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SENSIBLE TOOLS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

A Decision-Making Workbook for Local Officials, Developers and Community Leaders

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Note: Individual members of these respective organizations may not agree with every statement in it, but all organizations support the document as a whole.

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The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus provides a forum through which the chief elected officials of the region cooperatively develop consensus and act on common public policy issues and multi-jurisdictional challenges. With a foundation of collaboration and consensus-based decision making, it serves a number of functions for its partner organizations and local governments.

The Mayors Caucus is a voice for regional approaches to issues and challenges such as: economic development, school funding and tax reform, workforce readiness, energy reliability and security, air quality, funding for transportation and other infrastructure, housing, and emergency preparedness.

The Housing Task Force of the Mayor's Caucus initiated publication of this workbook in its desire to help local communities work with housing challenges in the region.



The Campaign for Sensible Growth is an action-oriented coalition of government, civic, and business leaders in northeastern Illinois' six counties (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) working to promote economic development while preserving open space, minimizing the need for costly new infrastructure and improving the livability of our communities.

The Campaign, working through its partners, has three primary goals:

- Strengthen the economic competitiveness of the Chicago region through smarter use of infrastructure investment and incentives
- Revitalize and support existing communities
- Promote new development, which is more walkable, transit-friendly and preserves natural resources in newly developed areas.

The Campaign served as project manager for this workbook.



Founded in 1934, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan group of business and civic leaders committed to serving the public interest through the promotion and implementation of sensible planning and development policies necessary for a world-class Chicago region.

MPC conducts policy analysis, outreach, and advocacy in partnership with public officials and community leaders to improve equity of opportunity and quality of life throughout metropolitan Chicago.

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About the Workbook

Livable, attractive communities are created as a result of hundreds, even thousands, of development decisions. How can local elected and appointed officials increase the odds that they make the right decisions? This Workbook was created to meet that need.

Property owners and developers in the Chicago region frequently ask public officials to amend or revise zoning or subdivision regulations to allow types of development that are prohibited according to the applicable law. Property owners also may ask local government officials, such as planning commissioners and village council members, to consider annexation of properties being proposed for development. Communities must assess these requests with the best information available and make the right decision based on the overall merits of the request.

Many such proposals are difficult to assess. Some may raise questions about the effects of a proposed project on adjacent neighborhoods and the community at large. Others may pose broader issues about the direction and quality of future community growth. Developer requests may require close scrutiny and significant changes to conform to community goals and development policies. Communities that have adopted comprehensive plans already have some guidance about evaluating proposals, but may have questions regarding consistency with those plans.

Local officials know how important these decisions can be for the future livability of their community. They also know that constituents and voters expect them to make informed and sensible decisions. This Workbook is intended to help local government officials decide how to apply and/or amend rules and regulations that affect proposed development projects. It can help to educate developers and builders about community expectations for development. While it is unlikely that any particular proposal will meet every goal of a community, local leaders need tools to balance these needs and determine the best possible project in the context of the real estate market, state and federal regulations, and short and long term needs. It may be that a proposed project conflicts with a community's comprehensive plan. Should the project be automatically discarded, or should the community think more broadly about whether the existing plan and zoning meet sensible growth goals?

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Campaign for Sensible Growth, and Metropolitan Planning Council cooperated to produce the Workbook. Each of the

organizations has a stake in promoting sensible growth through planning and development that enhance the quality of life enjoyed by all residents of northeastern Illinois. **As a result of this unusual collaborative effort, individual members of the respective sponsors of this document may not agree with every statement in it. Just as a municipality must weigh a proposed development based on its overall merits, these organizations support the document as a whole.**

Building on Sensible Growth Principles

In preparing the Workbook, the three organizations aimed to provide definition to the principles spelled out on page v. These principles, such as increasing choices of housing and how people get to work; providing options for travel around the region; and protecting water, land, air, and species resources provide broad guidelines for evaluating how proposed projects can contribute to quality community growth.

Building on these principles, the Workbook is organized to help local officials, developers, and community leaders:

- 1. plan for the community's future economic, environmental, and social viability by incorporating the vision and goals of the community, in advance of development controversy;**
- 2. identify the extent to which the project would achieve the community's development goals and standards;**
- 3. quickly understand key pros and cons of a proposal in the short time-frame of typical public hearings;**
- 4. thoughtfully examine the project benefits claimed by applicants;**
- 5. carefully consider costs or impacts, including any that might be raised by the project's opponents; and**
- 6. identify changes that could improve the likelihood of project approval and desired community impact.**

Discussion generated by this information can shed light on the potential contributions that a proposed project might make to the quality of life in communities as they grow and change.

Asking the Right Questions. The Workbook's subjects and format are based on the concept that asking the right questions is necessary to obtaining the right answers. The Workbook poses a series of questions to help local officials evaluate requests for five common types of events that usually require public hearings, including adopting or revising:

- **local comprehensive plans;**
- **rezoning or zoning amendments;**
- **annexation of development sites;**
- **approval of subdivision plans; and**
- **approval of specific site plans.**

The information generated by these questions will help local planning commissioners, village boards, city council members, and zoning commissioners to reach conclusions about the sensibility of the actions requested. At the same time, it is hoped that the questions will alert developers, builders and their professional consultants in advance to the kinds of concerns that local officials and civic leaders will have about their proposals.

How to Use the Workbook

The Workbook has three major parts:

The introduction includes Sensible Growth principles and techniques. It allows a quick evaluation on the extent to which development proposals will advance Sensible Growth.

Part I is a list of questions for each of the five major types of public decisions about development. The questions are suggested ways to help local officials evaluate proposed projects. Follow-up questions and actions are also included, plus space to add helpful information about your own community's policies and regulations.

Part II presents helpful guidance for ways to improve projects to meet the community's objectives for development and better achieve Sensible Growth outcomes.

Use the Workbook this way:

Before and/or during a public hearing or other event concerning proposed development:

- 1. review the initial checklist of Sensible Growth principles and criteria (page v) to quickly assess how consistent a requested action may be;**
- 2. turn to the section about the specific type of proposal (Annexations, page 11; Zoning: Rezoning, Zoning Amendments, and Variances, page 17; Subdivisions, page 27; and Site Plans, page 39) and refer to questions relating to typical project issues;**
- 3. check the most important topics to raise for discussion of the proposal;**
- 4. refresh your memory about your community's comprehensive plan goals for future development; and**
- 5. refer to Part II to find brief descriptions of options and best practices for your consideration in reviewing the proposed project.**

The questions do not require complicated answers from applicants. They may require cross-referencing the various sections, for example, when a project needs rezoning and subdivision approval while seeking annexation. But the questions are intended to remind the user about the concerns and issues often raised by proposed developments. And they might provide some ideas about how the proposed action might help or hinder a community as it attempts to accommodate growth and change.

The sponsoring organizations would like to make the Workbook as useful as possible. In order to get full value from the Workbook, add information about your local plan, zoning ordinance, and other regulations. Feel free to customize it to serve your needs. Add and subtract items, provide additional information, re-phrase questions — all are encouraged. Consider the Workbook to be yours to use in whatever way is most beneficial.

Clarifying Concepts and Untangling Terminology

In recent years, planners and public officials have invented some new terms about forms of development. They can be confusing, especially in the heat of public discussions. Here are some definitions that might help to clarify terms:

Cluster development	Arrangement of development on one part of a site to save open space in the remainder of the site
Green architecture/infrastructure, greenways	Tracts of land that connect one preserved area to another, often including a hiking or bicycling trail
Growth management	Tools and techniques for implementing coordinated planning and sensible growth
New Urbanism	Design concepts that use traditional neighborhood and transit-oriented features to lay out neighborhoods and communities
Planned unit development	Zoning for phasing relatively large developments, which usually allows several uses and some flexibility in designing a site to make the best use of the property
Sensible Growth	Broad principles or goals for guiding community development toward quality growth, such as emphasizing infill and redevelopment, protecting natural resources, and linking transportation and land use
Smart Growth	Another term for sensible growth
Standard planning and zoning	Traditional planning and zoning, in use primarily since 1945
Sustainable development	Development that enhances people’s well being within the environment’s capacity
Traditional neighborhood development	Neighborhood designs that include features of typical pre-1940s development, such as mixed-uses, pedestrian friendly streets, and homes with front porches
Transit-oriented development	Development focused around transit stations that is designed to improve transit use and neighborhood walkability

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles for balanced community development have been adopted by many organizations and communities across the United States. Though techniques vary across regions and community types, the ten tools listed here can form the basis for a sensible and effective smart growth plan. This list, created by the Smart Growth America coalition, has been adopted by a variety of political and business leaders, including the National Governors Association, the International City and County Management Association, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

1. Mix land uses: New, clustered development works best if it includes a mix of stores, jobs, and homes. Single-use districts make life less convenient and require more driving.

2. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities: From local parks to neighborhood schools to transit systems, pub-

lic investments should focus on getting the most out of what we've already built. Before we plow up more forests and farms, we should look for opportunities to grow in already built-up areas.

choices: Not everyone wants the same thing. Communities should offer a range of options: houses, condominiums, affordable homes for low-income families, and "granny flats" for empty nesters.

4. Create walkable neighborhoods: Livable places offer not just the opportunity to walk — sidewalks are a necessity — but something to walk to, whether it's the corner store, the transit stop, or a school. A compact, walkable neighborhood contributes to people's sense of community because neighbors get to know each other, not just each other's cars.

5. Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place: In every community, there are things that make each place special, from train stations to local businesses. These should be protected and celebrated.

6. Take advantage of compact building design: Development should take into account the ecology of a site and protect the most valuable natural resources.

7. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas:

People want to stay connected to nature and are willing to take action to protect farms, waterways, ecosystems, and wildlife.

8. Provide a variety of transportation choices:

People can't get out of their cars unless we provide them with another way to get where they're going. More communities need safe and reliable public transportation, sidewalks, and bike paths.

9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective:

Builders wishing to implement smart growth should face no more obstacles than those contributing to sprawl. In fact, communities may choose to provide incentives for smarter development.

10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration:

Plans developed without strong citizen involvement don't have staying power. When people feel left out of important decisions, they won't be there to help when tough choices have to be made.

A detailed checklist to use in evaluating how projects do or do not achieve sensible growth is provided on [page ix](#).

Northeastern Illinois Housing Endorsement Criteria

Homeownership studies show that housing in high job growth areas like DuPage, Lake, and north suburban Cook counties, and in revitalizing neighborhoods in Chicago, is beyond the reach of the average working family and lower income people. Data from the 2000 Census also confirms the findings of the Metropolitan Planning Council's 1999 Regional Rental Market Analysis that rental housing is often not available for households who cannot afford homeownership. Where housing is affordable, jobs and other opportunities are scarce — contributing to the traffic congestion, economic disparities, and racial segregation that tax the region. Compared to other metropolitan hubs, the Chicago area is failing in its ability to meet housing demands with adequate supply. Focus groups and key informant interviews with critical stakeholders identify community resistance and poor com-

munication as primary obstacles preventing local decision-makers from accepting proposals and policies that forward regional housing objectives.

For northeastern Illinois to remain competitive, the supply of housing options must be expanded to meet growing demands. By securing broad-based support for these Housing Endorsement Criteria, municipal leaders, neighbors, employers, and community-based organizations can together more effectively attract, identify, and support proposals for quality developments. To promote housing and mixed-use developments that meet community needs while also addressing broader regional sensible growth goals, new housing should:

1. Promote economic development and sustainability. Housing, when appropriately located, encourages the expansion of existing and the location of new businesses and industries within the region. The mismatch between where the jobs are and where workers can afford to live has significant costs. Increasingly, employers recognize that local housing for all levels of their workforce promotes stability and productivity for the workers as well as the individual company.

2. Encourage an array of quality housing options throughout the region. Developments with units at price points accessible to a wide range of income levels are needed to provide the local workforce and residents with a housing supply that is critically needed and currently lacking. By the year 2020, northeastern Illinois is expected to increase 25 percent in population, or 1.5 million people, and the housing market must be expanded at all price points to accommodate this dramatic growth.

3. Support innovative development and design. Quality residential and mixed-use developments maintain, enhance, or create livable streets, neighborhoods, and public space oriented to the pedestrian. A variety of housing types provides a healthy mix of residents from different age groups, racial and cultural backgrounds, income levels and household types. New developments foster a sense of community, while promoting people's choice of housing, privacy, and convenient access to nearby amenities.

4. Provide for mixed uses within neighborhoods. In order to enhance community livability and decrease auto dependency, a mix of land uses within a neighborhood combines residential with retail, restaurants, schools and other amenities in close proximity. The location of schools, entertainment districts, parks, businesses, institutions, and recreational facilities will be consciously integrated with new and existing residential developments to encourage ease of pedestrian access.

5. Minimize the cost of municipal services. Cluster housing near existing infrastructure to minimize the per capita costs of municipal services by allowing for more efficiency and economics of scale.

6. Promote the use of public transit. Housing, together with commercial space and public amenities, should be planned for, and built first, within walking distance of existing or planned transit service, in order to strengthen transit ridership and decrease traffic congestion.

7. Support sensible growth. There are ample opportunities within existing service areas of our older cities and suburbs to provide for a portion of projected housing needs over the next 20 years. Infill development and redevelopment within existing municipal areas and conservation developments are of tremendous value. Adhering to development policies that encourage compact, mixed-use development promotes an array of housing types and expands individual choice. This will advance other regional and community needs, such as the protection of open space and the growth of the local tax base.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA

Location

Infill development and redevelopment within existing cities and towns, as well as new conservation developments, will receive preference. In order to maximize compatibility with public transit and minimize auto use, housing within one mile of major transit service, a job hub, or town center provides a future market for transit. The project may be within two miles of a rail transit station if provisions are made to provide ongoing shuttle service to the future residents. Major transit service is defined as a bus or rail stop with peak period wait times of no more than 30 minutes. Major transit service also includes funded, but not yet built, fixed rail stations.

Land Use

New developments that aim to cluster housing in an efficient manner, in context with the surrounding community, to preserve natural resources and open space will be given priority attention. Higher densities and mixed uses are particularly appropriate near transit stations to reduce the growth of traffic congestion on local and regional roads.

Attainability

Mixed-income housing developments, which include units accessible to moderate-income working families and to households with lower-incomes along with market rate units in the same complex, will be given preference. Developments that help balance affordability levels within communities, while assuring consistent quality and design, will receive strong support.

Design

New developments that stress quality design and construction to help ensure their long-term contribution to the improvement of the neighborhood will be given preference. The proposed buildings will fit their setting, complementing and enhancing the existing neighborhood, and promoting a sense of community. They will also feature pedestrian friendly design and the other principles of good village design. Proposals will address transit use and access and, where appropriate, the potential for mixed uses.

Management

The management and maintenance of developments are as critical as the initial design and construction to meeting the goals of enhancing communities. Therefore, the capacity of the development team to successfully address long-term needs, as evidenced by its track record in selling, leasing, and managing development properties, and its history with neighborhood and/or tenant relations will be also considered.

The Housing Endorsement Criteria are a joint initiative of the Metropolitan Planning Council and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Housing Task Force. The Task Force is led by co-chairs Mayor Zenovia Evans of Riverdale and Mayor Rita Mullins of Palatine. For further information contact Robin Snyderman, Metropolitan Planning Council, at 312-863-6007 or rsnyderman@metroplanning.org; or Beth Dever, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, at 312-201-4507 or beth.dever@mayorscaucus.org.

