

11 Conclusion

Introduction

When the *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan* is implemented, the members of the community will have created an improved Downtown with fewer vacancies and increased sales and tax revenues. This will be accomplished, in part, by investing in an improved Downtown with enhancements such as the "Downtown Greenway", the Main Street Corridor (the full, two-mile stretch from Roosevelt Road to St. Charles/Geneva Roads), upgraded building interiors, historically-sensitive building exterior restorations, new and improved residential living opportunities, structured parking, and a streamlined Downtown organizational structure.

A spirit of cooperation, continued volunteerism, ample funding, and a passion to achieve the goal by all members of the community will help Downtown Glen Ellyn become *economically-viable*

Downtown Programming

Cities and villages are organic living entities that must constantly reinvent themselves. Some creativity must be pursued to make Downtown Glen Ellyn a unique destination for it to remain and/or reestablish itself as a competitor in its primary market area. The basic Downtown programming elements are:

Downtown Framework

Physical Form

Focus an activity center along a primary circulation corridor and surrounding the Glen Ellyn Train Station. In addition, provide parking convenient to this activity center.

Uses, Activities, and Events

Facilitate the development of a critical mass of interconnected eating and drinking establishments, entertainment, recreational, and cultural activities, and market rate residential development.

Downtown Land Use

Create a Downtown Community Open Space

Provide a large area for the citizens of Glen Ellyn to gather in the Downtown for recreation and socialization. This urban park should have an exemplary landscape design that is recognized internationally for its character and charm. The success of the park will spill over to the Downtown economics by functioning as a magnet for people who also will be consumers for Downtown retail and residents of Downtown homes.

Maintain and Build New Downtown Mixed-Use Buildings

Increase the overall density and activity in the Downtown. Retail and restaurant uses should be reserved for first floor space throughout the core of the Downtown, and be contained in mixed-use buildings with residential uses above. The additional residential density will increase the consumer population of the Downtown to fuel the economic engine to support the existing and future retail. Mixed-use redevelopment is a key means for accomplishing this objective. Ensure that any new developments in the core shopping district accommodate residential dwelling units (preferred) or office above first floor retail; that any new developments in the periphery of the core shopping district accommodate residential dwelling units above first floor office; that existing buildings are remodeled and/or renovated; that new infill development and renovations are historically-sensitive; that new commercial space is designed to meet the needs of modern retailers; and that there is a no net loss of retail space in the Downtown.

Increase Downtown Office and Service Space

Infusing additional professional and medical offices and service businesses into the Downtown would increase employment and thus the demand for retail and other services. Businesses and offices are typically daytime consumers; however, they can spill over into evening and weekend consumption as well. The location of these businesses must be strategically positioned so as not to interrupt critical retail street corridors. An appropriate location is above or below first floor retail in a mixed-use setting or a site that is on the periphery of the Downtown core.

Increase the Number of Downtown Residential Units

Provide additional dwelling units for different types of households – especially empty-nesters (couples who no longer need a big house but want to remain in Glen Ellyn) and young professionals (individuals and couples who want to live in Glen Ellyn but don't need or want a house at this stage in their lives). There is a demand for Downtown residential living for people who want to enjoy the benefits of the Downtown including its charm, convenience, and the cluster of services available within a comfortable walk from home. In addition, allow the construction of accessory dwelling units¹ on single family properties in and near the Downtown study area. These units can be located above detached garages, or as an addition to – or a remodel of – the single family home.

Civic and Institutional

Preserve and enhance the visibility of the elegant Downtown civic and institutional buildings. New civic and institutional uses should also be considered and be accompanied with the strictest standards of architectural excellence.

¹ See "Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)" on Page 8.6.

