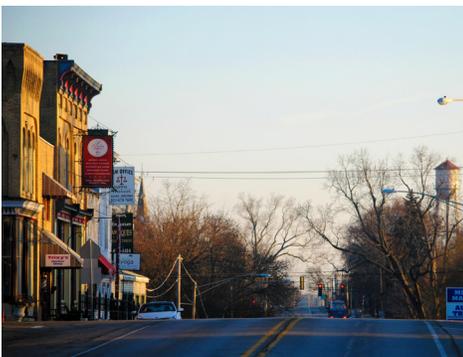




Village of Richmond Developer Discussion Panel



Summary Report

August 2017



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning



Urban Land Institute
Chicago

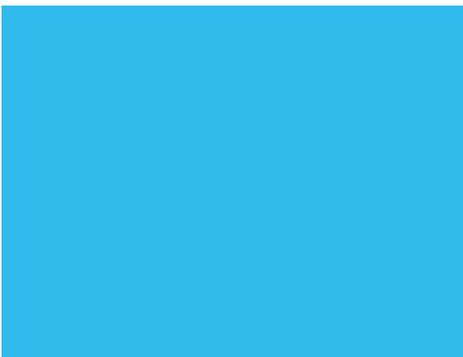


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Introduction

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) developed and now guides the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that will help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. It provides principles that municipalities and counties can apply when they decide how and where development should happen or which infrastructure investments to make in their communities. The plan recommends supporting local planning through grant programs, infrastructure investments to implement plans, technical assistance, and collaboration between municipalities on shared priorities.

CMAP established the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program to direct resources to communities pursuing planning work that helps to implement GO TO 2040. Since launching this program in 2011, CMAP has initiated more than 160 projects with local governments, nonprofits, and intergovernmental organizations to address local issues at the intersection of transportation, land use, and housing, including the natural environment, economic growth, and community development. For each project, CMAP conducts the technical work but coordinates closely with community representatives to ensure that the project reflects local concerns and priorities. After a plan is adopted, CMAP will remain involved to monitor and encourage progress on the implementation actions specified in the plan.

As part of these efforts, CMAP is working with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) in Chicago to provide guidance and advice to communities that have completed LTA projects on ways to attract investment and strengthen developer connections.

Background

The Village of Richmond requested technical assistance from CMAP to help plan for the Village's future. With support from CMAP's LTA program, the Village studied the full range of opportunities, assets, and needs in Richmond to help determine what type of planning is most important for the Village to undertake next. The project culminated in a "planning priorities report" that recommends a number of planning priorities for the Village to pursue. The Richmond Village Board accepted the report in 2016, setting the stage for Richmond to pursue future plans and projects.

The [Village of Richmond Planning Priorities Report](#) includes a vision for the community's future and recommends a wide variety of planning projects that could address its future needs and investment priorities for the downtown, residential areas, commercial corridors, infrastructure, transportation system, and parks and open space. Since Richmond has been the subject of numerous planning studies that focused broadly on community character and natural resources, CMAP staff and the Village determined that a more narrowly targeted planning project, which the Village can effectively implement to deliver short-term results, would be the most effective next step for Richmond. The report outlined one primary recommendation and



two other recommendations for the Village to pursue based on Richmond's current conditions and needs.

The report's primary recommendation is for the Village to develop a master plan for its historic downtown. Richmond's downtown is a point of pride in the community and could be a major asset in the Village's efforts to recruit and retain residents, businesses, and visitors. CMAP also recommended that the Village update its Unified Development Ordinance to address a number of the concerns expressed by stakeholders, including support for local businesses, the impact of future development, and preservation of natural resources. In addition to these recommendations, CMAP suggested that the Village apply through CMAP to be considered for a ULI developer discussion panel, in which unbiased experts provide feedback and advice on how to attract development that is in line with the goals of the community.

The CMAP/ULI developer discussion panel, which took place on July 11, 2017, provided feedback to the Village about general downtown development challenges as well as on key sites, including the former Hunter Golf Course along IL Route 173. This report summarizes the panel's key recommendations and suggested strategies for the Village to effectively attract new development.

Developer Panel Participants

- Chris Coleman, Buckingham Properties, Inc.
- Anastacia Fratto, ResElevate
- Swasti Shah, ULI Chicago
- Jon Talty, OKW Architects
- Diane Williams, Business Districts, Inc.

