2019/2020 Local Technical Assistance and Community Planning Programs

Application Number: 51

Project Title: Glen Ellyn Zoning Update

Applicant: Village of Glen Ellyn

Project Description:

The Village of Glen Ellyn is known for its high quality of life and charm, which has generated significant development interest and created a quickly changing economic landscape. The Village recently approved two significant, but controversial, transit-oriented development projects within its historic downtown, and has seen reinvestment in its residential and commercial areas throughout the Village. Additionally, the Village is actively pursuing upgrades to its Metra station to improve transit service. The Glen Ellyn Metra station is the ninth-busiest of the 233 Metra stations outside downtown Chicago. Unfortunately, the codified review process itself and the outdated zoning requirements have failed to keep up with the demand for sustainable, affordable, and transit oriented development. For affordable housing in particular, the Village's zoning code encourages lot consolidation and tear down rebuilds on larger lots, removing, existing stock on smaller, more affordable lots, and adds procedural burdens to building diverse housing types.

Although the Village has recently supported two large TOD projects, which will add more than 150 multi-family units to the downtown, these projects suffered through significant procedural challenges, a large number of deviations from the code, and a time-consuming process for both the developer and staff. The code also limits development outside of downtown, particularly along the busy Roosevelt Road/IL-38 corridor, where the lack of proper zoning has led to complicated planned unit developments even for smaller, less complex sites. Residential areas struggle from confusing development standards, few zoning considerations for sustainability, and a lack of housing options. A previously affordable area, Glen Ellyn is quickly becoming an unattainable community in which to rent or buy property, as long term residents are pushed out due to excessive tax burdens and new residents struggle to find housing they can afford. The predominately large single family housing supply means that the Village lacks housing for seniors, diverse families, and middle-class residents, despite a proven market demand for housing other than single-family homes.

The Village has been laying the groundwork for an update to the zoning code for several years. In 2016 and 2017, the Village previously applied for CMAP's Local Technical Assistance Program for an update to the Village's 2001 Comprehensive Plan, but was not awarded assistance. The Village then hired a consultant to complete the update, which is nearing its final stages before adoption. The update thus far reiterates the need for significant zoning changes.

Staff routinely brings smaller zoning text amendments forward when it is feasible, and is working on amendments for parking requirement reductions and “missing middle” housing support, but is struggling to make the overall necessary improvements due to the complexity of the task and lack of time to pursue such a huge endeavor in addition to the day-to-day functions of municipal planning. Assistance from CMAP's Local Technical Assistance Program to update the Zoning Code would help the Village to address these local and regional issues while achieving the goals of ON TO 2050 and serving as a template for planning success in the region.

Project Location: Village of Glen Ellyn boundary