

# City of Warrenville, Illinois

For a Visit, Or a Lifetime...



## Economic Development Plan





## Acknowledgments

### City of Warrenville City Council

David Brummel, Mayor  
Fred Bevier, Ward 1 Alderman  
Stuart Aschauer, Ward 1 Alderman  
Robert (Bob) Wilson, Ward 2 Alderman  
Bill Weidner, Ward 2 Alderman  
Dan Leonard, Ward 3 Alderman  
Kathryn Davolos, Ward 3 Alderman  
Clare Barry, Ward 4 Alderman  
Leah Goodman, Ward 4 Alderman

Robert Johnson, Treasurer  
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# Introduction

During 2014, the City of Warrenville worked with Teska Associates and Business Districts Incorporated to employ a detailed public input and planning process as part of its effort to develop a new Strategic Plan. During this process, Warrenville residents, stakeholder groups, and the City Council collectively and repeatedly reaffirmed that Economic Development continues to be the most important priority for the City to focus on in the coming years. The City's new 2015 Strategic Plan and this Economic Development Plan are the culmination of this process.

This document establishes the policy and data foundation for a focused and coordinated City economic development program going forward, documents the City's overall economic development goal, prioritizes the City's eight most important economic development objectives, and identifies specific implementation action examples developed by staff. Collectively, this information forms the City's economic development plan for the next five to seven years.

While there is no universal definition of Economic Development that fits all communities, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) generally describes economic development as "a program, group of policies, or activity that seeks to improve the economic wellbeing and quality of life for a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life." According to the IEDC, municipal economic development is best described in terms of a series of objectives designed to meet a unique set of challenges and goals that are specific to the individual community.

**In Warrenville's case, the City has established the following overall economic development goal:**

**Enhance the City's tax base, support the growth of businesses, increase local shopping and dining opportunities, diversify the City's labor market, expand housing options, and create attractive gathering places.**

**Collectively, the City's economic development goal and objectives focus on enhancing quality of life in the community by promoting high quality tax generating growth that:**

- Is sensitive to the community's unique character;
- Satisfies the commercial and housing needs of the community; and
- Allows the City to provide high quality services within a framework of conservative fiscal policies (balanced budget, little or no debt, and a diversified revenue stream).

**The Plan attempts to balance the City's economic development goal and objectives with the realities of the private real estate market, local business climate, and City fiscal constraints. It will help the City allocate its limited economic development resources in a more proactive, strategic, and efficient manner.**

# Plan Background

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**Historically, much of the City's economic development efforts focused on establishing and administering a predictable, efficient, and fair development entitlement and permitting process and reacting to specific development related opportunities and challenges.**

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**In 2007, the City adopted its first Strategic Plan, which identified Economic Development as one of the ten Community Focus Areas.**

While the City has consciously worked to become more proactive and implement the economic development objectives and implementation action priorities identified in the 2007 plan, challenging economic conditions, shifting real estate market conditions, important long-term land use planning policy gaps, competing priorities, and limited staff resources have all combined to constrain the amount of actual private development and business expansion that has occurred in the City since its adoption. These factors compound the City's inherent impediments to economic development, which are delineated in the consultant's White Paper described herein.

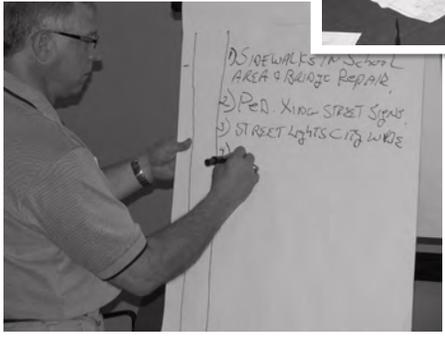
**Therefore, when the City decided to create a new strategic plan, it also implemented a process designed to:**

1. Establish the City's overall economic development goal;
2. Enhance the City's understanding of the obstacles to high quality economic development;
3. Identify the City's best opportunities for economic development; and
4. Prioritize the various objectives and implementation actions required to achieve the overall economic development goal in an efficient and effective manner.

The process included a detailed review of the City's current economic development practices, position in the regional development market, economic and demographic data, planning policy documents, multiple elected official, staff, and stakeholder input meetings, preparation of the Economic Development Input Report found in Appendix C, and the Consultant Teams preparation of the Economic Development White Paper found in Appendix E.

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**A summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations contained in these documents follows.**



## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The various stakeholder groups identified the following as their economic development priorities for the City:

- Proactively plan and prepare for well designed development in the Route 59 corridor;
- Implement the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan with a special emphasis on facilitating high quality mixed-use redevelopment and creating community gathering places;
- Increase occupancy and upgrade tenant mix in older commercial properties throughout the Community; and
- Support existing business and encourage additional complimentary development in the Cantera project.

Neighborhood Dialogues | May 5, 2012



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER SUMMARY

As part of the process to develop this Plan, in mid-2014, the Consultant Team reviewed the economic development related stakeholder input, analyzed the economic development efforts of three “peer” communities, reviewed Warrentville’s demographics, and conducted a professional assessment of the area business climate and real estate market. The Consultant Team’s assessment of the City’s most prominent economic development strengths, challenges, and opportunities, and City staff’s executive summary of the same, is provided in the White Paper information contained in **Attachment 1**. The key conclusions provided in the White Paper include:

### ► **Future Retail and Restaurant Development:**

Existing conditions and constraints indicate that a more strategic, coordinated and sustained City effort will be required to attract high-quality commercial development and new retail and restaurant businesses in Warrentville and specifically the Route 59 corridor. Evolving market conditions in 2014-2015 suggest that the Route 59 corridor will ultimately experience less retail and restaurant development than what the Community desires and is reflected in the City’s current long-term planning documents. Furthermore, improving the condition, tenant mix, and occupancy of older existing aging shopping centers is a complicated and long-term endeavor and will require a multipronged and coordinated approach that includes strategic City investments, partnerships with property owners and developers, sustained and targeted code enforcement, and potential City assistance.

### ► **Additional Residential Development:**

According to the Consultant Team, attracting new higher density residential development, including high quality apartments, should be a core component of the City’s economic development strategy going forward. The inconsistency between the economic development benefits of new, higher density residential development and the City’s current comprehensive plan should be addressed as soon as possible through a land use planning processes designed to identify the type and location where the City feels higher density residential development is desirable.



Red Robin Restaurant

*Economic Development White Paper continued...*

▶ **Employment Uses:**

Warrenville is home to a very robust job market. The City's highest concentration of employment is associated with the diverse group of businesses that now operate in the Cantera development. The employees of these businesses support a healthy local economy by patronizing local businesses. The expansion and attraction of businesses in Cantera is one of the best and most cost effective short term economic development opportunities for the City. To do so, the City will need to enhance its interaction with the owners, businesses, and real estate professionals that have an interest in Cantera properties. The City's efforts should include (i) implementing cooperative ways for Warrenville's businesses to work together for mutual success, and (ii) improving its understanding of what businesses need and expect from the City.

▶ **New Gathering Places:**

Creating and facilitating the development of new public and private gathering spaces in the Old Town/Civic Center area will not be easy or quick due to the various physical, governmental coordination, fractionalized ownership, and market challenges that exist in this area. However, development is possible and can happen on an incremental basis with a sustained effort to implement the recommendations in the Old Town/Civic Subarea Plan.

▶ **Economic Development Program Administration:**

In order to effectively implement the action priorities outlined in this Plan, advance its eight objectives, and make significant progress towards achieving its overall economic development goal, the City will need to utilize a more proactive, focused, and coordinated approach to economic development. This will require the strategic investment of additional City resources on a sustained basis.



Warrenville is home to a very robust job market. The City's highest concentration of employment is associated with the diverse group of businesses that now operate in the Cantera development.

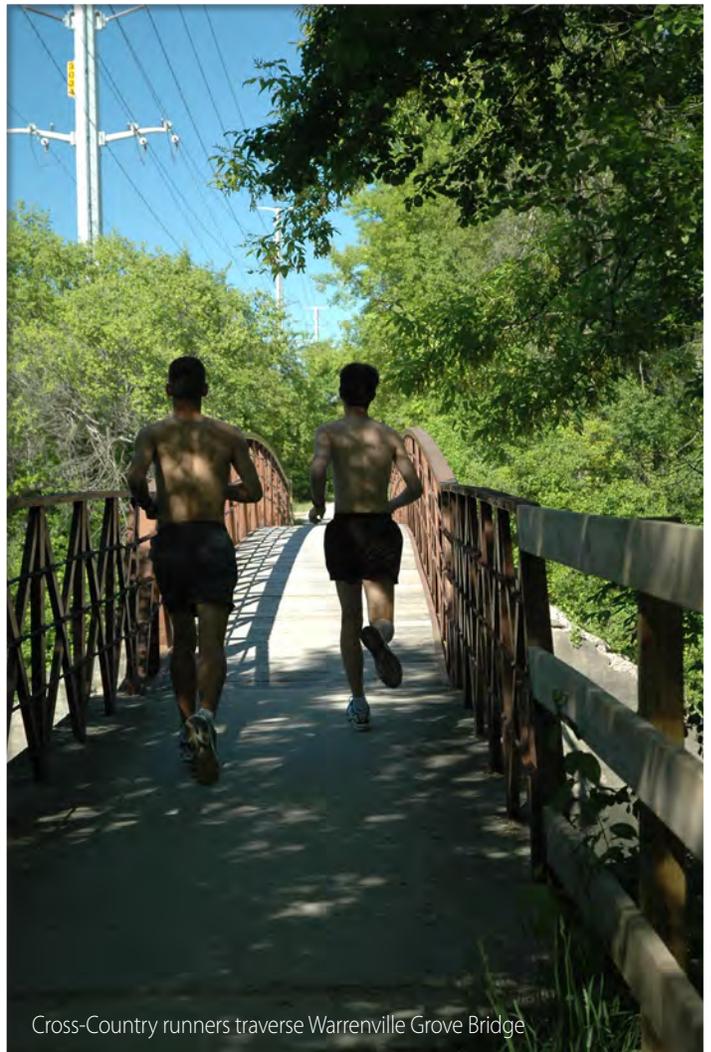
CITY OF WARRENVILLE

# Economic Development Plan Objectives

**The stakeholder input component of the City’s Strategic and Economic Development Planning process culminated in a City Council workshop where the Council reviewed and refined the City’s overall economic development goal and provided detailed input on the scope and priority of the eight economic development objectives defined during the planning process.**

The final list of objectives represents those actions that best match the City’s economic development aspirations with current market realities. This information was then synthesized with the key findings and conclusions of the Economic Development White Paper to develop this Plan.

The Plan identifies and prioritizes the type of actions the City will need to implement in order to accomplish the eight objectives and achieve its overall economic development goal. While the implementation action examples represent the “road map” for the City’s future economic development efforts, it is not static. The specific actions the City implements in any given year will evolve based on the challenges, opportunities, and resources that exist at that given time. Following the plan and regularly recalibrating the action steps will allow the City to allocate its finite economic development resources in a more strategic and coordinated manner going forward.



Cross-Country runners traverse Warrenville Grove Bridge

## Economic Development GOAL STATEMENT

- ▶ Enhance the City’s tax base, support the growth of businesses, increase local shopping and dining opportunities, diversify the City’s labor market, expand housing options, and create attractive gathering places.

### THE FOLLOWING SECTION IDENTIFIES:

- The City’s eight economic development objectives in order of priority;
- Examples of specific implementation actions for each objective ;
- The highest priority objective and implementation actions (**in bold, blue font**), which the City will begin addressing in the first year following the adoption of the Plan; and
- The implementation actions that represent long-term sustained efforts (*in italic font*).

### OBJECTIVE #1

ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, STAFFING SUPPORT, AND FUNDING COMMITMENT FOR EFFECTIVE ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### OBJECTIVE #2

PROACTIVELY PLAN AND PREPARE FOR WELL DESIGNED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ALONG AND CONTIGUOUS TO THE ROUTE 59 CORRIDOR

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. *Annually identify the City’s highest priority development opportunity properties and related development goals*
- B. *Develop and adopt new comprehensive, subarea, and/or corridor land use plans*
- C. Formalize City’s “brand”
- D. Consider establishment of Rt. 59 TIF District

### OBJECTIVE #3

SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELL DESIGNED DEVELOPMENT ALONG AND CONTIGUOUS TO THE ROUTE 59 CORRIDOR

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. *Annually develop, fund, and implement detailed action steps to improve marketability (assemblage, zoning, wetland delineation, environmental investigation, utilities, road improvements, and targeted marketing) of priority development opportunity properties*
- B. *Implement deliberate and sustained outreach program with brokers and owners of development opportunity properties*
- C. *Strategically communicate City “brand” and market City for private economic development*

**OBJECTIVE #4**

PLAN FOR AND ENCOURAGE HIGH QUALITY, APPROPRIATELY SCALED AND LOCATED, NEW HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING MULTIPLE-FAMILY HOUSING

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. **Prepare new Comprehensive Plan to clearly identify City's location and density preferences for new residential development**
- B. *Conduct outreach to developers qualified to develop sites designated for higher density residential development*

**OBJECTIVE #5**

FACILITATE ADDITIONAL COMPLIMENTARY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CANTERA DEVELOPMENT

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. *Annually identify the City's highest priority Cantera development opportunities and related development goals*
- B. *Implement deliberate and sustained outreach program with brokers and owners of Cantera development opportunity properties*

**OBJECTIVE #6**

STIMULATE DESIRABLE MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT AND NEW COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES IN THE OLD TOWN/CIVIC CENTER AREA

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. **Annually identify the City's highest priority redevelopment properties and related development goals**
- B. *Develop, fund, and implement a fiscally responsible and targeted incentive program(s) that helps achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the TIF #3 Redevelopment Plan and the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan*
- C. *Implement the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan and the TIF #3 Redevelopment Plan*
- D. *Pursue land acquisition and redevelopment opportunities that enhance the DuPage River corridor as a community amenity and simultaneously support private economic development and/or the formation of new community gathering spaces*
- E. *Develop, fund, and implement plan to improve the marketability (assemblage, zoning, utilities, marketing) and development of priority redevelopment properties*
- F. *Implement deliberate and sustained outreach program with brokers and owners of redevelopment opportunity properties*

**TEXT LEGEND**

**Bold blue font** = Highest priority objective and implementation actions which the City will begin addressing in the first year following plan adoption.

*Italicized blue or black* = Implementation actions that represent long-term sustained efforts.

***Bold, italicized blue font*** = High priority action, requiring long-term sustained effort, that will be addressed in the first year following plan adoption.

**OBJECTIVE #7**

PROMOTE THE REHABILITATION, IMPROVEMENT, AND OCCUPANCY OF OLDER COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. *Develop, fund, and implement a fiscally responsible and targeted incentive program that supports site improvements and building rehabilitation in older, existing, more auto-oriented development in the Route 59 corridor*
- B. *Develop, fund, and implement a streetscape improvement and beautification program*
- C. *Fund and implement key pedestrian improvements in the existing developed areas in the Route 59 corridor*
- D. *Implement deliberate outreach program with brokers and owners of properties that would benefit from rehabilitation and improvement*

**OBJECTIVE #8**

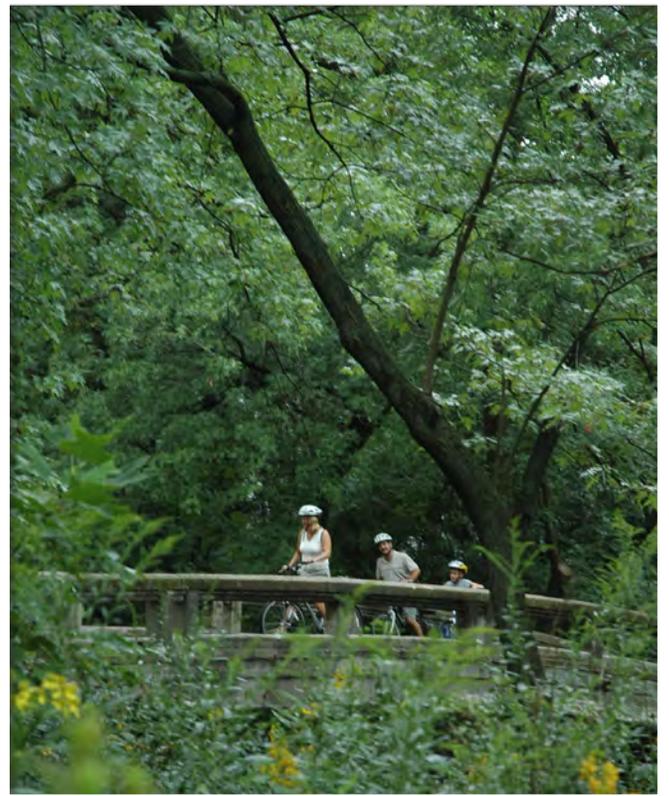
ASSIST AND ENCOURAGE EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESSES TO EXPAND, GROW, AND BE SUCCESSFUL IN WARRENVILLE

Example Implementation Actions:

- A. *Develop and implement targeted business retention and expansion initiatives*
- B. *Implement new software program to enhance efficiency of the building permit process*
- C. *Modify Zoning Ordinance to reduce hurdles to creative business expansion*
- D. *Facilitate roadway improvements that address specific traffic congestion and access issues for existing business*



Assist and encourage existing local businesses to expand, grow, and be successful in Warrenville.



# Plan Implementation

**When implementing this plan, it is important to recognize that some implementation actions are relatively simple and can be addressed immediately (short-term priorities) while others deal with complex issues and will require a more coordinated and sustained effort to implement (long-term priorities).**

One of the most important challenges for the City going forward will be how best to allocate its finite resources in a manner that balances the need to simultaneously advance both short and long-term priorities.

While this balance won't necessarily be clear or easy, it can be accomplished, provided the City regularly reviews and adjust its economic development efforts in light of changing conditions, new challenges, and evolving opportunities.

The review process should involve City staff and the City's Economic Development Representatives annually evaluating and then reporting to the City Council on implementation progress and where adjustments to the implementation actions are recommended due to changing conditions or new opportunities in the City.

The timing of the review process should be coordinated with the City's annual budget process in order to facilitate informed funding decisions for priority economic development initiatives and implementation actions.

## Staples of Successful Implementation

- Regular / Annual Review**
- Involvement by both City Staff and Economic Development Representatives**
- Implementation Progress Report prepared for City Council**
- Coordinate review with annual budget Process**

# Attachment 1

## CITY STAFF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER

Prepared by Teska Associates and Business Districts, Inc.

The following information represents City staff's executive summary of the Consultant Team's assessment of the City's most prominent economic development strengths, challenges, and opportunities as described in their October 7, 2014, Economic Development White Paper.

### Future Retail and Restaurant Development

**Findings:** While Warrenville's residents, City officials and others have expressed a strong desire for more grocery, shopping, and dining options throughout Warrenville and specifically in the Route 59 corridor, there are many factors that currently impede this type of development. The most important factors include:

- Relatively low population density due to the predominance of single-family homes on larger lots and the extensive amount of public open space that borders Warrenville.
- Limited availability of "development ready" land. Much of the vacant commercial land in the Rt. 59 corridor is not adequately served by City sanitary sewer and water utilities, lacks proper road improvements, is impacted by wetland/floodplain areas, and/or contains subsurface environmental contamination and therefore is not easily developed.
- Fractionalized ownership of land in the Route 59 corridor make the assemblage of the larger blocks of land required for high quality, coordinated development very difficult.
- Market demand for dining and shopping is already being satisfied by businesses currently operating in Warrenville AND surrounding communities. This is especially true from a grocery store perspective.
- The antiquated design, deferred maintenance, and tenant mix of much of the existing commercial development in the Route 59 corridor makes it challenging to attract new businesses that would satisfy local dining and shopping needs.

### Conclusions

These factors suggest it will require a more strategic, coordinated and long term effort to attract high quality commercial development and new retail and restaurant businesses in Warrenville and specifically the Route 59 corridor.

Evolving market conditions dictate that the Route 59 corridor will ultimately experience less retail and restaurant development than what the Community desires and is reflected in the City's current long term planning documents. Furthermore, improving the condition, tenant mix, and occupancy of older existing shopping centers is a complicated and long term endeavor.

It will require a multipronged and coordinated approach that includes strategic City investments, partnerships with property owners and developers, sustained and targeted code enforcement, and potential City assistance.

CITY STAFF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER CONTINUED

### Additional Residential Development

**Findings:** Developers find the Warrenville market very attractive for new residential development due to its high quality school system, central location in DuPage County, easy access to a well developed highway system, well maintained infrastructure, and some of the same factors that tend to impede new retail and restaurant development... a large amount of open space and the City's small town / "rural" character. New high quality residential development could be accomplished in Warrenville with little or no investment from the City.

Over the past 10 years, an average of seven new residential homes have been built in the City each year. The majority of these were associated with vacant infill lots and the redevelopment of existing single family homes. While the apparent disconnect between developer interest and actual new home construction during this period is, in part, due in to the recent recession and related contraction in the residential real estate market, the more significant ongoing impediment is the lack of available "development ready" properties zoned and/or planned for residential development.

Higher density residential development is especially attractive from an economic development perspective for the following reasons:

- Greater spending power for existing businesses
- Additional population makes community more attractive to new commercial/retail/restaurant business development
- More housing options for City's large employee population
- More diverse housing options for existing residents
- Less per capita long term infrastructure liabilities and more tax base per acre of land in comparison to large lot single family residential development

### Conclusions

Attracting new, higher density, residential development, including high quality apartments, should be a core component of the City's economic development strategy going forward.