Checklist for Sensible Growth

Use this checklist to quickly determine whether a proposed project adheres to sensible growth principles, or simply to remind yourself about what project qualities make for sensible, sustainable forms of development. Check the factors that apply to a proposed project. Not all factors will apply to all projects, depending on types of proposed uses and project size and complexity. The checklist is aimed at helping community leaders evaluate how beneficial a project is likely to be to their communities. It is unlikely that any particular proposal will meet every item on the checklist. Focus attention on the most important elements the community is trying to foster. Over the long-term, a community may be able to raise the standards, building on initial gains and successes.

This checklist presents a broad array of questions that community leaders might ask — but you may think of others. The authors recommend that you copy the checklist and use it for evaluating each development proposal until this becomes second nature for your community.

How will this proposal promote the economy of the community? Does the development ...

- Help meet community goals for economic development, including expansion of industries, commercial centers, and business services?
- Meet (for commercial development) standard commercial location criteria that will quickly attract developers? Will the development attract retail/commercial developers?
- Add to economic activities that serve, complement, and/or support existing industries and businesses?
- Fall within, or reasonably near, both business and residential areas to strengthen relationships with existing activities?

- Add to employment opportunities?
- Provide reasonable wage and salary levels for employees to pay taxes for public services to be provided for them?
- Provide desirable housing and neighborhoods attractive for the existing and future work force?

How will this proposal encourage an array of quality housing options throughout the region or in our community? Does the development ...

- Incorporate and increase a variety of housing types, sizes, and price/rent levels within the neighborhood area?
- Help meet community goals for affordable housing?
- Rehabilitate or restore existing housing in neighborhoods needing revitalization?

How will the proposal provide desirable and/or innovative types of development and design? Does the project ...

- Provide a mix of interrelated uses within a walkable distance of each other? (See mixed-use principle below.)
- Provide a plan for phasing development and indicate relationships between proposed uses?
- Cluster development in one part of the site in order to retain open space in the remainder of the site?
- Intersperse development with preserved open space? (See principle of preservation of natural resources below.)
- Provide efficient lots (less than a quarter-acre) for most residential development?
- Reduce the area devoted to parking by arrangements such as shared, structured, or limited parking?
- Provide effective, low-impact infrastructure systems such as drainage swales (planted, vegetated land depressions) instead of pipes, permeable pavements that allow

water to be absorbed on site (instead of impervious surfaces), walk-to-school opportunities, and narrow streets?

How will the proposal contribute to a mix of uses within the neighborhood? Does the development ...

- Mix a variety of related uses in a compatibly designed way and within walkable distance of each other?
- Incorporate uses that will complement or add variety to existing uses in the neighborhood?
- Provide attractive streetscapes and pathways to connect the variety of uses both within the project and in the neighborhood?

How will the proposal provide public facilities to support development in a cost-effective manner? Will the developer ...

- Provide on-site public facilities, such as sewer and water facilities, roads, walkways, street lighting, connections to major roads, schools, parks, and recreation areas as required by zoning and subdivision regulations?

Connect public facilities to the existing infrastructure adjacent to or near the site?

Provide facilities with sufficient capacity to serve project needs (as determined by staff or consultant planners) on site or through existing facilities in the area?

Ensure that any inadequacies in facility capacities specifically attributable to the new development will be made up through developer contributions (land, construction, fees) and/or planned public works?

Discuss the use of public funds available to provide the supplemental facilities (such as off-site road improvements or schools) necessary to support the needs generated specifically by the proposed development?

How will the project promote efficient transportation mobility in the neighborhood and region? Does the development ...

Provide or make possible a range of travel choices between the project and important destinations within the community and neighborhood?

- Provide connections and improvements to exterior highway systems that are designed to minimize impacts on capacities of the surrounding street network?
- Have a designed street system interconnected at multiple intersections with streets outside the development, and convenient access to current or future transit service?
- Incorporate safe, attractive, and convenient pathways so pedestrians and bicyclists can walk or ride to important destinations rather than use cars?
- Provide transit options on site or within walking distance (one-half mile), or provide for public transit to be available within a reasonable period of time?
- Provide available or planned public transit for satisfactory access (in terms of travel times) to major employment nodes and residential concentrations outside the project?
- Incorporate densities and a mix of development types to establish corridors of activities that will reduce dependence on driving and encourage walking, bicycling, and using transit?

- Have a transportation demand management plan prepared to offer a variety of travel modes and eliminate disparate out-of-pocket travel costs for residents and employees using transportation other than single-driver automobiles?

How will the proposal contribute to neighborhood livability and sense of place? Does the development ...

- Provide uses, services, and/or amenities that will complement or enhance the existing character of the neighborhood?
- Re-use existing buildings, including buildings of historic or architectural interest?
- Recycle abandoned, underutilized, or contaminated sites?
- Upgrade or replace deteriorating infrastructure?

How will the proposal help to conserve natural resources? Does the development ...

- Preserve and/or restore environmentally sensitive qualities and areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, flood plains, erodible hills, and stream valleys, and native ecosystems?
- Protect scenic assets and views of natural features such as woodlands, streams, hills, and meadows?
- Minimize the proportion of hard, impervious surfaces (on roofs or pavements) that promote storm water runoff instead of allowing natural infiltration into the underground aquifer?
- Weave on-site natural resource systems among developed areas to create a "green infrastructure" system?
- Mitigate loss or damage of natural resources by contributions to off-site natural resource preservation or restoration?

Ten Things You'll Always Hear at Public Hearings

Certain issues come up again and again when development proposals are evaluated. Some are legal or moral issues, such as property rights versus community needs. Others relate to the costs and benefits of community growth or how closely plans and regulations are related.

Your local planning staff and legal counsel can help you understand these issues and how they might apply to specific proposals. But, here are brief explanations of ten issues that often come up at public hearings.

1. "The zoning must be changed to allow me to build what I want to — that's my Constitutional right as a property owner."

From Colonial times to today, we Americans have jealously guarded our right to own and use private property. Nevertheless, we own property only through the sovereign power of the nation. The Constitutional right given by the Fifth Amendment of the Bill of Rights states "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

Courts have affirmed repeatedly that the federal government and states, and through them local counties and municipalities, can, within guidelines set by law, regulate the use of property. That means that local officials can decide to control development and can regulate the type of development that is allowed. Only when a regulation would eliminate all reasonable economic use of a property would it become a "taking." (For a detailed textbook on the takings issue see Robert Meltz, Dwight H. Merriam, and Richard M. Frank, *The Takings Issue* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999.)

2. "The proposed development will ruin my property value and destroy the quality of life we hold near and dear."

If the proposed use may impact the visual character, traffic conditions or other aspects of adjacent properties, conditions can be added to avoid or alleviate problems (such as buffer areas, height restrictions, and traffic calming devices). But if the property owner is complaining because the proposed use will bring different types of housing (and households) to the area, there is no evidence that such development will drive down property values. Remember that housing diversity is one of the principles of sensible growth and can add value.

3. "We don't need any more ... [fill in the proposed use here]."

Many people in growing communities want their neighborhood to stay just the way it is. That's a comfortable idea but often doesn't take account of what the community will need in the future. Communities do change, even if they don't grow, and growing communities change more. A specific use may not be appropriate in a specific location and neighbors certainly have a right to complain about that. But too many people take the knee-jerk attitude that any change is bad.

4. "This community doesn't need any more development, period." Communities can decide not to allow growth (or annexation) but then must live with the consequences. Some consequences may be losing control to other communities over adjacent development (and the traffic it might bring), potential impacts on the jurisdiction's economic or fiscal strength, and the loss of potential benefits of growth that might make special facilities like community or arts centers affordable. This decision is one every community must mull over and make.

5. "This project will generate way too much traffic on roads that are already too congested." This is a tough issue, because new projects always will generate more traffic and many roads already are congested. Some facts may help. "Congestion" is frequently more a state of mind rather than reality — drivers in big cities become accustomed to heavy traffic while drivers in growing small towns remember the "good old days." Congestion can prompt people to link trips together, use car pools and transit, or move closer to where they work. Congestion can be relieved by better traffic management. And the kinds of developments that follow Sensible Growth principles help to make all these things happen.

6. "The project is too dense." For many people, density is a four-letter word. Any building that makes more intensive use of land than most buildings in the neighborhood is automatically branded ugly and incompatible, and its future inhabitants undesirable. "Too dense" also suggests more traffic. Yet "more dense" also makes transit and walking more convenient and feasible. Architects know how to design attractive density that doesn't overpower its neighbors. Future residents may actually be better educated and more financially stable than expected. Density does not equate with bad development. Also, the use of clustered and smaller individual lots gains more open space and reduces overall density. Such clustered development links density in one area to preserved open space in another.

7. "This project will put too much stress on our schools." School children may come with more development, although our aging population is generating fewer children and many projects attract mostly older residents. The problem with school capacity is two-fold: families with children tend to move to where schools are scarce (and housing is less expensive), requiring new construction, while existing schools in older areas are under-used. Space and race play major roles in these trends. But communities anxious to zone for lots of new single-family homes must expect to fund new school buildings to maintain adequate school capacity. Redevelopment and improving in-city neighborhoods can attract families back to existing schools.

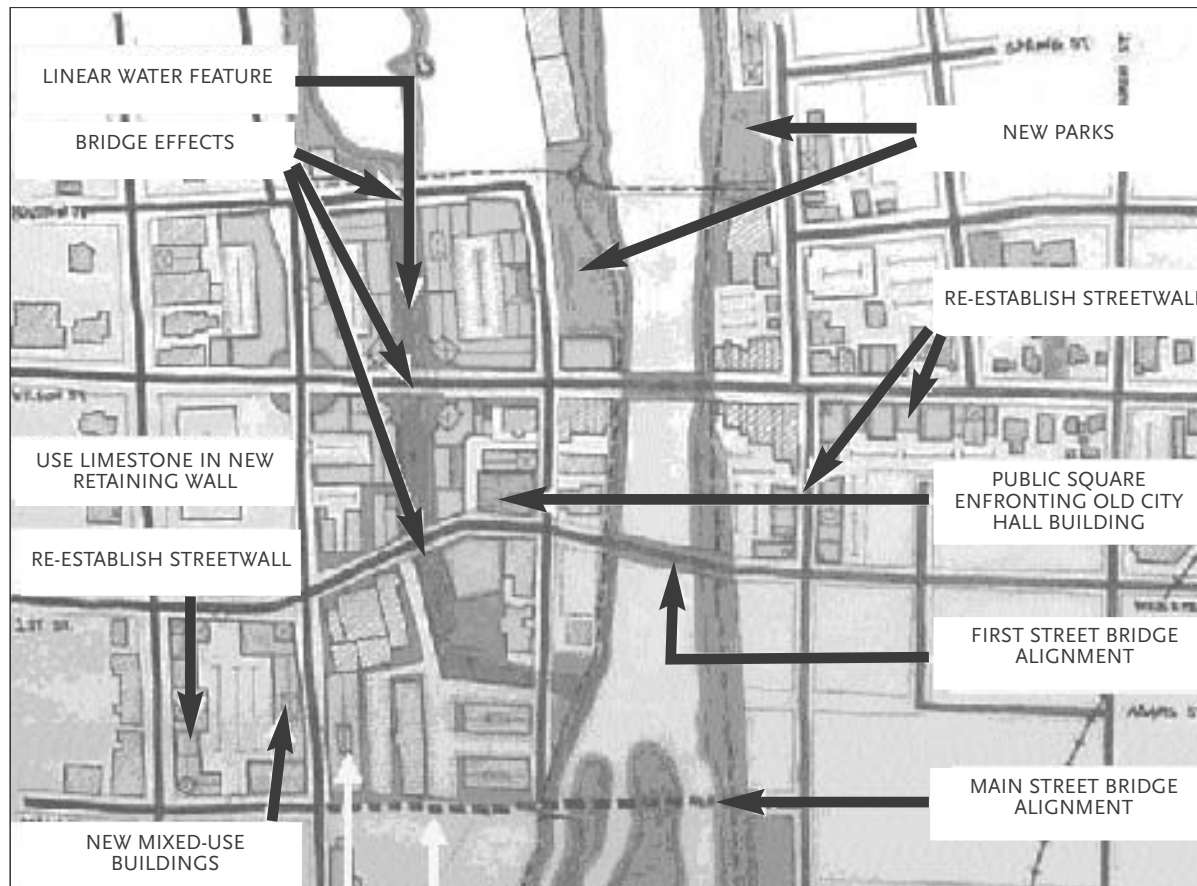
8. "This change is just the tip of the iceberg and sets a terrible precedent for our community." Some people's anxiety levels are raised by variances or zoning changes that indicate a deviation from past development practices. Variances do not set precedents, because they require a finding of hardship, which pertains only to the property involved. On the other hand, zoning changes do establish precedents that may or may not represent reasonable responses to new trends in community development. Therefore, it's sensible to evaluate them with great care to ensure that zoning revisions are consistent with the community's development goals and do not represent a "terrible" precedent.

9. "This proposal makes sense here and now, even though it doesn't conform to our comprehensive plan, which is just pie in the sky." Comprehensive plans are intended to take the long view — to define "what the community wants to be when it grows up." Zoning and other development regulations are means to achieve that end. Public officials who decide that a proposed project looks good even if it is not consistent with the comprehensive plan either are (1) valuing short-term project benefits over long-term community benefits or (2) indicating that the comprehensive plan is outdated and irrelevant for current conditions. If the plan is outdated, then it needs to be revised or replaced. Making zoning decisions not based on a reasonable plan for future growth makes for unpredictable public policies and invites conflict over subsequent decisions.

10. "Nobody asked me how we ought to develop, so why should I go along with this project?" People often are surprised and sometimes angered by proposals for development, even if the proposals agree with the comprehensive plan and the zoning for the area. Most have never bothered to understand the plan and many are not well versed in how plans and zoning might affect future development in their neighborhood. (How many times have people bought houses next to a wooded area only to discover later that development is planned for that area?) Citizens have an obligation to become educated about their community's plan, and zoning for their area. Communities have an equal obligation to help educate them, especially when plan and zoning revisions are being considered.

About Comprehensive Plans in Illinois

1. What a comprehensive plan is and does: Communities adopt comprehensive plans to provide policies and guidelines for the most desirable long-range development of the community. Comprehensive plans allow local leaders to identify and plan for the physical, economic, social, political, aesthetic, and related factors that affect community growth and change. Such plans demonstrate that a community values planning ahead to identify development issues and deal with them systematically. That means that not only should comprehensive plans be adopted and used to guide zoning and other decisions, but that they should be periodically updated with broad public input.



Batavia Downtown Plan Communities that adopt and implement comprehensive plans explain and illustrate the vision of the community on a map. This downtown plan, part of the City of Batavia's comprehensive plan, illustrates the natural (linear water) and man-made (sewage treatment) features in the community. It then identifies where new development — residential, mixed-use buildings, pedestrian crossing, parks — will be placed. This plan works to inform the public as well as developers interested in doing projects in Batavia. It alerts residents to understand the "vision" of a redeveloped downtown with an emphasis on nature, bicycle travel, and historic flavor — public square and street wall. It alerts developers to projects they might be interested in — the hotel or residential buildings — and shows them the context in which the community is seeking development.

2. Legal basis for comprehensive plans in Illinois: Review the Illinois statutes regarding comprehensive plans on [page 62](#). The review includes the updated definition of a comprehensive plan according to the "Local Planning Technical Assistance Act" enacted by the state in 2002, recommended if a rewrite of the comprehensive plan is to be undertaken.

3. Benefits of comprehensive plans: Illinois communities are not required to adopt comprehensive plans. If they do, however, the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act (20 ILCS 662) provides that they may obtain preference for state funding for state economic development, transportation, planning, and natural resource and agriculture programs.

Traditionally, a comprehensive plan is advisory, but the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act states that any municipality or county receiving state assistance to write or revise a comprehensive plan should ensure that land development regulations, including zoning map amendments and any other land use actions, be consistent with the new or revised comprehensive plan.

