

INTRODUCTION

WHY PLAN

A Community Plan strives to create "good growth" not "no growth." That is, growth should occur but not the haphazard growth that is unsightly, wasteful, and results in sharply rising municipal service costs and property tax increases. Planning offers a way to try to maintain a positive "quality of life" in revitalizing the community.

A plan shows the current positive and negative aspects of the community. It also offers guides to spending public money for improving community life and where each type of private development should occur in order to make the community a better place to live.

Sometimes private development plans can run into conflict with community desires and development plans. One purpose of the community plan is to show private landowners and developers the location and type of private development wanted by the community. In other words, a clear community plan will save private developers considerable time and money in putting together their plans. At the same time, a good community plan will help the community spend money wisely and effectively so that municipal service costs do not result in a crushing property tax burden on local residents. The community budget should be compared to the community plan to ensure that public money will be spent in accordance with the community's goals and objectives.

REASONS TO PLAN¹

Planning is the mark of good community sense and intelligent thought. It makes sense for a community to plan when changes are occurring and if the citizens wish to be a part of those changes. It makes even better sense to plan when changes are pending. Planning enables people to influence changes in the appearance, economy, and social life of their community. By planning, the community will begin to realize that the economy, the housing base, the unique environment, and the historic characteristics are closely related to those annoying or pressing problems such as traffic congestion, water pressure, flooding, and the lack of adequate employment.

The technical reasons for planning are quite simple. Many local land use decisions are often uncoordinated in that they are made over time by a wide and diverse group of citizens--developers, real estate interests, public officials, businessmen, church and school boards, private individuals planning to build new homes or speculating in land, special districts and other governments. The decisions made by these various groups will eventually evolve into a pattern of community growth. If allowed to remain uncoordinated, these development decisions may adversely affect many aspects of commerce, population, education, housing, streets and roads, services, and facilities. For

¹The Small Town Planning Handbook, Thomas L. Damets, John W. Keller with Mark B. Lapping, American Planning Association, Washington, D.C. - Chicago, IL 1988

instance, when several small housing subdivisions are added to the community, they may strain public services (e.g., schools and roads) and not contribute enough in property taxes to pay for new services. Private families may plan and build their homes only to find that within a few years they are neighbors to industrial or commercial uses that are incompatible with family living. Also, some land may be developed before the community realizes that the land is subject to periodic flooding.

All of these reasons point toward the need for planning as a common framework for community decisions so that all interests can begin to pull together. Without the unifying framework provided by planning, serious difficulties may arise.

The use of a community plan in making decisions is not a simple process of commercial and industrial development, although a community plan can be extremely helpful in the background preparation for new businesses.

1. A plan can provide information on the ages and conditions of existing businesses and industries and show what kind of businesses the community needs.
2. A plan can also indicate whether or not the work force is sufficient to staff particular manufacturing jobs and whether or not local road systems are capable of handling the particular loads and types of traffic that would result from increased industrial activity.
3. A plan can paint a picture of how much additional school space and how many recreational facilities would be needed if new residential developments were to locate in the community.
4. A plan also helps to convince prospective manufacturers and business people that the community has considered the needs of new employers and employees, not just the greater payrolls and property tax revenues.
5. A plan can help a community to direct efforts toward common and pressing problems. Planning should help citizens make more effective decisions and draw people into policymaking through public hearings with public officials.
6. A plan is the key: it must reflect a community consensus on the needs and goals of the community in development matters. The more people that take part in the planning process, the more they will feel that the final plan is their plan. In putting together a plan, there is plenty of work for everyone who wants to be involved.

Planning helps shape the drafting and adoption of local zoning and subdivision ordinances. These ordinances will assist the governing body and the planning commission in ruling on development proposals which would bring either small or large changes to the community.

Planning will assist the community in thinking regionally. The more a community becomes involved in the planning process, the more quickly it will realize that local problems, as well as local assets, are not unique. Before long, those who participate in the planning process will come to think of the region as the community. Many problems are larger and more complex than originally anticipated, and often these problems are shared with the county and the community next door. Indeed, it may become apparent that the solution to some problems requires cooperative efforts among communities.