The inconsistency between the economic development benefits of new, higher density residential development and the City's current comprehensive plan should be addressed as soon as possible through a land use planning processes.

The process should be designed to identify the type and location where the City feels higher density residential development is desirable.

CITY STAFF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER CONTINUED

## Employment Uses

**Findings:** Prior to the development of the Cantera Project, the City was generally considered a bedroom community where most residents worked elsewhere and the number of “in town” jobs was relatively limited. Today, Warrentville is home to a very diverse and robust job market. Warrentville’s jobs per household ratio is a positive 1.6 local jobs for every Warrentville household. A large percentage of these jobs, including many of the higher paying white collar jobs, are associated with business activity in the highly regarded Cantera Development. The employees that work in these jobs support a healthy local housing market and the City’s economy by patronizing local businesses. Fortunately, there are still opportunities for existing businesses to grow and new businesses to locate in the Cantera Development.



## Conclusions

The expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses in the Cantera development is one of the best and most cost effective economic development opportunities for the City.

To do so, the City will need to maintain and enhance its interaction with the owners, businesses, and real estate professionals that have an interest in Cantera properties.

This effort should include (i) implementing cooperative ways for Warrentville’s businesses to work together for mutual success and (ii) the City improving its understanding of what businesses need and expect from the City.

CITY STAFF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER CONTINUED

### New Gathering Places

**Findings:** Even though most stakeholders recognize that a vibrant downtown with many successful stores and restaurants is not a realistic goal for Warrentville, there is a strong desire to further enhance the historic core of the community by providing additional places for the community to gather and interact. The City's Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan contains a coordinated list of public policy, public improvement, and site development recommendations that are collectively intended to enhance the subareas position as a vital social, cultural, historic, and economic asset. These recommendations include creation of new public gathering spaces and facilitating new private development that provides new opportunities for community interaction.

### Conclusions

Creating and facilitating the development of new public and private gathering spaces in the Old Town/Civic Center area will not be easy or quick due to the various physical, governmental coordination, fractionalized ownership, and economic challenges that exist in this area.

However, with a sustained effort to implement the recommendations in the Old Town/Civic Subarea Plan, it is possible and can happen.



CITY STAFF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHITE PAPER CONTINUED

## Economic Development Program Administration

**Findings:** The City has an excellent development review process. It is well defined, predictable, and affords multiple opportunities for those interested in investing in the community to obtain important information and valuable feedback on proposed projects before significant time and money has been invested into design and legal fees. This along with the City's continuing commitment to develop and then use important policy documents such as this Plan, creates a solid foundation for a successful municipal economic development program.

Since the City's adoption of the 2007/2011 Strategic Plan, the City has advanced the following economic development implementation actions:

- implemented the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan
- implemented Tax Increment Financing District #3
- assembled several key redevelopment sites
- performed demolition and environmental cleanup activities to make redevelopment sites more attractive for private redevelopment
- conducted numerous business retention and expansion visits
- significantly expanded economic development information on City website
- became active member of the DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau
- established the City Council's Economic Development Representatives (EDR)
- created and coordinate efforts of the Warrenville Hospitality Group
- coordinate with the County's economic development agency - Choose DuPage

While these actions represent a conscious effort on the City's part to become more proactive, competing priorities and constrained staff resources limit the City's ability to be more proactive from an economic development perspective.

## Conclusions

In order to successfully implement the action priorities outlined in this Plan, advance its eight objectives, and make significant progress on its overall economic development goal, the City will need to utilize a more proactive, focused, and coordinated approach to economic development.

This will require the strategic investment of additional City resources on a sustained basis.

# City of Warrenville, Illinois

For a Visit, Or a Lifetime...

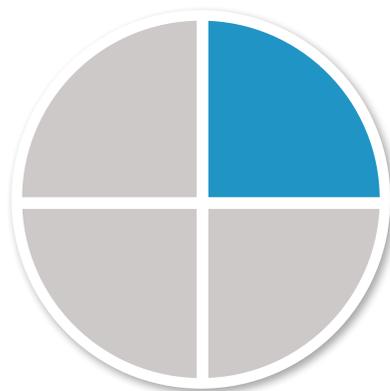
## Strategic/Economic Development Plan



DuPage Forest Preserve Warrenville Grove Bridge



### Report 1



## Resident Strategic Plan Input Report

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**Business Districts, Inc.**  
Terry Jenkins, Managing Director  
Diane Williams, Director



# Introduction

The overall goal of the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report is to combine feedback from the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogue meetings and 2013 Community Survey in a manner that establishes the foundation for a new City of Warrenville Strategic/Economic Development Plan. The new Strategic/Economic Development Plan will guide the direction of City services and policies for the next five years.

In the summer of 2012, the City conducted Neighborhood Dialogue meetings with groups of residents from each of the City's four Wards. The Neighborhood Dialogue Results Report was presented to the public and City Council on June 25, 2012. A brief summary of the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogue process and the input collected during it is provided in Attachment A. The full report is available for review on the City's website under Forms & Documents.\*

In August of 2013, the City issued its second Community Survey. The results of the Community Survey were presented at the December 9, 2013, Public Safety Committee meeting. A brief summary of the survey process and the resident input received from it is provided in Attachment B.\*

**The specific objectives this report aims to accomplish include:**

- Identify the most common themes and priorities reflected in resident feedback received during the City's two most recent outreach initiatives; and
- Define preliminary goal statements based on the prevailing priorities.



\* The complete 2012 Neighborhood Dialogue Report and October 2013 Warrenville Community Survey Report are both available on the City's website under 'Forms & Documents'.

# Identifying Common Themes and Shared Priorities

Theme refers to the subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts, or an exhibition; a topic. When reviewing the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogue meetings and the 2013 Community Survey, common themes – or subjects – emerged.

- ▶ Both citizen outreach initiatives demonstrated that the advantages to living in Warrenville centered on maintaining the natural setting/open spaces as well as its sound fiscal management.
- ▶ Shared priorities for the future included encouraging thoughtful, planned, and environmentally responsible economic development, maintaining open space, continued sound fiscal management - which included low taxes - reducing flooding, coordinated maintenance and targeted upgrade of City infrastructure assets, and comprehensive and proactive policing.

A more detailed assessment of the six most prominent areas of resident interest and concern, or 'Topics of Interest', as listed at right, follows. While some of these may be specific areas of focus in the final Strategic/Economic Development Plan, others may become key points in broader areas.

## TOPICS OF INTEREST

- 1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 2 OPEN SPACE
- 3 FINANCES
- 4 FLOODING & STORMWATER
- 5 INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES
- 6 SAFETY



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOPIC 1

Based on feedback collected from the Neighborhood Dialogues and 2013 Community Survey, Economic Development is the #1 Topic of Interest.

From the residents’ perspective, this area needs to be the City’s top priority. How to address economic development varies from respondent to respondent. While some just indicated in general that development must be a priority, others had very specific ideas. From a broad overview, what appears most often is a desired focus on development along the Route 59 corridor and an increase in restaurants and shopping venues for residents.

Based on the Neighborhood Dialogues, development along Route 59 and creating gathering places were listed as the top overall priorities. Highlighted at right are the specific priorities emphasized by each of the four wards.

In the Community Survey, economic development was also ranked as the biggest concern related to living in Warrenville including the lack of retail shopping options (67.4%) and restaurants (59.6%). Land use planning of currently undeveloped areas was identified as a service in which residents were not satisfied (43.2% satisfaction level).

▶ **When asked specifically about priorities for land use:**

- 73% wanted the City to encourage environmentally responsible development.
- 71.5% wanted the City to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts associated with new development.
- 70.9% wanted the City to increase job opportunities
- Similar to the Neighborhood Dialogues, Rt. 59 development and redevelopment, along with new restaurants were top priorities.

▶ **When asked what business they would patronize more if Warrenville had them:**

- 69.9% identified new restaurants
- 53.2% identified building supplies/home goods stores
- Taking a broader look at the comments, it was clear that respondents would also like to see more restaurants and grocery stores in Warrenville. There were 188 comments for additional grocery stores and 208 for more restaurants.



**PRIORITIES BY WARD**  
BASED ON NEIGHBORHOOD  
DIALOGUES

**WARD 1**

“We desire thoughtful planning and new development, especially in the Rt. 59 corridor.”

**WARD 2**

“We desire redevelopment along Rt. 59 that includes an upscale gathering place near Batavia Rd.”

**WARD 3**

“We desire mixed use downtown development.”

**WARD 4**

“We desire redevelopment of vacant properties and new gathering places”



## OPEN SPACE + ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC 2

Warrenville has a reputation of placing high value on its natural setting and outdoor recreational amenities; the environment is important to residents.

In the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues, Ward 1 participants felt it was important to preserve the City's "rural" character, Ward 3 participants wanted the City to encourage and maintain "environmental awareness," and Ward 4 participants wanted to ensure that open spaces were maintained.

While the Community Survey did not identify these elements as priorities, almost all participating residents identified similar items, including the community's natural setting (98%), open spaces (91.7%), and environmental quality (85.7%), among the most highly rated advantages to living in Warrenville.

Warrenville Grove Bridge, DuPage Forest Preserve District



Illinois Prairie Path



The Warrenville Grove Bridge, DuPage Forest Preserve District allows for pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the West Branch of the DuPage River.

Warrenville is surrounded by Dupage County Forest Preserves, including Blackwell, Warrenville Grove, and Herrick Lake. Multiple trails and paths run through the City for everyone to use, including the nationally recognized Illinois Prairie Path.



### ADVANTAGES TO LIVING IN WARRENVILLE BASED ON COMMUNITY SURVEY

**98%**  
Natural Setting

**92%**  
Open Spaces

**86%**  
Environmental Quality



According to the 2013 Community Survey, the cost of living and affordability of housing were both viewed as advantages to living in Warrentville.

In the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues\*, sound fiscal management emerged as a high priority for each ward. Ward 1 participants noted that the City should live within its means. Ward 2 participants wanted the City to maintain no debt. Ward 3 participants asked that the City maintain its financial stability and balanced budget. Finally, Ward 4 participants desired continued financial management.

Comparing these priorities against the priorities of the 2013 Community Survey\*, 84 comments from 325 completed surveys noted decreasing taxes/fees as the second highest priority for the City in the next three years. However, respondents also noted that Warrentville’s cost of living (80.4%) and housing affordability (81.8%) were both advantages to living in Warrentville. So there seemed to be acknowledgement that the City engages in sound fiscal management coupled with a desire to maintain that, particularly so it will lead to decreasing taxes.

► **What Do Residents Like MOST About Living in Warrentville?**



SOURCE: 2013 Community Survey

\* Note that in either effort, there was no explanation or distinction provided to participants about taxes, i.e. differentiation between City and other taxing bodies’ tax rates or distinction between income tax vs. property tax.



## FLOODING + STORMWATER

### TOPIC 4

According to the 2013 Community Survey, Warrenville residents would like the City to address issues related to flooding and stormwater while improving flood mitigation and protection.

Even though flooding or stormwater related issues were not identified as priorities in the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues, a high percentage (75.4%) of the 2013 Community Survey respondents felt addressing these issues should be a priority for the City. In addition, improving flood mitigation/protection was one of the few items that a majority (68.8%) of Warrenville residents indicated they would like to see the City address even if it meant raising taxes and fees.

- ▶ **76% identified flooding and stormwater related issues as a priority.**
- ▶ **69% indicated that they would like flood mitigation / protection improved.**

SOURCE: 2013 Community Survey

#### Rendering of River Post Modification

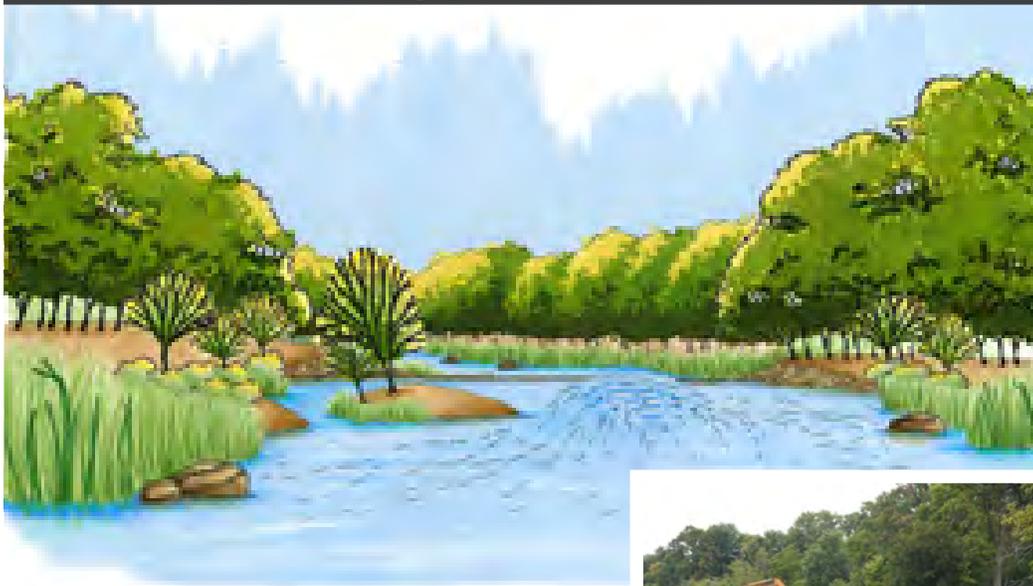


PHOTO CREDIT: Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



Warrenville Grove Dam Modification



## CITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

### TOPIC 5

According to the 2013 Community Survey, Warrenville residents would like the City to improve infrastructure, including trails and paths, as well as the quality of water, which is believed to be an issue.

Overall, resident input received through the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues and the 2013 Community Survey placed a high value on the community's existing trail and path system with a desire to improve the safety and connectivity of the area's sidewalk, trail, and bike network. Citizens also rated their satisfaction level relatively high regarding the City's ongoing maintenance of the community's various infrastructure assets (streets, sidewalks, streetlights, sewer and water system improvements, etc.) and placed a high priority on continued infrastructure maintenance. Finally, there was a desire to improve the quality of the City's municipal water system (as detailed below).

In the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues, participants both Wards 2 and 3 identified improving the safety and expanding the network of bike paths and sidewalks as priority. Almost all (95.9%) of the residents who participated in the Community Survey identified trail/paths among the most highly rated advantages to living in Warrenville. In addition, improving pedestrian/bicycle connections and safety was one of the few infrastructure improvements that more than 50% of survey respondents felt would justify an increase in City taxes or fees.

Even though more than three-quarters of the Community Survey respondents indicated they were satisfied with street and parkway maintenance in the City, infrastructure maintenance was still prominently identified among the most important issues for the City to address in the next three years. "Well-maintained infrastructure" was also identified as one of Ward 2 residents' top priorities during the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues.

While the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues did not highlight the City's water quality as an issue, the 2013 Community Survey feedback indicated that the "quality" of the City's municipal water continues to be a concern among residents. While almost 70% indicated that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the City's water supply more than 72.5% of the respondents indicated they would like to see water quality improved even if it meant increased taxes or fees. At least twenty of the written comments received indicated that the City should make it a priority to improve the quality - including reducing hardness - of the City's water.

▶ **Although 70% of survey respondents indicated they were satisfied/somewhat satisfied with City's water supply, 73% indicated they would like to see water quality improved.**

SOURCE: 2013 Community Survey

**P PUBLIC SAFETY**  
TOPIC 6

According to the 2013 Community Survey, Warrenville residents feel safe and enjoy living in Warrenville for that reason but would like the City to continue efforts to address gang and drug activity.

In the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogues, public safety services were identified among some of the participants. Ward 1 participants desired more neighborhood policing and individuals from Ward 4 wanted cooperative and proactive policing to maintain a safe community. The 2013 Community Survey identified safety as an advantage (94.4%) in the community, but it identified public safety as an important issue as well. Respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay increased taxes and fees if it meant more aggressively addressing a perception of gang and drug activity (88.1%).

**Award-Winning 'National Night Out' Event**



The 'Dog Demonstration' is one of many activities for families to watch and take part in at the award-winning 'National Night Out' event hosted annually during summer months by the Warrenville Police Department. Featured in this picture are Officer Tom Bellinger and Bandit.

**Warrenville Police Bike Patrol Program**



Warrenville police officer Teresa McBride, right, and Mayor David Brummel commemorating the 2013 start of Warrenville's fledgling police bike patrol program, wherein officers spend several hours a week patrolling parks, paths and other hard-to-reach places in Warrenville.

PHOTO CREDIT: The Daily Herald

# Preliminary Goal Statements Based on Prevailing Priorities

This Resident Strategic Plan Input Report is the first interim report for the City Council during the Strategic/Economic Development planning process. This interim report is the initial step in formulating goal statements based on what the resident outreach initiatives identified as priorities. However, it is important to note that these goal statements will evolve as outreach activities with specialized stakeholder, business, and community groups take place, as well as meetings with the City Council members themselves.

## GOAL 1

### Economic Development

Enhance the City's tax base, increase local shopping and dining opportunities, expand the City's labor market, and create attractive gathering places by:

- actively planning for and aggressively encouraging well designed and environmentally responsible commercial development in the Route 59 corridor;
- mixed use redevelopment in the Old Town/Civic Center; and
- rehabilitation, improvement, and occupancy of older vacant commercial properties throughout the community.

## GOAL 2

### City Finances

Uphold the City's record of fiscal conservatism by adopting a balanced budget overall and at the fund level, ensuring a relatively low cost of living for Warrenville residents, incurring little to no debt, and maintaining a diversified revenue stream.

## PRELIMINARY GOAL STATEMENTS

CONTINUED

### GOAL 3



#### Open Space and Environment

Preserve and protect the natural features, open space, and wooded areas that contribute significantly to the City's overall character, setting, and uniqueness, and seek opportunities to showcase, access, and promote these components as important and valuable community assets.

### GOAL 4



#### Flooding and Stormwater

Improve flood protection and reduce residential and business flooding in the West Branch of the DuPage River Watershed, require environmentally responsible development that effectively controls the volume and improves the quality of stormwater runoff, and address neighborhood drainage issues.

### GOAL 5



#### City Infrastructure and Utilities

Repair, maintain, replace, and strategically upgrade the City's physical infrastructure assets in a well planned, coordinated, and timely manner that is fiscally responsible, enhances public safety and supports increased private property values.

### GOAL 6



#### Public Safety

Provide excellent, proactive, public safety service throughout the community, focusing on addressing the perception of gang activity and drug use.

# Conclusion

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The Resident Strategic Plan Input Report is the City's first step in assessing the community's thoughts and desires regarding Warrenville's future, particularly in regards to economic development. The purpose of this interim report is to identify the most common themes and priorities reflected in the resident feedback received during the City's two most recent resident outreach initiatives. Secondly, the report articulates preliminary goal statements based on these prevailing priorities.

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- ▶ This report identified six common themes and priorities and developed goal statements accordingly. These goal statements will evolve as additional feedback is analyzed. Ultimately, this report will be incorporated into the final Strategic/Economic Development Plan that will serve the community for coming years and help shape its future.

# Attachment A

## SUMMARY OF 2012 NEIGHBORHOOD DIALOGUES

During the Neighborhood Dialogue meetings, participants were asked to answer the question: *What are your hopes and dreams for Warrentville for 2017?*

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Each table had a staff facilitator who guided the participants through the process of answering this question. A worksheet posed questions covering seven broad areas that fall under the responsibility of the City, including Public Safety, Financial Management, Service Levels, Development, Communication/Open Government, Neighborhood Character, and Quality of Life.

► **Questions were as follows:**

- What would a safe and secure Warrentville look like in 2017?
  - What can/should the community do to ensure financial stability in 2017 and beyond?
  - What services should be provided in Warrentville in 2017?
  - What type of development would make Warrentville a good place to live in 2017?
  - Describe the best way Warrentville can communicate with you.
  - What would an ideal neighborhood look like in Warrentville in 2017?
  - What makes a good community?
  - What are some of the important things that make you want to live in Warrentville?
  - If you were going to persuade someone to live in Warrentville, what would you tell them?
  - If Warrentville would get an award for “the place to live”, what qualities would earn them that award?
- 

After a process of brainstorming and prioritization, common themes, which represented the hopes and dreams for Warrentville for 2017, were derived from each ward. While each ward identified different priorities, they had common themes as well. Overall, every ward recognized sound fiscal management as a high priority. The financial themes centered on maintaining no debt and living within the City’s means. The second common goal among all four wards was related to development. While some wards were more specific in the location of where they wanted to see development, all wanted to see continued development of vacant areas in the City. Among three of the wards, there were identified priorities in the area of recreation, including open spaces, sidewalks and bike paths, proactive policing, enhanced communication to citizens and the creation of gathering places.

# Attachment A

## PRIORITIES BY WARD

### ▶ WARD 1

- Live within means
- Rt. 59 Development Plan
- Thoughtful planned development
- Maintain small town/rural character
- More neighborhood policing
- Utilize social media
- Enforce property maintenance rules
- Engage diverse groups
- Promote Arts

### ▶ WARD 2

- Maintain no debt
- Re-development along Rt. 59
- Safe bike paths & sidewalks for all
- Partner with Park, Library & School districts to maintain high levels of service
- One upscale gathering place near Batavia Road and Rt. 59
- Well-maintained infrastructure

### ▶ WARD 3

- Financial stability/balanced budget
- Mixed use downtown development
- More sidewalks
- Senior housing development
- Increase public transportation access
- Improve City-to-citizen communications
- Environmental Awareness / Recycling

### ▶ WARD 4

- Continue financial management
- Re-develop vacant properties
- Maintain open spaces
- Cooperative/proactive policing maintain safe community
- Create gathering places

# Attachment B

## SUMMARY OF 2013 COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Survey research was designed to help City Council and staff assess satisfaction with levels of City services and residents' desire to pay for additional or increases in the levels or variety of services, as well as gain insight on resident-desire for type and amount of development.