The Local Planning Technical Assistance Act (20 ILCS 662) defines a comprehensive plan as including — at a minimum — the following elements:

- Issues and opportunities
- Land use and natural resources
- Transportation
- Community facilities (schools, parks, police, fire, and water and sewer)
- Telecommunications infrastructure
- Housing
- Economic development
- Natural resources
- Public participation

Comprehensive plans may also include the following: natural hazards; agriculture and forest preservation; human services; community design; historic preservation; and the adoption of subplans, as needed.

The authors of this Workbook strongly urge communities to adopt and update comprehensive plans to provide basic guidelines for making decisions on zoning, subdivision, and other ordinances, as well as programs the community uses to guide growth and change. Once plans are prepared and adopted, the community should expect to review them at least every five years, and revise and update them at least every ten years, to ensure they still reflect community trends and goals.

4. Topics generally covered by comprehensive plans (in addition to the comprehensive plan elements defined in the state law, listed in [Part II, pages 62 and 63](#)):

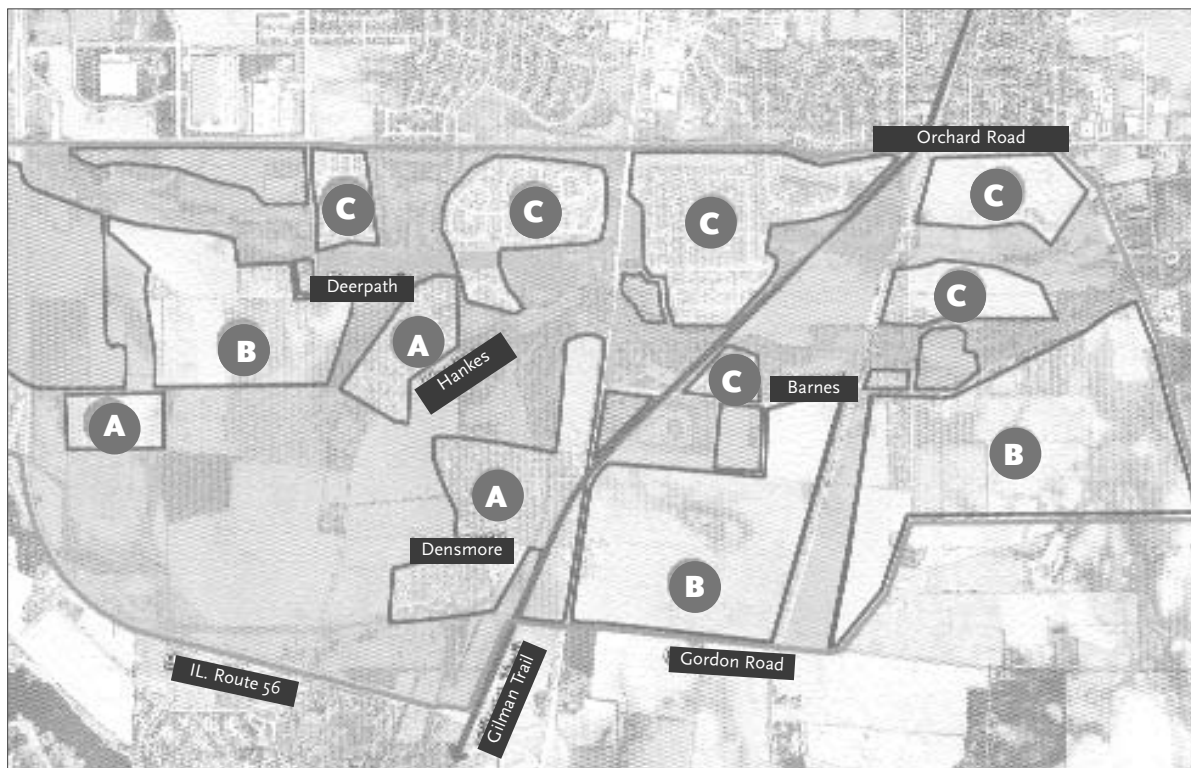
- Proposals for the general physical design of the future community — such as where growth should or should not take place — based on what natural systems should be protected; how that development should be designed and function; what infrastructure expansions will be needed; how special areas should be treated;



Kane County Critical Growth Area Perspective Included in Kane County's 2020 Land Resource Management Plan, the county's comprehensive plan, is this map of the Critical Growth Area, which shows the central region of Kane County. The area contains a blend of land uses: open space, agricultural, and residential areas, limited areas of commercial services, and specified villages of Batavia, Elburn, Kaneville, LaFox, Lily Lake, Plato Center, South Elgin, and Wasco. The 2020 Plan recognizes that it is crucial for the municipalities and the county to manage growth in the Critical Growth Area while protecting the environment. This area, the plan notes, will be critical — the county's litmus test — where the county and municipalities either surrender to conventional suburban sprawl or make a stand for managed growth and the preservation of countryside character and open space. The county has stated the issues clearly for both residents and developers to understand, and illustrated the areas it wants to protect and where development is welcomed.

COURTESY OF KANE COUNTY

- Historic and existing conditions that will affect future development — for example: population, economic characteristics and growth trends; current land use and basic transportation and other infrastructure systems; environmental conditions and identification of areas (such as business centers and residential neighborhoods) needing special consideration;
- Trends that will affect these conditions in the future, and a summary of concerns and issues about future growth; and
- Goals (and/or a vision statement) that describe the desirable character of the future community.



COURTESY OF CITY OF AURORA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Aurora Countryside Land Use Plan The City of Aurora created a Countryside Concept Plan for its West Side. In it, the City identifies parcels for existing and future non-residential development, noting that developers are encouraged to incorporate design features advocated throughout the plan into whatever development they intend to construct in the area.

Often, communities supplement the comprehensive plan with more detailed plans — for example, about infrastructure systems, downtown areas, or certain neighborhoods.

5. Current status of the plan (for communities having adopted plans):

Date of most recent revision or major update: _____

Revisions or updates underway? _____

Other officially adopted plans and dates:

Court decisions affecting the plan, if any:

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. For more information on comprehensive plans, see:
The brief section on comprehensive planning in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties and Smart Growth Network, 2002), pp. 9-12

The video *Best of Planning for Zoning Administrators* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1994)

Gunnar Isberg, *Creating Successful Communities* (Metropolitan Council, 1997) 46 pages

Eric Damian Kelly and Barbara Becker, *Community Planning* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000) 478 pages

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

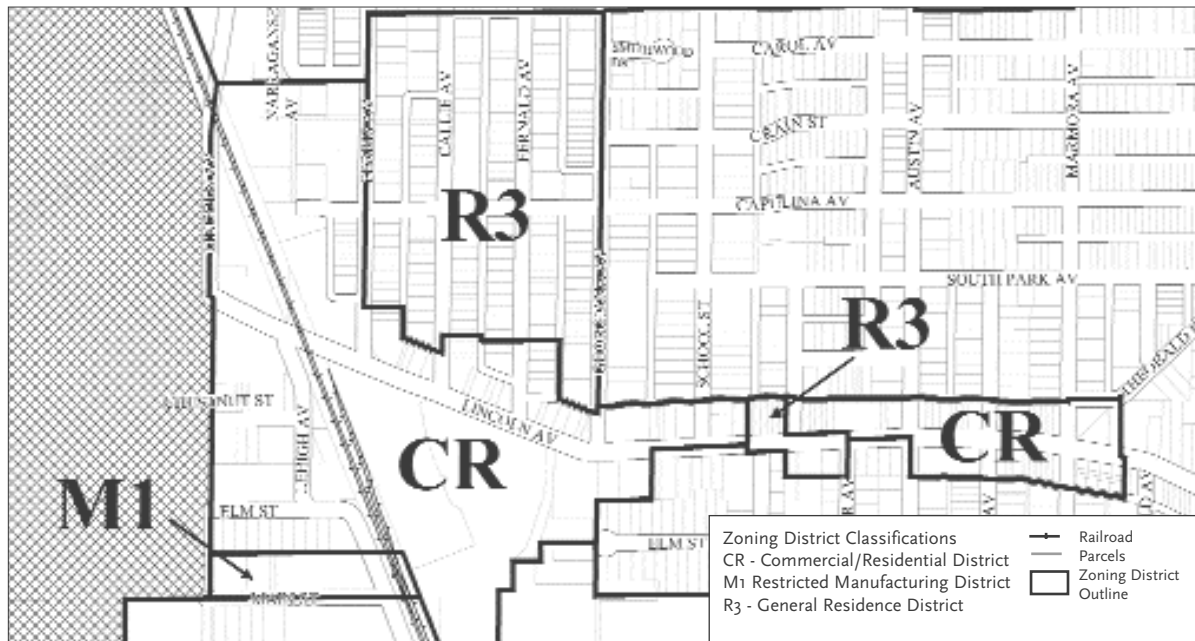
- a. The Illinois Statute provisions for comprehensive plans.
- b. A summary of the community's current plan's most important goals and policies for guiding community growth and development.
- c. The adopted community vision statement (if any).
- d. [Work Sheet 4, page 44.](#)

Evaluating the Need for Plan Revisions or Updates

1. Conformity with Community Goals and Objectives: Do the comprehensive plan’s goals and policies recognize the important trends and issues affecting the community’s growth and change?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Are they desirable and realistic objectives? Do they describe what is wanted for the community?
- b. Do they adequately reflect Sensible Growth principles?
- c. Do they make sense considering the plans and changing character of surrounding communities, and potential annexations within the mile and one-half planning and zoning jurisdiction of the community?
- d. Have the plan’s recommendations or actions to implement the plan been taken? If not, why not? Is it because the community disagrees with the recommendations, or does not have the financial or staff resources necessary to carry them out?



Morton Grove Comprehensive Plan

The Village of Morton Grove revised its comprehensive plan to accommodate mixed-use development. Looking to revive its retail and commercial areas, and to promote development in and around its transit station, the Village created a plan that included "CR" districts, or those where development that mixed commercial and retail were welcomed. The plan, developed after many public meetings for stakeholder input, indicates to residents what sort of development will be coming and to developers where opportunities are located.

COURTESY OF VILLAGE OF MORTON GROVE

2. Zoning Consistency: Are the comprehensive plan's goals, policies, and other guidelines consistent with the current zoning ordinance and recent rezoning decisions?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. If there are only minor inconsistencies, do zoning or rezoning provisions generally meet the plan's goals or objectives?
- b. Are there major inconsistencies due to a series of zoning or rezoning decisions that do not conform to the comprehensive plan?
- c. Does that mean that the plan is obsolete and should be reviewed and updated, or should a major revision be undertaken? Or, alternatively, does it mean that the zoning ordinance or rezoning decisions should be brought more into line with the plan?
- d. In either case, do current subdivision regulations and other development regulations reflect the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan? Should they be reviewed as well to reconcile them with the plan?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Compare plan map with zoning map.

- 3. Indications of Major Inconsistencies:** Do the zoning ordinance and recent zoning decisions differ from the comprehensive plan goals and policies in any of the following ways?
- a. Much of the development recently approved is occurring in locations not proposed for growth by the plan. Many major types of development — shopping centers, business parks, civic institutions, residential neighborhoods — are being approved in locations not proposed by the plan.
 - b. The plan and zoning ordinance do not allow for innovative development types, such as mixed-use and conservation development.
 - c. Densities proposed by the plan are being increased or reduced in many developments.
 - d. Existing neighborhoods identified in the plan as desirable living areas are being adversely affected by incompatible development allowed by zoning.
 - e. Roads and other public infrastructure improvements proposed by the plan are not being funded or constructed as needed to serve growing areas.
 - f. Historic areas and other special places that the plan identifies as important community assets are being drastically affected by new development or are declining or deteriorating.
 - g. Open spaces (of all types) proposed by the plan are being developed.
 - h. Many zoning proposals are being opposed or fiercely debated because the proposed development is inconsistent with the adopted plan.
 - i. Community leaders, developers, and civic activists complain that decisions about the location and quality of growth are increasingly unpredictable and erratic.
 - j. Community leaders are increasingly at odds with adjoining communities over zoning decisions that are inconsistent with our plan and their plans.

4. Gaps in the Plan: Does the comprehensive plan address the following important areas (defined under the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act):

- a. Land use and natural resources: Have natural resources been inventoried to protect them from development?
- b. Transportation: Are transportation options considered in the plan?
- c. Technology: Are new businesses that may require technological advancements considered?
- d. Affordable housing: Does the plan consider how to accommodate the needs of residents for housing that they can afford?

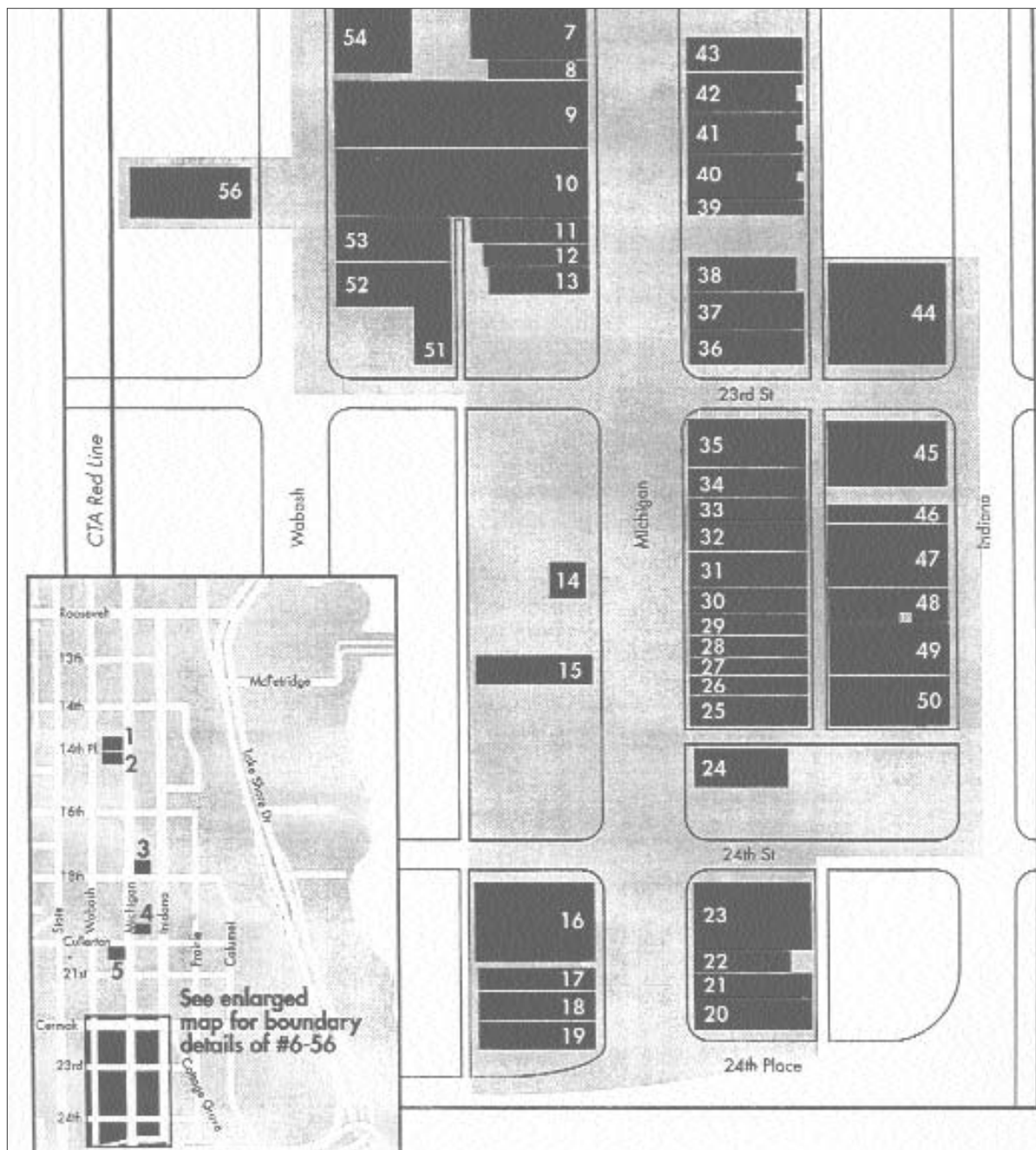
FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FOR #3 AND #4:

- a. Decide whether to revise the comprehensive plan and/or the zoning ordinance to make them consistent with each other and to meet sensible growth principles.
- b. Determine whether wholesale re-thinking and re-writing of the plan or zoning ordinance is necessary or whether only certain sections need revision.
- c. Formulate a procedure for revisions that recognizes the views of all of the parties interested in the community's development.