Downtown Circulation and Access

Maintain and Improve Infrastructure

Corridors

Install streetscape improvements that will make the Downtown a vibrant experience, and build upon the existing features to make the Downtown a destination. Improve the safety of dangerous intersections. Create plaza streets² in the Downtown core. Choose a bike rack design that coordinates with the street furniture design for the Downtown, and install them along Main Street and at the Glen Ellyn Train Station first, side streets off Main Street second, and other Downtown streets third. Design and install bicycle route signage along Lorraine Road between Roosevelt Road and Duane Street, (refer to the *DuPage County Bikeways and Trails Map* for details), and other neighborhood streets leading into the Downtown.

Intersections

Ensure every intersection is safe for all modes of transportation – especially pedestrians. Include gateways along Main Street and points along other corridors that access the Downtown.

Parking

Increase the parking supply for the general public and commuters, and ensure it is convenient to their respective destinations. Provide additional parking to accommodate the needs of future development, including the event and recreation programming for the community open space. Install covered bicycle parking near the Glen Ellyn Train Station and the Illinois Prairie Path. Consider a Downtown parking standard of 0-3 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space, 1 space per 1,000 square feet of office space, and 1 space per dwelling unit for new construction. Consider shortening the Downtown core (“convenient”) on-street parking time limits from three to two hours, and expanding the non-Downtown core (“inconvenient”) metered parking time limits from three to six hours. Accommodate future parking needs for future development, commuters, and event and recreation programming.

Facilities

Consider the construction of one or two public parking structures to accommodate general public and commuter parking needs. Design the parking structures with pedestrian-friendly and historically-sensitive details (including the accommodating first floor retail), in the most efficient layout possible. Strive for more than one vehicular entry/exit per parking structure.

Accommodate Different Modes of Transportation

Pedestrians

Ensure pedestrians are the top priority in the Downtown, and provide pedestrian-scaled details throughout the Downtown. Construct a pedestrian tunnel under the railroad tracks and east of the Glen Ellyn Train Station. Modify and create access points to accommodate wheelchair and stroller accessibility, where possible.

Bicycles

Expand the bikeway system and provide additional bicycle parking to increase the use of bicycles by Downtown visitors. Work with DuPage County to update the *DuPage County Trail Guide* to list the amenities in Downtown Glen Ellyn. In addition to a drinking fountain listed as the only amenity in the trail guide, consider including Downtown shopping and restaurants, the Prairie Path Park gazebo/benches/bicycle parking, and the historic Glen Art Theatre.

² See “Plaza Streets” on Page 8.6.

Transit

Design a “landmark quality” train station that is sensitive to the existing historic Downtown architecture. In addition, include shops, restaurants, a historic display, and outdoor greenspace. Minimize the impact of freight train and commuter rail traffic on the Downtown by reviewing the train operation procedures to see if adjustments can be made to train stop locations, crossing gate timing, and train signalization.

Automobiles

Improve the ease of access to and through the Downtown by automobile, without losing the pedestrian-friendliness of the Downtown, by establishing a two-way traffic system that will provide more options to access available parking spaces and evaluating the possibility of constructing a vehicular overpass or underpass.

Organizational Structure

Village of Glen Ellyn Responsibilities

Overall

Establish a commitment to make the difficult decisions and time-consuming efforts to make the Downtown Master Plan a reality. Daily progress on implementation is necessary to achieve the goal and objectives of the *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan*.

Perception

Continue efforts to mitigate the perception of government-imposed obstacles.

Municipal Code

Amend the Municipal Code to accommodate the zoning and sign recommendations of the *Downtown Strategic Plan*, including the consideration of the potential creation of a form-based zoning code for the Downtown. Amend the *Appearance Review Guidelines – Photo Resource Directory*, or establish a Downtown-only guide, to illustrate the recommendations of the plan.

Streetscape and Public Land

Identify a streetscape and public land maintenance strategy, including timely pavement repairs, a coordinated snow removal and ice prevention system between the Downtown business/property owners and the Village to ensure access during regular business hours, tree planting, tree-trimming, landscape cultivation, and more frequent public trash and recycling collections.

