inconvenience to the community and maximize public exposure.

Public Relations

- Regularly communicate progress to the stakeholder groups.
- Carefully coordinate press, advertising, promotions and events in order to position the downtown as the premier live, work, shop, dine neighborhood in the area.

Evaluation

- Evaluate progress on a quarterly basis.
- Update the land plan, the yearly work plan and the operational and capital budgets annually, in advance of the Village budgeting process in order to keep the downtown “front-of-mind” with decision makers.

Draft 2004, 2005 Work Plan

Once the plan is adopted as a matter of public policy and the Implementation Team is appointed, presumably prior to the end of 2003, the door is opened to begin the implementation process in earnest. This draft work plan will have to be adjusted regularly to accommodate the challenges and opportunities that will inevitably occur during the first two years. Beginning in January, 2004 we recommend that the Village, through the implementation team:

1Q, 2004

- Confirm 2004 work plan
- Select executive, public relations, design and finance sub-committees
- Confirm staff and financial resource needs
- Create marketing collateral
- Begin the zoning process
- Determine necessary storm water and utility improvements
- Prepare a 5 year capital construction budget
- Finalize the TIF redevelopment district
- Adopt a development incentives review process
- Begin negotiations with Harris Bank to acquire property for the park and Phelps rights-of-way and to market the corner property for residential development
- Begin negotiations with other property owners to acquire property for Essex

2Q, 2004

- Begin negotiations with Mr. Prassas to redevelop Spartan Square
- Work with other property owners to improve and/or redevelop their properties
- Recruit new developers
- Complete the zoning process
- Adopt refined design and engineering standards
- Begin negotiations to acquire property and/or easements necessary to construct storm water improvements
- Begin final design and engineering of the Phase I Village Square, storm water improvements, street extensions and streetscape improvements



Phase One Projects

3Q, 2004

- Present Phase I public improvements to Village Board for final approval
- Begin private sector fund raising for the Village Square
- Continue to work with owners and developers on redevelopment plans
- Negotiate to acquire property for public, off-street parking lots

4Q, 2004

- Complete and bid the Phase I public improvement plans
- Update the land plan, work plan and budgets



1Q, 2005

- Award Phase I construction contract



2Q, 2005

- Begin Phase I construction
- Begin design of Phase II - Dalhart, Rt 53, Town Hall and Alexander public improvements



3Q, 2005

- Present Phase II public improvements to Village Board for final approval



4Q, 2005

- Complete Phase I construction
- Dedicate Village Square
- Establish SSA to supplement the maintenance and promotion of the Downtown