COURTESY OF WILL COUNTY, ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY CENTER, SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT, INC., AND CHICAGO PLAN COMMISSION

Plans A variety of comprehensive plans illustrates different approaches communities have taken.



Motor Row District Historic areas should be delineated as important community assets. Many communities identify historic districts to be preserved, such as this map of Chicago’s designated landmark Motor Row district. Each structure that contributes to the district is numbered and identified with both a short history and a photo.

COURTESY OF CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

About Annexation Requests

Property owners and developers frequently request annexation of one or more properties intended for development. Usually they hope to obtain access to urban services provided by municipalities (such as water and sewer service). Sometimes, they also want zoning that will allow the kind of development they plan to undertake. Annexation requests often go hand-in-hand with requests for a comprehensive plan and zoning changes, particularly because local governments in Illinois have planning and zoning jurisdiction for one-and-a-half miles outside their boundaries. If approved by the municipality, the annexation is generally cemented by a development agreement that spells out agreed-upon plan and zoning changes.

Neighboring jurisdictions also may claim responsibility for part or all of these "extraterritorial" areas. It's best for local governments to cooperate in working out a joint agreement dividing responsibilities for overlapping territory.

1. State Law: Consult Illinois Statutes, page 66 about the annexation provisions in the state statutes.

2. Status of annexations:

	Recently Approved	Under Consideration
Number:	_____	_____
Total number of acres:	_____	_____
Total housing units:	_____	_____
Total nonresidential space:	_____	_____

Questions to the Applicant/Developer

1. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: How is the proposed annexation and expected development consistent or inconsistent with the community's comprehensive plan map and with the plan's goals and policies regarding preferred areas for future development?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Is the proposed annexation located in an area designated by the comprehensive plan for future development?
- b. Will the annexation require any amendment to the comprehensive plan?

2. Consistency with Facilities Planning Area (FPA): Does the annexation require an amendment to the jurisdiction's FPA?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

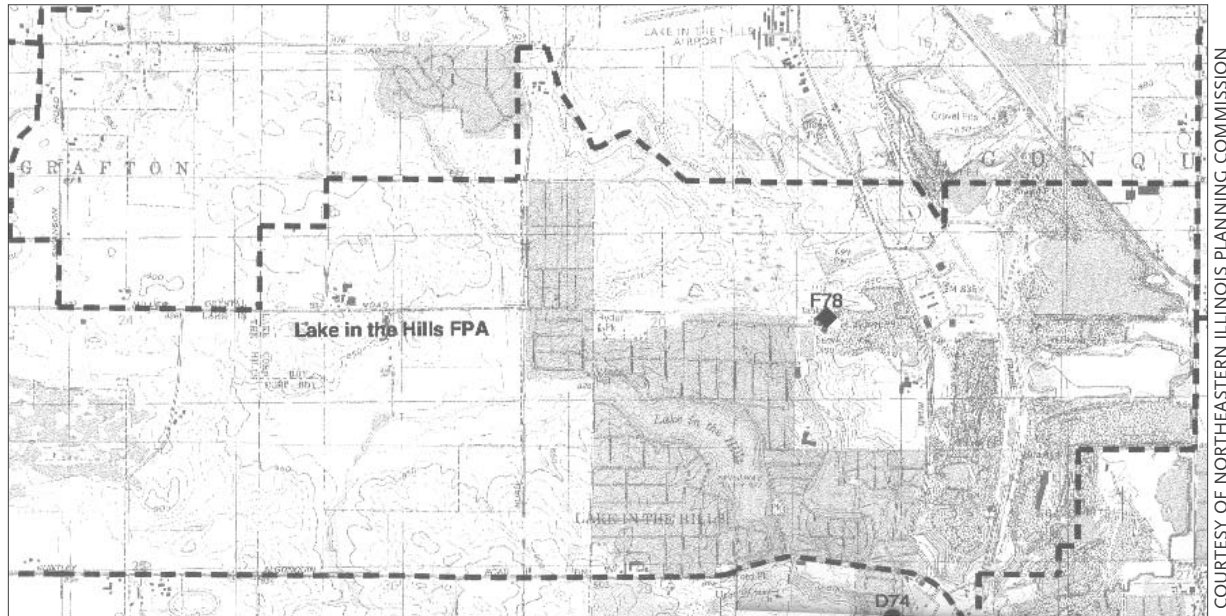
- a. If so, what is the rationale for expanding the area?
- b. Will adjoining communities be affected by an expansion of the area?
- c. How will potentially harmful impacts on water quality and environmentally sensitive areas be eliminated or minimized?
- d. How would expansion of the FPA affect the overall environment of the area and region?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check plan map for uses designated for this area.
- b. Review plan policies and goals in [Part II, Work Sheet 4, page 43](#).
- c. Check community vision statement, if any.
- d. Check any intergovernmental agreements with adjoining communities concerning boundaries.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) criteria (www.nipc.cog.il.us/wq_docs.htm) for expansion of FPAs.
- b. Check plans and proposals for sewer facilities in surrounding jurisdictions.



COURTESY OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS PLANNING COMMISSION

NIPC FPA Map The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) provides maps and other information on where Facilities Planning Areas are located throughout the Chicago metropolitan region. Questions about new or expanding FPAs should be taken to NIPC, 312-454-0400.

3. Location and Timeliness: Why is annexation and development appropriate at this time in this location?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Is the proposed project contiguous to existing development? If not, how far away is it from existing development, and is the intervening land planned to be developed over time?
- b. Why is annexation and development appropriate at this time? Is sufficient developable land available within the jurisdiction's boundary? If such land is available, is it on the market?
- c. Will annexation contribute to meeting existing or emerging needs for development in this area?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check existing land use or aerial maps for location and type of development in the vicinity.
- b. Check existing boundaries compared to annexation proposal.

4. Community Consultation: Have neighboring residents and/or property owners and adjoining communities been contacted about the proposed annexation?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

a. How many neighboring residents were consulted? How were they consulted and when? What were their views?

b. Is there a boundary agreement with adjoining communities, or have they been consulted about the annexation and the implications for the boundary?

5. Planned Development: To evaluate development planned for the proposed annexation area, see [“Comprehensive Plans: Adopting and Updating,”](#) page 1.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

a. See [Best Development Practices, #10, page 61](#), on options for seeking agreement with community groups.

Questions for Discussion Among Public Officials

- 1. Staff and Agency Recommendations:** What recommendations, if any, have staff and/or any other commission or agency that might have comments or concerns about the proposal made?

- 2. Sensible Growth Evaluation:** In what ways does the proposed annexation help the community to meet Sensible Growth principles?

- 3. Cumulative Effects:** If added to other previous annexations, will approval of the proposed annexation affect the community's development enough to consider an overall revision and/or updating of the comprehensive plan? Should that occur before or after decisions on this proposal are made?

- 4. Associated Actions:** What other actions — such as decisions on zoning revisions or public facility improvements (such as streets, schools, water and sewer facilities, infrastructure) — will be necessary to approve this request?

- 5. Regional Impacts:** Will the proposed development affect other jurisdictions in the area and throughout the region? (Examples of impacts might be traffic generated by the proposed development through adjoining jurisdictions, or developing in planned or existing natural corridors or agricultural preservation areas.)

FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

- a. Create a checklist of agencies relevant to this decision.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

- a. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #8 \(page 58\)](#) and [#9 \(page 59\)](#), about maintaining public facility capacities at levels adequate to serve approved development and fiscal impact studies.

About a Community’s Zoning Ordinance

Property owners and developers may request rezoning for development that may not be allowed by existing zoning. To allow higher densities, different uses, or changes in yard and other requirements, they may request replacement of the current district with either a new zoning district tailored to their needs or another district in the zoning ordinance. Or, they may request changes in specific requirements or ask for a variance in the current district regulations. These requests raise questions about the character of the proposed development and how it will fit in with the surrounding area.

A. About the Community’s Zoning Ordinance:

1. What the state law says about zoning amendments and variances: See [page 64](#) on what Illinois statutes require for zoning ordinances.

2. Current status of the community’s zoning ordinance:

Date of adoption of current ordinance: _____

Number, dates, primary purposes of recent amendments:

Guidelines for Zoning Decisions

The courts in two Illinois cases defined standards to be used in evaluating challenges to municipal zoning decisions. Local planners, members of planning commissions and boards of appeals, and municipal attorneys should consider these standards in making zoning decisions. Preferably, they should prepare a written statement explaining how their decision is consistent with the standards and include the statement as part of the findings of fact made by the boards involved.

The two cases were: *LaSalle National Bank v. County of Cook* (1957) and *Sinclair Pipeline Co. v. Richton Park* (1960). The courts established the following factors to be considered in zoning decisions:

- existing uses and zoning of nearby property.
- extent to which the particular zoning restrictions diminish property values.
- extent to which the destruction of a plaintiff’s property values promotes the health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the public.
- suitability of the subject property for the zoned purposes.
- length of time the property has been vacant as zoned, considering the context of land development in the vicinity.
- community need for the proposed land use.
- care with which the community had undertaken to plan its land use development.

Worksheet 1: Facts About Rezoning

Basic Facts About the Proposed Rezoning: List the facts about changes in development that would be allowed by the requested rezoning.

	PERMITTED USES	CONDITIONAL USES
<p>Maximum Density</p> <p>Lot Size</p> <p>Residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</p> <p>Non-Residential FAR</p>		
<p>Required Open Space</p>		
<p>Required Parking</p>		
<p>Other Factors</p>		

Questions to the Applicant/Developer

1. Sensible Growth Evaluation: How does the proposed rezoning help or hinder achievement of Sensible Growth principles as described in Part I?

2. Basic Facts about the Proposed Rezoning: List the basic facts about changes in development that would be allowed by the requested rezoning.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Will this require a change to another district already in the zoning ordinance, changes in provisions of the existing district, or formulation of a new zoning district?
- b. Could this proposal be allowed in the current zoning district as a variance, special use permit, or exception?
- c. Could the development use one of the alternative forms of zoning permitted in our ordinance, such as planned unit developments, floating or overlay zones, or special-permit zoning?
- d. Would this be considered "spot" zoning for an area too small to be considered as an appropriate zoning district?

REFERENCES:

- a. See [Part II, Illinois Statutes, page 64](#), summary of the "whereas" purposes of zoning that introduce the ordinance. Also, see adopted community vision statement (if any).

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Confirm answers by checking zoning ordinance and map for allowed uses, densities, and other regulations in the current district compared to the requested district.
- b. Refer to [Part II, Best Development Practices, #2, page 47](#), about flexible zoning techniques.

3. Consistency with Plan: Is the proposed rezoning consistent with the comprehensive plan map and with plan goals and policies?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. How does the proposal help to achieve community goals and policies (as expressed in the comprehensive plan) for the location and character of future growth?
- b. Are proposed uses and development densities consistent with the plan’s goals and policies for the area affected by the proposed rezoning?
- c. Will the proposed rezoning require amending the comprehensive plan?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check plan policies and goals in [Part II, Work Sheet 4, page 43](#).
- b. Review community vision statement, if any.



COURTESY OF VILLAGE OF SCHAUMBURG

Designated wetland

Schaumburg Wetland Overlay *Some communities use overlay districts in their zoning maps, superimposing certain additional requirements upon a basic use zoning district without disturbing the requirements of the basic use district. Most overlay districts that extend on top of more than one base district are intended to protect certain critical features and resources. Where the standards of the overlay and base zoning district are different, the more restrictive standards apply.*

4. Effects on Existing Community Facilities (such as highways, streets, water supply, schools, and other infrastructure): How will development allowed by the proposed rezoning specifically affect the capacities of existing public facilities in the area, especially the following facilities: highways, streets, schools, water supply, sewers, drainage systems, parks and recreation areas, and police and fire stations?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR EACH TYPE OF FACILITY:

- a. What existing facilities are available to serve the proposed project, and where are they located in relation to the site?
- b. What is the existing unused capacity? How much capacity will be required if the development is allowed under the requested rezoning?
- c. If existing capacity is inadequate to serve development allowed by the requested rezoning, are there planned increases in capacity that would ensure adequacy?
- d. Has the timetable for planned improvements been checked to see if it matches the timing of development?
- e. What contributions to capacity will be made by the applicant/developer based on the direct impact of the proposed development?
- f. Who would pay for capacity improvements (general budget, special financing district, agency fees, developers?)
- g. Have the agencies responsible for administering each type of facility been briefed on this proposal, and what were their responses?
- h. Has a fiscal impact study been prepared based on facility requirements? If not, should one be prepared before a decision on rezoning is approved?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Review community plans for public facilities, if any.
- b. Review the community's capital improvements program, if any.
- c. If agencies' responses are lacking or incomplete, request information from agencies' staffs.
- d. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #8 \(page 58\)](#) and [#9 \(page 59\)](#), about maintaining public facility capacities at levels adequate to serve approved development, and fiscal impact studies.

Work Sheet 2: Effects of Rezoning on Existing Community Facilities

	EXISTING OK	REQUIRES NEW CONSTRUCTION
Highways and streets		
Schools		
Water Supply		
Sewer Service		
Drainage Systems		
Park and Recreation Areas		
Fire and Police		

5. Adjacent Uses and Zoning: How does the proposed zoning compare to zoning in adjoining districts? What effect might the allowable uses under the proposed zoning have on uses in adjoining zoning districts and/or adjacent properties?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Do adjoining districts allow similar or different uses and densities? If different, how compatible are they with the proposed rezoning?
- b. Are uses allowed by the proposed rezoning compatible in size, appearance, and types of activities with uses in the surrounding area?
- c. Does the rezoning request affect existing development and residents within the proposed district? Within adjacent districts? In what ways?

6. Community Consultation: Has the proposed rezoning been discussed with residents and/or property owners in zoning districts adjoining the proposed district? In adjacent neighborhoods? The entire community?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. How many residents were contacted and when was the contact made?
- b. What were their views about the proposal?
- c. Were any revisions made in the proposal as a result?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check zoning map to determine types of adjacent districts.
- b. Check uses permitted in the districts.
- c. Check current land use inventory map.
- d. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #1, page 46](#), about adjacent zoning districts.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #10, page 61](#), on processes for seeking support from community groups.

Questions for Discussion Among Public Officials

- 1. Staff and Agency Recommendations:** What recommendations, if any, have been received from staff and/or any other commission or agency that might have concerns about the proposal?
- 2. Sensible Growth Evaluation:** In what ways does the proposed rezoning help the community to meet Sensible Growth principles as spelled out in Part I?
- 3. Cumulative Effects:** Added to previous zoning amendments, would approving this request sufficiently affect the plan's goals and zoning regulations so as to warrant an overall revision and/or updating of the zoning ordinance? Should that occur before or after a decision on this proposal is made?