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While citizens were generally satisfied with the quality and level of services provided by the City, there were two areas that stood out in both the data and commentary that respondents felt needed addressing; economic development and lowering taxes. Responses showed that these two issues were linked in that respondents believed that generating economic development would lead to lowering taxes. The next two issues that residents felt there was a need for improvement were flooding and/or stormwater control and maintaining or even enhancing public safety, particularly addressing gangs and drugs.

**Objectives/Conclusions:** The overall objective of the Community Survey was to help the City Council guide the direction of City services and policies for the next three years and inform the Strategic/Economic Development Planning process.

▶ **The specific information objectives were as follows:**

- How do residents feel about the types/levels of services the City provides?
- What are the unmet needs in the community that residents would like the City Council to address? How do residents feel about increased fees or taxes associated with meeting these needs?
- How do residents feel about economic and community development in Warrenville, and what type of economic development do they desire?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the quality of life in Warrenville?
- What should be the City Council's priorities in the next three years?

▶ **The conclusions from the 2013 survey demonstrated the following:**

- Residents were satisfied with City services, but did want potential expansion.
- Residents wanted to see more economic development, but wanted to ensure it was thoughtful and planned.
- Residents wanted their taxes lowered and believed economic development was a component of this goal.
- Residents very much valued Warrenville's open space and wanted that maintained.

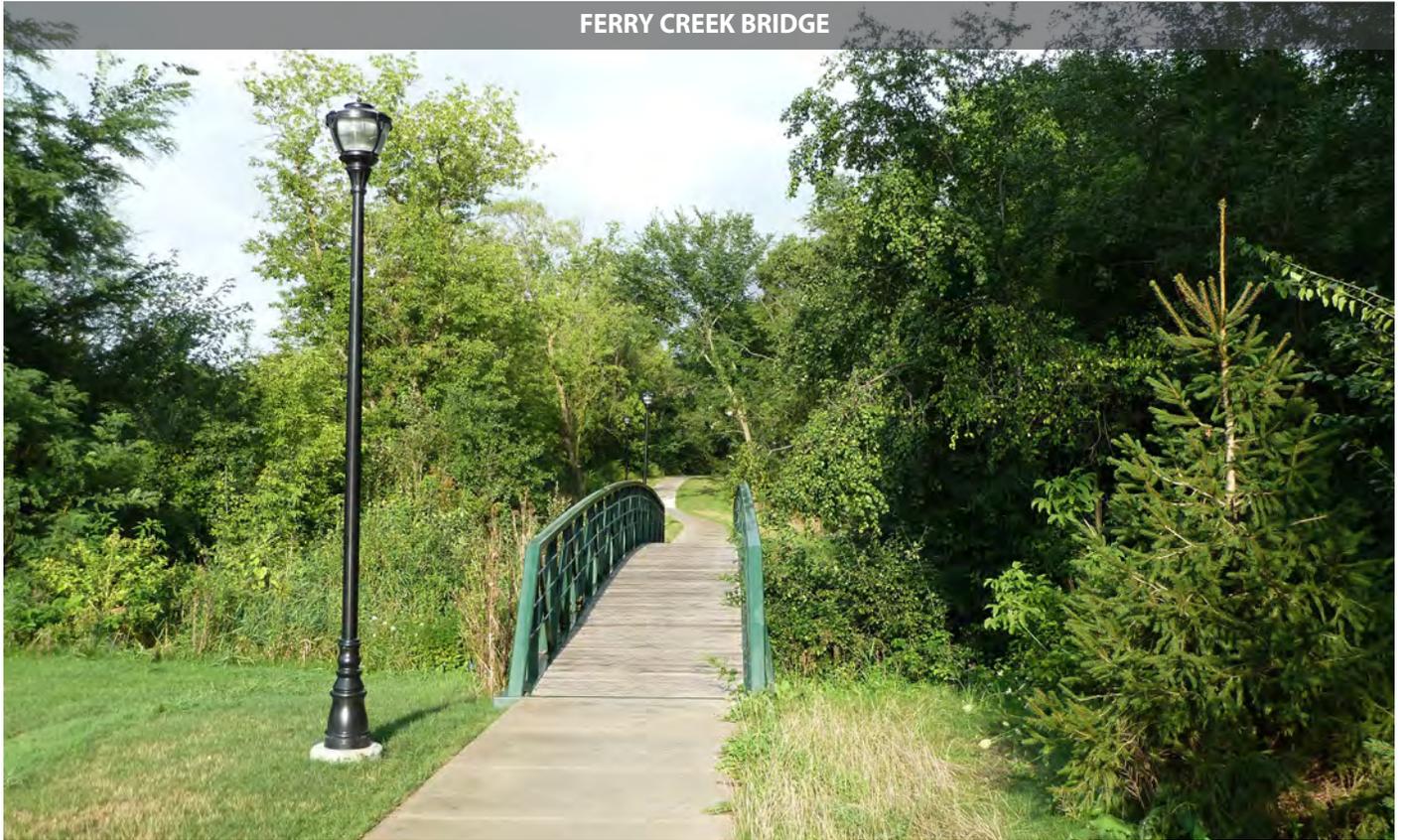
# City of Warrenville, Illinois

For a Visit, Or a Lifetime...

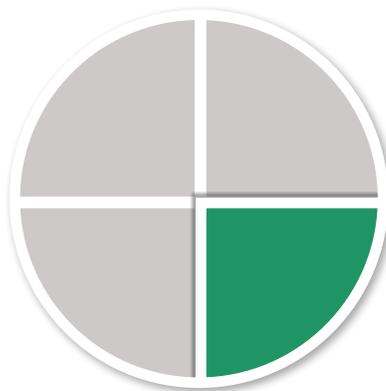
## Strategic/Economic Development Plan



FERRY CREEK BRIDGE



### Report 2



## Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

.....



## Acknowledgments

### City of Warrenville City Council

David Brummel, Mayor  
Fred Bevier, Ward 1 Alderman  
Stuart Aschauer, Ward 1 Alderman  
Robert (Bob) Wilson, Ward 2 Alderman  
Bill Weidner, Ward 2 Alderman  
Dan Leonard, Ward 3 Alderman  
Kathryn Davolos, Ward 3 Alderman  
Clare Barry, Ward 4 Alderman  
Leah Goodman, Ward 4 Alderman

Robert Johnson, Treasurer  
Emily Larson, City Clerk

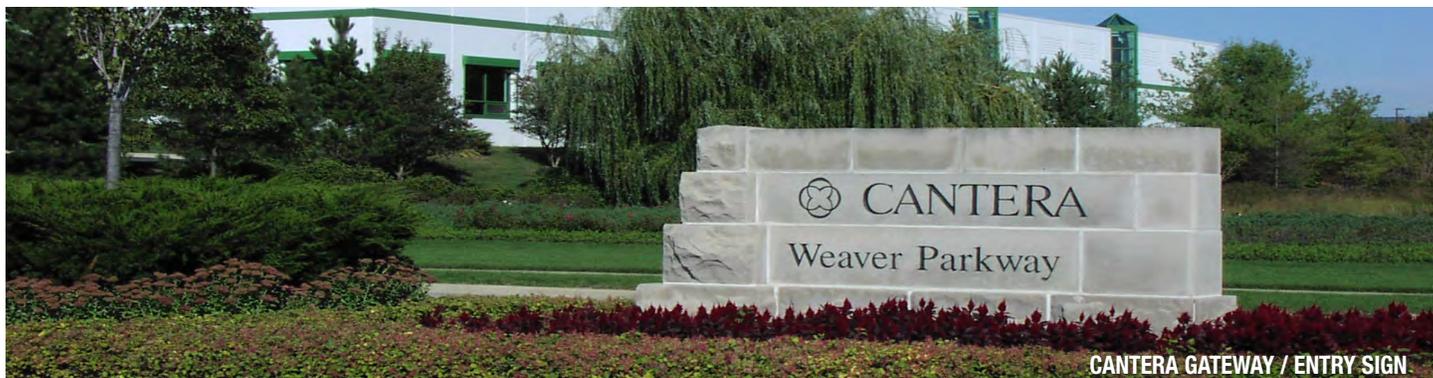
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CANTERA GATEWAY / ENTRY SIGN

# Introduction

Preparation of the Strategic / Economic Development Plan update for the City of Warrenville began in 2013 with a public input process to understand residents’ needs and desires for the community. In December 2013, the Warrenville City Council approved a contract with a consultant to help facilitate the strategic planning process with a focused economic development component. That element began in January 2014, with a document review, staff and officials training, and the analysis of resident input obtained from the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogue meetings and the 2013 Community Survey.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the strategic/economic development planning process is to identify and prioritize the issues, initiatives, and projects on which the City will focus in coming years. The final plan will include clear action steps designed to achieve the City’s goals.

## PROCESS

The process includes a focused effort to establish the foundation for City economic development policies and activities that will enhance the economic health of the community. The first step of this process was development of the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report. Following that initial step, the City collected perspectives and insights from specialized stakeholder groups and synthesized it into this Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input. That input is summarized in the body of this report, but detailed feedback can be found in the appendices.\*

\* Participant turn out for both the appointed officials group and Community Organizations group was low. Therefore, the feedback provided in the input meetings for both groups is representative of a relatively small number of people.

### TIMELINE

- DECEMBER 2013**  
 City approves contract with consultant to facilitate strategic planning process.
- JANUARY 2014**  
 Facilitation begins with a document review, staff and officials training, and analysis of resident input.
- APRIL 2014**  
 Consultant and designated City staff meet with the overlapping taxing bodies.
- MAY 2014**  
 City staff hosts two specialized stakeholder input meetings.
- JUNE 2014**  
 Consultant meets with key representatives of City departments.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input report is to augment information used to draft the initial priorities and goals originating from the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report. This information will ultimately help the City flush out objectives and determine the resources needed and the action steps to be taken to achieve each desired outcome.

► **The consultant and staff identified the following specialized stakeholders:**



Representatives from community whose views may not be appropriately represented in Resident Strategic Plan Input Report (i.e. appointed officials and overlapping taxing bodies' leaders).



Community organizations whose responsibilities and services are covered in the results from the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report (i.e. churches, homeowners associations and volunteer groups).

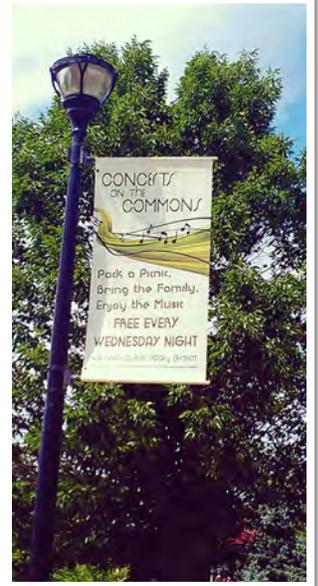


City staff whose areas are covered in the results from the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report (i.e. leaders from Administration, Community Development, Finance, Police and Public Works).

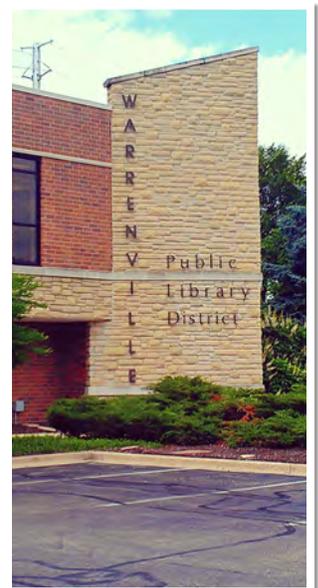
In April 2014, the City's consultant and designated City staff met with the overlapping taxing bodies, including representatives from the Community Unit School District 200, Warrenville Fire Protection District, Warrenville Library District, and Warrenville Park District.

In May 2014, City staff hosted two specialized stakeholder input meetings. The first meeting included representatives from the City's various boards and commissions including the Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners, the Electrical Commission, the Environmental Advisory Commission, the Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Tourism and Arts Commission. Also in attendance were representatives from the Emergency Services Disaster Agency (ESDA). City staff then hosted an input meeting for community organizations, which included invitations to the Warrenville Historical Society, all churches, homeowners associations, youth groups, and community volunteer groups.

In early June 2014, the City's consultant met individually with key representatives of each of the City's departments.



**STREETSCAPE LIGHTING AND BANNER**



**WARRENVILLE LIBRARY**



# Defining Priorities

In the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report, the priorities and goals were:

- Encourage thoughtful, planned, environmentally responsible economic development
- Maintain open space
- Reduce flooding
- Continue sound fiscal management (low taxes)
- Coordinate maintenance with targeted infrastructure upgrades
- Comprehensive / proactive policing

The outreach initiatives to specialized stakeholder groups served as a way to further define and refine priorities and goals. The specialized stakeholders were instructed to provide feedback from the perspective of their stakeholder group rather than a Warrenville resident. The input meetings began with garnering an understanding of what is right with Warrenville. Each group was asked to identify qualities that made Warrenville a good place to live and a good place to do business.

► **According to Stakeholders, Warrenville is a good place to live and do business because:**



Each group agreed that Warrenville was a good place to live because of its small-town feel. This sentiment was repeated by several members of each group, making it a common characteristic within and among the groups.



Three of the four groups identified Warrenville's safety as an important characteristic making it a good place to live and do business.



The last two issues brought up by two of the groups were natural areas and resident volunteerism.



When asked about actions the City should take or focus on over the next five years and what development/redevelopment would best support Warrenville's future, the answers varied depending upon the group.

**WHAT MAKES WARRENVILLE A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE AND DO BUSINESS?**



BASED ON SPECIALIZED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

**100%**

**Small-Town Feel**

(REPORTED BY 4 OF 4 GROUPS)

**75%**

**Safety**

(REPORTED BY 3 OF 4 GROUPS)

**50%**

**Natural Areas**

(REPORTED BY 2 OF 4 GROUPS)

**50%**

**Resident Volunteerism**

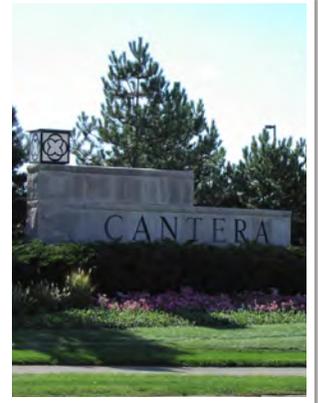
(REPORTED BY 2 OF 4 GROUPS)

Building off the priorities and goals that emerged in the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report, the specialized stakeholder groups had the following perspectives:

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOPIC 1

Economic development again emerged as a priority for the City over the next five years.

- Specifically, the appointed officials group and representatives from overlapping taxing districts identified the need for a downtown area or gathering place.
- Appointed officials ranked this as the highest action the City could take to make Warrentville a better place to live.
- The Community Organizations group felt that filling retail vacancies in Cantera and encouraging unique commercial development were the most important issues the City should focus on in the next five years. That being said, when asked specifically about development, this group noted that a gathering place would be desired.
- From the City staff perspective, the most important issue that that City should focus its efforts on in the next five years was development of the Route 56/Route 59 area. This issue was also ranked high by the appointed officials group.



CANTERA MONUMENT SIGN

## OPEN SPACE + ENVIRONMENT TOPIC 2

Nature, opens space, walk-ability, and trails were all noted as some of the City's most valuable assets and are among the most important qualities that make Warrentville a good place to live by the appointed officials, Community Organizations, and City staff.

- Improving walk-ability was noted by the appointed officials as a medium priority to focus on in coming years. However, overall, this was not an issue that these groups felt should be a high priority in coming years.



WEST BRANCH OF THE  
DUPAGE RIVER

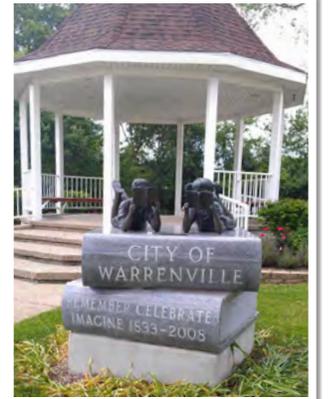


## CITY FINANCES

TOPIC 3

This topic did not come up nearly as often as it did among residents.

- The appointed officials group ranked “a balanced budget” as the most important quality that makes Warrenville a good place to live and then echoed this sentiment when asked about the future. Specifically, maintaining a balanced budget was a medium priority for this group.
- The Community Organizations ranked “staying out of debt” as the number one issue the City should focus on in the next five years.
- City staff agreed, noting that maintaining no debt is an important component of the high level of service they feel the City provides.
- The overlapping taxing districts did not discuss this issue.



**ALBRIGHT PARK GAZEBO  
AND 175TH ANNIVERSARY  
SCULPTURE**



## FLOODING + STORMWATER

TOPIC 4

While this was an important issue for residents, these groups had little to say about the topic.

- The Community Organizations group ranked flooding/stormwater along the DuPage River as an important issue the City should focus on in the next five years.
- City staff noted detention pond maintenance as an issue to address if resources were available.
- The appointed officials group and the overlapping taxing bodies did not mention flooding or stormwater as a goal to focus on in the next five years.



**RAISED FLOOD WATERS  
ALONG THE WEST BRANCH  
OF THE DUPAGE RIVER IN  
WARRENVILLE GROVE**



## CITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

TOPIC 5

This goal was also not prominent among the feedback in the specialized stakeholder groups.

- The Community Organizations noted that maintenance of City infrastructure was a low priority to focus on in coming years. Among the appointed officials group, the addition of bicycle amenities was noted as a desire from the Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission.
- City staff identified infrastructure maintenance as an important element of high quality City services, but did not note it as something the City needed to focus on and improve in coming years.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

TOPIC 6

Safety was identified by the groups as a quality that made Warrenville a good place to live and do business. But when asked about priorities for the future, the feedback was not focused on public safety.

- Appointed officials asked that public safety funding be maintained and that more community outreach from the Police Department be done. These sentiments were exclusive to the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.
- Community Organizations identified policing of the Illinois Prairie Path as an issue on which to focus, but it was a very low priority. Implementing a rental registration and inspection program was a priority in this group and was specifically reflected by a couple of homeowners associations.
- City staff felt that the police provided a high level of service currently, but that a crime-free housing/rental registration and inspection program would be beneficial.



ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH



WARRENVILLE POLICE CHIEF  
HONORS WARRENVILLE OFFICERS  
WITH LIFESAVING AWARD

*Photo Credit: Daily Herald, Bev Home  
bhome@dailyherald.com*



## Refine Goal Statements

Within this interim report is a further refining of the goal statements presented in the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report. As noted in that report, these goal statements were to evolve as outreach activities with specialized stakeholder, business, and community groups and City Council members took place. Following is a list of goal statements developed in the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report along with a refined statement, if appropriate, based on the input from the specialized stakeholders.

### GOAL 1

#### Economic Development

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report

“Enhance the City’s tax base, increase local shopping and dining opportunities, expand the City’s labor market, and create attractive gathering places by:

- actively planning for and aggressively encouraging well designed and environmentally responsible commercial development in the Route 59 corridor;
- mixed use redevelopment in the Old Town/Civic Center; and
- rehabilitation, improvement, and occupancy of older vacant commercial properties throughout the community.”

► *The input garnered from the specialized stakeholder meetings does not significantly alter this goal statement.*

## REFINE GOAL STATEMENTS

CONTINUED

### GOAL 2



#### City Finances

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

“Uphold the City’s record of fiscal conservatism by adopting a balanced budget overall and at the fund level, ensuring a relatively low cost of living for Warrenville residents, incurring little to no debt, and maintaining a diversified revenue stream.”

- ▶ *The input garnered from the specialized stakeholder meetings does not significantly alter this goal statement.*

### GOAL 3



#### Open Space and Environment

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

“Preserve and protect the natural features, open space, and wooded areas that contribute significantly to the City’s overall character, setting, and uniqueness, and seek opportunities to showcase, access, and promote these components as important and valuable community assets.”

- ▶ *Since this was such a significant issue for the residents and was a topic that was noted as a valuable feature by the specialized stakeholders, it’s recommended that this goal statement remain the same.*

## REFINE GOAL STATEMENTS

CONTINUED

### GOAL 4



#### **Flooding and Stormwater**

##### **Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:**

“Improve flood protection and reduce residential and business flooding in the West Branch of the DuPage River Watershed, require environmentally responsible development that effectively controls the volume and improves the quality of stormwater runoff, and address neighborhood drainage issues.”

- ▶ *In the 2013 Community Survey, 75.4% of respondents felt addressing flooding and stormwater should be a priority. Improving flood mitigation/protection was an issue identified for improvement by 68.8% of Warrenville residents.*
- ▶ *However, no one raised it during the 2012 Neighborhood Dialogue meetings, and the only specialized stakeholder group to raise this issue was Community Organizations group; they felt it was something to focus on in coming years.*
- ▶ *In addition, the State, the County and the City have all done significant work or have work planned and funded to address this issue. This includes, replacing and raising the bridges at Route 56, Warrenville Road, and Williams Road, the building of a flood protection berm along the east side of River Road, installation of automatically-operated storm sewer check valves, the installation of four supplemental sluice gate structures, among other things.*
- ▶ *Therefore, as input is gathered from subsequent groups, it is recommended that this goal statement continue to be monitored to determine if it should be maintained.*

## REFINE GOAL STATEMENTS

CONTINUED

### GOAL 5



#### City Infrastructure and Utilities

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

“Repair, maintain, replace, and strategically upgrade the City’s physical infrastructure assets in a well planned, coordinated, and timely manner that is fiscally responsible, enhances public safety and supports increased private property values.”

