



**Village of Carpentersville Old Town Plan:
Implementation Status Update
July 31, 2014**

The Carpentersville Old Town Plan was completed in July 2012 through a partnership between the Village of Carpentersville and CMAP. As part of the plan, CMAP committed to remain involved for a period of two years to assist with the implementation of the plan's recommendations. Over the last two years, CMAP has held quarterly discussions with Village staff to talk over implementation activities, and the Village has undertaken several activities.

Current and Upcoming Projects

CMAP has begun a new Fox River Corridor Plan in cooperation with the Villages of Carpentersville and Algonquin that will further support many recommendations of the Old Town Plan. In addition, CMAP has partnered with Kane County to create a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for the Village of Carpentersville. The HIA will examine options to address traffic and safety issues at the Washington/Main Street intersection and nearby Fox River trail crossing.

Potential Tax-Increment Finance District

The Village is currently considering the creation of a new tax increment financing (TIF) district for the Old Town area. The creation of a TIF district would assist in funding several infrastructure improvements. Possible projects envisioned include constructing a roundabout, replacing a culvert to reduce flooding, burying utility lines, and acquiring property along the Fox River.

Implementation Status

The Old Town Plan identified a number of key activities that were expected to occur within the first two years of adoption. In light of Old Town's unique situation, the plan's implementation strategies have been grouped into four main categories based on responsibility. In the first category are actions that are primarily the responsibility of the public sector, such as regulatory change or infrastructure investment. The second category contains actions that are primarily the responsibility of private businesses or landowners or relate to private development without extensive public sector involvement. The third category includes actions that require extensive coordination between the public and private sectors and will not succeed unless close coordination occurs. Finally, a fourth and more minor implementation category includes studies and surveys that would help to inform other recommendations but are not truly implementation actions without other follow-up activity.

The following summarizes each key recommendation identified within the Plan's four categories, discusses the activities that were completed or are underway, and identifies actions that should continue to be worked on:

Public Sector

1. Update the Village's zoning ordinance to better accommodate the types of development desired by the community.

The Old Town Plan recommends that the Village update its zoning ordinance so that it can accommodate mixed-use developments within the area.

Steps Completed

After the Plan was adopted, the Village created an "OTR Old Town Residential" zoning district for residential areas just outside Old Town. The Village is considering the creation of new "OTM Old Town Mixed Use" zoning district in the 2014-15 budget year.

Moving Forward

The Village should continue make updates to its zoning ordinance to support the types of development desired within Old Town. The creation of a new mixed-use classification for Old Town would be a logical next step. The zoning ordinance should also be updated to include development setbacks that will support buildings positioned at or near the front property lines. Parking requirements should also be reviewed and updated to a shared parking factor to lessen parking requirements for existing/new businesses.

2. Create a greenway between Carpenter Park and the Fox River.

The Old Town Plan identifies the creation of a new public greenway along Carpenter Creek that connects Carpenter Park and the Fox River. This would require acquisitions or easements from private property owners and the use of the southern section of the current public works facility property. The majority of the property identified as a future greenway is within the floodplain and is heavily wooded.

Steps Completed

The Village has made great strides towards achieving this goal. The Village contracted with UpLand Design, a landscape architecture firm, to create a park plan for Carpenter Park and the Greenway. Last year, the Village received an Open Spaces Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant administered by IDNR. The \$400,000 grant will assist in paying for improvements to Carpenter Park (see attached concept plan).

Moving Forward

The Village should continue to improve Carpenter Park as proposed and also work towards property acquisition and development of the greenway as envisioned. Staff is considering the use of potential TIF funds to help with property acquisition. After acquisition, the Village plans to apply for OSLAD

funding for park construction. The recently started Fox River Corridor Plan will support the addition of new public open space along the riverfront.

3. Enhance intersections for pedestrian safety.

The Old Town Plan recommends installing new pedestrian crossings at key locations within the area. As intersections are improved over time, especially at Main Street and Washington Street, pedestrian crosswalks should be included in the construction project. If possible, the use of brick pavers at crosswalks could build on the historic look of Old Town and should be considered in the streetscaping program.

Steps Completed

Although the Village has researched the cost of installing their preferred type of pedestrian crossings, they have not yet included crosswalk construction into their annual budget. Staff is waiting to see if a TIF district will be created in the area and if those funds could be used to install new crossings.

Moving Forward

The Village should continue to move forward with the installation of pedestrian crossings in the Old Town area, especially at key points along Main Street. Moving forward, the Village should also include the creation of highly visible pedestrian crossings in their plans for a new Washington and Main Street roundabout. Pedestrian crossings will likely be discussed in the upcoming HIA project that will be led by Kane County and CMAP.

Private Sector

4. Share parking spaces between commercial, office, and residential uses.

The Plan recommends that owners coordinate to share parking spaces during different times of the day. This may decrease the number of off-street parking spaces needed in Old Town and also can make redevelopment easier and less expensive.

Steps Completed

Village staff has discussed this concept with business owners in Old Town, but no shared parking arrangements have been made.

Moving Forward

The Village should work with property owners, especially Otto Engineering, to monitor parking usage in the area and, if necessary, continue to support shared parking spaces. This may begin naturally without the need for formal agreements as Otto Engineering continues to purchase properties within Old Town. In the near future, this may result in most commercial and business parking lots in the area to shift to single-ownership.