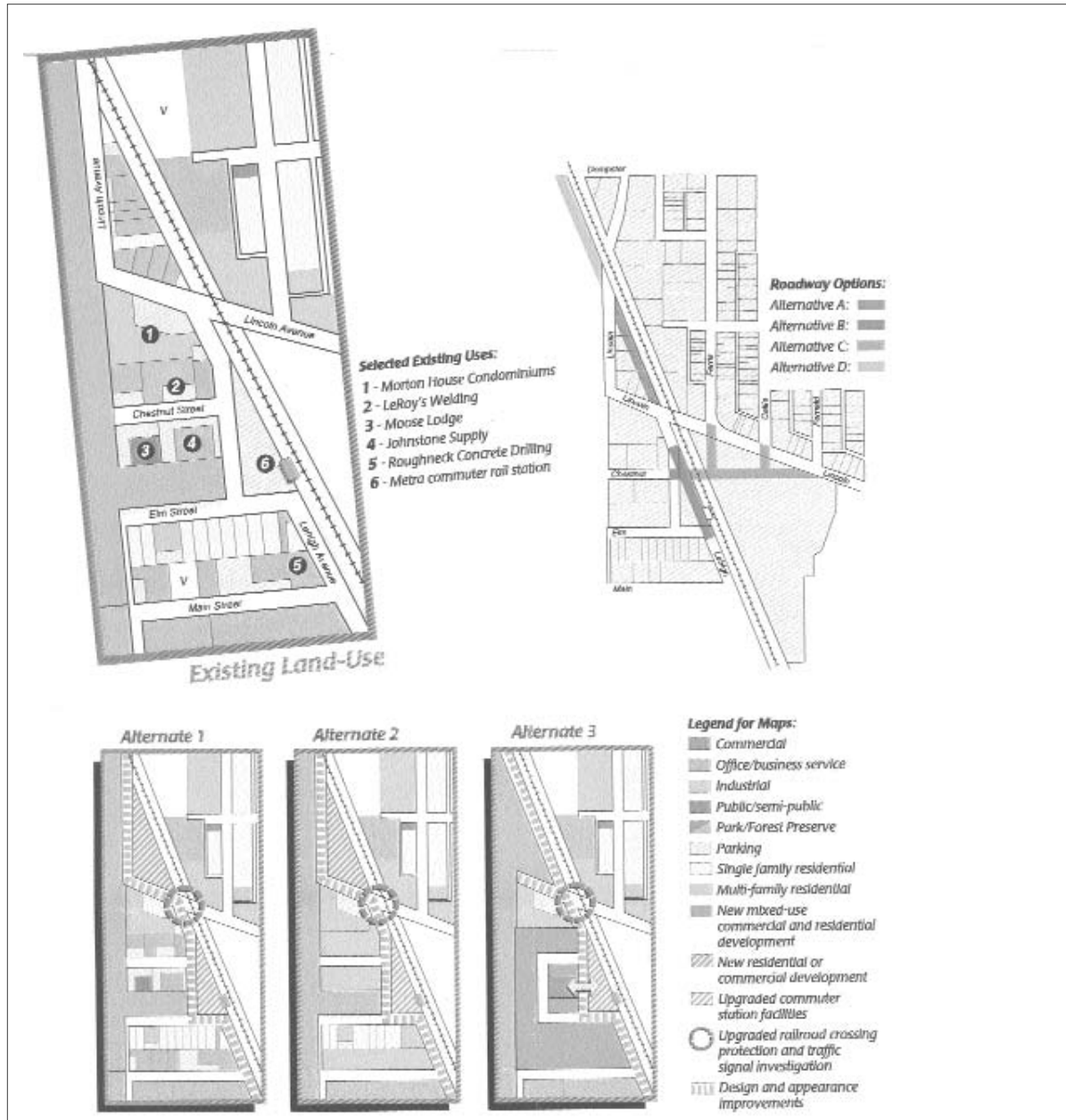
4. Regional Impacts: Will the proposed development affect other jurisdictions in the area and throughout the region? (Examples of impacts might be traffic generated by the proposed development through adjoining jurisdictions, or development in planned or existing natural corridors or agricultural preservation zones in the area.)

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Do adjoining districts allow similar or different uses and densities? If different, how compatible are they with the proposed rezoning?
- b. Are uses allowed by the proposed rezoning compatible in size, appearance, and types of activities with uses in the surrounding area?
- c. Does the rezoning request affect existing development and residents within the proposed district? Within adjacent districts? In what ways?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check zoning map to determine types of adjacent districts.
- b. Check uses permitted in the districts.
- c. Check current land use inventory map.
- d. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #1, page 46](#), about adjacent zoning districts.



Morton Grove Zoning Alternatives The Village of Morton Grove's comprehensive plan has a vision for a mixed-use development around its transit station, in the Lehigh Avenue subarea. The zoning map was updated in the winter of 2002 to implement the vision, with the creation of a commercial-residential district that promotes transit-oriented development in the village. Zoning alternatives were presented to the public.

COURTESY OF VILLAGE OF MORTON GROVE

About the Community's Requirements for Subdivision Plans

Developers must apply for formal approval of proposed subdivisions by submitting plans as required by state law and the community's subdivision regulations. Usually, subdivision plans show the general design of street systems, locations of major buildings, lot sizes, and locations and general nature of parks, other open spaces and community facilities (such as potential school sites). Applications for subdivision approval generally are prepared by licensed land planning and/or engineering firms. Generally, local governments employ professional staff or consultants to review applications for conformity with the written regulations.

Some subdivision regulations offer optional methods of subdivision development and design. Regulations may allow some flexibility in standards and requirements to allow for unusual site conditions and innovative designs. Reviews of proposed subdivisions using these optional approaches will require thoughtful and informed evaluation and decisions by public officials.

A developer's first formal submission is usually a map with accompanying documents providing the information required by the ordinance about the proposed subdivision, including the name of the subdivision and its location, acreage, and owner. A preliminary plan of a subdivision or land development includes all required supplementary data, showing approximate proposed street and lot or site layout, or a plan of existing private streets to be dedicated to public use, as a basis for consideration by the planning department. Following review and discussion by the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board and other municipal entities involved, changes may be made to the map and conditions may be agreed to by the municipality and the developer, leading to final approval by the village, town or county board or the city council.

1. What the state law says: See [Part II, page 65](#), for Illinois Statute provisions for subdivision plans.

2. Statement of purpose from our subdivision regulations:

3. Current status of subdivision plan reviews:

Last year's subdivision plans

Number of applications: _____

Number approved: _____

Total dwelling units in approved plans: _____

Year-to-date

Number of applications: _____

Number approved: _____

Number disapproved: _____

Number under review: _____

4. References:

Have on hand:

- an outline of the application process;
- a summary list of required elements of subdivision plans;
- a summary of the most important goals and policies in the current comprehensive plan for guiding community growth and change; and
- the community's adopted vision statement (if any).

Questions to the Applicant/Developer

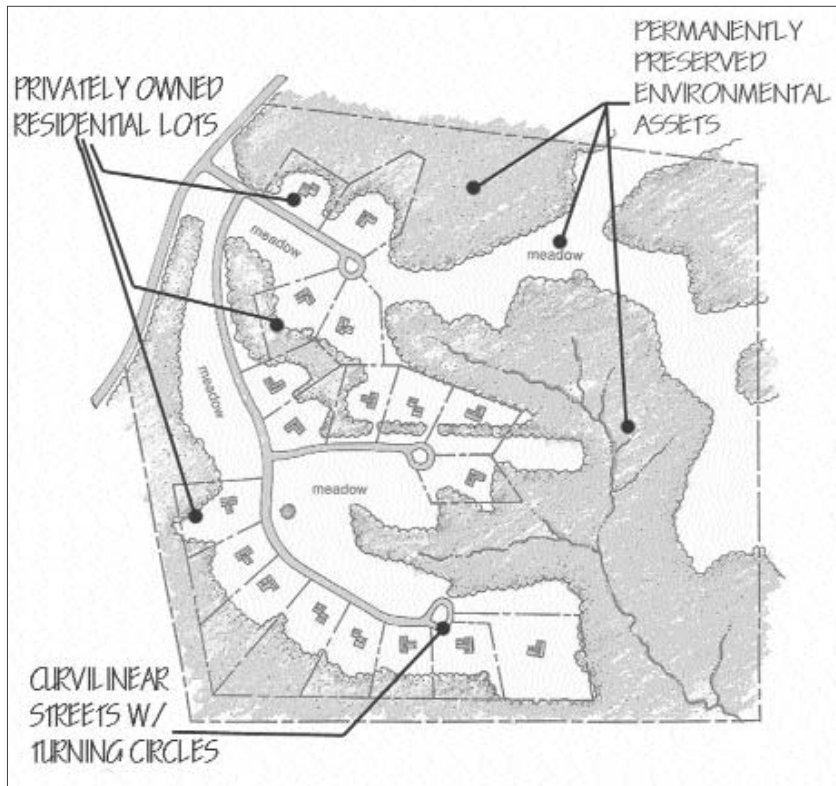
1. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: How is the subdivision plan consistent or inconsistent with the community's comprehensive plan goals and policies?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- Is the proposed subdivision located in an area designated by the plan for future growth?
- Are proposed uses and development densities consistent with plan goals and policies for the area?
- Will the proposed subdivision plan require any zoning amendments?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- Check plan policies and goals in [Part II, Work Sheet 4, page 44, Sections A,B,C.](#)
- Review community vision statement, if any.



Will County Conservation Development Map

In conservation development, a significant amount of open space is included in a development design. The open space is preserved and homes are clustered together. Sites that cluster buildings in a development can provide a zoning district's allowable number of units by rearranging them in ways that retain areas for nature. These areas serve as valuable amenities, enhancing the new development and acting as reserves for plants and animals native to the region.

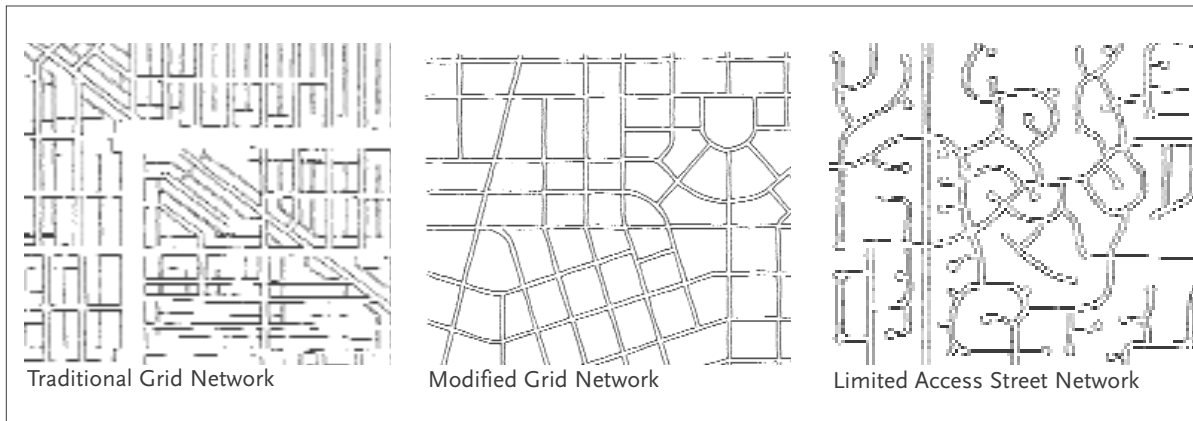
2. Conformance to Regulations: Does this subdivision plan meet the standards and requirements of the subdivision regulations?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. How does the plan deal with site issues such as:
- unbuildable or environmentally sensitive land;
 - existing streams, water bodies, wetlands, woodlands, and other significant natural features;
 - steep terrain;
 - existing buildings or areas of historic or architectural interest; and
 - irregular property lines?

FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

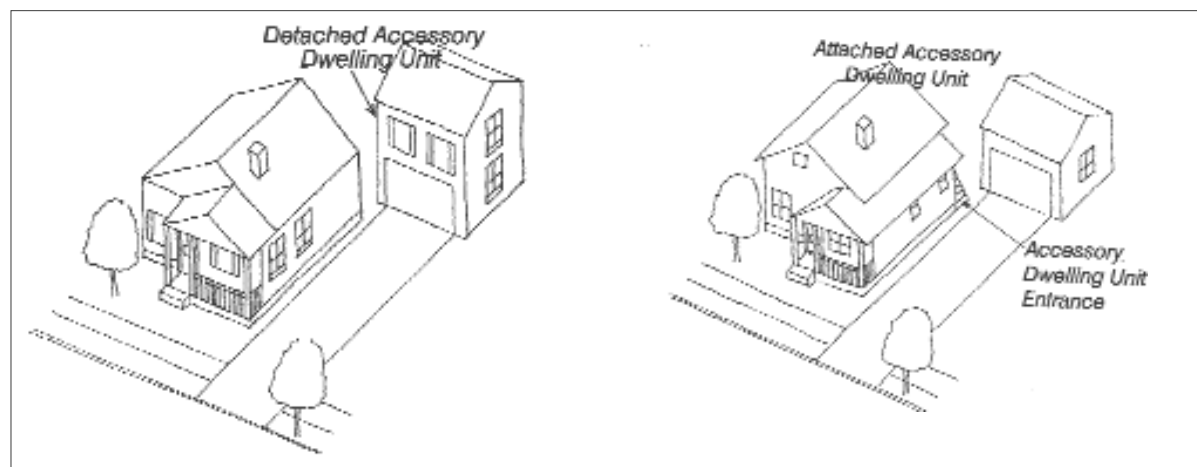
- a. See brief descriptions in [Part II, Best Development Practices, pages 49 and 50](#), of how these features can be treated in subdivision design.



Street Layouts A grid system is a series of designed parallel streets intersecting with a second set of parallel streets. Street grid patterns link the community together and do not isolate one neighborhood from another; they also help ease the flow of traffic with more than one entrance and exit from the subdivision. Modified grid networks work in the same way, with less rigid street lengths. However, the streets still cross one another frequently and allow for a flow of traffic from different directions. A limited access street network, characterized by many cul-de-sacs, makes traffic flow difficult and isolates some neighborhoods from others within the community.

- b. How does this subdivision plan connect the subdivision to adjoining neighborhoods and public facility systems? By:
- connecting internal streets to the existing pattern of streets in adjoining subdivisions and to main arterial streets;
 - connecting internal open spaces, natural corridors, and trails to patterns of preserved open space and trails around the site;
 - providing access by future site residents and employees to facilities, services, and employment opportunities in adjoining areas; and/or
 - providing for eventual service by bus or rail transit?
- c. Does the plan require any exceptions, variances, or waivers of subdivision regulations? Are these necessary to improve the site design?

- b. Check regulatory conformance with staff or consultant subdivision reviewer.
- c. See [Clarifying Concepts and Untangling Terminology, page iv](#), for brief definitions of words, phrases, and descriptions of techniques.



COURTESY OF LEE BROWN

Accessory Housing Accessory dwelling units, often called "granny flats," can be attached or detached from the primary dwelling unit. Accessory units can increase numbers of residents accommodated within a subdivision without substantially changing the overall design.

3. Innovative Design: Does the subdivision plan use any innovative design techniques or regulatory alternatives to standard designs?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Does the plan employ innovative design techniques, such as:
- clustered development;
 - conservation or enhancement of natural features;
 - reduction of impermeable surfaces;
 - protection of natural corridors (sometimes called "greenways");
 - use of natural drainage facilities;
 - designs that encourage construction of "green" buildings?

FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

- a. See brief descriptions in [Clarifying Concepts and Untangling Terminology, page iv](#), of some innovative techniques.