Perhaps the most important reason to plan is that, through planning, a community can achieve feelings of security, pride, and lasting accomplishment. The community can point to itself over the years with great satisfaction and demonstrate that its people care. Planning is a consistent way to show a caring attitude: 1) caring for the residents on the fringe of the newly annexed areas as much as for the residents of older established neighborhoods; 2) caring for the housing of senior citizens and the deprived as much as for the housing of young couples and the visibly rich; 3) caring for the environment and a community's character in the same manner as the tax base and special assessments; and 4) caring that future residents will enjoy the same, if not a better, quality of life as that of prior generations.

PLANNING HISTORY-ITASCA

Community Planning is not new to the Village of Itasca. The first Comprehensive Plan² was adopted in 1959 with a population of 3,151 (Special Census) and in 1960, the official census recorded was 3,564.

The total area of the Village in 1957 was 891 acres with over 36 percent in residential land use. There was no manufacturing in the Village in 1957 and only 1.2 percent of the corporate area was in business and commercial uses.

In 34 years the Village has grown in corporate area, population and in almost every category of land use. Seventy percent of the total area was developed with 30 percent in vacant land.

In 1959 the population, because of the growth since World War II, was projected to reach 16,000 by 1980. This was not reached and never will be attained unless there are changes made, including any redevelopment when the density would be increased.

The second Comprehensive Plan (amendment) was developed for the Village of Itasca between 1974 and 1977 with the adoption of the General Development Plan on October 18, 1977.

²Comprehensive Plan, Itasca, Illinois, Carl Gardner and Associates, October, 1959

This plan was prepared in two parts consisting of "Part One: Background Studies for Planning" and "Part Two: The General Development Plan." This plan has guided the growth and development of Itasca for the past fifteen (15) years.

"Part One:³ Background Studies for Planning" encompasses a wealth of data and information about Itasca and its regional setting, presented in text, table and map form. This report will be used in preparing a new General Development Plan by comparing present data with that collected in the middle 1970's. For example, existing land use can be compared with land use in the 1970's to determine how many acres within the corporate area have been used for uses other than agriculture or vacant.

The topics of information collected and presented in the two parts of the 1977 Comprehensive Plan include:

"Part One: Background Studies for Planning"

- History and Background for Itasca
- Goals and Policies
- Existing Land Use
- Natural and Environmental Resources Inventory
- Population and Social Characteristics
- Economic Inventory and Analysis
- Housing Conditions and Characteristics
- Community Facilities
- Park, Recreation and Open Space System
- Transportation
- Utility System
- Central Business Area Analysis

"Part Two: The General Development Plan" includes two basic elements which were prepared based on the Part One report:

- The General Development Plan for Itasca
- Implementation of the Itasca General Development Plan

The General Development Plan update amending certain sections of the above, adopted between 1986 and 1987, addressed the:⁴

³Part One: Background Studies for Planning and Part Two: The General Development Plan" DuPage County Planning Commissions, 1974-1977

⁴Itasca General Development Plan Update, DuPage County Regional Planning Commission, 1986-1987

- Analysis of Existing Conditions:
 - Planning Area and Base Map
 - Existing Land Use
 - Community Facilities
 - Environmental Characteristics
- Transportation Network Plan:
 - Transportation Network Plan
 - Arterial Highway Development Policies and Standards
- General Development Plan

The update to the General Development Plan was never adopted by the Village Board.

THE AMENDATORY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In 1992, it was approved that the General Development Plan adopted in 1977 was to be amended. This amendment is extensive and includes the following:

- A. Base Map Update
- B. Planning Studies
 - 1. Analysis of Existing Conditions
 - 2. Goals and Objectives
 - 3. Annexation Studies
 - 4. Population Analysis and Projections
 - 5. Community Facilities
 - 6. Environmental Characteristics
 - 7. Streets, Thoroughfares and Transportation
 - 8. Town Center Area Parking Studies
- C. Physical Plan Elements
 - 1. Land Use Plan
 - 2. Community Facilities
 - 3. Streets, Thoroughfares and Transportation
- D. Interim Report
- E. Comprehensive Plan
- F. Comprehensive Plan Brochure

The principal tools to implement the Comprehensive Plan is the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations. The Village of Itasca updates the Zoning Ordinance every two years and the Zoning District Map is revised annually according to the Illinois Revised Statutes.

The Subdivision Regulations adopted August 12, 1986 have never been amended.

On March 9, 1993, the Village adopted the Development Standards and Specifications which will now require a comprehensive amendment to the Subdivision Regulations to remedy any conflicts.