- ▶ *This was a significant issue in the Resident Strategic Plan Input Report and it focused on existing trail and path system with a desire to improve the safety and connectivity of the area’s sidewalk, trail, and bike network.*
- ▶ *In the specialized stakeholder meetings, this topic came up only in the context of bicycle amenities. Maintaining the City’s current infrastructure was noted as something that made Warrenville a good place.*
- ▶ *This goal statement could be edited to reflect the appointed officials and the Community Organizations’ desire for a focus on pathway/sidewalk connectivity.*



## REFINE GOAL STATEMENTS

CONTINUED

### GOAL 6



#### Public Safety

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

“Provide excellent, proactive, public safety service throughout the community, focusing on addressing the perception of gang activity and drug use.”

- ▶ *The specialized stakeholders repeatedly noted that Warrenville was a safe community and that made it a good place to live and do business. The new issue that came up with the community organizations and City staff was the implementation of a crime free housing/rental registration and inspection program. However, this was mentioned by only a few participants in the Community Organizations group, indicating more education is important.*
- ▶ *Depending upon additional input, this goal statement could be revised to reference a crime free housing/rental registration and inspection.*

Warrenville Police Station



# Conclusion

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The Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input is step two in assessing the community's thoughts and desires regarding Warrenville's future, particularly in regards to economic development. The purpose of this interim report is to define and refine draft priorities and goals so that, as the process continues, the City will be better equipped to define specific desired outcomes and determine the resources needed and the action to be taken to achieve each of those outcomes.

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- ▶ This report suggests the editing or potential elimination of specific goals statements, but only as further input is obtained in future steps. Ultimately, this report will be incorporated into the final Strategic/Economic Development Plan that will serve the community for coming years and help shape its future.

# Appendix

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE MEETING NOTES - 3.21.14

### 1. What plans, projects, programs, or enhancements are on your agency's radar for the near and long term future?

- Fire District is working on obtaining property for a new satellite station
- Library is working making interior modifications that would allow for more private rooms and a media center in order to serve small and home businesses
- Park District is updating its strategic plan. Their challenge is the lease and care for parks rather than being able to own them. They have completed renovation on the Community Building and are looking for large pieces of land to develop as parks. There is a continuous cry for an outdoor pool that they are aware of. They are launching an effort to do some environmental education.
- School District will be doing a lot of maintenance and updating to facilities throughout the District. Currently engaged in a community engagement process: <http://www.cusd200.org/Page/296>

### 2. What qualities make Warrenville a good place to live?

- Small sense of community. Unique culture – feel a part of the community. All different entities blend together. Has a charm. Tight knit. People come together. Celebrate small-town things. A lot of volunteerism. A lot of ways to get involved – diversity of interests.

### 3. What type of development would best support Warrenville's future? What attracts or discourages development in Warrenville?

- Enhance entryways into town. Residents do not want housing for low income or apartments – no high density. No high rises. They might be open to high end rentals. The School District doesn't want anything that generates more children due to facility constraints. Residents want age-targeted (i.e. boomers) homes. They want a community gathering place – there is no downtown. Is Warrenville only a drive-through community? Do they want to draw people in to shop? If so, how do they want that done?

## PARTICIPANTS

- *Library District Executive Director*
- *Park District Executive Director*
- *Fire Chief*
- *CUSD 200 Assistant Superintendent*

# Appendix

## CITY STAFF STAKEHOLDER MEETING NOTES

- ▶ Theme identified by multiple participants
- Comment from one or a few

### 1. What qualities make Warrenville a good place to live?

- ▶ Location in metro area
- ▶ Nice residential areas / Small town feel / knowing neighbors
- ▶ Relative cost of living / housing / taxes (compared to metro area)
- ▶ Residents / volunteerism
- ▶ Safe community
  - Access to nature / forest preserve / open space / trails
  - High (boutique) level of City services (pick up branches, Acorn mini van service, police etc.)
  - Quality of staff and elected official accomplishes community goals
  - Schools

### 2. What are the highest level and quality of services / programs provided by the City, in general? How about from this Department specifically?

- ▶ Customer service (city-wide)
- ▶ No City debt
- ▶ Police (high level of professional service – focus on personal touch – auto lock out, investigations, vacation checks, check on elderly residents, etc)
- ▶ Review / Approval process for new developments (predictable for developers – makes them willing to return and work in City. Reflected in quality of newer development)
- ▶ Snow plowing
  - Administration – focus on problem solving and transparency
  - Infrastructure maintenance (PW operations) and response to emergencies (water main breaks)
  - Long term policy development (creates consistency between City Councils and supports political stability)
  - Website

### PARTICIPANTS

- *City Administrator*
- *Assistant City Administrator*
- *Director of Finance*
- *Senior Accountant*
- *Community Development Director*
- *Senior Planner*
- *Senior Civil Engineer*
- *Public Works Superintendent*
- *Chief of Police*
- *Deputy Chief of Police - Operations*

# Appendix

## City Staff Stakeholder Meeting Notes (Continued)

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### 3. If more resources were available, what services should the City add, in general?

#### What about this department specifically?

- ▶ Code enforcement
  - ▶ Economic development (reorg CD to add emphasis or bring in outside support)
  - ▶ Information Technology (internal IT services) staff and software for improved records / information management and reporting. Make more use of website and social media – becoming an expectation of residents.
  - ▶ Residential inspections of rental property
    - Administrative Services Coordinator in Police for special events, crime prevention, community relations with business and home owners associations (expand “personal touch” focus of department)
    - Beautify Village
    - Bicycle / pedestrian paths
    - Detention pond maintenance
    - None – lower taxes
    - Residential inspection of all property
-

# Appendix

## City Staff Stakeholder Meeting Notes (Continued)

**4. From your department's perspective, what are the three most important issues the City should focus its efforts on addressing in the next 5 years? Please provide specific suggestions on how the City should address these issues.**

- ▶ Development of Route 56/59 area. Needs to be fiscally feasible (supported by marketplace) and responsible (not adverse to businesses in City).
- ▶ Warrenville's Identity crisis:
  - Resident's expectations of services are not sustainable from a budget perspective. Those services are provided with lean staffing. Residents have come to expect a lot of services but not interested in paying higher taxes
  - Code enforcement:
    - Longtime residents have a small town, semi rural expectation but new residents expect a suburban character. Longtime residents expect to be able to burn trash in their yard, new residents don't like that
    - Some of the housing stock construction and layout is older and not to modern standards / quality (has poor parking organization). Areas are more affordable, more likely to be rental, and more likely to need repair (that can't be afforded by owners)
  - Residents like small, quaint town feel but businesses (big and small) are looking for more activity, traffic, density, etc.
  - Cantera v small town character (would expect downtown to be more active)
- ▶ Economic Development (Cantera and other parts of City). Residential and commercial areas need improved appearance and businesses (uses like pawn shops and tattoo parlors discourage new businesses and residents from coming to town)
  - Budget/revenue
  - Development of various sites in City (Gas station at Batavia Road, City owned site behind City Hall)
  - Implement town Civic Center Plan / create a gathering place for residents
  - Raise level of Public Works internal management (operations is at a high level)
  - Unfunded mandates related to environmental regulations
  - Training for Police Dept staff
  - Vehicle / Pedestrian safety

# Appendix

## City Staff Stakeholder Meeting Notes (Continued)

### 5. What specific things should the City do to make Warrenville a better place for business?

- ▶ Branding / advertising assets of the community.
- ▶ Economic development emphasis to support existing businesses and attract new
- ▶ Land consolidation to support new development in key areas (find active role for City)
  - Access to retail centers in Cantera during lunch.
  - Improve permit process with better information tracking/reporting (IT solution)
  - Limit undesirable land uses (pawn shops, tattoo parlors)
  - Reducing sales tax and reducing / eliminating food and beverage tax
  - Small business support (ie façade program)
  - Tax incentives

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### 6. What type (location, uses, design) of development/redevelopment would best support Warrenville's future?

- ▶ 59 Corridor and 56/59 area (new businesses, M/F residential, dense residential)
- ▶ Crime free housing program
- ▶ Diverse housing types and densities
- ▶ Redevelopment to establish gathering places for community (need community center – near City Hall an option)
  - Place for children of residents to move back to community
  - Single family, not multiple family

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### 7. What specific actions should the City take to attract desirable development in Warrenville?

- ▶ Assemble property at 56/59
- ▶ Branding (identify and embrace what City should emphasize in all activities)
- ▶ Crime Free Housing Program
- ▶ Emphasize economic development in Community Development Department (perhaps reorganize department to do so)
  - Attract new businesses / retailers
  - Identify implementation actions and follow up to completion

# Appendix

## APPOINTED OFFICIALS STAKEHOLDER NOTES - 5.15.14

### 1. What qualities make Warrentville a good place to live?

Balanced budget	8
Small-town feel	5
Low crime	4
Nature	3
Location	3
Schools	3
Close to services	3
Residents/long-time residents	2
Low utility cost	1
Very involved volunteers	1
Contained/no blending into next town	1
Responsible City staff	1
Friendly community	1
Variety of activities	1
Strong arts/culture	1
First place to open chain restaurant	0
Diversity	0
People who care	0
Acorn van	0

### PARTICIPANTS

- *ESDA Coordinator*
- *BPAC Commissioner*
- *2 TAC Commissioners*
- *BOFPC Commissioner*
- *EAC Chair*
- *PC Chair*
- *ZBA Chair*
- *PC/ZBA Commissioners*

# Appendix

## Appointed Officials Stakeholder Notes - (Continued)

### 2. What specific things should the City do to make Warrenville a better place to live?

One “downtown”	6
Fill vacant Route 59 businesses	5
Develop and market our “own” brand	4
Adopt “green” building and development codes	3
Housing for aging boomers	3
Maintain public safety services	2
Develop CCRS #1 carefully	2
Maintain balanced budget	2
Lake Michigan water	2
Improve walk-ability	2
Do not allow Route 56 to turn into Route 59 or Roosevelt Road	2
City-wide WiFi	1
No roundabout	1
Build roundabout	1
Land for mountain bike track	1
Implement plans City adopts – leadership	1
Support business development (existing/new)	1
Manage TIF #3 carefully	0
Improve bike facilities	0

# Appendix

## Appointed Officials Stakeholder Notes - (Continued)

3. From your perspective as a Board or Commission member, what are the three most important issues the City should focus its efforts on addressing in the next 5 years?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue bike-friendly application</li> <li>Plan addition multi-paths</li> <li>Educate bike safety-training school programs</li> </ul>	BPAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain public safety funding</li> <li>Expand involvement in BOFPC to five members now</li> <li>Perform more PD community outreach</li> </ul>	BOFPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review green building codes/LEED for neighborhood development</li> <li>Maintain open spaces/trees/promote natural landscaping</li> <li>Support climate action plan initiatives</li> </ul>	EAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Branding</li> <li>Retain and attract businesses</li> <li>Maintain balanced budget/pension</li> </ul>	PC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial development/support of current businesses and hotels</li> <li>Re-evaluation of current hotel/motel tax structure</li> <li>Rapport with hotels; enhance understanding and relationships</li> </ul>	TAC

4. What qualities make Warrenville a good place to do business? What things should the City do to make Warrenville a better place for business?

Friendly local government
High traffic/easy access to major roads
Promote and market qualities that make Warrenville a great place to do business
Good labor supply
I-88 blue business signs
Offer tax incentives
Increase population
Increase visitors
Residents want to shop in town. Get more business for loyal residents.
Get more sit-down restaurants
Employ Lobbyist/Economic Development Director
Be smart about leveraging TIF money
Low crime
Encourage competition
Community map
Increase key words on search engines so Warrenville comes up more

# Appendix

## Appointed Officials Stakeholder Notes - (Continued)

5. What type of development/redevelopment would best support Warrenville’s future? What specific actions should the City take to attract desirable development in Warrenville?

Attract and cluster special unique business in center of town to promote “destination”	6
Design/implement community engagement program regarding development and redevelopment opportunities	5
Mixed use development in Old Town/Civic Center	5
Carefully controlled/regulated development standards	4
Promote “lifestyle” not utilitarian business	4
Residential density with high-quality amenities	3
City financial incentives to promote key property assemblage for desirable redevelopment	3
Encourage desirable business in Uptown/downtown that capitalizes on unique strengths of each area	2
Café/coffee shop	1
Downtown (Old Town) tasting room/brew pub	1
Tie in arts/performing center	0
Home improvement store	0

6. What can the City do differently to support the work of your Board/Commission?

Maintain and support volunteer opportunities
--

# Appendix

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS STAKEHOLDER NOTES - 5.21.14

### 1. What qualities make Warrenville a good place to live?

Low crime	6
Good public facilities (library, museum, park district)	6
Good schools	5
Small-town atmosphere	4
Natural areas	3
Well-maintained City	3
Walk-ability – Trails – Biking	2
Strong sense of community/civic pride	2
Low taxes (relative)	2
Good access (I-88)	
Friendly residents	
Cost of water	

### 2. What are the three most important issues the City should focus on in the next five years?

Stay out of debt	6
Filling retail vacancies in Cantera commercial area	5
Encourage unique commercial development	5
Flooding/stormwater along DuPage River	4
Improve community identification, directional signage	3
Improve public transportation	3
Implementing rental registration/inspection program	2
Community pool	2
Enhance City beautification efforts	2
Youth transportation	2
Maintenance of City infrastructure	1
Improve day-to-day City-resident communication	1
Improve communication about important City issues	
Policing Prairie Path after dark	
More public parking	

### PARTICIPANTS

- Historical Society  
Museum Director
- Cantera Village HOA
- Edgebrook HOA
- Winchester HOA
- WIB
- Hubble Principal
- Park District Board  
Member/Friends of the  
4th of July Chair

# Appendix

## Community Organizations Stakeholder Notes - (Continued)

### 3. What qualities make Warrenville a good place to do business?

Near I-88, Route 59, and Route 56
Close to airport
Got license within one day; smooth process
Helpful City staff
Loyal consumers that shop locally

### 4. What specific things should the City do to make Warrenville a better place for business?

Shorten time it takes to open a business
Impose traffic access/circulation to commercial areas where vacancies are prevalent
Implement business outreach meetings

### 5. What type of development/redevelopment would best support Warrenville's future?

Commercial development with character (non-strip)	8
Encourage new development with small-town, quaint character	6
Mixed use/multi-story development on Musselman property	5
More mid-scale move-up housing	3
Public gathering space enhancements in and near natural/open space areas	3
More housing to accommodate aging population (ranch/first floor master)	2
Higher density/multi-story residential on Musselman property	1

### 6. What specific actions should the City take to attract desirable development in Warrenville?

Upgrade existing businesses (the look)	9
Encourage gathering places in Civic Center (coffee, ice cream, etc.)	9
Local programs that could assist with façade improvements	5
Encourage Businesses to stay open later	4
PR material showing the features of Warrenville	2

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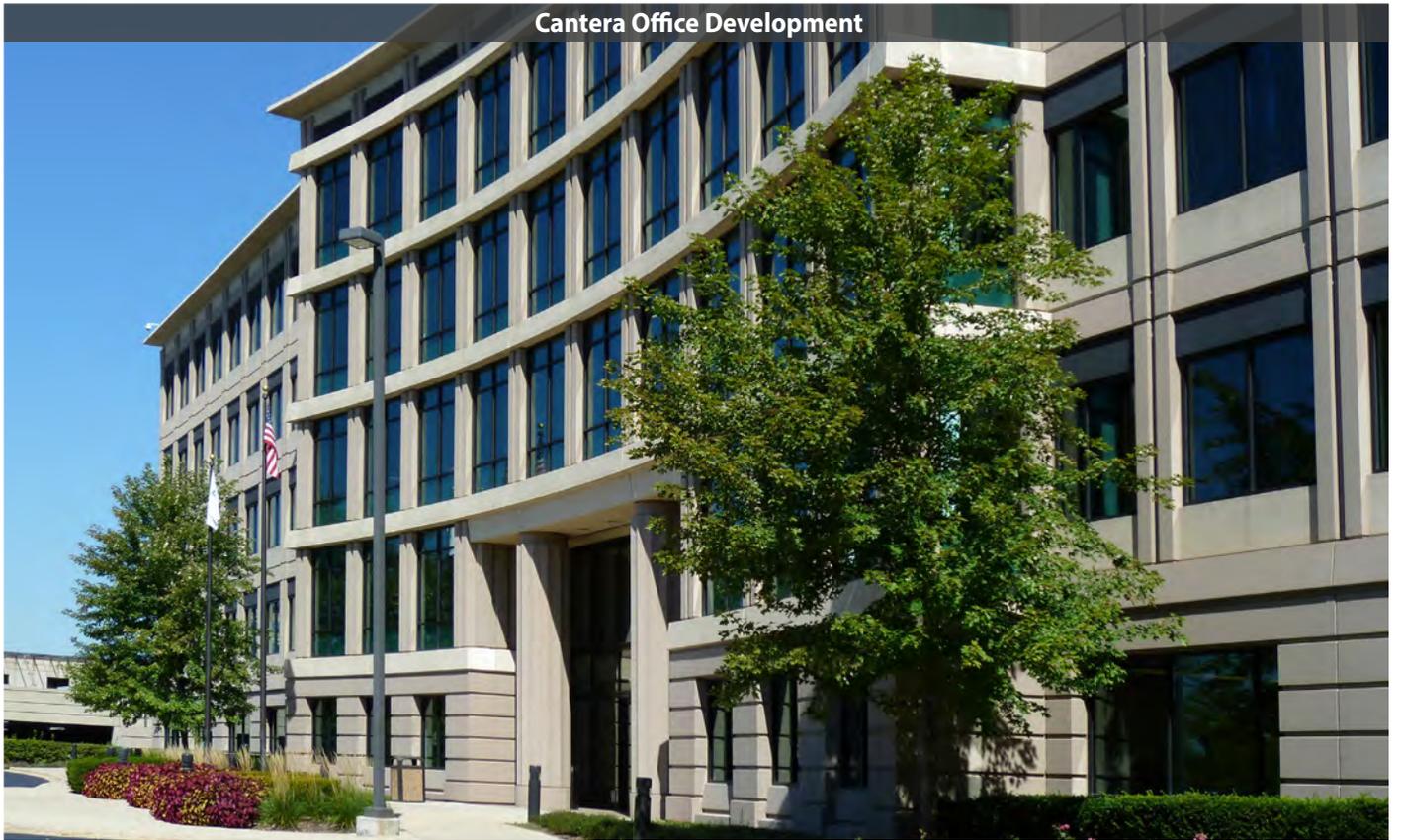
# City of Warrenville, Illinois

For a Visit, Or a Lifetime...

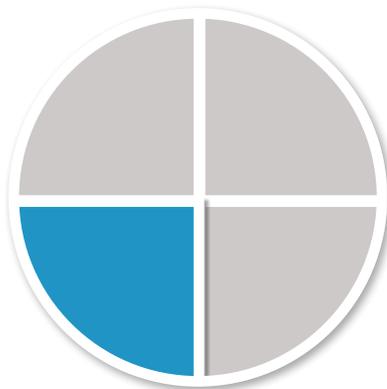
## Strategic/Economic Development Plan



Cantera Office Development



### Report 3



## Economic Development Strategic Plan Input Report



## Acknowledgments

### City of Warrenville City Council

David Brummel, Mayor  
Fred Bevier, Ward 1 Alderman  
Stuart Aschauer, Ward 1 Alderman  
Robert (Bob) Wilson, Ward 2 Alderman  
Bill Weidner, Ward 2 Alderman  
Dan Leonard, Ward 3 Alderman  
Kathryn Davolos, Ward 3 Alderman  
Clare Barry, Ward 4 Alderman  
Leah Goodman, Ward 4 Alderman

Robert Johnson, Treasurer  
Emily Larson, City Clerk

### City of Warrenville Staff

John Coakley  
City Administrator  
Jennifer McMahan,  
Assistant City Administrator  
Ronald Mentzer  
Community Development Director  
Natalia Domovessova  
Senior Planner

### Consultant Team

**Teska Associates, Inc.**  
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Principal  
Erin Cigliano, AICP  
Associate, New Media Specialist  
Brittany Bagent, Associate  
Amy Riseborough, Associate

**Business Districts, Inc.**  
Terry Jenkins, Managing Director  
Diane Williams, Director



## Introduction

Preparation of the City of Warrenville Strategic / Economic Development Plan has been a very inclusive effort with broad community input. The process was initiated with detailed resident surveying and neighborhood dialogues. Subsequent tasks secured input from Warrenville governmental and community stakeholders. The areas of importance (themes) identified in those steps were:

- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Open Space and the Environment
- ▶ City Finances
- ▶ Flooding and Stormwater
- ▶ City Infrastructure and Utilities
- ▶ Public Safety

The findings of those input tasks have been summarized in the previously prepared reports: Resident Strategic Plan Input Report and the Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report. This report summarizes public input steps focusing on the theme of economic development.

### TIMELINE

**JANUARY 2014**  
Facilitation begins with a document review, staff and officials training, and analysis of resident input.