COURTESY OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS PLANNING COMMISSION

Water Resource Protection Streams and creeks should be protected with buffers, such as this one in rural Lake County. The county ordinance specifies buffer widths.

b. Does the applicant intend to use any optional regulatory techniques such as planned unit development, density bonuses, transferable development rights, or mixed-use development?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. See brief descriptions of these techniques in [Clarifying Concepts and Untangling Terminology, page iv](#), and [Part II, Best Development Practices, page 45](#).
- b. See reading list for more information on these techniques.



Tellabs Corporate Headquarters

Sustainable storm water management is a crucial design component to ensure a sound and healthy natural water cycle. Often, sustainable storm water management is integrated with a native landscape design. Bioswales, naturalized detention ponds, and permeable paving materials allow water to naturally drain into the land, as evidenced in this plan for Tellabs' corporate location in Lisle.

COURTESY OF CORRIDOR RIVER PROJECT

4. Effects on Public Facilities: How will development allowed by the subdivision plan affect the capacities of existing public facilities in the area, especially the following:

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. What public or common facilities will be provided by the developer to serve the development proposed by this subdivision plan?
- b. What existing facilities are available to serve the proposed project, and where are they located in relation to the site?
- c. What amount of unused capacity of existing facilities will be required by the proposed development (taking into account facility capacities proposed to be provided by the developer)?
- d. If the capacity adequacy depends on planned improvements, will that capacity be available in time to serve the development as it occurs?
- d. If the capacity adequacy depends on planned improvements, will that capacity be available in time to serve the development as it occurs?
- e. Who is expected to pay for the planned addition to capacity (general budget, special financing districts, agencies that cover costs with fees, developers)?
- f. Has the agency responsible for administering each type of facility been briefed on this proposal, and what was its response?
- g. If required, has a fiscal impact study been prepared to estimate the public costs for facility investments to serve the proposed development compared to the revenues to be generated? If so, what were the findings, and will impact fees be required, and at what level? If not, should a fiscal impact study be required?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Review community public facilities plans, if any.
- b. Review the community's capital improvements program, if any, to determine timing and costs of planned improvements.
- c. Require results of reviews of the proposed subdivision plan by any agencies that have not been briefed or have not reported the results of their reviews.
- d. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #6, page 56](#), about maintaining public facility capacities at levels adequate to serve approved development.

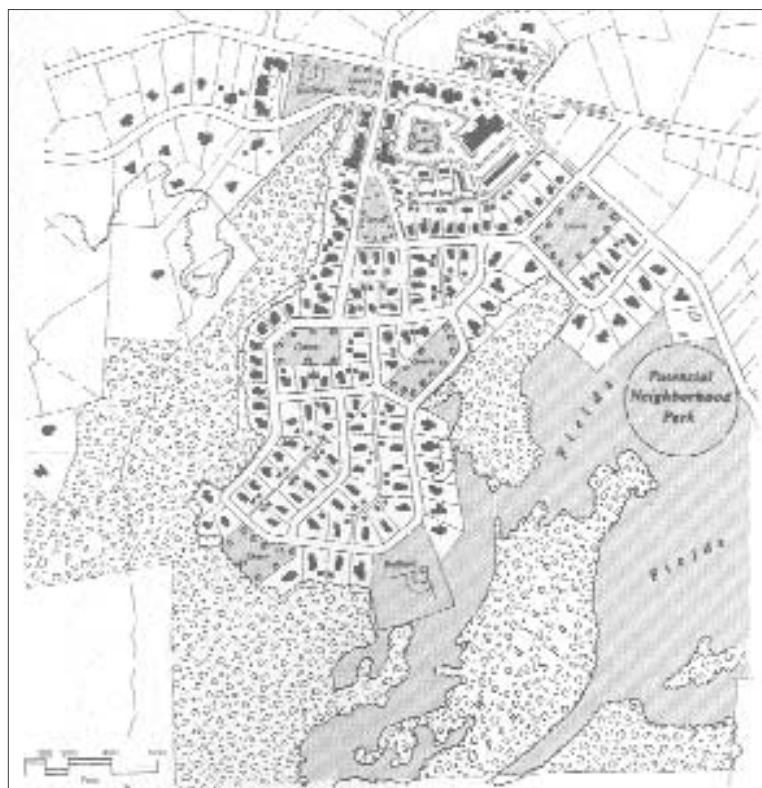
5. Adjacent Uses: How does the type of development proposed by the subdivision plan compare to existing uses and zoning in the adjacent area?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. How will development proposed by the subdivision plan be compatible in size, appearance, and types of activities with existing or planned development in the surrounding area?
- b. How will public facilities such as streets and open spaces connect to such facilities in adjoining areas? Will facilities to be developed on the site be available for use by residents or employees in the surrounding area?
- c. Have property owners and residents in the adjacent area been informed about the proposed subdivision plan, and what were their views?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check land use and zoning maps to determine types of existing and zoned uses in adjacent districts.
- b. See [Part II, Best Development Practices, #10, page 61](#), on processes for seeking support from community groups.

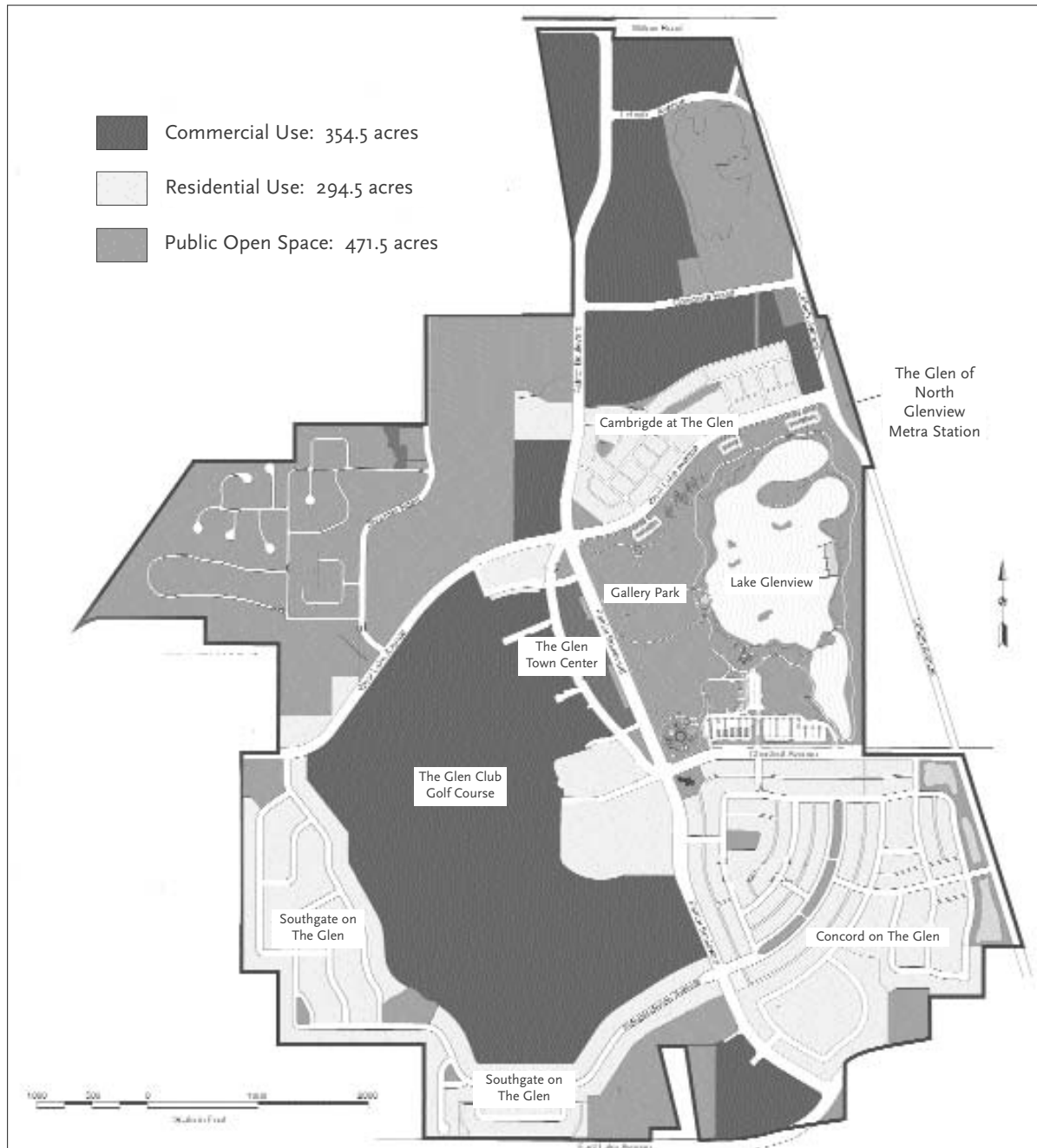


Site Plan *This sample site plan retains the density of the developer's original "cookie-cutter" plan but arranges the development in a more compact, village-like manner that preserves a substantial greenbelt of woodlands and farm fields around its perimeter.*

Work Sheet 3: Effects on Public Facilities

Subdivisions

	EXISTING OK	REQUIRES UPGRADE	REQUIRES NEW CONSTRUCTION
Highways and Streets			
Schools			
Water Supply			
Sewer Service			
Drainage Systems			
Park and Recreation Areas			
Fire and Police Protection			



The Glen In redeveloping the Glenview Naval Air Station, Glenview, Ill. officials identified a number of specific areas for commercial and non-commercial uses. Within the non-commercial uses, housing was identified as being part of the more gridded areas and public open space was identified throughout the development.

Questions for Discussion Among Public Officials

- 1. Staff, Consultant, and Agency Recommendations:** What findings and recommendations have been received from the staff or consultant review of this subdivision plan and/or any other commission or agency that might have concerns about the proposal?

- 2. Sensible Growth Evaluation:** Will the development proposed by this subdivision plan advance Sensible Growth principles as described in Part I?

- 3. Subdivision Plan Improvements:** Should this plan be recommended to (1) bring it more in line with Sensible Growth principles and/or (2) incorporate innovative techniques that appear appropriate for the location, site conditions, and potential market for the development?

- 4. Additional Studies:** Should additional studies be required to analyze special conditions or effects of the proposed subdivision, such as the effects it would have on environmentally sensitive lands (such as wetlands or wildlife habitats), resources, and the possible fiscal impacts on the community's budget of public service and facility costs to serve the development?

- 5. Cumulative Effects:** If added to previous subdivision plan approvals, would this request sufficiently affect the comprehensive plan goals so as to warrant an overall revision and/or updating of either the comprehensive plan or the subdivision regulations? Should that occur before or after a decision is made on this proposal?

- 6. Regional Impacts:** Will the proposed development affect other jurisdictions in the area and throughout the region? Examples of impacts might be traffic generated by the proposed development through adjoining jurisdictions, or the development of planned or existing natural corridors or agricultural preservation zones in the area.

About a Community's Requirements for Site Plans

After local officials approve a subdivision plan (with or without conditions), the applicant prepares and submits a site plan with detailed drawings and accompanying data. The site plan is important because it will become the legal document for purposes of constructing required improvements and transferring titles to lots acquired by buyers. In addition, for local officials, the application for site plan approval represents the last opportunity for public input into the character and quality of the subdivision.

In some communities, site plan approval is required whether or not a subdivision of property occurs. It gives public officials a final chance to approve the physical layout and use of the property. They may require a review of site plan features similar to those considered in subdivision plans, such as:

- arrangement of structures on the site;
- open space and landscape improvements;
- organization of the circulation system;
- design of off-street parking;
- landscape screening; and
- site illumination.

The information provided in the final site plan should be carefully reviewed in detail by professional staff or consultants, and circulated for review to all departments and agencies potentially affected by the development. The staff or consultants should work with the applicant to iron out problems or issues before making recommendations to the planning commission or local council responsible for approving or disapproving the site plan.

1. What the state law says: See [Part II, Illinois Statutes, page 65](#), for Illinois Statute provisions for site plans.

2. Statement of purpose from the subdivision regulations:

3. Current status of site plan reviews and approvals:

Year-to-date applications:	_____
Number approved:	_____
Number disapproved:	_____
Number under review:	_____

4. References:

Have ready:

- an outline of the application process;
- a summary of required elements of site plans;
- a summary of the most important goals and policies in the current comprehensive plan for guiding community growth and change; and
- the community's adopted vision statement (if any).

Questions to the Applicant/Developer

1. Comparison with Approved Subdivision Plan: How do the details of this site plan compare with the approved subdivision plan?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. Have any significant changes been made to the design and improvements represented on the approved subdivision plan? What and why?
- b. Does the site plan reflect any conditions made in approving the subdivision plan?

2. Variances to Site Plan Requirements: Have the board, staff, or consultant responsible for reviewing the site plan agreed upon any variances to the regulations to grant relief from unusual burdens or impacts of the regulations? What are they and why are they necessary? (Examples include changes to lot sizes, street intersection angles, lengths of cul-de sacs, widths of stream buffers, use of drainage swales, or innovative designs.)

3. Transfer of Public or Common Facilities: What dedications, reservations, or other transfers of public or common facilities or easements will be made?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- a. What facilities or easements will be dedicated to the local or state government for public use?
- b. What facilities or easements will be transferred through donation or sale to any utility, public authority, homeowners association, or nonprofit organization?
- c. What land is being reserved for future donation or sale to any public or nonprofit entity?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check record of subdivision plan approval.
- b. Check approved subdivision plan.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

- a. Obtain confirmation and comments by review staff or consultant.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

- a. Check site plan for locations of such facilities and easements.
- b. Review written agreements with all entities.

d. What facilities or easements will be transferred to a community association established to manage their use?

e. Has the community or developer/applicant secured agreements from all such entities to accept transferred facilities or easements?

4. Timing and Phasing: In what time frame does the applicant/developer expect to initiate and complete development according to this site plan?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

a. How will the timing and phasing of development correspond to the timing of facility improvements required to provide needed capacity to serve the development?

b. Have any conditions been identified that could speed up or slow down the expected time frame?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

a. Check development timing with schedule of capital improvements program.

b. Check past record of developer in completing other projects.

Best Development Practices

When property owners and developers request changes in plans and regulations, it helps to have some ideas about the kind of development that would be best for the community. Remember, developers and property owners are trying to make money. Public officials are trying to make a desirable community. These need not be adversarial. But it makes sense for public officials to at least consider up-to-date practices that might improve proposed developments — for future residents or employees and the community as a whole.

Here are some ideas that have been used in other developments. Certainly not complete, additional and perhaps better ideas can be added.

For convenient reference, these techniques and concepts are grouped under the major goals for Sensible Growth — which sometimes means some repetition from one goal to another. These are also referenced in the checklist of questions (page ix).



COURTESY OF VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

Row Houses Homes on small lots and near sidewalks create friendly neighborhoods, with easy pedestrian travel and contact with neighbors.

A. Summary of the Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Policies for Community Development [to be inserted by the local official or staff]

B. Vision Statement for the Community's Future Development [if any, to be inserted by local official or staff]

C. Purposes of the Community's Zoning Ordinance [from introductory "whereas" section of ordinance]

1. ACHIEVING COMPACT, CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENT

Cluster development arranges development on one part of a site to save the remainder of the site as open space. The site will contain no more homes than if it were designed as a conventional subdivision. The developed part is designed for compact densities (such as smaller lots) than typical subdivisions. The preserved open space may be retained as farmland or natural areas that have environmental features that might be harmed by development. Cluster development saves on infrastructure costs and reduces impacts on the site's natural qualities. A homeowners' association, the developer, or a governmental entity can own the preserved space.

Planned unit development (one of many terms for similar developments) provides for phasing relatively large or unique developments, and usually allows several uses and some flexibility in designing the site layout to make the best use of the property. Planned unit developments often design a variety of housing types and therefore reach densities beyond typical suburban, single-family projects. But their large scale often allows for incorporating more amenities and higher quality design.