Downtown Organization Opportunities

Overall

Create a new Downtown organization that centralizes the efforts of the Downtown Glen Ellyn Alliance, Go Downtown!, the EDC, and the Chamber of Commerce, into one organization. Hire a full-time staff member to manage the organization. Establish a budget for the organization to cover event planning, marketing, salary and benefits for staff, etc.

Transition Period

Involve select members of the Downtown Advisory Committee during the transition time between plan adoption and the creation of a new Downtown organization. The “Transitional DAC” will be involved in establishing the structure and bylaws for the new Downtown organization, and will make recommendations to the Village’s elected and appointed officials regarding Downtown activities and decisions prior to the creation of the new Downtown organization.

Events and Activities

Reduce the number of organizations involved in planning Downtown events, activities, and strategies, to ensure consistency and eliminate the duplication of efforts. Facilitate Downtown branding and marketing efforts.

Business Liaison ("Ombudsman")

Establish a partnership between the staff of the new Downtown organization and the Village, community organizations, business owners, and citizens, to minimize obstacles and make the Downtown vibrant.

Marketing and Branding

Establish a "brand" for Downtown Glen Ellyn and market the Downtown to the residents ("shop local"), the western suburbs ("visit our Downtown neighborhood"), and the region ("escape to Glen Ellyn").

Downtown Strategies

Strategies identify important approaches to plan implementation, and measures are tangible outcomes to ensure each strategy is fully realized. The following strategies and measures are important in achieving the vision of the *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan*.

1. **Retail** in a mixed-use setting that includes office and housing creates a dynamic environment and multiple-purpose visits. Retain and attract a retail mix for the Downtown that includes unique eating and drinking establishments and also provides outdoor eating and drinking opportunities. Retain and enhance entertainment and recreational uses such as the Glen Art Theatre, Illinois Prairie Path, and Lake Ellyn.

Measure: Reduce the Downtown vacancy rates; ensure a no net loss of retail, restaurant, and entertainment tenant space in the Downtown; incorporate such uses in the first floors of mixed-use buildings; ensure that new commercial space is built to meet the needs of modern retailers; and manage the utilization of Downtown core business hours.

2. New housing opportunities in the Downtown increases the **population** base in the community without encroaching on the surrounding single family neighborhoods. Since the surrounding area is substantially built-out, and the limited population growth will primarily result from the movement of empty-nester, younger-aged, and smaller-sized households, the Downtown is an ideal location for increased housing opportunities.

Measure: Construct a minimum of 450 new dwelling units in the Downtown.

3. **Buildings** deteriorate over time in the absence of proper maintenance and renewal. In the past, sufficient maintenance and renewal did not occur. Interior upgrade needs include heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems, telecommunications, electrical, plumbing, and interior finishes. Exterior upgrade needs include historic restorations, historically-sensitive façade upgrades, awnings, signage, and rooftop repairs.

Measure: Establish a historic district in the Downtown core area. Make available financial incentives to business owners and property owners in the form of grants, low-interest loans, and/or tax credits, for building maintenance, renovations, and upgrades. This includes incentives for historic or landmarked properties within a historic district. The EDC currently offers grant programs to assist with exterior façade improvements and interior renovations. These programs should continue, and possibly be enhanced.

4. The benefits of having **office** users in the Downtown includes the opportunity for residents to walk to work, having a daytime and early evening population base to eat in Downtown restaurants and shop in stores. In

addition, professional office-based businesses can partner with each other and creative businesses can provide goods and services to Downtown merchants.

Measure: Provide a net increase in office tenant space in the Downtown, and ensure that it is flexible to allow firms the opportunity to grow in place.

5. **Amenities** such as a large Downtown open space, the Illinois Prairie Path, sidewalk cafes, and public art, provide active and passive recreation opportunities and create a unique ambiance in the Downtown for citizens and visitors alike.

Measure: Reconstruct Main Street and Crescent Boulevard to accommodate the creation of the "Downtown Greenway" open space, the construction of wider sidewalks, and the installation of public art and bicycle racks.