**APRIL 2014**  
Consultant and designated City staff meet with the overlapping taxing bodies.

**MAY 2014**  
City staff hosts two specialized stakeholder input meetings.

**JUNE 2014**  
Consultant meets with key representatives of City departments.

**JULY 2014**  
Consultant completes meetings with economic development focus groups.

# Purpose

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In order to delve deeper into the topic of economic development, a series of focus group meetings were conducted over the summer of 2014 with representatives of different facets of the business community in Warrentville including:

- ▶ Local Business Owners
- ▶ Business Owners in the Cantera Development
- ▶ Real Estate Brokers / Developers
- ▶ Hospitality Industry Representatives
- ▶ Choose DuPage (Countywide economic development organization)

The topic of economic development is highlighted as part of this process because of its importance in supporting the quality of life of Warrentville residents – both in terms of generating tax revenue and providing for the commercial needs of the community. In that regard, the businesses in Warrentville (or of any city) are a valuable parts of the community and highly vested in its future. Understanding the perspectives and needs of the business community, therefore, is important to strategic planning.

Input drawn from discussions with the businesses community can be expected in some ways to differ from those of residents and local governments – perhaps even be at odds with those views. Yet incorporating the business community’s perspective into planning for the City (long and short term) is essential. How it is coordinated with the overall needs and goals for Warrentville is to be addressed in preparing the Strategic / Economic Development Plan and subsequent City policy, regulatory, and implementation efforts.

# Focus Group Participants

The various perspectives to be sought for participation in the economic development focus groups were developed by the consultant team and City staff. The intent was to gather those representing large and small companies, businesses located specifically in the Cantera development and throughout the City, and those that had been in the area for a long time and those that were newer to the region. The categories and types of organizations represented by the participants are:

## Local Businesses

- Local Retailers (grocery, salon, auto repair, marine sales)
- West DuPage Chamber of Commerce
- Small commercial building owner
- Local financial institution
- Brewer / restaurant owner

## Businesses in the Cantera Development

- Professional services firm
- Medical facility

## Real estate brokers / developers

- Large property owners
- Real estate developers / brokers
- Property managers

## Hospitality industry

- Local hotels
- DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau

## Choose DuPage (Countywide economic development organization)



*Development in Cantera*

# Summary of Focus Group Input

As with previous public input discussions, the economic development focus groups identified a number of strengths that make Warrentville as a desirable place to live – noting also that this helps make it a desirable place to locate a business. Factors cited include the convenient location, attractive open space, and supportive municipal government.

A differentiation within the comments made by those participating in the economic development focus groups can be found in factors such as location and type of business. More specifically, the input highlights the different perspectives and needs of those businesses located in and around the Cantera development and those located elsewhere in the City. This is neither surprising nor unusual. Most communities have multiple business districts that have differing characters, strengths, weaknesses and needs, reflective of their age and location.

Former Navistar Building (left) and RR Donnelley Building (right)



Businesses located throughout Warrentville were developed in a variety of eras and mostly are found along arterial or collector roadways. Most businesses and commercial properties throughout the community are owned and operated by entrepreneurs – rather than national or regional chains. As noted in the detailed focus group input below, the challenges and opportunities for those businesses are not unusual for commercial development in comparable communities. Challenges noted regarding day-to-day operations included advertising, visibility, and access to their properties. Opportunities often reflect enhancements that would require support or direct action of the City or greater market place: increased traffic volumes, additional development nearby, property maintenance of neighboring sites, or navigating development regulations.

The perspectives and needs of business and property owners in Cantera reflect the form and location of that development, and certainly are made in a different context from those of local businesses. Cantera is relatively new, having been started in the early 1990's, and its development form reflects a distinctive market (a modern corporate office park with large lots that accommodate large businesses, company headquarters, restaurants, entertainment facilities, hotels, etc.). As such, operational issues and needs discussed in the focus group were at a larger scale and reflected concerns of corporations. For example, filling vacancies for commercial office spaces that are measured in tens or hundreds of thousands of square feet. Also, traffic in the Cantera area was raised as a concern related to excessive congestion discouraging customers (rather than a need for more traffic and potential customers). These factors highlight the different economic development needs of the Cantera area and local business districts, and are reflected in insights provided through the focus group discussions.



.....  
*Development in Cantera*

# Detailed Focus Group Input

## BUSINESS CLIMATE

The overall economic climate in DuPage County was described as sound; yet there is little doubt that just as in the rest of the country, recovery from the Great Recession is gradual. However, a number of economic strengths in DuPage County were noted by participants and include:

- Good quality of life
- Low unemployment rate
- Highly educated, high quality work force
- Excellent transportation access to the region
- Low cost of doing business
- Diverse economy
- Close proximity to Chicago

Similarly, Warrenville was described as having a number of strengths:

- Very good municipal services
- Good schools
- Engaged community
- Location along I-88
- Safe area for people to meet (both a reality and perception)
- Generally economical area (parking, food, hotel rooms, taxes, etc.)
- Being close to Naperville, but being a different type of community
- Being in / near a natural environment
- Easy access to Downtown Chicago by train

## ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

1 HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

2 LOW UNEMPLOYMENT

3 EDUCATED WORK FORCE

4 EXCELLENT TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

5 LOW COST OF DOING BUSINESS

6 DIVERSE ECONOMY

7 CLOSE PROXIMITY TO CHICAGO

## PERSPECTIVES ON THE REGIONAL MARKET

- The Cantera development was noted by company and owners association representatives to be doing well in terms of occupancy and level of business activity. As with other areas, Cantera was impacted by the economic downturn, but is recovering. Due to the size of businesses in the development, the loss of a single user (such as Navistar which moved out in 2012) can create a large “hole” in the market. Conversely, a new business can consume significant vacant space (such as the recent arrival of EN Engineering).
- Discussions confirmed the perspective that Cantera is a high profile, high quality development in the region. From an economic development perspective Cantera puts Warrenville on the radar of numerous large corporations due to the visibility, access, nearby business services (hotels), and location of the development.
- The City of Naperville looms large as an economic activity area in the west central part of DuPage County. Its downtown, retail districts, hotels, etc. create a gravity that draws business, retailing, and activity. Those interviewed felt shoppers go to Naperville because there are desirable clusters of businesses including many places to eat.
- In concert with observations about Naperville, focus group participants commonly noted that Warrenville has a distinctive and positive reputation for business and benefits from being a different community than Naperville. Warrenville strengths commonly noted include: open space, small town character, less traffic, and responsible local government.
- Interstate 88 was identified as a significant economic strength for Warrenville and surrounding areas, specifically areas around the Winfield and Route 59 interchanges. Once improvements are completed, the Route 59 interchange area is expected to see significant new development and be a benefit for the area.
- Hospitality industry representatives of hotels in and around the Cantera development note they are performing solidly and have a goal of continued growth. They note that the number of hotels in the area creates a synergistic effect between them (being able to refer potential customers to another property if they are filled) and the nearby corporate properties. Available nearby hotel rooms were cited as helpful in drawing new commerce to the area. Likewise, hotels look to increase their booked room nights by attracting more activity from existing businesses, and capturing new activity from businesses that will come to the area.

## PERSPECTIVES ON THE LOCAL MARKET

Local businesses noted a range of challenges and concern. As noted below, some reflect the general economy while others are particular to the area:

- ▶ Relatively low traffic volumes in certain areas that have been identified for future commercial development.
- ▶ Sales performance being down or not meeting expectations.
- ▶ Limited amount of available land for development.
- ▶ Limited visibility by passing vehicles (particularly for those businesses located along Route 59).
- ▶ Appearance of older strip malls as poor and detracting from community image and desirability.
- ▶ Lack of housing growth and the need for more residential rooftops / density and potential customers.
- ▶ Existing Diehl Road retail/restaurant business area effectively satisfy a significant portion of the Warrenville market demand for these types of uses.
- ▶ Forest Preserves exclude growth opportunities. While an attractive amenity they create a one-sided commercial market area.
- ▶ The most active local area of development (for residential uses) is further east. One participant described Glen Ellyn as the current “hot town” for housing. However, local housing markets were identified as performing well in Warrenville for homes in the \$400,000 range.
- ▶ Traffic was noted as a challenge in the Cantera area (as opposed to concerns of low traffic volumes in other business areas), particularly efficient access to and from restaurants in the area south of Interstate – 88 at lunch within one hour is difficult. In addition, high traffic volumes there were noted as potentially discouraging for many customers who may patronize retailers in the area.
- ▶ Businesses away from I-88 noted that much of their successful advertising is done by word of mouth because visibility and access are limited.

## PERSPECTIVES ON THE LOCAL MARKET (CONTINUED)

Participants representing smaller, local businesses identified several opportunities they felt would support existing businesses and attract new ones:

- ▶ There was a general sense that Warrenville would benefit from successful clusters of businesses – either new ones or improvement to existing areas currently with a “run down” appearance.
- ▶ A destination retailer, perhaps a higher-end grocery store, was noted as desirable for attracting shoppers.
- ▶ Additional population in the community was described as needed to make the community more appealing for new commercial/retail/restaurant tenants.
- ▶ The desire to replace City well water with Lake Michigan water was discussed (as was the significant costs involved in such a switch).
- ▶ Having a place in the community for people to gather was noted frequently in the discussions. While this may not be seen as creating a direct economic benefit, the sense of the group was that encouraging people to attend community activities in Warrenville would help residents and visitors focus on the City and increase visibility of businesses.
- ▶ In addition to increased business from corporate customers, those in the hospitality industry see room for growth in other sectors. Stays from new non-corporate customers attending local events (weekend and weekday) may include: personal family events like weddings, regional events such as sports tournaments, and local attractions such as recreational or cultural areas (a trailhead on the Prairie Path was specifically noted).
- ▶ Needs for supporting business identified by representatives of the hospitality industry included increased number of local or regional events – understanding that some are outside the control of local industry or government. The group also indicated that additional food / restaurant options would be beneficial. They noted that most of the nearby options are in the “fast casual” category of dining. Interest from their customers indicated a need for more family oriented or white tablecloth restaurants.
- ▶ More diverse and higher density housing stock than currently exists was noted as a way to increase the customer base and provide additional housing options for those who work in the City.

## WARRENVILLE AS A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS

Warrenville and its municipal officials (elected, appointed, and staff) consistently were rated well overall as supportive of businesses by focus group participants.

- The City's development approval process was specifically noted as predictable and well managed. This was particularly the case for larger businesses. Those having challenges with the process were more likely to be smaller business operators, which is common in communities. For example, signage regulations were identified by a number of participants as restrictive regarding electronic changeable copy signs and permitted sign size, which is consistent with concerns raised regarding visibility to customers.
- City services were highly rated (particularly snow plowing, which was topical given the amount of snow seen during the most recent winter).
- Representatives of business and property owners in the Cantera development noted having a good, but not active working relationship with the City; they would support and expect to find benefit from more regular communication with City officials.

Warrenville City Hall (left) and Warrenville Public Library (right)



- Warrenville is broadly seen as a safe place. In particular, participants in the hospitality industry focus group noted that their customers in the Cantera area feel safe. However, the perception of safety is diminished by those developments and businesses in the City where the appearance of older strip malls is poor. They detract from community image, desirability and perceptions of safety.
- The small town feel of the City is strong in the community, and helps to make Warrenville's name a good one in the region. Having many of the locational advantages of the I-88 corridor and being the community that is "not Naperville" was described as a worthwhile niche.

# Refined Goal Statements

Input summarized in this interim report suggests a further refining of some goal statements originally presented in the Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report. As noted in that report, these goal statements were to evolve as outreach activities took place with specialized stakeholder, business community groups, and City Council members. What follows is a list of goal statements as presented in the Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report. In some cases suggestions are provided on how those statements might be refined in the City of Warrenville Strategic / Economic Development Strategic Plan based on economic development focus group input.

## GOAL 1



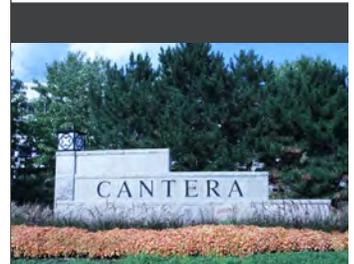
### Economic Development

#### Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

“Enhance the City’s tax base, increase local shopping and dining opportunities, expand the City’s labor market, and create attractive gathering places by:

- actively planning for and aggressively encouraging well designed and environmentally responsible commercial development in the Route 59 corridor;
- mixed use redevelopment in the Old Town/Civic Center; and
- the rehabilitation, improvement, and occupancy of older vacant commercial properties throughout the community.”

- ▶ Input from the economic development focus groups was consistent with the above goal statement, and highlighted the challenges to achieving the goal. One such challenge is focusing on new commercial development along Route 59. Obstacles noted to reaching this goal include multiple property ownerships, environmental conditions (wetlands), character of nearby commercial centers, and overall lack of strength in the retail market. These barriers to attracting new commercial development are not insignificant and suggest that accomplishing this goal will be difficult and long term.



## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GOAL 1

#### Economic Development (continued)

##### Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

- ▶ An element of the goal highlighted through the focus groups was rehabbing and enhancing older commercial properties (vacant and occupied) throughout the community. Commercial centers in the City that were built in a different era and reflect deferred maintenance are counter to the goals of having attractive gathering places. Further, they diminish the overall character of the City's commercial corridors and its perceived quality. The third bullet point in this goal statement could be edited so that it is not limited to just "vacant" commercial properties.
- ▶ The goal, as stated, provides no reference to the Cantera development at the south end of the City. Discussions with focus groups highlight that this area is a significant economic engine for Warrenville. Consideration should be given to adding a fourth bullet point to this goal statement that recognizes the need to support existing retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses and encourage additional complimentary development in this area where appropriate.



.....  
*Walgreens at Route 59 and  
Batavia Road.*

## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GOAL 2

#### City Finances

##### Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

“Uphold the City’s record of fiscal conservatism by adopting a balanced budget overall and at the fund level, ensuring a relatively low cost of living for Warrenville residents, incurring little to no debt, and maintaining a diversified revenue stream.”

- ▶ Comments from the focus group meetings support (and applaud) the City’s sound fiscal practices and relatively low cost of living. However, the input also suggests a more active economic development program be in order for the City to support its tax base and attract desired development. As that program is yet undefined, a goal locking into specific financial practices, such as maintaining current fund levels or a set amount of debt may not be appropriate. Consideration should be given to expanding this goal statement to document the City’s commitment to the development and implementation of a more formal economic development program as a way of achieving the desired outcomes identified in draft goal statement.

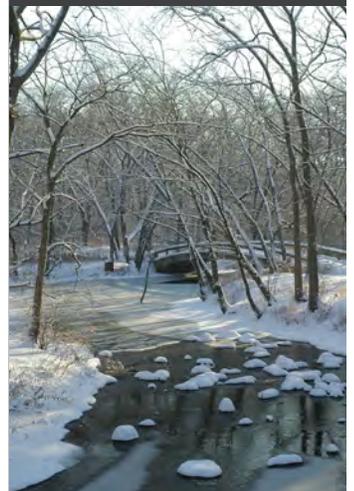
### GOAL 3

#### Open Space and Environment

##### Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

“Preserve and protect the natural features, open space, and wooded areas that contribute significantly to the City’s overall character, setting, and uniqueness, and seek opportunities to showcase, access, and promote these components as important and valuable community assets.”

- ▶ Since the natural features in and around Warrenville were repeatedly highlighted as assets to the community during economic development focus group discussions it is recommended that that this goal statement remain the same.



*West Branch of the DuPage River.  
Photo credit: Maurice Goodman*

## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GOAL 4



#### Flooding and Storm Water

##### Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

“Improve flood protection and reduce residential and business flooding in the West Branch of the DuPage River Watershed, require environmentally responsible development that effectively controls the volume and improves the quality of stormwater runoff, and address neighborhood drainage issues.”

- ▶ Input from the economic development focus groups did not address this issue.

### GOAL 5



#### City Infrastructure and Utilities

##### Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report

“Repair, maintain, replace, and strategically upgrade the City’s physical infrastructure assets in a well-planned, coordinated, and timely manner that is fiscally responsible, enhances public safety and supports increased private property values.”

- ▶ Infrastructure related comments raised in the economic development focus group discussions highlighted an interest in securing Lake Michigan water for Warrenville. However, the discussion also acknowledged the high cost of securing that service. While those expressing this desire were not aware of the detailed analysis the City previously performed on the costs associated with securing Lake Michigan water for Warrenville, they did acknowledge that the cost would be extremely high when compared to existing municipal well water costs. Unless the City Council chooses to reevaluate these costs, the goal statement should not be modified based on this input.



*Williams Road Bridge (top) and Towne Tap (bottom).*

## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

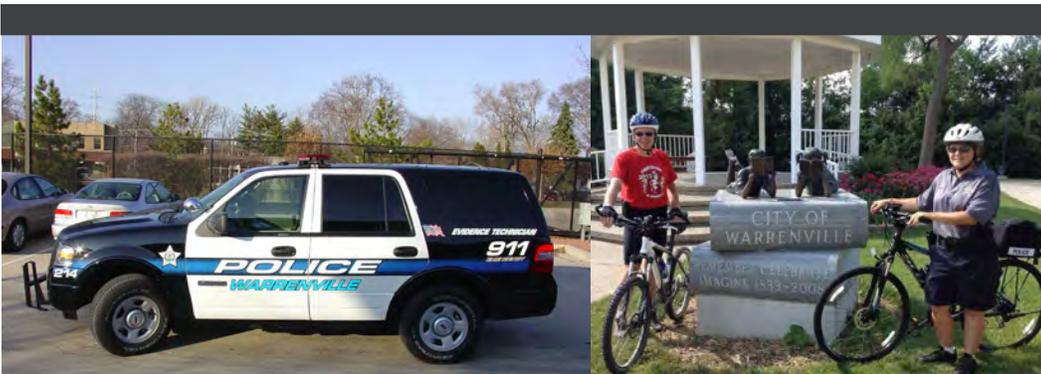
### GOAL 6

#### **P** Public Safety

##### **Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report**

“Provide excellent, proactive, public safety service throughout the community, focusing on addressing the perception of gang activity and drug use.”

- ▶ As with the specialized stakeholders, economic development focus group participants highlighted that Warrentville was a safe community and that made it a good place to live and do business. The issue raised was one of perceived lack of safety related to outmoded and poorly maintained commercial centers in the community. Some centers include land use that are considered not conducive to attracting shoppers. This suggests augmenting the goal to include land use and physical conditions of business areas to the safety related concerns.





## Conclusion

This Economic Development Strategic Plan Input Report is step three in assessing the community's perspectives and needs regarding Warrentville's future. The interim report highlights the area of economic development and identifies relevant observations from those in the community with firsthand knowledge of the business climate in Warrentville. How input from the focus groups may change draft goal statements has been noted. Ultimately, these findings will be combined with those from other input reports to support drafting of the goals, priorities, and specific outcomes that will be included in the final City of Warrentville Strategic/Economic Development Plan.



# Appendix: Focus Group Participants

## ATTENDEES AT JUNE 26, 2014 BUSINESS OUTREACH MEETING LOCAL BUSINESSES (OUTSIDE CANTERA)

BUSINESS NAME	REPRESENTATIVE(S)
Two Brothers Brewery and Tap House	Jason Ebel, Owner
Water Works II	Walt Matan and Anthony Kosi, Owners
Mr. Jim's Service Center	Jim Mehling, Owner
Family Foods	Phil Salerno, Owner
Heidi's Hair Salon	Darcy Pinedo, Employee
Family Dental Care	Sue Tripp, Owner
Northstar Credit Union	Lloyd Fredendall, President
Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce	Patricia Haskins, President

## ATTENDEES AT JUNE 26, 2014 BUSINESS OUTREACH MEETING IN CANTERA

BUSINESS NAME	REPRESENTATIVE(S)
Cadence Cancer Treatment Facility Cantera	Larry Bell
EN Engineering	Thomas Ziegenfus, President

## ATTENDEES AT JUNE 26, 2014 BUSINESS OUTREACH MEETING REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS/BROKERS

BUSINESS NAME	REPRESENTATIVE(S)
Daniel and Associates	Dan Czuba
Cantera Owners Association	Christopher Wilimitis
MaeCliff Project	Tim Brugh, Developer
JR Walker Development	Jeff Walker, Owner/CEO
Duke Realty & Development	Susanne Bergdoll
Commercial Group R.E. Inc.	Mike Phillips
Jones Lang LaSalle	Jeff Shay
Remax	Fred Nelson

# Appendix: Focus Group Participants

## ATTENDEES AT APRIL 25, 2014 WARRENVILLE HOSPITALITY MEETING

BUSINESS NAME	REPRESENTATIVE(S)
Springhill Suites	Richard Mazur/Katya Posega
Hilton Garden Inn/Residence Inn	Tricia Meyer
Residence Inn	Christina Swanson
Hilton Garden Inn	Lou DeMarchi
Hyatt	Shannon Schurr
Warrenville Historical Society	Sara Phalen
Warrenville Park District	Karey Ross

## ATTENDEES AT JULY 1, 2014 BUSINESS OUTREACH MEETING – CHOOSE DUPAGE

ORGANIZATION NAME	REPRESENTATIVE(S)
Choose DuPage	Greg Bedalov, President & CEO
Choose DuPage	Bryan Gay, Economic Development Director

# City of Warrenville, Illinois

For a Visit, Or a Lifetime...