Zone for appropriate density development by raising density standards in at least some residential districts and designating locations for such districts on the comprehensive plan and zoning map. This eliminates requirements for case-by-case negotiation for any except low-density development. A more predictable "by-right" process for higher density development, including conservation design, with appropriate standards for appearance and amenities, will provide a more predictable market for both developers and community residents.

Allow "traditional neighborhood development" that designs homes on small lots and near sidewalks, thus decreasing the amount of land required for development. "TND," as it is known, trades off small lot sizes to obtain more generous civic spaces, including pleasant streetscapes and small "pocket" parks. The closer spacing of homes is also intended to promote neighborliness.

Employ density bonuses to help compensate developers for providing special design features or community amenities in buildings and sites. For example, developers who agree to incorporate civic spaces, natural areas, public artworks, or affordable housing in their developments can be rewarded with allowances for additional development.

Require connections to adjacent development to allow the orderly extension of roads, sidewalks, trails, school service areas, sewer and water lines, greenways, and other aspects of community development, rather than skipping over — leap-frogging — undeveloped lands for development that requires more expensive infrastructure development.

Use urban service limits to extend urban services in an efficient manner. Plans for the major components of infrastructure systems indicate the most efficiently served areas for growth. Establishing limits based on such plans cuts costs for extending facilities and reduces leap-frogging development into rural areas.

For more information and examples of promoting compact development, see: "Take Advantage of Compact Building Design" in *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2002), pp. 9-16

Traditional Neighborhood Development (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1999), 44 pages; or chapter on compact, mixed-use development in Douglas R. Porter, *Making Smart Growth Work* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2002), pp. 13-28

Steven Fader, *Density by Design* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2000), 137 pages; or Peter Katz, *New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 245 pages



COURTESY OF LEE BROWN

Traditional Neighborhoods *Traditional neighborhood development (TND) looks for a continuity of the block face and orients doors, windows, and porches toward the street to encourage social interaction.*

2. MIXING USES

Zoning for mixed uses is replacing the old type of zoning invented to keep uses separate, especially heavy industry from residential neighborhoods. Having taken that idea too far, many activities are too isolated from one another. That increases the amount of driving people do instead of walking. Changing zoning to allow a mix of uses can make it easier to serve areas by bus and rail as well as allow more children to walk to school and local parks.

Use overlay or floating zones to implement mixed-use zoning. Areas where uses could be mixed may be designated by overlay zones that allow some variations on provisions in the underlying zone. An overlay zone for a business area, for example, might allow a wider list of permitted uses (such as residential uses) under certain conditions. Floating zones are described in the zoning text but are not initially designated on the zoning map. A developer must request and obtain approval to use the special provisions of a floating zone (for example, for mixed uses). Both types of districts typically require special hearings and approvals.

Retrofit existing development to provide opportunities for recycling under-used or declining areas. Examples are rescuing semi-abandoned strip commercial centers and old industrial buildings by adapting them for residential uses, sometimes providing homes above stores, sometimes adding apartments to old shopping centers, or reusing historic buildings for new uses, such as schools for residential use. Done right, such projects can be very successful and improve both the neighborhood and the tax base.



MILDA GRIGAITE, METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL

Downtown Redevelopment Downers Grove, Ill. used historic preservation, streetscape improvements, and new sidewalks to rejuvenate the downtown business district.

Change market dynamics to stimulate "Main Street" revitalization, which has benefited hundreds of small towns and cities using the Main Street program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The idea is to target public and private investments and programs to create exciting new downtowns from existing ones, as well as make downtown development an attractive alternative to another shopping center.

Support mixed-income housing to allow residential developers to build a variety of home types to reach many markets and sell homes faster. Many projects these days manage to mix small apartment buildings, senior-living facilities, and townhomes with single-family enclaves, providing opportunities for lifetime living in a single neighborhood or community.

For more information and examples on mixing uses, see:

The chapter on zoning for smart growth in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties, 2002) pp. 27-29

Infopacket (a compilation of articles and references) on "Mixed Use Development" (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2003)

Dean Schwanke et al., *Mixed-Use Development Handbook* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2003), 400 pages

Ellen Shubart and Carrie Makarewicz, *Historic Preservation: Old Buildings as New Tools for Sensible Growth* (Chicago: Campaign for Sensible Growth: December 2002)



Mixed-Income Housing *New mixed-income housing is planned for the former ABLA public housing project site in Chicago. The housing units are priced differently, but those for lower-income families are identical to those for market-rate payers.*

3. PROTECTING NATURAL QUALITIES OF LAND, WATER, AND AIR

Know the area's landscape and groundwater characteristics to protect the natural systems already in place. Much development can be planned to maintain basic natural systems, including retaining and even restoring landforms, native vegetation, streams and wetlands, and wildlife habitats. Learn to understand how these natural assets can be preserved or adapted as development occurs.

Identify valuable natural features in advance of development to alert landowners and builders to needs for protecting valued natural features before deciding to build. Communities that identify important aspects of the natural environment in comprehensive plans, backed up with protective measures in zoning and subdivision regulations, elicit cooperation rather than opposition when development occurs.

Use development techniques that minimize the percentage of impermeable surface areas (roads, driveways, parking lots, and roofs) in order to allow rain to soak into the ground and minimize storm water runoff. This helps replenish groundwater supplies and protects local streams and rivers.



COURTESY OF ST. CHARLES PARK DISTRICT

St. Charles Greenway Map Communities recognize that development and natural protection can go hand-in-hand through the use of good planning. The St. Charles, Ill. Park District has mapped its green infrastructure, linking natural areas along the Fox River.

Create plans to weave "green infrastructure" into development, recognizing that nature doesn't start or stop at the edge of development. Stream valley buffers and protection of wildlife habitats, wetlands, and floodplains can be integrated with parks, trails, and recreational spaces to create green corridors ("greenways") that benefit both nature and people. Communities can plan for preserving corridors and open spaces as subdivisions are designed and built.

Plan conservation subdivisions that are a type of cluster development (see iv for a definition of cluster development) to conserve and even restore natural resources — for example, by restoring wetlands to reduce storm water runoff or reviving prairie lands that provide enjoyable vistas for residents.

Establish conservation easements and/or zoning to permanently set aside significant open spaces. Work with nonprofit conservation groups with expertise in these programs to identify and establish easements and open space zoning (including farmland protection zoning) that can be feasible in many areas.

Think "green" in development and building by urging developers to think about protecting the landscape and waterscape. Encourage builders to use recycled or recyclable materials and employ solar or geo-thermal energy, natural lighting, and other greening techniques. Do the same with public structures and equipment.

Designate growth areas or draw growth boundaries to separate areas to be developed from those to remain as open-space uses. Zone areas outside growth areas to discourage development, either by farmland protection requirements or minimum lot sizes (usually 20 or more acres) that will make development difficult.

Establish transferable development rights (TDR) programs to help compensate property owners in rural areas for prohibiting urban development. TDR programs allow developers to purchase development rights in areas intended to remain in open space uses and transfer them to "receiving" areas where denser growth is desirable.

For more information and examples on preserving open space, see:

Environmental Considerations in Comprehensive Planning: A Manual for Local Officials (Chicago: Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, 1994);

The chapter on "Open Space and Farmland Protection" in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties, 2002), pp. 55–59

"Open Space: The Common Ground of Community," *On Common Ground* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Realtors, Summer 2001), 56 pages

Video tape on "Suburban Open Space Planning and Design" (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1995)

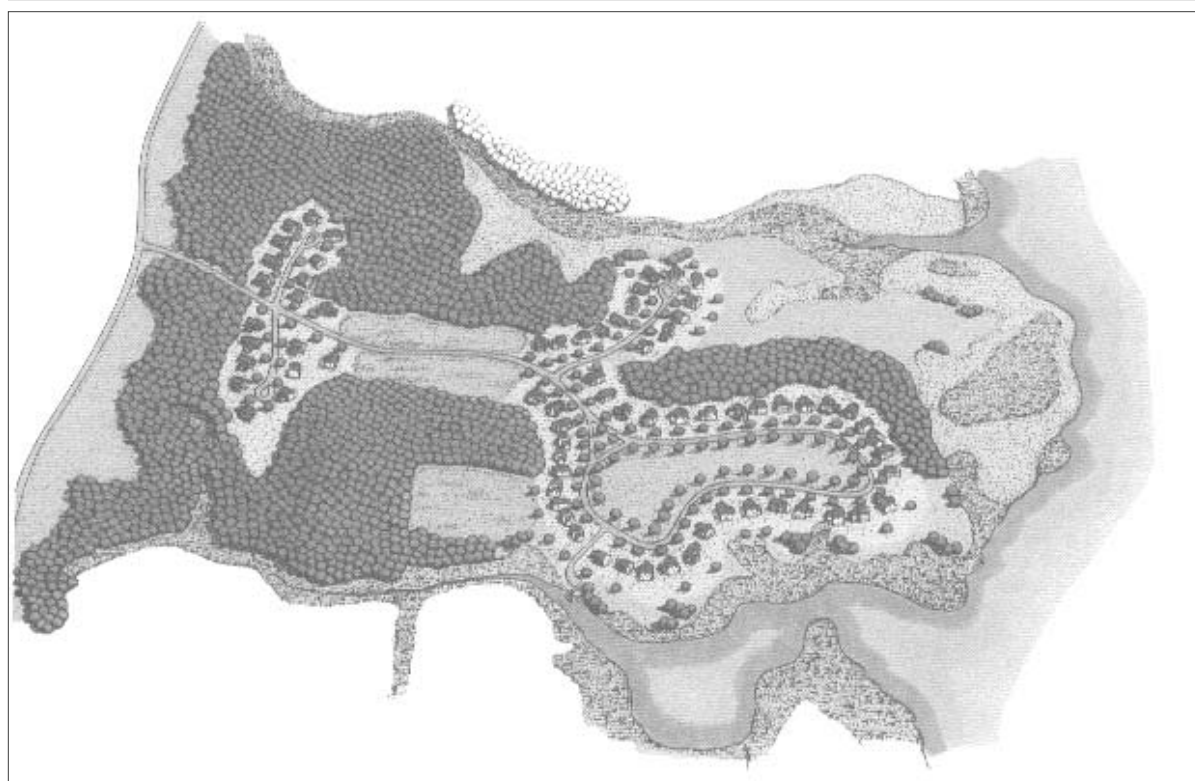
Randall Arendt, *Growing Greener* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999), 261 pages

4. WIDENING CHOICES OF TRAVEL

Promote compact, mixed-use development to reduce needs for land and impacts on streams, forests, and wildlife while increasing opportunities for reducing air pollution through greater reliance on transit, walking, and bicycling.

Encourage subdivision designs that provide interconnected street networks. Subdivision street systems should not all arrive at the same intersection with a major highway, but rather allow a variety of travel routes that reduce congestion at major intersections. Consider prohibiting "gated" communities that don't connect to any others.

Require sidewalks and/or pedestrian pathways throughout development projects, at least on one side of every street and both sides if possible. These will promote more walking within the neighborhood, especially if designed as part of an interconnected street network.



Conservation Design A subdivision with conservation design protecting woods, water, and trails.

COURTESY OF NATURAL LANDS TRUST, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION, AND AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Promote "transit-ready" development, which designs new development areas to be capable of accepting bus or rail transit as development matures. Street systems built to be adaptable to future transit routes, with sidewalks and pathway systems that can provide easy access to such routes, and development, over time, of mixed-use compact centers that can reduce travel needs are some of the measures that can be established as subdivisions are designed.

Cluster development around transit stations and create systems to promote walkable activity centers and encourage transit ridership. Creating mixed-use centers in which many destinations can be reached on foot helps to make transit attractive and convenient, thus reducing needs for driving. Transit-oriented development benefits from a combination of residential and employment uses.



JOHN BESKE, COURTESY OF SUSTAIN

Bicycle Paths *More communities need safe and reliable public transportation, sidewalks, and bike paths.*

Make strategic use of existing federal and state housing assistance programs by coordinating programs in target neighborhoods to attract private investments for renovations and redevelopment, by focusing local infrastructure and facility investments in such neighborhoods, and by working to reconnect interrelated qualities — economic, social, physical — of the neighborhood.

Provide incentives to encourage people to live near their workplaces or easily reach nearby major activity centers. These include employer-assisted housing forgivable loan programs so employees can move closer to work. Employers gain by reducing lost time on tardiness and absenteeism, and companies gain with stable workforces and declines in parking costs they otherwise must subsidize. Many communities are finding that an increasing number of people enjoy in-town living or residing in and around revitalized downtowns. Short trips and greater use of transit and walking will reduce pressures on highway congestion.

Allow shared parking to reduce total parking demands in mixed-use areas that can get double duty from parking areas for daytime and nighttime activities.

Work with employers to manage travel demands by locating employment centers near transit lines. Or, have employers subsidize employee transit use, car-pooling, and other ways of avoiding single-person car commuting.

For more information and examples on improving transportation systems, see:
Robert T. Dunphy, *Transportation and Growth, Myth and Fact* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1996), 16 pages

The chapters "Provide a Variety of Transportation Options" and "Create Walkable Communities" in *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2001), pp. 61-67

The chapters on "Best Transportation Practices" in Reid Ewing, *Best Development Practices* (Chicago: American Planning Association and Urban Land Institute, 1996), 180 pages (also available on audio tape from APA)

Robert Dunphy, et al., *Developing Around Transit* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2003), about 200 pages

5. PRODUCING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Maximize collaborative working relationships to leverage funding for affordable housing. Many communities find that networking among public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private sector companies are productive in securing funds and organizational know-how to package feasible affordable housing projects.

Zone for higher densities, a mix of housing types, and accessory units to lower land costs, usually one of the major factors in developers' abilities to reduce housing costs. Mixing housing types allows higher density development of new projects, while allowing accessory units increases housing availability even in single-family home neighborhoods.

Establish community land trusts and housing trust funds to provide sites and cost subsidies for development of affordable housing. Community land trusts acquire housing sites from many sources, including donations from public agencies and nonprofit organizations, and package them for development. Housing trust funds can attract funding from many sources to use in reducing new housing costs and/or rehabilitating existing housing. Both concepts encourage contributions from many sources.

Adopt inclusionary housing programs that encourage or require developers of residential projects in desirable housing markets to incorporate a percentage of affordable units. Not only do such programs generate significant numbers of affordable units, but they are dispersed within projects and across the community. Inclusionary housing programs are increasingly effective as hundreds of communities have gained experience with administering them.

Promote adaptive reuse of underutilized land and buildings to gain doubly: to recycle abandoned or declining areas and buildings, and add both market-rate and affordable units to the housing stock. Adapting historic or architecturally attractive buildings for new uses, especially housing, has proven economically rewarding for both developers and communities, and keeps the community character intact.

Adopt tax and other incentives for building and renovating housing to attract developers by lowering development costs. Tax abatements, waiving or deferring development fees, providing density bonuses, arranging low-cost loans for first-time homebuyers, and other incentives help to make it financially feasible to build affordable housing. Many communities have programmed a battery of such incentives to promote affordability.

Improve permitting processes to cut development costs by reducing the length and complexity of the permitting process. In-city markets benefit to the extent that communities make it as easy to develop there as in suburban greenfields, where developers are usually able to obtain permits more quickly.

For more information and examples on stimulating production of affordable housing, see: "Attainable Housing" in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties, 2001), pp. 42-46

Growing Smarter with Apartments (Washington, D.C.: National Multi-Housing Council, 1998), 9 pages

S. Mark White, *Affordable Housing* (Chicago: American Planning Association PAS Report 441, 1992), 76 pages (and audio tape also from APA)

"Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices" in *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2001), pp. 17-24

Mary Anderson, *Opening the Door to Inclusionary Housing* (Chicago: Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, 2003), 106 pages

6. REDEVELOPING BUILT-UP AREAS AND EMPHASIZING INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Target public investments in high-priority and "winnable" areas to promote revitalization of deteriorated or declining parts of the community. Some neighborhoods and business centers possess strong leadership and desirable locations that need just a push in the right direction to stimulate revitalization. Identifying and working with such areas frequently produces gratifying results that can serve as role models for other areas.

