

# Village of Big Rock Comprehensive Plan

## Public Visioning Charrette Summary of Results

### Summary

#### Public Visioning Charrette Results

The Village of Big Rock's Comprehensive Plan has included extensive public involvement, with input about the community's future received from stakeholders at multiple points during the planning process. On July 8, 2013, approximately 30 residents and Village officials gathered at the Big Rock Fire Department Community Room to partake in a visioning workshop, during which participants divided up into smaller groups to envision the Village's future through a mapping exercise. The ideas and suggestions that were generated by this exercise are outlined in the following summary.

### Overview

During this workshop, participants responded to a series of questions outlined in a discussion workbook. From these questions, residents developed ideas about topics including history, image and identity, commercial development, transportation, parks and open space, community facilities and infrastructure, residential, and agriculture and environmental ideas. After the exercise, each smaller group of participants reported their top two important ideas to the larger group, and then all participants voted individually – using live, interactive polling technology – for the idea they thought is most important to address to plan the future of Big Rock.

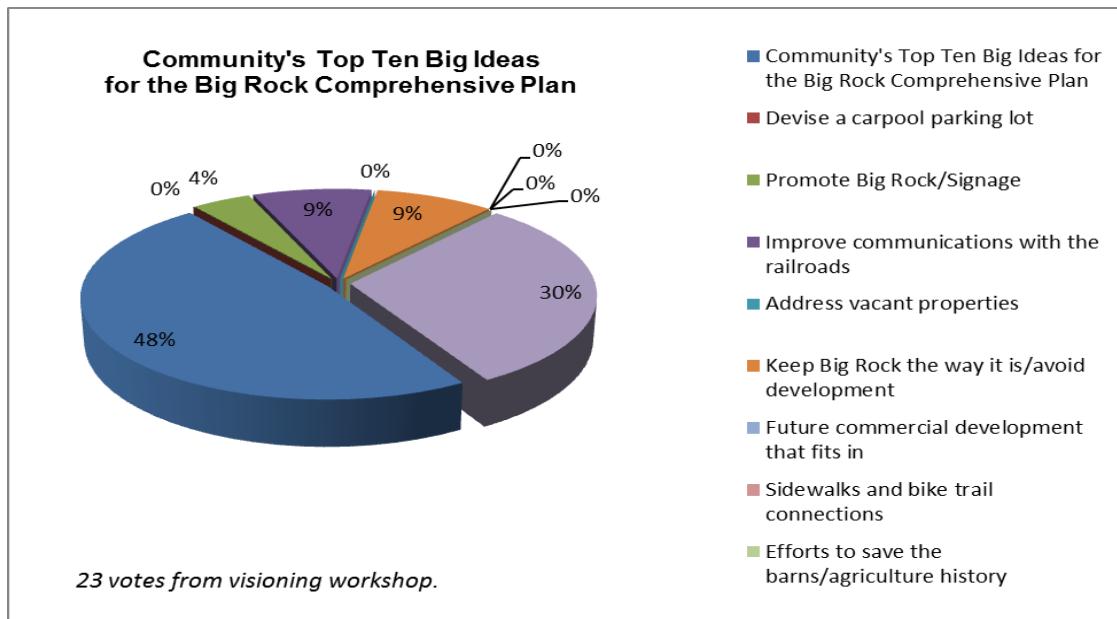
### The “Big Ideas”

Each of the smaller groups were asked to provide two of their most important ideas from the mapping exercise. Although all of the ideas and comments will be taken into consideration, by making each group choose only two ideas, a view of the attendees' most pressing concerns and important projects becomes more visible.

The *top ten ideas* expressed during the meeting and voted on by individuals at the workshop were:

1. Enforce standards and improve image/clean Route 30
  - a. *This idea garnered the most interest and votes from the public, with 42% of participants choosing this as the most important project to pursue for the Village's future.*
2. Devise a carpool parking lot
3. Work with neighboring communities to promote Big Rock/Signage
4. Improve communications with the railroads/train crossings
5. Address vacant properties
6. Keep Big Rock the way it is/avoid development

7. Future commercial development that fits in
8. Sidewalks and bike trail connections
9. Efforts to save the barns/agriculture history
10. Town drainage



## History, Image and Identity

Attendees mainly focused their ideas on ways that the Village could improve their main entrance into the community; US Route 30, as well as their desire to preserve their rural character.