6. Permanent Downtown venues for the performing arts need to be constructed to maximize setup convenience and minimize temporary stage and tent rental costs. Expand the number of Downtown **cultural events and activities** by building upon popular events such as the Jazz Fest, holiday parades, and scavenger hunts, and renew events such as the Taste of Glen Ellyn by incorporating Glen Ellyn restaurants and College of DuPage Foodservice Administration students into the program of featured vendors.

Measure: Construct a small amphitheater that protects the stage from the weather and minimizes the impacts of train noise in the performance area.

7. The Zoning Code needs to be updated to reflect the recommendations in the Market Analysis and minimize the perceived burden of **government-imposed obstacles** in the Downtown business and development review process. The Village's existing Zoning Code requires a special use permit for non-retail uses in the Downtown. Amending the Zoning Code to permit entertainment and cultural uses by right in the Downtown, and amending zoning district boundaries, will reduce the time it takes for businesses to be opened. In addition, the Village should look for opportunities to expand its authority to grant administrative approvals.

Measure: Update the Zoning Code, consider writing form-based regulations for the Downtown prior to the development of new mixed-use buildings, and utilize an Executive Director of a new permanent Downtown organization to work as an ombudsman for business owners and developers.

8. The existing one-way traffic loop around the block located at the northeast corner of Main Street and Crescent Boulevard makes access in and through Downtown inconvenient and confusing, and the large number of trains passing through the Downtown can create backups and be frustrating to motorists. In addition, the Downtown is located one mile north of Roosevelt Road and one mile south of Geneva/St. Charles Roads. Opportunities to improve the **traffic** flow include converting one-way streets to two-way streets, installing clear wayfinding signage, constructing consistent streetscape features from Roosevelt Road to Geneva/St. Charles Roads, and constructing gateways at key intersections.

Measure: Consider converting the Downtown's primary one-way streets to two-way streets; design and install attractive, easy-to-understand, and memorable gateways and wayfinding signage; and design and install streetscaping along the two-mile Main Street corridor. In addition, consider converting the Downtown's one-way neighborhood streets, such as Forest Avenue, Hillside Avenue, and Anthony Street, to two-way streets, and hire a consultant to evaluate the possibility of constructing a vehicular overpass or underpass in the vicinity of the Downtown.

9. Although the current overall **parking** supply is generally sufficient for the Downtown, too few spaces are available for Downtown public parking, and the public parking supply that is available is generally inconveniently-located to the Downtown core, and in some cases, requires a fee to park. In addition, the

existing one-way traffic loop north of the tracks passes by very few public parking spaces, resulting in frustrated shoppers who sometimes decide to shop elsewhere. The waiting list for merchant parking permits has grown to 90. Future commuter parking needs identified by Metra require an additional supply of 300-500 (to a maximum of 1,100) Downtown commuter parking spaces.

*Measure: Increase the number of time-constricted and conveniently-located public, commuter, and merchant **parking** in the Downtown, beginning with the reconfiguration of on-street parking on Main Street and Crescent Boulevard, followed by the construction of one or two parking structures near the train station, where they will be convenient for shoppers and commuters, and the Village will have a greater chance of obtaining grant assistance.*

10. In Chicago's western suburbs, it can be difficult to differentiate between the downtowns of different communities. In addition, consumers are looking for enjoyable experiences. Differentiating Downtown Glen Ellyn from other communities with a **distinguishing feature** and special attractions will make the Downtown more memorable and enjoyable, and draw visitors back for return visits.

Measure: Design and construct "The Downtown Greenway".

11. Currently, the Village, region, and nation are in the middle of an economic downturn; however, the *Downtown Strategic Plan* outlines a 20-year vision and implementation strategy. Now is the time to identify and pursue **funding opportunities** to begin projects once the economy gains positive momentum.

Measure: Prepare a list of funding sources for each major Downtown reinvestment project and initiative.