Village of Richmond Participants

- Bob Elliot, Trustee
- Craig Kunz, Village President
- Karla Thomas, Village Clerk
- Ram Wardanian, Trustee



Key Recommendations

The panel admired the existing amenities in Richmond and recommends that the Village capitalize on and leverage these amenities through improved publicity and promotional efforts to increase visitors to the downtown. A new or updated branding, marketing, and wayfinding strategy that highlights the Village's existing businesses and proximity to Lake Geneva, the Chain O'Lakes, Nippersink Creek, and the Prairie Trail would attract passing travelers to Lake Geneva to stop in Richmond to shop or eat. Additionally, encouraging the businesses adjacent to the Prairie Trail to offer bike-friendly amenities (snacks, water, tire pump stations, etc.) would encourage users to stop and spend time in downtown Richmond.

The panel also recommends the Village develop a cohesive long-range vision for the downtown and surrounding areas with support and guidance from the stakeholders in town. Because many of the opportunities for development in the Village are privately-owned, Richmond leadership should establish and strengthen relationships with the local landowners and banks to ensure that they support the Village's vision for the future.

Short-term opportunities and actions

The panel suggests the Village create a separate page on their website to publicize and promote downtown amenities and merchants. This page should also be formatted as a mobile site, and advertised as one that visitors can use to navigate the Village. Additionally, the current Development Information Packet (2017) should be revised to include downtown local businesses and area natural amenities.

The ULI team also recommends that the Village update their signage throughout downtown to point visitors (and passersby) to the downtown local businesses, nearby amenities, and available parking. Signage should be located at all entry points to the Village to let drivers on Route 173 and Route 12 that they are entering Richmond.

Lastly, the Village should work with the local businesses adjacent to the Prairie Trail to try out a "pop-up" bike repair kiosk or "checkpoint" that offers water, snacks, and a resting area during a high traffic time, such as a weekend morning or afternoon. This can be promoted as a one-day trial event, or over multiple days to garner and increase interest in the trail and adjacent local businesses.

Long-term opportunities and actions

The ULI team recommends that, over time, the Village work to **build and strengthen relationships** with local landowners, local businesses, and the organizers of large annual events taking place in or near the Richmond. Building, strengthening, and maintaining these relationships should, however, begin immediately and be an ongoing focus. Establishing open lines of communication to collaboratively discuss the future uses of the development sites will be beneficial to both the Village and to local landowners. Developing these relationships can



ensure that future land use plans are created in partnership. Engaging the **Chamber of Commerce** to see whether the Village can provide support is another way to build a relationship with the local businesses. The Village should ask, “What can we do to help?” Working with area **commercial brokers** to discuss any tenant issues and trends in uses can help identify ways the Village can provide assistance and support business attraction.

The ULI team also recommends that the Village apply to the CMAP LTA program in 2018 or 2019 for a **downtown master plan**. This endeavor, if selected by CMAP, would help establish a framework for moving forward with planning and economic development in Richmond. This master plan should include recommendations to improve the Village’s image/brand efforts, streetscaping and wayfinding along Main Street, and ways to revise and streamline the zoning ordinance to attract investment. Successful LTA applicants illustrate previous implementation attempts and success; therefore, it is important for the Village to focus on the Next Steps outlined below over the next 1-2 years to position themselves for future LTA assistance.

Next Steps

The Village should immediately begin to build and strengthen relationships with landowners and local businesses with in-person meetings to inform the community of the new administration’s goals, objectives and direction. This includes the bank-owned Hunter Golf Course property, which has been closed and for sale for quite some time. By engaging the bank in discussions now, the Village can create an opportunity to work collaboratively with ownership on future land use plans.

Additionally, the Village Board should explore improvements to the Village website to highlight the downtown’s businesses and amenities. An inset map on the “Location Map” page of the website that specifically illustrates the downtown local businesses would be a great addition.

Lastly, the ULI panel recommends the Village immediately move the “Welcome to Richmond” sign currently located on the South side of Route 173 (Kenosha Street) to the North side of Route 173 to capture eastbound traffic. The Village may also consider updating the sign to remove the “Antique” shops reference if this is no longer applicable.