Prepare special plans for special areas, including historical buildings and spaces, where vision and inspired actions can produce highly desirable places in which to enjoy living and working. An action program based on a plan benefits "place-making," attracts civic leadership, and provides tangible civic development such as streetscape improvements, parks, or community centers.

Find new uses for underutilized land and buildings that act as a drag on the market and yet represent opportunities for recycling old business centers and neighborhoods. Use the targeting and planning approaches described above to reinvent such areas and structures as active components of the community.

For more information and examples on planning and initiating infill and redevelopment projects, see: The chapter on "Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities," *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2002), pp. 51-60

Suzanne G. Dane, *Main Street Success Stories* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997), 191 pages

Audio tape on "Infill Development and the Redesign of Suburban Centers" (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1999)

Geoffrey Booth et al., *Transforming Suburban Business Districts* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2001), 229 pages

Nahoum Cohen, *Urban Planning Conservation and Preservation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 359 pages

Diane R. Suchman, *Developing Successful Infill Housing* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1997), 122 pages

7. CREATING LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Expect to improve infrastructure because streets, sidewalks, sewer and water systems, and other public facilities often have not been adequately maintained and may need substantial upgrading or even replacement to support new and/or additional development.

Plan to avoid or alleviate displacement of existing residents whose rents or property taxes may rise as renovations take place. Most have lived there because housing is affordable, and even small increases in housing prices and rents will drive some away. Plan to retain a substantial share of affordable housing in revitalizing neighborhoods through use of community land trusts, housing trust funds, inclusionary zoning ordinances, and homeownership assistance programs.

Build communities that will last and adapt to changing conditions. Public planning and regulatory programs can establish a level of quality in new development and add public facilities that will make communities desirable places to live and work in for years. At the same time, public officials should expect change over time — changes in housing needs or business services, for example — that will require flexibility in adapting buildings and spaces to new uses. Sustaining livable neighborhoods and communities means continual support and response to changing conditions.

Remember that building communities, not projects, is the main focus in evaluating development proposals. Individual projects may or may not contribute in positive ways to building the community, which should strive to create compatible yet functional land use and design relationships in newly developing, infill, and redevelopment areas. Especially when many small projects are being proposed, it is important to establish the connections and relationships that create whole communities.

Neighborhoods consist of many activities and groups that will thrive in a diverse but well designed mix of living and working environments. Neighborhoods need not prize sameness and uniformity to succeed. Diversity of people, buildings, spaces, and relationships among them makes neighborhoods living organisms that build strong communities.

For more information and examples on creating livable communities, see:

"Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place" in *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2002), pp. 333-41

Wendelyn A. Martz, *Neighborhood Based Planning* (Chicago: American Planning Association, PAS Report 455, 1995), 33 pages

Traditional Neighborhood Development (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1999), 44 pages

Frederick D. Jarvis, *Site Planning and Community Design for Great Neighborhoods* (Washington, D.C.: Home Builder Press, 1993), 133 pages

8. PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create strong centers of activities to encourage interaction and mutual support among businesses and between business and residential areas. Such centers allow choices of living environments, create opportunities for travel by means other than cars, and add to the network of clustered activities that make communities work.

Don't bet on a losing hand. Know the fiscal consequences of decisions before making mistakes that will affect the community's bottom-line economics and financial capabilities to provide services. Luring shopping centers or new industries with incentives to generate tax revenues will present community problems in the long run if they fail. Knowing the fiscal pros and cons of proposals is important for the community's financial health.

Build on existing strengths and assets of your businesses and labor force. In many communities, expansion of existing businesses and industries is proportionally more important than bringing in new industries. Work with the local business community to identify needs for expansion that could be aided by public actions such as assembling suitable sites, making infrastructure improvements, and sponsoring training programs to support greater economic activity.

Expedite project approvals for economically important projects that cannot afford lengthy permit procedures. Expediting can include assigning specific staff to guide applications through the process and cutting red tape in both requirements and procedures. But be careful to make these exceptions fair.

For more information and examples on planning for economic development, see:

Rick Cole, et al., *The Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development: An Implementation Guidebook* (Sacramento: Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities, 1998), 74 pages

The chapter on "Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities" in *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2002), pp. 51-60

The chapter on economic development in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties et al., 2002), pp. 34-41

Edward J. Blakely and Ted K. Bradshaw, *Planning Local Economic Development* (New York: Sage Publications, 2002), 398 pages

9. PLANNING AND FUNDING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

Plan ahead of service need, recognizing that many infrastructure facilities and systems require a lead time for planning, design, funding, and construction. Running low on water supply? It may take years to identify sources and put new pipes, storage towers, and pumps in the ground. A major highway upgrade often requires four to six years in design and construction. In many cases, intergovernmental permits or agreements may be required, further lengthening the process.

Program improvements based on realistic funding resources. This sounds sensible but is too often ignored in the rush to satisfy citizen complaints. "Realistic" funding sources include traditional federal, state, and local sources of revenue, but can also include special taxing districts such as tax-increment finance (TIF) districts, a variety of developer and user fees, and funds raised by intergovernmental authorities and agencies.

Develop a "fair-share" allocation of public and private costs to fund infrastructure investments. Many communities expect developers to fund on- and off-site improvements, without allowing for and identifying revenue sources for major system improvements that require public funding. Other communities, in their rush to attract development, fail to devise a shared program of investment in public facilities. A blended approach is usually needed in areas where new growth is taking place.

Require adequate facilities as a condition of development permission. This policy has been used for years in many communities, but abhorred by others that will do almost anything to avoid shutting down development, even development that will strain the capacities of local facilities. But communities imposing adequate facility requirements find they are forced into planning for funding and finding a balance between public and private investments — generally a beneficial policy-making process to think through.

Use innovative systems to reduce "hardware" costs of infrastructure, such as reducing needs for expanding drainage system capacities by using permeable pavements to allow more infiltration to groundwater systems, using wetlands as runoff cleansing and holding basins, and adding trees and other vegetation to absorb storm water. Similar innovative strategies for roads and other systems (connectivity and transit) should be considered.

Use urban service limits to reduce expansion costs to extend urban services in an efficient manner. Locate major components of infrastructure systems in the most efficient places to serve growth. Establishing limits based on such plans cuts costs for extending facilities and reduces leap-frog development into rural areas.

For more information and examples on planning for infrastructure systems, see:

Robert A. Bowyer, *Capital Improvements Programs* (Chicago: APA Planners Press, PAS Report 442, 1993), 53 pages

Chapter on infrastructure in Douglas R. Porter, *Managing Growth in America's Communities* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996), 319 pages

Walter M. Kulash, *Residential Streets* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2001), 76 pages

10. PROMOTING COLLABORATION RATHER THAN CONFLICT

Remember that regions are collections of communities and communities are collections of neighborhoods, recognizing that individual local governments will benefit from creating and then working within a regional development strategy that can guide local actions. Interactive and intergovernmental compacts and agreements can help to implement strategic directions for regional development.

Understand that the "Big Systems" are regional in nature. These include major infrastructure systems (roads, transit, sewer, water supply, and drainage) as well as environmental systems, housing needs and economic development. Acknowledging the interdependence of individual communities, and their combined dependence on effective functioning and financing of such systems is a big step in thinking regionally while acting locally.

Reach decisions after broad consultation with the community at large, allowing ideas to filter into discussions from many sources and directions and helping to instill confidence in decisions and the actions needed to implement them.

Engage trained facilitators if necessary to help reach agreements and resolve controversies over growth and regulatory issues. Skilled facilitators can pinpoint areas of agreement, raise questions to identify points at issue, and lead discussions to find agreeable alternatives to conflictive differences.

Use project-rating systems to measure the extent to which proposals achieve Sensible Growth principles. Organizations in several metropolitan areas have formulated lists of Sensible Growth characteristics that are useful in evaluating proposed developments. The "Housing Endorsement Criteria" prepared by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (and found on page vi) is a generalized version of such a system. The checklist on page ix of the workbook is a more specific example. Rating systems in other metropolitan areas provide even more detailed criteria (for example, the project-endorsement program of the Smart Growth Alliance in Washington, D.C.).

For more on regional collaboration, see: The chapter on "Regional Cooperation" in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties, et al., 2002), pp. 14-19

Good guides to methods of achieving consensus include:

The chapter "Encourage Community and Stake Holder Collaboration in Development Decisions" in *Getting to Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network, 2002), pp. 77-86

The chapter "Citizen Participation" in *Local Tools for Smart Growth* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Counties, et al. 2002), pp. 20-26

Participation Tools for Better Land-Use Planning (Sacramento, Calif.: Center for Livable Communities, 1997), 44 pages

For information about project-rating systems, see: Douglas R. Porter, section on "Smart-Growth Ratings and Scorecards," *Making Smart Growth Work* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2002), pp. 167-171

Illinois Statutes and Reference Concerning Plans and Development Regulations

1. Comprehensive Plans:

Illinois 65 ILCS 5/11-12-5 law enables the municipal plan commission to prepare and recommend to the village board or city council a comprehensive plan "for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality." A plan may include "reasonable requirements" regarding streets, alleys, public grounds, and other improvements. Once adopted it may apply "to land situated within the corporate limits and contiguous territory not more than one and one-half miles beyond the corporate limits and not included in any municipality." Such a plan may be adopted as an official map and implemented by various ordinances (such as zoning and subdivision regulations).

Section 11-12-6 says the plan shall be effective only after formal adoption by the corporate authorities and is advisory — it does not regulate the use of private property except as implemented by ordinances.

Section 55 ILCS 5/5-14006 says much the same for counties of less than 500,000 population located in the area served by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. A county plan, when adopted, recommends public improvements looking to the present and future development of the county. To provide for the health, safety, comfort, and convenience of the inhabitants of the county, such plans may establish reasonable standards of design for subdivisions and for resubdivisions of unimproved land and areas subject to redevelopment, including reasonable requirements for public streets, alley, ways for public service facilities, storm or flood water runoff channels and basins, parks, playgrounds, school grounds, and other public grounds.

Illinois 20 ILCS 662, informally known as the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act, enacted in 2002, provides the first definition of what a comprehensive plan is and requires municipalities seeking funding under the Act to adopt plans that address the following elements:

- (1) Issues and opportunities.
- (2) Land use and natural resources. The land use element must be in text and map form. It must include supporting studies on population, the local economy, and natural resources, and an inventory of existing land uses.
- (3) Transportation.
- (4) Community facilities (schools, parks, police, fire, and water and sewer).
- (5) Telecommunications infrastructure.
- (6) Housing, including affordable housing and special needs housing; taking into account the housing needs of a larger region; identifying barriers to the production of housing, including affordable housing; assessing the condition of the local housing stock; and developing strategies, programs, and other actions to address the needs for a range of housing options.
- (7) Economic development; coordinating local economic development initiatives with those of the State.
- (8) Natural resources, by identifying and defining the natural resources in the community with respect to water, land, flora, and fauna.
- (9) Public participation.

For more information about zoning ordinances, see: Herbert H. Smith, *Citizen's Guide to Zoning* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1983), 242 pages

Charles A. Lerable, *Preparing a Conventional Zoning Ordinance* (Chicago: American Planning Association, PAS Report 460, 1995), 61 pages

Eric Damian Kelly, *Enforcing Zoning & Land-Use Controls* (Chicago: American Planning Association, PAS Report 409, 1988), 30 pages

Videotapes on: "Best of Planning for Zoning Administrators" (1994) and "Developing and Streamlining Zoning Administration (1994) or the audio tape "Fundamentals of Updating the Zoning Ordinance (1998), all available from the American Planning Association, Chicago

Douglas R. Porter, et al., *Flexible Zoning* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1988), 200 pages

2. Zoning Ordinances:

Illinois 65 ILCS 5/11-13-1 says that municipalities have varied powers in order to:

- provide adequate light, pure air, and safety from fire and other dangers;
- preserve the taxable value of land and buildings throughout the municipality;
- lessen or avoid congestion in the public streets;
- lessen or avoid hazards to persons and damage to property resulting from the accumulation or runoff of storm or flood waters;
- promote the public health, safety, comfort, morals, and welfare; and
- ensure and facilitate the preservation of sites, areas, and structures of historical, architectural, and aesthetic importance.

The powers include regulation of:

- height and bulk of buildings;
- building setback lines;
- intensity of the use of lots;
- area of open spaces; and
- location of trades and industries and of buildings designed for specified uses.

They allow the municipality to:

- establish districts to implement these regulations;
- fix building standards;
- prohibit uses, buildings, or structures incompatible with such districts;
- prevent additions to or alteration of existing buildings or structures;
- classify the use of property on the basis of family relationship; and
- regulate any structure or activity that may hinder access to solar energy.

The powers may be exercised within the corporate limits or within contiguous territory not more than one and one-half miles beyond the corporate limits and not included within any municipality.

3. Subdivision Regulations:

Municipal Powers According to Illinois Statute 65 ILCS5/11-12-12, no map or plat of a subdivision presented affecting land within a community's corporate limits or within contiguous territory not more than one and one-half miles beyond the corporate limits of any municipality that has adopted an official plan shall be valid unless the public ways, ways for public service facilities, storm and floodwater run-off channels, and basins and public grounds are in conformity with applicable ordinances, including the official map.

Illinois 65 ILCS 5/11-12-8 says if reasonable requirements provided by the ordinance, including the official map, indicate the necessity for providing for a school or park site, or other public lands within any proposed subdivision for which approval has been requested, the municipal authority may require that lands be designated for such public purpose before approving such plan. After approval of a plat designating provision of such facilities, the community has the ability to acquire the land by purchase or condemnation within one year of plat approval. If not, the land may then be used by the owners in any other manner consistent with the ordinance and official map and zoning ordinance.

The statutes also provide a procedure for submittal and approval of a preliminary plat and then the final plat, which, after approval, becomes the official plat.

County Powers Illinois 55 ILCS 5-1041 says a county board may prescribe, by resolution or ordinance, reasonable rules and regulations governing the location, width, and course of streets and highways, and of floodplain, storm water, and floodwater runoff channels and basins, and provision of necessary public grounds for schools, public libraries, parks, or playgrounds, in any map, plat, or subdivision of any block, lot, or sub-lot or any part or parcel of land, not being within any city, village, or incorporated town. Rules and regulations may include reasonable requirements with respect to water supply and sewage collection and treatment, floodplain and storm water management, and street drainage and surfacing according to rules established by other agencies. The Statute also describes procedures for adoption of such plans and plats.

For more information about subdivision plans, plats, and approval procedures, see:

David Listokin and Carole Walker, *Subdivision and Site Plan Handbook* (Rutgers University: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1989), 438 pages

Robert H. Freilich and Michael Shultz, *Model Subdivision Regulations* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1995), 392 pages

Whitney Brownjetal, *Better Site Design* (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Watershed Protection, 1998), 210 pages

For information about innovative subdivision designs, see page iv clarifying concepts and page 45 concerning cluster designs, traditional neighborhood designs, New Urbanist designs, and large-scale community designs.

4. Annexation Agreements:

Illinois 65 ILCS 5/11-15.1-1 says municipal officials may enter into an annexation agreement with one or more landowners in unincorporated territory. That land may be annexed to the municipality at the time the land is or becomes contiguous to the municipality.

Procedures for execution, enforcement, validation, and extensions of agreements are included in the Statute.



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