Ideas expressed to improve the appearance of the **US Route 30 Corridor** included:

- Enforce ordinance for preservation and current property standards
- Control growth
- Improve appearance and landscape of the corridor
- Encourage residents to mow their lawns
- Address outside storage issue and remove junk from front of properties
- Improve communication among residents of US Route 30

Participants suggested the Village takes the following action steps to continue to preserve the **rural character and history** of Big Rock:

- Create a zoning ordinance to identify land use of farm and non-farm
- Support community plowing match association
- Establish a Historical Society
- Encourage more rural-oriented businesses and events
- Maintain and preserve farmland
- Keep out “big box” stores
- Support farming

- Support horse riding trails
- Preserve train station

Other ideas to support the **image and identity** of Big Rock include:

- Maintain single family residence –no high density housing
- Keep Big Rock the way it is –make small changes
- Involved new and more people
- Create a chamber of commerce to help promote local businesses
- Enforce ordinance for property care
- Work with BSNF
- Create events that fit in with the social and character of town
- Find assistance programs (fixed income) to help the elderly residents
- Maintain and improve the outdoor landscaping

## Commercial Ideas

Residents would like to see new business that could help draw in traffic and complement existing businesses. Participants also suggest creating a Chamber of Commerce to assist current businesses better market themselves for residents and outside neighbors to know what is available. Other commercial ideas include making Route 30 more presentable with sidewalks, banners, nice signage, and welcome to Big Rock signs.

The type of future businesses that residents would like to see include:

- Businesses along Route 30 that attract a younger generation
- Outdoor activities supply –possibly along Granart Rd to supply the camp ground
- Boutique grocery store for fresh foods, crafty type (independent) –similar to Esther's place
- Farmers market
- Grocery store
- Casey's
- Pizza restaurant
- Pet and agricultural supply store
- Hardware store for hard to get items
- Office supply store
- Industrial park
- Home-based crafts
- Professional service offices, i.e. Lawyers etc.
- Independent car dealership
- No big box stores

## Transportation Ideas

Attendees focused on how the village could improve its transportation and circulation system for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles as well as ways to improve rail crossings through the village.

To address the issue with the **rail crossings and delays caused by trains**, participants suggest:

- Supporting the idea of an overpass with the extension of Dauberman Road to Granart Road.
- Address noise issue at second crossing east of town
- Wayside horn or median crossing
- Make second track longer so that it is long enough to hold train
- Move trains elsewhere

**Road improvements and types of improvements** participants would like to see include:

- US Route 30
- Hinckley Road
- Granart Road –needs infrastructure improvements
- Redo old town roads
- Residential streets
- All roads inside Village
- Widen the streets
- No curb and gutters
- Feasibility of an underpass somewhere in town
- Collaboration with Forest Preserve and Kane County
- Speed monitor at Granart Road –police it.

Overall, participants would like to see more **sidewalks and bike trails** to link areas in town and provide alternative non-motorized access to neighboring communities. Specific recommendations include:

- Extend side of roads for add bike pads
- Create a bike trail parallel to Route 30
- Bike trail from the Big Rock Park to the town center
- Bike trail along rail tracks, and east to the forest preserve
- Connect Madison Street to the Fire Department
- Sidewalks from 4<sup>th</sup> street to Price Road
- Match all sidewalks –sidewalks are needed, but not a priority
- Improve what is there and finish what has started

Participants recommend that the Village develop a capital plan to allocate a budget for new road construction and re-construction.

## Parks and Open Space

Participants were generally satisfied with the existing conditions of the parks, as well as the quantity of open space. However, some ideas to improve access and quality of the parks include:

- Connect the parks
- Sidewalks and trails to access parks
- More kid-oriented
- Additional land for plowing near Plowmens Park.
- Garden plots/Community gardens for food production.

- Satellite park in each subdivision.
- Create a public and private park.

## Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Most participants would like infrastructure improvements to be made to address drainage issues, particularly in certain areas of the village:

- In the field at intersection of Rhodes Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- Within the Welton subdivision
- Near the school

Other infrastructure improvements and community services include:

- New sidewalks
- Bury power lines and cables
- Create a bigger tile for the north watershed.
- Parking lot to encourage car polling
- Welcome wagon
- Something for senior citizens to do.
- Accessible and affordable telecommunications and wi-fi services/high speed internet.

Other residents believe the village should first focus on its current projects, and suggest holding off on future community and infrastructure improvements until current assessments are finalized.

## Residential Ideas

Most residents expressed that there was no need for future housing development given their desire to maintain the rural character of Big Rock. However, ideas for where they would like new infill homes constructed, and projects to improve residential areas are listed below:

- Improve streets
- Nicer sidewalks
- Better snow plowing
- Connect parks with walkable and bike trails
- Growth within if there is a need for future development
- Fill empty lots without creating large subdivisions
- HUD housing –affordable housing
- Horse-centered sustainable community
- Create a community similar to Prairie Crossings in Grayslake
- Discourage two-unit homes and rental properties unless owners agree to higher and upkeep the visual standards.
- No more satellites

## Agriculture and Environmental Ideas

Residents would like to preserve as much high quality agriculture as possible and many groups stated that they would like assistance from government grants to help farmers preserve their property and save old barns.