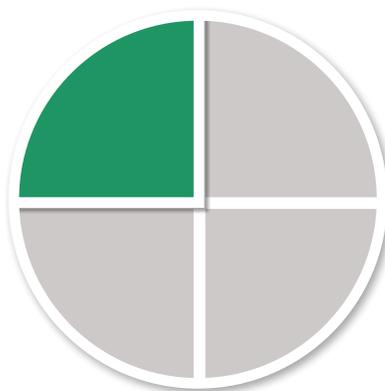
## Strategic/Economic Development Plan



IBEW LOCAL #701 BUILDING



### Report 4



## City Council Strategic Plan Input Report



## Acknowledgments

### City of Warrenville City Council

David Brummel, Mayor  
Fred Bevier, Ward 1 Alderman  
Stuart Aschauer, Ward 1 Alderman  
Robert (Bob) Wilson, Ward 2 Alderman  
Bill Weidner, Ward 2 Alderman  
Dan Leonard, Ward 3 Alderman  
Kathryn Davolos, Ward 3 Alderman  
Clare Barry, Ward 4 Alderman  
Leah Goodman, Ward 4 Alderman

Robert Johnson, Treasurer  
Emily Larson, City Clerk

### City of Warrenville Staff

John Coakley  
City Administrator  
Jennifer McMahan,  
Assistant City Administrator  
Ronald Mentzer  
Community Development Director  
Natalia Domovessova  
Senior Planner

### Consultant Team

**Teska Associates, Inc.**  
Michael Blue, FAICP  
Principal  
Erin Cigliano, AICP  
Associate, New Media Specialist  
Brittany Bagent, Associate  
Amy Riseborough, Associate

**Business Districts, Inc.**  
Terry Jenkins, Managing Director  
Diane Williams, Director



# Introduction

Preparation of the City of Warrenville Strategic / Economic Development Plan has been an inclusive process with insights and suggestions provided through resident surveys, neighborhood dialogues, community stakeholder meetings, business focus groups, and most recently City Council interviews. The Mayor and all sitting City Council members provided input to the process via individual interviews with the consulting team. Discussions focused on securing the Council’s perspectives on the topics and concepts raised through the input process. These included:

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Warrenville provides a high level of city services, which has become the standard expected by residents. The City has a reputation for ample and timely services, and mostly receives positive feedback regarding that work. Police protection was among the well regarded services and the Warrenville Police Department was lauded as having significantly improved safety in the City over the last several decades. However, some safety concerns were noted through the public input process.

In regard to public finances, the City practice of not incurring debt for capital expenditures and maintaining budget reserves are noteworthy. This approach received praise and appreciation throughout the public input process. Even so, as with all communities, budget decisions require prioritization of projects and programs. Whether and how the City might incur debt for a project or reprioritize budget resources for other activities was raised during the input process.

## TIMELINE

- JANUARY 2014**  
Facilitation begins with a document review, staff and officials training, and analysis of resident input.
- APRIL 2014**  
Consultant and designated City staff meet with the overlapping taxing bodies.
- MAY 2014**  
City staff hosts two specialized stakeholder input meetings.
- JUNE 2014**  
Consultant meets with key representatives of City departments.
- JULY 2014**  
Consultant completes meetings with economic development focus groups.
- AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER 2014**  
Economic Development White Paper developed by consulting team
- OCTOBER 2014**  
City Council input interviews conducted by consultant.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Warrenville is a blend of a rural and suburban community. Longtime residents, some of whom have lived in Warrenville since before it incorporated in 1967, value a more rural lifestyles while newcomers anticipate more suburban standards and regulations. City services and ordinances relate to this community character in how they seek to balance expectations of residents and businesses. In particular, property maintenance code enforcement can be an issue. In Warrenville, as in most communities, it is addressed by a Senior Code Enforcement Officer through a complaint-based enforcement approach.

In addition to quality city services, Warrenville residents value the City's annual community events. The events provide desirable community traditions that longtime and newer residents enjoy. Events help drive economic activity and further enhance community character. Annual events tend to be located in the Civic Center or Cerny Park, both of which have potential to be a more formally established central gathering place.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Warrenville has a depth of economic development resources but also myriad economic development priorities, not all of which can be achieved given available time and resources. These were highlighted in other documents prepared as part of this project (the Economic Development Strategic Plan Input Report and White Paper). Those reports note that economic development objectives of the City may require long lead times or additional resources to be accomplished. Therefore, one aim of the Strategic / Economic Development Plan will be to address how the City might apply resources in the short and long term.

Focus group input and economic development best practices indicate that additional households will be important to support commercial development in Warrenville. Simply put, more rooftops are needed to house potential customers that ultimately will buy more goods and services. Higher density dwellings (townhomes or other multiple-family) will generate more residents on a per acre basis and create greater buying power to support commercial development. What type of housing is most appropriate and where it should be located in Warrenville was a part of discussions held in this task, but ultimately would be determined as a result of further economic and land use deliberations.



*The Illinois Prairie Path outside City Hall*



## Input Process

Meetings with City Council members reviewed status of the Strategic/Economic Development Plan project and secured input via interview questions that were developed based on feedback received from resident, stakeholder, and focus group input.

The Council member input will contribute to the final Strategic / Economic Development Plan, which will include a statement of goals, objectives, and action steps to guide implementation. As representatives of Warrenville residents and businesses, the Council members provided feedback and suggestions reflective of their contact with constituents, as well as their own perspectives as City leaders and residents themselves (some of them having lived in the community all their lives).

### STRATEGIC GOAL CATEGORIES

- 1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 2 OPEN SPACE
- 3 FINANCES
- 4 FLOODING & STORMWATER
- 5 INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES
- 6 SAFETY

Albeit paraphrased, interview questions included the following:

- ▶ The input process has identified an appreciation and expectation by residents for high quality city services. What is your perspective on that and how City staff fits into the equation?
- ▶ The City's approach to financial management does not include incurring debt for capital expenditures. Should that approach continue? Can you see a project or need that would merit consideration of changing the approach?
- ▶ Do you think of Warrenville as suburban or rural? Why?
- ▶ The strictness of property maintenance enforcement has been raised in the community input process. Some note there is not enough, some feel there should not be strict enforcement. Where do you feel the City should be on that continuum?
- ▶ What do you hear from constituents regarding their perceptions of safety in Warrenville? What is your feeling on the topic?
- ▶ Do you feel it is important for the City to help expand community events? If so, are there any specific events you feel would be appropriate for the City to support?
- ▶ Participants in the various stakeholder input meetings have repeatedly identified the creation of a central gathering place as a high priority for the City. Do you see this as a priority for the City? What form do you see the central gathering place taking in Warrenville?
- ▶ In the context of the Economic Development Input Report, White Paper, and Council meeting discussion, what strikes you as the top 3 economic development priorities for Warrenville?
- ▶ What types of new residential development do you feel should be part of Warrenville's future land use planning?
- ▶ Other topics have been part of the City's strategic planning. Are there priorities in these areas you feel should be pursued:
  - Infrastructure
  - Environment
  - Parks and Recreation

# City Council Input Summary

This summary of City Council input for the Strategic / Economic Development Plan is meant as an overview of the discussions; it does not reflect any one perspective or set of comments (as a number of the alderman noted, those details can be heard at City Council meetings). The description focuses on areas of consensus among the aldermen and where their observations confirm, clarify, or differ from previous input tasks of this project. Differing perspectives among aldermen whose comments were either broad, or presented alternate approaches to an issue, have been noted.



## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### DISCUSSION AREA 1

The level and quality of public services in Warrenville, as noted earlier, are appreciated and considered good. Operational decisions about those services are made by City administrative staff as supported by the Council through the budget and Capital Maintenance and Replacement Plan. Input on services as it relates to the strategic planning process is noted here.

#### Existing Services

Provision of essential services was clearly considered a fundamental function of Warrenville government. Some services, or the extent to which they are provided, will always be open for discussion. For example:

- ▶ The extent of snow plowing and salting provides options for communities. Recollection of snow plows and salt consumption from 2013-2014 were still fresh during the discussions. How often to plow and salt streets is a point on which further discussion seems warranted.
- ▶ The ACORN van servicing senior residents was a service some consider very important and others consider not essential.

#### Code Enforcement

Warrenville staff includes a Senior Code Enforcement Officer to administer city ordinances that help maintain the community's physical structures and natural environment. The staff member provides monthly reports summarizing complaint-based violations to the Council. Discussions on this topic noted that the service is difficult and challenging in all communities, yet there was concurrence that the service in Warrenville generally functions soundly and is particularly appropriate for matters that can impact the health of residents (such as leaf burning).

Code enforcement services as discussed are particularly relevant as they relate to the City's history and image – in fact, this summary would be as pertinent and instructive to understanding Warrenville if it were listed below under the section on Community Character. Longtime residents recall when leaf burning was not an issue or a code violation. However, newer residents expecting a more suburban lifestyle may feel otherwise. The point is not limited to code enforcement; many of the public services in Warrenville must be provided within this context.



## GOVERNMENT SERVICES (CONTINUED)

### DISCUSSION AREA 1

#### Public Safety

Perceptions of safety in Warrenville were described as overwhelmingly positive, particularly in comparison to the early years of the City; the work of the Police Department was commended. Crime in Warrenville is considered not extraordinary in comparison to like communities; although specific parts of the City were acknowledged as having intermittent minor crimes, drug issues, and gang activity.

#### New Services

While discussed in the abstract, a variety of ideas were raised in regard to possible new services, programs or use of funds – including the perspective that no new services stood out as necessary. The topic was intended to identify the types of additional services or programs that might be most worthwhile to the City. It should be noted that consideration of additional services would have to be made in context of the City's history of conservative fiscal management, particularly remaining debt free and maintaining a responsible fund balance. Further, the process by which the City deliberates significant matters, and might consider changes to service provision or new expenditures, was described as open, thoughtful, and inclusive of residents and interested parties.

Concepts raised for potential new uses of funds included: incentives to new and existing businesses, paying down pension obligations, or providing a facade improvement program. Others noted in more detail included:

- Fall leaf pickup is a service that has been considered by the City. However, the need for this service was not supported by all. There was concern that such services quickly become considered essential by residents and would be difficult to eliminate in times of tight budgets.
- Additional staff or consultant services to conduct increased economic development functions was noted by some as an area where the City might consider applying additional resources. Current economic development activities were considered sound and done well, but not with adequate resources or frequency. Reorganizing staff functions or priorities to provide this service was an approach noted in some discussions.



## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

### DISCUSSION AREA 2

The community character of Warrenville encourages longtime residents to stay and is considered attractive to potential new residents; it has a unique blend of rural and suburban qualities that few other municipalities can claim.

Some suggest that Warrenville is a rural community with suburban amenities while others consider it a suburban community that allows for rural lifestyles. Regardless of the viewpoint, there is a sense that this dual focus suits Warrenville. However, some tension between the two perspectives can be expected. For instance, lifelong residents may not prioritize sidewalks whereas newer residents express interest in sidewalks, curbs, bike lanes, and other infrastructure improvements. In addressing these needs, Warrenville regularly weighs the needs of all its residents and businesses.

#### Community Events

Annual community events, such as Summer Daze, 4th of July fireworks, and baseball/softball tournaments, are considered to be of value to the residents of Warrenville. They provide local entertainment and traditions that bring former residents back to town and attract people living outside of the City. In this light, the City annually budgets to underwrite the cost of community events, primarily through hotel/motel tax revenues. Enhancements to these events could include outreach to Latino/Hispanic neighborhoods and consideration of reviving events that have ceased due to organizers moving out of Warrenville.

A related consideration is whether a central gathering place for events or daily interactions could be another asset in Warrenville. The City does not have a traditional downtown to serve such a function. However, the historic role of the Civic Center area makes it a possible location. That notion is furthered by the number of community functions in the area (City Hall, the Library, and Park District facilities) as well as the anticipated development of the Musselman property behind City Hall. Other locations for formal or informal gathering included Cerny Park or a location near (or in) Cantera.



*Illinois Prairie Path*



*Veterans Memorial*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### DISCUSSION AREA 3

Economic development in Warrenville and the need to look beyond traditional commercial development to drive economic vitality has been given focus in earlier reports.

Those studies also highlighted bringing higher density residential development to the City and building on success in the Cantera development as key objectives. Similarly, the need to work with and support existing businesses has been noted.

For this input step, discussion sought to highlight the types of strategies that might be pursued to achieve the City's economic development goals. Some of those discussed were:

- ▶ Take a proactive approach to economic development by assessing available properties and decide what is strategically viable for the area (rather than waiting for developer proposals).
- ▶ Expand outreach to current businesses, hotels, and realtors.
- ▶ Move forward with redevelopment of the CCRS #1, the former Musselman property.
- ▶ Encourage development, redevelopment, and renovation on Route 59, potentially supported by a TIF district.
- ▶ Improve the appearance and viability of Route 59 properties.
- ▶ Consider a facade improvement program and determine the range of need (i.e. do business owners need \$5,000 or \$50,000 for improvements?).



*Restaurants in Cantera development*

## LAND USE

### DISCUSSION AREA 4

Determining locations for commercial and residential uses play a role in Warrenville's economic development deliberations. The White Paper prepared for this project suggests a focus on housing developments of increased density to add more residents and potential customers.

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The appropriate density for such housing is an issue that requires further discussion and consideration of where it may be located, as it will influence the overall character and quality of life in the community.

Discussions during City Council input acknowledged that higher density housing options could provide economic development benefits. It was also noted that offering different housing options for groups such as empty nesters and young professionals who are not interested in single family detached homes has merit. Building high-end townhomes was commonly suggested, due in part to its ability to create more density without compromising the rural qualities of the City. In general, incorporating some type of higher density housing was seen as a possibility if done with an attractive form. Other populations to consider included groups such as Fermi Lab's contract workers who seek high-quality short-term lease options. The CCRS #1 property redevelopment was noted by most as an option for townhome or duplex development.

The character and appearance of future development was noted by some as a pertinent land use consideration. This might include providing connections to recreational amenities such as the Forest Preserves, the West Branch of the DuPage River, and the Illinois Prairie Path (used by up to 300,000 people annually).

## OPEN SPACE/SUSTAINABILITY

### DISCUSSION AREA 5

Warrenville is a community surrounded by ample open space including the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and recently-cleaned West Branch of the DuPage River.

All Council members consider these spaces to be a great community asset, although it was acknowledged that the areas can hinder development and progress because they cannot be built on. In any case, preserving and supporting use by residents of the natural environment in and around Warrenville was expressed as a current and ongoing priority for the City. The potential for creating a river walk or other river-focused amenity also was discussed.

WARRENVILLE GAZEBO OUTSIDE CITY HALL



Ideas raised through conversations about open space, the Park District, and sustainability included interest in:

- ▶ an indoor public pool
- ▶ a need for pedestrian access to McKee Marsh
- ▶ municipal fuel efficient cars
- ▶ reducing use of fertilizers
- ▶ increasing use of native landscape species
- ▶ engaging more with organizations like the Sierra Club and The Conservation Foundation.

# Refined Goal Statements

A set of preliminary goals for the Strategic / Economic Development Plan was drafted early in this project as part of the Resident Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input report.

As successive community input has been secured, concepts raised in those discussions have been used to suggest how the initial goals might be amended. The goal statements listed below are as they appeared in the Specialized Stakeholder Strategic Plan Input Report. Some suggestions for how those goals might be amended based on input derived from the focus group discussions were noted in the Economic Development Strategic Input Report. Additional notions for amendments based on City Council input are noted below.



## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GOAL 1



#### Economic Development

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report

“Enhance the City’s tax base, increase local shopping and dining opportunities, expand the City’s labor market, and create attractive gathering places by:

- ▶ actively planning for and aggressively encouraging well designed and environmentally responsible commercial development in the Route 59 corridor;
  - ▶ mixed use redevelopment in the Old Town/Civic Center; and
  - ▶ rehabilitation, improvement, and occupancy of older vacant commercial properties throughout the community.”
- ▶ *Input from this task noted the challenges inherent in securing development on the Route 59 Corridor and Old Town/Civic Center areas (as raised in the White Paper). However, these areas were considered important to the City and need to be addressed. In that regard the input does not alter this goal.*
- ▶ *Discussions indicated value in the City being aggressive in pursuit of economic development objectives. This concept could be reflected by amending the goal to note a proactive approach for the entire goal – rather than just in the first bullet point.*
- ▶ *While the notion of adding higher density housing to the City was acknowledged as a component of economic development for Warrenville, there was concern that the type and location of such development not alter the essential character of the community. This concept could be reflected in the goal by adding a bullet point encouraging new “appropriately scaled and located” multiple-family housing in support of a growing tax base and the needs of local residents and employees.*



Cantera businesses

## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GOAL 2



#### City Finances

##### **Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:**

“Uphold the City’s record of fiscal conservatism by adopting a balanced budget overall and at the fund level, ensuring a relatively low cost of living for Warrenville residents, incurring little to no debt, and maintaining a diversified revenue stream.”

- ▶ *Input from the City Council interviews reflected the importance of and support for current City finance practices. While discussions included thoughts on current and possible additional services, the input does not alter this goal statement.*

### GOAL 3



#### Open Space and Environment

##### **Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:**

“Preserve and protect the natural features, open space, and wooded areas that contribute significantly to the City’s overall character, setting, and uniqueness, and seek opportunities to showcase, access, and promote these components as important and valuable community assets.”

- ▶ *Input from the City Council interviews reflected the importance to the community of open spaces and environmental characteristics. The comments did not significantly alter this goal statement, but added emphasis to the second part of the goal, as it suggest finding ways to “showcase, access, and promote” open space and environment. As noted in this report, implementation ideas related to this goal might include a naturally designed river walk along the West Branch of the DuPage River, furthering City sustainability practices, and increasing access to the Illinois Prairie Path.*

## REFINED GOAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GOAL 4



#### Flooding and Stormwater

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

"Improve flood protection and reduce residential and business flooding in the West Branch of the DuPage River Watershed, require environmentally responsible development that effectively controls the volume and improves the quality of stormwater runoff, and address neighborhood drainage issues."

- ▶ *The input from the City Council interviews does not significantly alter this goal statement.*

### GOAL 5



#### City Infrastructure and Utilities

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

"Repair, maintain, replace, and strategically upgrade the City's physical infrastructure assets in a well planned, coordinated, and timely manner that is fiscally responsible, enhances public safety and supports increased private property values."

- ▶ *The input from the City Council interviews does not significantly alter this goal statement.*

### GOAL 6



#### Public Safety

##### Resident Strategic Plan Input Report:

"Provide excellent, proactive, public safety service throughout the community, focusing on addressing the perception of gang activity and drug use."

- ▶ *The input from the City Council interviews does not significantly alter this goal statement.*

# Conclusion

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This City Council Strategic Input Report is the final input step in preparing the City of Warrenville Strategic/Economic Development Plan. The discussions comprising this input considered a range of topics for the strategic plan. In that way this document is somewhat wider reaching than the two previous input reports. As with all the input to the plan, the results of this report will be applied to drafting of the goals, priorities, and desired results to be outlined in the final strategic plan.



# Appendix

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## CITY COUNCIL MEMBER INTERVIEWS

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David Brummel, Mayor

Fred Bevier, Ward 1 Alderman

Stuart Aschauer, Ward 1 Alderman

Robert (Bob) Wilson, Ward 2 Alderman

Bill Weidner, Ward 2 Alderman

Dan Leonard, Ward 3 Alderman

Kathryn Davolos, Ward 3 Alderman

Clare Barry, Ward 4 Alderman

Leah Goodman, Ward 4 Alderman

**City of Warrenville, Illinois**

**Strategic/Economic Development Plan**

**Economic Development White Paper**

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October 7, 2014

# Introduction

The City of Warrenville is preparing a Strategic / Economic Development Plan, which will guide the City's economic development plans and actions for the foreseeable future. The process has been thorough, involving stakeholders throughout the community, multiple data resources, regional organizations, a university study and outside consultants. The entire plan preparation has been guided by the Warrenville City staff in concert with Warrenville elected officials. A threshold in preparing the Strategic / Economic Development Plan is development of an Economic Development White Paper, which is the culmination of all the research and stakeholder input into a clear picture of Warrenville's strengths and challenges relevant to future economic development. The White Paper is intended to position these strengths and challenges in concert with the future goals and vision of the community stakeholders as the basis for the development of the next document. Following presentation of the White Paper, a detailed Strategic / Economic Development Plan will be developed, which following stakeholder consensus, will provide the direction for Warrenville's future economic development policies and actions.

Warrenville's residents and officials want to retain the City's character, in addition to growing the local economy. With these dual objectives, the City's commitment to its economic future must be based upon an understanding of those opportunities that best match Warrenville's market attributes with current market realities for potential uses, such as office or retail. Recognizing how these two sets of market characteristics integrate will assist City officials and residents in making economic development decisions that succeed financially for the private sector and fiscally for the City, its residents, and local stakeholders.

The following data complements the "City of Warrenville Illinois Analysis of Population, Local Economy, Housing and Land Use Data" report prepared for the City of Warrenville in 2013 by graduate students in the University of Illinois-Chicago's Master of Public Administration Program Capstone Project (UIC Report). Additional industry-specific and market data resources and themes from the recent focus groups and business surveys have also been incorporated into this review of existing economic conditions.

# Current Markets by Use

This section examines existing market conditions for Warrenville's retail, residential, and employment sectors. After describing the current market status specific to each use, the implications for Warrenville's future economic development work are described.