5. Screen ComEd substation.

ComEd should screen its substation, which was noted throughout the planning process as an aesthetic problem in Old Town.

Steps Completed

Over the last two years the Village has held many discussions with ComEd representatives regarding this issue. Unfortunately no solutions have been agreed upon due to cost.

Moving Forward

The Village should continue to work with ComEd to determine if the substation can either be relocated or better screened. Possible screening options include a brick wall, additional landscaping, or a combination of both.

6. Pursue new retail and residential development.

The Old Town Plan recommends that new retail and residential development should be constructed in the area.

Steps Completed

After the Plan was adopted, Otto Engineering purchased additional buildings and has undertaken a number of high-quality renovations. These newly-renovated buildings are being marketed for retail and office uses. Otto Engineering recently purchased the former Milk Specialties building at the southern end of the study area.

Moving Forward

The Village should continue to work with and support Otto Engineering in its plans to construct commercial uses on its property. Similarly, plans to construct new rowhomes on the west side of Lincoln Avenue should also continue to be pursued. This action is tied to the Village's update of its zoning ordinance, which is expected to allow and encourage these land use changes.

Both Public and Private Sector

7. Meet with current property owners to pursue property acquisition or easements along the Fox River.

The Plan recommends that the Village meet with property owners along the riverfront and begin discussions to determine if parcel acquisition or easements are possible. If property owners are interested, the Village should begin to acquire open space or enter into easements to improve public access to the river.

Also included in this action was investigating the feasibility of converting the existing abandoned rail bridge into a bicycle/pedestrian bridge. Unfortunately, shortly after the Plan was adopted, a large section of the bridge collapsed into the river. At this time, the future of the bridge is unclear. However, the Village did meet with Mr. Roeser and he was not in favor of having a bike trail run through his property to align with the bridge.

Steps Completed

The Village has held discussions with Mr. Roeser and the owners of Quiltmaster and M&M Exposed Aggregate regarding possible acquisitions or easements along the Fox River. It is our understanding that no agreements have been reached.

Moving Forward

The Village should work with both M&M Exposed Aggregate and Quiltmaster to determine if possible acquisitions and/or alternative locations would be feasible. The Village should also work with Mr. Roeser to determine if easements along the river for public trails would be possible.

8. Create and begin to use a marketing strategy, attracting visitors and potential shoppers into Old Town.

The Plan recommends that the Village work with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to create a new marketing strategy and continue to hold community events in Old Town.

Steps Completed

At this time, no new marketing strategy has been created. The Village of Carpentersville continues to partner with other groups such as the Park District to hold community events at Carpenter Park. Examples of events include the Easter Egg Scramble, Kickoff to Summer, Rock the Fox, Father's Day Cookout, and movies in the park. The successful OSLAD grant application included improvements to the existing bandshell that will continue to support community events in Carpenter Park.

Moving Forward

The Village should hold events at Carpenter Park, and as development occurs within Old Town, more events should be held at either Triangle Park or a closed Wisconsin Street.

The Village should also create a marketing strategy that includes promotional materials, meetings, and presentations about benefits of opening a business in Old Town. This should be given to the development community and realtors association.

In addition to events, the Village should work with the Dundee Township Historical Society to establish a self-guided walking tour of the historical sites in Old Town.

Studies and Plans

9. Determine if a Special Service Area (SSA) would be desirable and/or feasible for Old Town to pay for capital improvements.

The Plan recommends that the Village conduct a study to determine if a SSA would be appropriate and feasible in Old Town and what capital improvement projects could be funded through such a funding tool.

Steps Completed

At this time, the Village is determining if a TIF district would be possible in the Old Town area.

Moving Forward

The Village should continue to work with its TIF consultant to determine if such a financial tool would be feasible and appropriate in the Old Town area. If desirable, the Village should move forward with the creation of a TIF district and use funds to complete necessary infrastructure projects. Although the Old Town Plan recommended studying an SSA for the area, an SSA would no longer be necessary if a TIF district were created.

10. Conduct an annual parking survey.

The Plan recommends that the Village conduct an annual parking survey to determine how public and private parking spaces are being used in Old Town.

Steps Completed

Village staff has met with CMAP staff to learn how to best conduct an annual parking survey.

Moving Forward

Village staff should conduct an annual parking survey on their own or in conjunction with Otto Engineering. As redevelopment begins to occur within Old Town, the importance of conducting a parking study will likely increase.

11. Conduct a market analysis to guide redevelopment.

The Plan recommends that the Village create a market analysis which examines different types of redevelopment in Old Town. This could be done in partnership with major landowners and developers, such as Otto Engineering, so that the study could examine both the feasibility of different longer-term developments and the immediate viability of new commercial and residential development, as currently proposed.

Steps Completed

At this time, no market analysis has been conducted.

Moving Forward

The Village should hire a consultant to create a market analysis for the Old Town area, either as a stand-alone project or as part of the TIF project.

Conclusion

As CMAP's two-year commitment comes to a close, we want to encourage the Village of Carpentersville to continue to work towards implementing the plan. The Village and the community, including Otto Engineering's Tom Roeser, should be commended for all that has been accomplished. CMAP will continue to touch base on an annual basis concerning project implementation and would appreciate updates on significant activities and progress. Thank you for your participation in the LTA program, and we look forward to working with you again in the future.