## RETAIL AND RESTAURANT USES

Initial demographics for the City and selected geographies are shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1 : Selected Demographics**

Selected Demographics	City Hall Center Point			Routes 59 and 56 Center Point		Warrenville Road and Dupage River		Route 59 and Batavia Road	
	Warrenville	.5 Mile	5 Minutes	.5 Mile	5 Minutes	.5 Mile	5 Minutes	.5 Mile	5 Minutes
<b>Total Population</b>	13,480	1,298	12,984	1,725	13,944	2,181	7,277	5,143	12,898
<b>Total Households</b>	5,022	460	4,893	612	5,350	943	2,854	1,836	4,619
<b>Household Size</b>	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.8
<b>Population Density (per Sq. Mi.)</b>	2,429.46	1,648.03	1,883.74	2,189.94	1,753.01	2,769.40	1,238.55	6,530.96	2,161.01
<b>Median Age</b>	37.3	43.6	37.2	33.3	36.5	38.6	38.6	34.3	34.9
<b>Employees</b>	8,171	415	8,768	536	9,866	787	12,143	821	3,319
<b>Jobs Per Household</b>	1.6	0.9	1.8	0.9	1.8	0.8	4.3	0.4	0.7
<b>Renter Occupied Housing Units</b>	20.0%	11.1%	22.1%	15.7%	23.4%	39.8%	39.8%	19.2%	22.6%
<b>Average Household Income</b>	\$96,717	\$104,106	\$97,335	\$79,181	\$94,160	\$102,887	\$116,984	\$95,255	\$106,966
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$74,628	\$76,916	\$74,255	\$62,053	\$72,189	\$79,424	\$86,706	\$70,594	\$82,034
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$36,167	\$36,910	\$36,784	\$28,113	\$36,289	\$44,543	\$46,214	\$34,000	\$38,683
<b>Aggregate Retail Demand</b>	\$111,048,451	\$10,070,278	\$107,374,405	\$12,775,278	\$116,576,462	\$21,374,862	\$61,795,186	\$39,708,459	\$99,789,964
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>									
<b>Asian</b>	4.2%	2.2%	4.0%	4.7%	4.7%	6.7%	4.5%	3.3%	3.4%
<b>Black</b>	4.0%	0.8%	4.2%	6.8%	4.8%	3.5%	3.7%	5.4%	4.6%
<b>White</b>	81.1%	94.3%	81.2%	71.8%	79.4%	86.0%	85.0%	74.2%	76.1%
<b>Other</b>	10.4%	2.5%	10.3%	16.4%	10.7%	3.2%	6.6%	16.8%	15.6%
<b>Hispanic Ethnicity</b>	21.7%	7.0%	21.5%	25.7%	21.9%	6.2%	14.0%	36.2%	32.1%
<b>Not of Hispanic Ethnicity</b>	78.2%	92.9%	78.4%	74.2%	78.0%	93.7%	85.9%	63.7%	67.8%

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The City is diverse with nearly 22% of the population identified as Hispanic. Incomes are generally strong. Nearly 32% of Warrenville households have incomes exceeding \$100,000. The City's household incomes are generally consistent throughout all geographies, with the exception of slightly lower median, average, and per capita incomes within .5-miles of Routes 59 and 56. The median age (37.3) and household size (2.7) indicate the presence of families in their highest spending years, reflecting Warrenville's strong family orientation. Population density in Warrenville is generally low due to the predominance of single-family homes on larger lots (versus more homes on smaller lots and/or multi-family housing). Significant forest preserve lands also border Warrenville. Warrenville's open space, much of it this forest preserve land, is perceived by the community's stakeholders as an important asset to the community. While an amenity attractive to potential and current residents, this vacant land, including nearby Fermilab, represents a void in Warrenville's market area for retail development.

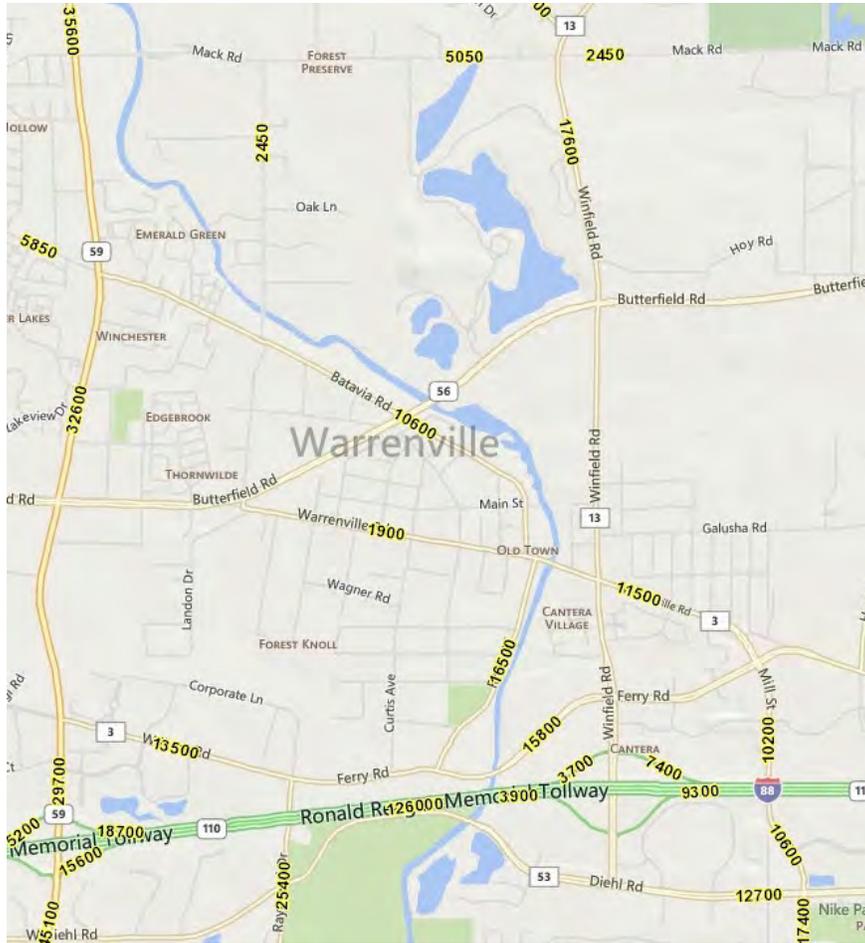
Four (4) additional sub-sets of geographies are shown in Table 1. These geographies use the following as their respective center points: City Hall; the intersection of Routes 59 and 56; the intersection of Warrenville Road at the DuPage River; and the intersection of Batavia Road and Route 59. These geographies represent key retail and restaurant trade areas. The markets shown for each of these center points include:

- **Pedestrian Market:** Residents living within one-half (.5) mile of any commercial area are particularly active users of the businesses located in that commercial area. These residents can walk to the area, and their frequent visits add vitality to the area. A pedestrian market is often more important to the success of a nearby commercial area than its spending power suggests. For Warrenville, the population, household, and employment numbers for each of the .5-mile markets shown in Table 1 are very low by retail industry expectations and development trends observed by the consultant team, inhibiting the attraction of potentially successful retailers and restaurants.
- **Convenience Market:** Retail or restaurant locations within a five-minute drive time can become the routine choice to meet every day needs for many consumers. Shoppers or diners who drive to these locations represent the core market for these commercial areas. This kind of convenience also assumes that residents or employees within this market have ready access to a variety of quality goods. This same five-minute drive time market usually represents a ten-minute bike ride by area residents to these same locations. Again, limited access to sufficient numbers of residents and employees presents a challenge to recruitment of economically viable retailers and restaurateurs. .

Certain characteristics differ between these four geographies and with the City demographics. Incomes are lower in the Route 59 / 56 area than for Warrenville overall, and are highest in the Warrenville Road/DuPage River market. The .5-mile radius surrounding City Hall has similarly high-income levels. The Hispanic population percentage is largest in Route 59 and Batavia Road geographies. This geography's .5-mile market is also the most populated and has the greatest density, though both numbers are low for suburban markets. The employee number for the Warrenville Road/DuPage River drive time market is adequate; it includes several employment clusters to the east and south. Overall, these geographies reflect the City's general population with some minor variations.

In addition to access to sufficient pedestrian and drive time populations noted above, retailers and restaurants must be visible to a larger population. Although repeat customers represent the largest percentage of sales for these kinds of businesses, a steady flow of new customers is also needed. These new customers are much easier to attract when a large population sees the business every day. Regular conversations by the consultant with local, regional and national developers of retail and restaurant space indicate that a minimum of 20,000 cars per day is required for a successful development. Traffic counts from Illinois' Department of Transportation for Warrenville (Average Daily Traffic, or ADTs) are shown in Illustration 1.

**Illustration 1 : Traffic Counts**



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation.

Traffic counts are highest on Route 59, increasing from 29,700 near I-88 to 35,600 north of Batavia Road. Near Cantera, the counts for the nearby major routes, such as Ferry Road, range from 13,500-15,800 and 12,700 on Diehl Road east of Winfield Road. On Warrenville Road, the traffic counts decline significantly west of Batavia Road to about 1,900. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) final engineering plans for the recently completed expansion and reconstruction of Butterfield Road had an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count of 18,800 at the Batavia Road Intersection. The count west of Route 59 is 12,100. Batavia Road, just west of Butterfield, has a 10,600 ADT. River Road’s ADT south of Warrenville Road is 3,000 according to City staff.

While the traffic counts on Route 59 are high including the two center points along Route 59, which were highlighted in Table 1, high traffic counts alone do not guarantee a successful market for retail and restaurant development. The Route 59 corridor will be challenging for the following reasons:

- As mentioned earlier, populations and densities near the corridor are low; local forest preserves and Fermilab contribute to this factor.
- Land assembly will be required to develop sites that are large enough to sustain development that meets community expectations.
- Wetland and flood plain issues along the corridor would need to be further examined. This land would be excluded from any site assembly opportunities and may inhibit the assembly of sites of the necessary size to interest the development community.
- Existing development in parts of the corridor is not well maintained. In general, many of the tenants in these areas, comprising the business mix in many of the existing shopping plazas, are not considered desirable by most stakeholders interviewed. Also, the existing tenancies do not represent the kinds of co-tenant opportunities currently preferred by the development community. Co-tenants are businesses for whom there is a mutual benefit being near one other. For example a shoe store and clothing store are more likely to attract common customers on a single shopping trip than a shoe store and a liquor store. Working with these property owners to revitalize and re-tenant their properties will be a lengthy process and most likely will require use of some financial tool (i.e. TIF) to be successful. Municipal assistance in assembling property and recruiting new developers would also be complicated and potentially costly.
- Warrenville residents have existing, auto-oriented shopping patterns and patronize businesses in Warrenville, Naperville, Wheaton, and other neighboring communities. It will take thoughtful and attractive development on Route 59 to adjust these shopping patterns.
- Developers have also established preferences for known markets. Locations in Naperville are the preferred target of commercial developers, particularly for retail and restaurant uses. Developers want to capitalize on the existing successful clusters with locations close to other successful retailers. A Route 59 site in Warrenville would need superior locational advantages (such as high traffic counts or excellent visibility) for any developer to risk being the first major investment in the corridor.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR GROCERY

Residents and City officials have expressed interest in more grocers within Warrenville. Table 2 below lists major grocer options within 5 miles of City Hall. This table excludes any specialty and ethnic grocers or markets located in neighboring communities and accessible to Warrenville's residents. It also excludes area independent grocers, including Warrenville's Family Foods.

Overall, Warrenville's access to grocery stores is adequate. Some stores may be distant from certain Warrenville residential neighborhoods, but the availability of 10 major grocers within 5 miles of City Hall and additional 9 major grocers within 7 miles indicates overall market coverage. While grocers may either change their approach to market coverage given changing market conditions, or may alter their formats in the future, a new grocer in Warrenville is unlikely, unless current market requirements change.

**Table 2 : Nearby Grocers**

<b>Grocer</b>	<b># Stores Within 5 Miles</b>	<b># Stores Between 5 and 7 Miles</b>
Jewel-Osco	4	3
Mariano's	0	2
Whole Foods Market	1	0
Aldi's	2	2
Super Target	1	1
Wal-Mart Super Center	0	1
Meijer	1	0
Ultra Foods	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Grocer Store Locations and Distances on Store Websites; BDI.

## **RETAIL AND RESTAURANT RENTS**

Retail asking rents vary significantly depending upon the property's location within Warrenville. Asking rents near Routes 59 and Batavia Road are generally \$12-13 per square foot (PSF) on a triple net basis (for a triple net rent, in addition to base rent and normal fees like utilities, the tenant pays all real estate taxes, building insurance, and maintenance costs). Near Route 59 and Route 56, asking rents range from \$7-\$10 PSF triple net. These rents contrast with the asking rents on Warrenville's Diehl Road area at \$30-\$40 PSF triple net. Average asking retail rents in DuPage County are estimated at \$16.37 PSF. BDI's experience working with property and business owners indicates that developing any new retail or restaurant lease space throughout the Chicago region currently requires actual (versus asking) rents of \$27 PSF or greater to support market rate retail development.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETAIL AND RESTAURANT USES**

Warrenville's residents, City officials, and others have expressed an interest in more grocery, shopping, and dining options. As a separate matter, residents have also expressed an interest in the development of a central community gathering place with an attractive character. The area around City Hall was mentioned frequently. The four geographies/trade areas displayed in Table 1 are examined below.

### **City Hall Markets**

Certainly this area appears to be an attractive location for a community gathering place and the recent Warrenville Request For Proposals to add higher density residential on the former Musselman Lumber Company property behind the Warrenville Library is an excellent plan. The plan has potential to introduce new housing not currently available in the area. Such housing would add residential population to the area and may be a catalyst for other desirable development and redevelopment in the City Hall Market. However, from a retail and restaurant development perspective, the City Hall area does not currently offer access to sufficient nearby populations, to traffic, or to adjacent businesses to support or attract or support a group of profitable retailers or restaurants. The dominance of service businesses near City Hall reflects this market attribute.

### **Warrenville Road/Batavia Road/DuPage River**

The existing cluster of businesses at Warrenville and Batavia Roads attracts patrons from Warrenville and the surrounding communities. The current character is auto oriented and somewhat out dated. This condition makes the area less attractive for commercial and restaurant development. Improving the riverfront into a public park; the planned replacement of the Warrenville Road bridge; providing more parking; and, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access to the area should better provide a catalyst for the development or redevelopment of sites in the area with the type of uses contemplated in the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan. The bridge construction and the construction of a potential roundabout add some uncertainty for short-term investment. Potential site specific land uses should be considered in concert with the final design and potential construction of the roundabout or any other type of improved intersection.

### **Route 59 at Batavia Road and Butterfield Road**

In the earlier section of the White Paper, which discussed traffic counts, a number of reasons were provided why traffic counts alone will not make the corridor an attractive area for new development. To reiterate, Route 59 locations, given higher traffic volumes, have attracted some developer interest. There are three (3) major challenges to broader retail development along Route 59 at Warrenville's major intersections---physical, appearance, and co-tenancies.

1. Physical: Wetlands, floodplains, antiquated and awkward parcel configurations, fractionalized property ownership, public sewer and water infrastructure deficiencies, and potential significant roadway improvement requirements inhibit new development on the vacant property currently available at certain high traffic locations, including at Butterfield Road. Until now, the private sector has not found the Route 59/Butterfield Road intersection area attractive enough to justify the level of investment necessary to address these challenges and make new development a viable alternative. In order to achieve high quality, coordinated development in this area, it is likely that future City economic development efforts will require working more collaboratively with the property owners and developers to jointly address the physical challenges.

2. Appearance: In other sectors of the Route 59 corridor, the dated design and deteriorating appearance of many existing shopping centers inhibits interest by better tenants, reflects disinvestment by property owners, and enables sub-standard operations by current tenants. Strategies to address center appearance with property and business owners should be one component of the City's future economic development work. This work will be ongoing, incremental, and difficult for City officials, but it will be critical to corridor development and redevelopment success over the long-term. Formulating targeted incentives and the additional use of funding mechanisms, such as Tax Increment Financing, may be needed to increase the pace of improvements.

3. Co-tenancies: Having businesses in a retail center that attract common shoppers is the best case scenario for the businesses, property owners, and the City. Encouraging joint shopping trips or creating opportunities to comparison shop help boost sales. Tenant selection to create the optimal mix of businesses is a landlord function and one which is constrained by factors such as the strength of a local market, rents charged, and available potential businesses. Further, communities play a limited role tenant selection. Zoning regulations create broad categories of appropriate uses, but the ultimate determination is made by the marketplace. As part of an overall economic development program, Warrenville could work cooperatively with property owners to identify and attract desirable businesses and business combinations.

The needs of existing businesses present a more immediate opportunity. As Warrenville's most notable regional destination, Two Brothers Brewery and Tap House now operates in the Warrenville Industrial Park and is considering its expansion options. The potential of finding an appropriate site for expansion is an opportunity. Strategically, increased retail and restaurant development at locations at Warrenville's Diehl Road corridor and near Cantera represent the best short and long-term opportunities overall for the community.

## RESIDENTIAL USES

Listing numbers and median sales prices (all residential properties) continue to increase as the housing market improves. The median sales price for homes in Warrenville in 2014 was \$166,500—a 16% increase over the 2013 median sales price of \$143,500 and approaching the 2009 price of \$173,750. The average listing price is \$405,149, reflecting a recent increase of larger homes among current listings. Warrenville also has 87 residential properties currently in some stage of foreclosure as of the date of this report.

### RESIDENTIAL RENTS

Warrenville's rental housing market includes units near Cantera (Village Green) with rents ranging from \$1.35-\$1.50 PSF. Older rental units and single-family homes offered as rentals are leasing at \$.90-\$1.00 PSF.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL USES

Warrenville's residential economic development considerations partially reflect the opinions expressed by Warrenville's citizens. Residents feel they are a part of their community. They feel a local identity with various community events and the existing calendar of local events can strategically build that local identity and better engage residents in the community. The City, local groups, or various partnerships organize these events, and over time, they have the opportunity to expand outreach and increase marketing to successfully grow the events and target additional residents and likely visitors. Any role the City of Warrenville can play in further developing these events would be well received by retail and hospitality businesses who consider community events as a way to support increased business (as indicated in focus groups held as part of this strategic planning process).

Additional residential development is also an opportunity. Developers have indicated that they find the Warrenville market very positive, and it is a matter of finding viable sites. As the economy improves, new market-rate residential development at suitable sites remains an option. Higher density housing would remain the best option from an economic development point of view by providing:

- Additional customers for existing businesses,
- additional population to make the community more attractive for new commercial/retail/restaurant tenants,
- more housing options for office employees, and
- more diverse housing stock options for the Warrenville community.

Such development could be either owner-occupied or market rate rental housing, reflecting regional market price points.

## EMPLOYMENT USES

Warrenville is known as a location for major employers and for privately held industrial and commercial concerns. As noted in Table 1, the City's jobs per household ratio is a positive 1.6 local jobs for every Warrenville household. The UIC report indicates unemployment has increased in Warrenville during the recession, which has been typical throughout the region. According to Where Workers Work 2014, published by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), total private sector employment in the Southwest DuPage area (Warrenville and Eola) is 8,474 workers. The major private sector employment categories are shown in Table 3:

**Table 3 : Private Sector Employment Categories**

<b>Major Employment Categories</b>	
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>8,474</b>
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	<b>1,136</b>
<b>Professional, Scientific and Technical Services</b>	<b>1,300</b>
<b>Management of Companies and Enterprises</b>	<b>1,002</b>
<b>Accommodations and Food Services</b>	<b>808</b>
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>Retail Trade</b>	<b>440</b>

Source: IDES, Where Workers Work 2014; BDI.

As with the broader economy, Warrenville's office and industrial tenants are slowly emerging from the recession. Chicago's suburban office market continues to struggle despite an improving economy. The overall suburban vacancy rate declined in the second quarter to 20.6% from the first quarter 2014 rate of 21.3%. Like the vacancy rate, positive net absorption of vacant space continues to improve at a slow pace. Average office rents remain stagnant in the suburban markets, at \$19.86 PSF for the second quarter. Regionally, tenants continue to move into Class A office space at Class B rental rates, making leasing of Class B properties challenging. One of the major transactions during the second quarter was Exelon's renewal of its 150,000 SF lease at Cantera.

Data about Lisle-Naperville office leasing sub-market (which includes Warrenville) is shown and cited in Table 4 below. Within the Lisle-Naperville market, direct office vacancy rates are 18.3%-- a five year low. The vacancy rate for all office properties, including owner occupied office properties, for the Lisle-Naperville sub-market is 15.7%.

**Table 4 : Office Market****Lisle Naperville Office Market**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Total Inventory SF</b>	<b>Direct Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>Sublease Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>Total Vacancy Current Quarter</b>	<b>Total Vacancy Prior Quarter</b>	<b>Net Absorption YTD (SF)</b>	<b>Rents</b>
<b>Class A</b>	50	9,588,138	10.4%	4.2%	14.6%	14.9%	92,411	\$26.47
<b>Class B</b>	127	7,649,577	18.1%	5.8%	23.9%	24.4%	11,293	\$17.37
<b>Class C</b>	25	979,818	11.2%	0.0%	11.2%	11.2%	5,315	\$16.00
<b>Subtotal Local</b>	202	18,217,533	13.7%	4.6%	18.3%	18.7%	86,433	\$19.95

Source: Colliers International Suburban Chicago Office Market Research Report, 2nd Quarter 2014; BDI.

Overall office market rents and Class A office rents have declined since mid-2013. Average rents in the Lisle-Naperville market are \$19.95 PSF. Asking Warrenville office rents, according to Co-Star (a commercial real estate information company that provides building-specific information through a proprietary database of commercial transactions), vary significantly based upon property classification and range from \$10.00-\$22.00 PSF.

The industrial market in the Chicago region has experienced positive trends in sales, leasing, construction (mostly redevelopment), and net absorption during 2014. The overall vacancy rate for the Chicago metropolitan market now stands at 8.43%. The Fox Valley market, which includes Warrenville, generally reflects the Chicago metropolitan market. For the most recent quarter, the vacancy rate increased, from 7.02% to 7.43%. About 30% (2.1 million SF) of the Fox Valley market's vacant space is in properties of 100,000-300,000 SF. Industrial rents PSF for the regional market remain flat at \$4.19 PSF. According to LoopNet, asking rents for available industrial properties in Warrenville range from \$1.00 to \$7.50 PSF. Available listings include one Cantera listing at \$5.35 PSF.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES**

Warrenville's position in the market related to employment uses can be supported through two ongoing strategies. First, maintain the City's existing relationships with major employers in Cantera. This effort can include identifying and implementing cooperative ways that Warrenville's businesses can work together to provide additional amenities to local employees. Second, City staff can work closely with Warrenville's commercial real estate brokers to understand what their prospects want in a location, and how the City can assist them in attracting more business tenants. This kind of collaboration can be the foundation for reducing vacancies and increasing local employment. As with the retail considerations noted above, this work will require a sustained effort over the long-term. In addition, it will help City officials observe any location choice trends (why prospective tenants decide to locate or not locate in Warrenville) and determine what, if any, actions to take in addressing them. .

# Peer Communities

As part of this existing conditions review, three (3) peer communities were identified for comparison research in economic development. The three peer communities examined are: Muskego, Wisconsin; Batavia, Illinois; and Gurnee, Illinois. These communities are comparable in that they are suburbs facing similar economic issues to those of Warrenville (as noted in this report). Among them, they conduct economic development activities that have stood out to the consultant team as best practices; and which present examples of activities that Warrenville may choose to adopt. Batavia has a traditional downtown district. Also, Batavia's community and downtown organizations have developed events and programming designed to engage local residents and foster the community identity. Gurnee has two important regional visitor draws in Six Flags-Great America and Gurnee Mills, but the City is working to strengthen relationships with residents. Muskego most resembles Warrenville, with its multiple lakes and natural amenities, diffuse residential population, abundant highway access, and above average incomes.

The peer assessment process consisted of three (3) steps: reviewing of each community's market characteristics, researching each community's economic development focus, and interviewing local economic development staff. Overall, studying these peer communities seeks to identify each peer's approaches to economic development to inform Warrenville's opportunities.

Demographics for Warrenville and the three peer communities appear below:

**Table 5 : Peer Demographics**

Peer Communities	Warrenville	Batavia	Gurnee	Muskego
<b>Total Population</b>	13,480	26,345	31,424	24,454
<b>Total Households</b>	5,022	9,730	11,614	9,212
<b>Household Size</b>	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
<b>Population Density (per Sq. Mi.)</b>	2,429.46	2,723.00	2,320.88	678.51
<b>Median Age</b>	37.3	41.3	38.6	43.5
<b>Employees</b>	8,171	11,004	13,001	4,859
<b>Jobs Per Household</b>	1.6	1.1	1.1	0.5
<b>Renter Occupied Housing Units</b>	20.0%	22.0%	26.5%	16.2%
<b>Average Household Income</b>	\$96,717	\$111,477	\$110,933	\$101,550
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$74,628	\$88,885	\$83,405	\$84,110
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$36,167	\$41,235	\$41,027	\$38,310
<b>Aggregate Retail Demand</b>	\$111,048,451	\$223,893,635	\$259,052,442	\$217,294,565
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>				
<b>Asian</b>	4.2%	1.9%	11.7%	0.9%
<b>Black</b>	4.0%	2.8%	8.1%	0.2%
<b>White</b>	81.1%	91.1%	71.5%	96.9%
<b>Other</b>	10.4%	3.9%	8.3%	1.6%
<b>Hispanic Ethnicity</b>	21.0%	7.4%	13.5%	2.4%
<b>Not of Hispanic Ethnicity</b>	78.2%	92.5%	86.4%	97.5%

Overall, each community has identical household sizes and generally similar incomes. Muskego's employment base appears lower, but three major employers have relocated there since 2012, including a division of General Electric. Muskego has the least diverse population, and Gurnee is the most diverse. With the exception of Muskego, densities are similar. The housing units in each peer are predominantly owner occupied, with Gurnee as the exception.

## **MUSKEGO, WISCONSIN**

Located in Waukesha County near Milwaukee with access to interstate 43, Muskego represents an appealing location for employers seeking a suburban location. Muskego has three major business and industrial areas with significant available land. The City has been hampered by a lack of available Class A and B office space, and the growth of this sector is a long-term economic objective.

Muskego's City staff has been focused on extensive and pro-active outreach with its business and commercial real estate stakeholders. These activities include business owner visits and surveys. The results are used for retention and recruitment purposes. The City also produces several communications specific to the business community. Additional work on regulatory issues, such as modifying the street numbering system and improving sewer connections, is intended to improve the business climate. The City has also developed an interactive mapping tool for use by commercial brokers and prospective and existing businesses to identify locations, the applicability of incentives, and the business regulatory processes. Incentives available are targeted at improving appearance in all commercial corridors, including two of Muskego's major business parks. The City offers five (5) major incentive programs. A revolving loan fund, providing loans up to \$100,000, is based upon job creation criteria, or \$20,000 per full-time job created. Two programs provide small grants, up to \$5,000, in their business parks for building and site improvements. Both programs support exterior improvements, including signage, landscaping, facades, and positive visual change to building exteriors. Muskego also collaborates with eligible manufacturers for those projects requiring industrial revenue bonds. Finally, the community offers a Business Recruitment Rewards Program for brokers and residents. It is essentially a finder's fee for local efforts to bring new business to the City.

Residential development is primarily condominiums and single-family homes. Like Warrenville, the City has no traditional downtown. Residents enjoy multiple natural amenities and trails, and are interested in additional dining options. Access, traffic and a dispersed population represent challenges to retail and restaurant development. Two major local events, a summer heritage festival and a series of holiday events, are produced locally for residents and visitors.

## **BATAVIA, ILLINOIS**

In its 2014 internal update of the Economic Development element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Batavia is initiating implementation of key economic development goals. Eleven (11) development or redevelopment areas, including its downtown, have been identified for current and future planning-related efforts. A contractor, who is a retired municipal economic development director, directs the City's economic development program.

The City's first goal is to facilitate better and ongoing communication with prospective and existing businesses of all types. This includes the development of retention and recruitment programs, considering the possibility of business licensing, reviewing local regulations for the potential impact on future development within the redevelopment areas, and participating in additional partnerships with the private sector. Batavia recently broadened the applicability of some of its incentives—one example is that signage grants are available for businesses located throughout the community.

Batavia's downtown organization, Batavia Main Street, has developed innovative events, such as the Artisan Collective, Cocktails in the Park, dance and music events, the Windmill City Fest, and holiday events to engage residents and attract visitors from nearby communities. Batavia Main Street works in partnership with the City of Batavia to address downtown's issues comprehensively.

## **GURNEE, ILLINOIS**

Gurnee's competitive advantages include its access to U.S. Highway 41 and Interstate 94 and its central location between Chicago and Milwaukee. Gurnee Mills remains either the first or second leading retail sales tax generator in Lake County. About 30% of the Village's land is commercial and industrial, with 60% residential and 10% as open space.

Gurnee's recent development programs have been designed to streamline local processes. Within the overall community development function, use of the Village website and electronic forms is being used to reduce processing times. The Village offers One Stop Electronic Permitting applications for businesses and residents. The Village has developed a detailed guide to local permitting and zoning requirements specific to businesses of all sizes. Specific licensing and food and beverage tax information is also made available. To enhance economic development efforts, the Village has included a new full-time economic development coordinator position in the upcoming budget.

## RELEVANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

For any city, economic development programs obviously must be customized to the needs, capacities, and desired outcomes of the community. The actions described above from the peer communities provide lessons to be learned and type of programs Warrenville may want to consider adding in the future. Three (3) strategies applicable to Warrenville resulting from the peer research are recommended to be considered as part of the Strategic / Economic Development Plan:

- Communities are using technology to improve service delivery while also seeking to manage costs. It would be wise for the City to continually evaluate how other communities are using technology in their economic development efforts to see if there is application to Warrenville. Many communities use electronic applications and web-based information to reduce staff time allocated to processing forms and responding to inquiries.
- Ongoing and sustained communication with the business community, including local commercial brokers, to enhance the community's business growth and competitive position.
- Recognizing the importance of quality of life issues for residents and the link between residential quality of life and business attraction and retention. Locals may desire retail and restaurant development in certain locations. However, this White Paper has outlined the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of locations. Effectively matching desired uses with sites that can support these uses will be a key to future success. It is the City's responsibility to market its greatest strengths and best sites to the development community and to potential tenants.

Existing market conditions indicate that Warrenville's best short-term economic development opportunities may be strengthening; a) the City's relationship with the existing business community; and b) securing residential development.

- A. Working with the existing business community encompasses several aspects:
  1. helping them remain and grow in Warrenville;
  2. initiating the long-term work with property and center owners to improve business quality and appearance on Route 59; and
  3. working in partnership with local organizations that provide events and services to create additional reasons for residents and employers to remain in Warrenville, and for new residents and businesses to come to the community.
- B. The advantages of further residential development have been outlined earlier. Identifying sites and setting land use policies relative to density will be key.

# Strategic Economic Considerations

The Warrenville Economic Development White Paper was developed in concert with the multiple meetings and focus groups which were conducted with City staff and appointed officials, business owners, citizens, building owners, building tenants, inter-governmental agencies, hotels, tourism organizations, developers, brokers and county-wide economic development corporations with a focus on developing a series of primary strategic economic considerations. More detailed recommendations on these considerations will need to be defined in the Warrenville Strategic / Economic Development Plan, which is in the process of being developed. These strategic economic considerations will fall into the following categories:

- Near unanimous stakeholder understanding and expectations for key economic development issues.
- Evaluation of development assets and prioritization of development options.
- Specific decisions relative to future land use.
- Development of municipal actions and policies relative to development.
- Other supportive activities.
- Consensus building, evaluation and communication.

## **NEAR UNANIMOUS EVALUATIONS OF VARIOUS ISSUES IN WARRENVILLE AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE**

There are multiple key economic issues that appear to have near unanimous consensus from all Warrenville stakeholders. It is relatively unusual to have this level of consensus and therefore they form a very important foundation for all future economic development considerations. While these considerations have full consensus, it will require a very strategic approach to have each consideration successfully work in concert with other considerations. This will be explained further below.

- 1) Stakeholders appreciate the conservative approach the City government has taken to municipal finance and expect it to continue in the future. Reasonable expense management, no debt and only nominal increases in taxes are unusual in the current economic climate and Warrenville has done very well in this regard. However, these accomplishments are now the norm in terms of community expectations. The stakeholders assume that increased revenue needs are expected to come from some other source (i.e. new development revenue, use taxes from hotels, increased tourism, etc. not significantly from existing taxpayers.
- 2) Stakeholders expect that Warrenville will invest in infrastructure, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. It is also expected that the high level of government services will be maintained and enhanced over time. The expectation of municipal investment in concert with the expectation of conservative revenue growth from the current tax base raises an important challenge for the Strategic / Economic Development Plan.
- 3) Stakeholders understand that the amount of available land for development in Warrenville is limited. Also, some of the land is adjacent to forest preserves, contains wetlands and/or is in low traffic locations. They also understand that these factors will make it more difficult to accomplish significant high quality economic development.

- 4) Stakeholders place a high value on the open space in and around Warrentville. While much of the open space actually surrounds Warrentville and is not within the City limits, the large amount of open space has the potential to limit development density on available sites within Warrentville. However, high quality, higher density development generally produces greater net revenue for municipalities. This lack of residential density could complicate the preparation of future balanced budgets with no debt and nominal tax increases.
- 5) Stakeholders feel City staff and elected officials provide a high level of service to the community. They expect this will continue.
- 6) Stakeholder view much of the Route 59 corridor south of Batavia Road as out of character for Warrentville and the expectation is that the City will address this issue over time, although there are few specific recommendations in this regard. Whether this investment is in infrastructure or other partnering relationships with developers, it will either cost money or dilute potential new revenue, which is an important complication to consider in developing long-term financial plans.
- 7) When stakeholders discuss desired new development (except for the developer/broker focus group and the Choose DuPage representatives) they primarily discuss a high-end grocery store as well as higher quality food and beverage establishments. They rarely mention office and housing as economic development (more on housing later). It is also clear that they expect development to be very high quality, contemporary and highly landscaped (not strip centers).
- 8) While the topic of “creating a downtown” and/or having a “central gathering place” for the community came up often, Stakeholders appear to understand that creating a “central gathering place” near City Hall is a much more realistic goal from a market perspective than creating a vibrant “downtown” (lots of successful stores and restaurants) in this location.
- 9) Almost all focus groups mention the “small town feel” as one of Warrentville’s greatest assets. However, their vision for Route 59 is not typical of a “small town” and the type of stores and food and beverage venues the citizens desire are the ones they currently drive to Naperville and other communities to patronize. This dichotomy will be resolved through land availability and market forces, but it will be helpful to communicate in an economic development strategy about the relationship of these issues so that development goals are fully understood in advance.

## **EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSETS AND PRIORITIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS**

It is the opinion of the consultant team that the City's key development assets and best near-term development opportunities when ranked would not be fully consistent with the primary objectives of citizens. The consultants view the top two economic development assets and opportunities for Warrentville, and therefore the best opportunity for enhanced municipal revenue are as follows:

- Cantera (Class A office space)
- Further residential development

Again, new commercial/retail development along Route 59 will be more difficult to achieve and certainly more long term in developing.

### **CANTERA**

The Cantera development is attractive and the owners and tenants located there are pleased with the development. More than once it was referred to as "world class." Pending land availability, it appears that further growth from existing tenants and new tenants will occur. Future creativity relative to parking (i.e. parking decks to accommodate more cars on less land) may be necessary. The relationship between the City and ownership is excellent. Maintaining and enhancing this asset can be accomplished with ongoing hard work by the City, and absent new circumstances, not requiring significant City financial investment.

### **FURTHER RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Residential developers and brokers remain very optimistic about Warrentville as a very good market for new housing development. The issue is the amount of land planned and available for this type of development. As high quality "market rate rental" housing has had much success in area communities, it is a possible development option that has merits in Warrentville. Finally, while highly focused on single-family homes in the "\$400,000 range", developers are open-minded about other housing types (i.e. townhomes).

Citizens do not discuss housing as an economic development opportunity (fees, property taxes, use taxes, and more residents to purchase goods and services). School districts remain concerned about increasing the amount of students. Citizens seem split on housing overall. Some say there is enough and none should be added ("small town feel"). Others would like to see more housing of various types and price points, as well as market-rate rental to meet the needs of younger residents (including their children) and the aging baby boomer population. As mentioned earlier, much of the land available in Warrentville is adjacent to forest preserves, contains wetlands, and/or is located on low traffic count roads. While these factors limit commercial development, the land may still be attractive for housing development. High quality residential development could be accomplished in Warrentville with little or no investment from the City.

Earlier in the White Paper, some advantages of increased residential density were summarized: greater spending power for both existing and new businesses, more housing options for the large employee population in Warrentville, and a more attractive selection of housing options for the community. There are two other advantages of higher density residential:

- Less per capita long-term infrastructure liabilities
- More tax base per acre of land

Finally, it is important to note that much of the vacant and underdeveloped land currently available in the City is either formerly designated or expected to be developed with non-residential land uses. The inconsistency between the positive potential of residential development versus current land use planning will need to be addressed in the Strategic / Economic Development Plan and future land use planning by the City.

## **SPECIFIC DECISIONS RELATIVE TO FUTURE LAND USE**

The following summary conclusions, which were generated as part of the White Paper, suggest the need for the preparation of a new future land use plan, including the potential simultaneous development of a ten-year financial model that evaluates and quantifies the connection between future land use decisions and the City's future financial needs. A joined planning and financial modeling process would help connect the realities of land uses, revenue streams, future City capital expenditures, conservative fiscal policies and market realities. Some stakeholders may be uncomfortable having to view long term land use planning through this prism, but it will be productive and can be utilized continuously as the City benchmarks its activities over the next decade.

Other specific issues that should be addressed during the preparation of a new future land use plan include:

- The need for new revenue streams to meet future expenditure projections.
- A limited amount of developable land.
- A strong citizen interest in open space, which may translate to lower density preferences at development sites.
- Difficult market/economic and physical site condition issues for portions of the available land.
- The need for better consensus on housing development.

The consultant team views the type of development, which was most often discussed by citizen focus groups (grocery, food and beverage, high-end retail clusters), as the most difficult and most expensive for the City to achieve. The market analysis offered earlier in this white paper outlines the challenges. They include:

- Route 59 has older development that would need to be updated, re-tenanted, or removed in order to attract or provide sites for new development and/or more desirable and stable tenants.
- The presence of relatively low traffic counts in certain areas that are either currently zoned or planned for future commercial development.
- Lower household incomes near the Route 59 and Batavia Road intersection.
- Difficult sites at the Route 59 / Route 56 intersection due to fractionalized ownership, significant new infrastructure needs, and extensive wetland and floodplain areas. In short, development will be more difficult, time consuming, and expensive for both the private sector and the public sector at this intersection.
- The area around City Hall becoming a community gathering place is logical, but multiple market conditions make creating a traditional “downtown” unlikely.
- The area around the Warrenville/Batavia/River Road intersections may be a good location for an established regional draw, food and beverage venue site that uses the river as an amenity (such as Two Brothers Brewing Company and Tap House). This would require removal of some older structures and resolving the issue relative to the potential reconfiguration of the intersections. Given the relatively low traffic counts at this intersection, it is likely that only a business with an established reputation would seek a large site if it were to be created.
- Some sites along Route 56 are possible for economic development, but traffic counts remain an issue and the ability to cluster more than one major business appears to be difficult without consolidation of properties.
- DuPage County remains a car-oriented environment and Warrenville is no different. Citizens have already established their shopping/food and beverage habits, and it will take high quality and unique development in order to attract citizens to a newly developed location vs. their current shopping/dining patterns.

The above analysis does not suggest that development is impossible, just that it will be more difficult and time consuming. Accordingly, in the short term, strategic efforts may be more focused on working with existing property owners to clean-up/fix up their property and perhaps developing a targeted effort for one or two key sites in partnership with key property owners and/or highly desirable businesses. Also, given Warrenville’s positive reputation, it is possible that the market will support the unanticipated development of an unexpected high quality project in the City as the economy improves. Warrenville staff and elected officials appear to be fully prepared to respond.

## DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL ACTIONS AND POLICIES RELATIVE TO DEVELOPMENT

Once a consensus-built, land use/financial plan has been developed, the City may wish to review its already excellent economic development process, policies and tools to see how they match with the newly developed land use/financial plan. Key questions to consider may be:

- Is another TIF necessary (i.e. Route 59)? Should it be the entire corridor or should it be focused on non-vacant land?
- How should the City structure its resources and priorities within the Strategic / Economic Development Plan to meet City goals?
- Is there consensus on what other municipal economic development “tools” or assistance might be made available?
- Are there key property owners and/or key tenants who should be more involved in exploring site development opportunities?
- Are there underwriting standards, which assure that any municipal partnering will be done in a manner to support the financial objectives while limiting the City’s risk to the greatest extent possible?
- Are there opportunities for even greater outreach to County resources (i.e. the DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB) and Choose DuPage) to explore opportunities that may first come to their attention?
- Can a transparent, internal benchmarking process be established with staff and elected officials so that progress and challenges within the newly developed Strategic / Economic Development Plan can be tracked on a frequent basis (similar to the benchmarking which is done in the current plan)?

Actions and policies to address these issues should be developed as part of the Strategic / Economic Development Plan and follow-up progress reports should be provided to all stakeholders on a regularly scheduled basis.

## OTHER SUPPORTIVE ACTIVITIES

While the majority of the economic development discussion in this White Paper has focused on land use, new site development, and fully re-developed older site development, there are other issues that were noted by the various stakeholder groups that could potentially have an impact on future City economic development efforts, and, therefore should be noted. They include:

- 1) The University of Illinois report discussed an aging population and the potential need for more senior services in the future. While not a pure economic issue, it is a potential growing cost of service delivery, which should be included in any financial plan.
- 2) The potential role of tourism as an economic engine was discussed frequently, in terms of taking advantage of the natural resources, extensive open space and unique outdoor recreational amenities in the area. Other opportunities identified included creating more events and activities (particularly on the weekends), and better connecting regional draw events with the interests of local hotels. It is worth discussing what the City of Warrenville views as its appropriate role in accelerating this activity.
- 3) There was some discussion about code enforcement. It was not entirely clear there was a consensus in this regard. Some wished for stronger enforcement (i.e. poorly maintained houses) while others were opposed to a “heavier hand of government.” The issue was not significant but is worth further discussion.
- 4) The peer community section of the White Paper discussed how other communities are using technology to enhance the provision of service while helping to control expenses. Warrenville does this now and it is suggested that the City keep abreast of innovative new uses of technology in other cities, which may be beneficial to Warrenville.
- 5) Finally, there was some discussion of the signage ordinance and whether or not its flexibility could be enhanced. Again, not a significant issue but something the City should continue to carefully consider when businesses make specific requests.

## **CONSENSUS BUILDING, EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION**

As has been discussed throughout the White Paper, the community stakeholders have been most appreciative of the outreach and are very much looking forward to further discussion and ultimately the Strategic/Economic Development Plan.

The sense of the consultant team is that the stakeholders (with emphasis on citizens) are thoughtful and engaged, and very interested in the future of their community. Accordingly, the process of developing land use plans in concert with ten-year municipal financial plans is strongly advised. There are many communities where such a process would not work. The consultant team believes it can work in Warrentville and ultimately the community will be much stronger as a result.

These same stakeholders will be expecting a strong benchmarking program from staff and elected officials concerning success (and problems) with a transparent and regular reporting process. Again, the consultant team believes all of this can work in Warrentville.