

Section 3:

A Vision for Sugar Grove

On Thursday, October 23, 2003, a Visioning Workshop for the *Comprehensive Plan* was conducted at the municipal building in Sugar Grove, Illinois. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a Vision Statement that describes Sugar Grove as it will be in the year 2014.

Workshop Session

Participants in the Visioning Workshop included Sugar Grove Village Board, Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, business owners, Planning and Zoning Commissioners, Village staff, and interested residents.

Following a brief discussion of the planning process for the Sugar Grove assignment, the participants were asked to identify issues by creating a wish list of public and private sector projects or improvements and by identifying any problems or obstacles that could limit the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. A summary of the written statements prepared by all workshop participants are presented later in this report.

As part of the issue identification process, participants were separated into seven work groups. The groups were created by sequentially numbering participants with numbers one through seven. Each group separated from others and performed the next steps of the visioning session at a separate table, working only with participants in their group.

Each group was asked to describe the Village of Sugar Grove as they hoped it would be in the year 2014. In particular, the groups were asked to articulate the accomplishments and achievements that had been made since the Village's Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2004. To assist the groups with

developing and illustrating their vision, each group was given a base map of Downtown Sugar Grove.

After developing their vision the seven groups were asked to present their vision to the larger group for review and discussion.

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement, presented at the end of this section, has been prepared by the Consultant and is based primarily on the workshop described above. However, the Vision Statement also takes into consideration the results of other work activities undertaken as part of the ongoing planning process.

The Vision Statement is intended to be a retrospective that chronicles the accomplishments and achievements that have been undertaken in Sugar Grove since the Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2004.

The Vision Statement provides important focus and direction in the preparation of the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations during the next phases of the planning process.

It should be emphasized that the Vision Statement is intended to provide a brief, overall snapshot of Sugar Grove in the Year 2014. While it incorporates the main ideas and recurring themes discussed at the workshop, it does not include all of the specific projects and actions suggested by participants or smaller workgroups. However, many of these specifics will be incorporated into later phases of the planning program, as more detailed plans and policies are developed for the Sugar Grove community.

Issues Identification Summary

List three new private sector projects or developments you would like to see undertaken within Sugar Grove.

The three most commonly mentioned private sector improvements were:

- 1) the redevelopment of a town center (6 responses each);
- 2) development of an industrial park, a shopping center, and creative retail development along IL Route 47 (as opposed to strip center “cookie cutter” type development) (5 responses each); and
- 3) attracting a major grocery store (such as Jewel) and downtown retail development (3 responses each).

Projects mentioned once included: a town newspaper, a movie theater, a volunteer center, a bowling alley, a quilt shop, controlled retail growth, limited commercial growth, controlled residential growth that is concurrent with infrastructure growth, higher density housing, a private/public golf course or recreational area, neighborhood residential growth, a drug store, restaurants, a golf course community, more entertainment options, corporate office development along I-88, a research business park, a business conference center, expanded park district and to limit banks from building on prime locations.

List three new public-sector projects or improvements you would like to see undertaken within Sugar Grove.

The three most commonly mentioned public sector improvements were:

- 1) improve the park district and create a forest preserve or some other means to preserve green space (5 responses each);
- 2) build a better library and improve the water supply (3 responses each); and

- 3) build a better bike trail system, improve the roads, develop a town center, improve and expand the fire and police departments, preserve historic structures, widen Route 47 from Yorkville to I-88, and build a Bliss Road entrance/exit to I-88 (2 responses each).

Projects mentioned once include: curbside pick up of leaves and branches, better school facilities and more buildings, improved traffic flow and roads, walking access to shopping areas, build a youth center, build an entrance/exit at I-88 from Hanks, expand Village infrastructure to support a much larger community, build a high school in town, create an airport authority, employ a full-time Village fire department, complete an interchange at Route 47 and I-88, and build a four-lane road from Aurora to Sugar Grove.

What would you not like to see take place within Sugar Grove in the future?

Most participants said they would not like to see population overgrowth and too much development take place in Sugar Grove (7 responses each).

Residents said they don’t want to see Sugar Grove develop into a strictly residential, “bedroom” community (4 responses); or become another Naperville (3 responses each). They do not want an expanded airport, development that overtakes all the green space, “cookie cutter” strip malls, or any other entrances/exits to I-88 other than Galena (2 responses each).

Issues or undesirable projects mentioned once were: Village fragmentation, a megamall, heavy industrial development, large apartment complexes, residential expansion around the airport, a Metra station, and sprawl.

Please list the three most important projects, improvements or new developments mentioned thus far.

Of all projects listed in the first two steps of the community workshop, participants were asked to select the three most important projects, improvements or new developments. Development of a comprehensive traffic plan and managing the water resources were the most popular responses, with 8 votes each. Development of a town center and establishment of a retail/commercial base were also popular responses (7 votes each).

Other frequently mentioned improvements or new developments were: the need to match school facility growth with the expanding population (5 votes); building a better library, controlling population growth, development of a central business district and an industrial park all had 3 votes each; and an improved park district and boundary agreements were next, with 2 votes each.

Projects or improvements mentioned once included: the need for Sugar Grove to develop an identity, protect open space, create an airport authority, incorporate farmland use in the Comprehensive Plan, and build a better trail system.

What problems, obstacles or concerns must be overcome before Sugar Grove can reach its full potential?

When asked to identify obstacles that need to be overcome for the Comprehensive Plan, respondents cited a number of issues, with no clear consensus. Responses were: a lack of communication, lack of vision and implementation to move Sugar Grove forward, a lack of proper infrastructure, developers who are only interested in making money in Sugar Grove and don't really care about the community, transportation limitations, the lack of

commercial areas, high taxes, lack of cooperation between Aurora and Sugar Grove to form an airport authority, boundary agreements, spot development, the need to better coordinate with developers, and the need to better coordinate with the county, state, Tollway authorities, and the highway commission.

A VISION OF SUGAR GROVE

*S*INCE SUGAR GROVE'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WAS COMPLETED 10 YEARS AGO, considerable change has occurred. The community has achieved a healthy balance of growth in all market sectors. Although most of the growth has been residential in nature, significant industrial and commercial developments have diversified Sugar Grove's tax base, created employment opportunities, and provided residents with a local place to shop and dine.

Despite the growth that has occurred, the small town feel of Sugar Grove has been maintained and environmental features have been protected and enhanced. These assets have served to distinguish Sugar Grove from nearby communities and add greatly to the desirability of the community. The tenets of the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2004, coupled with sound decisions made by elected officials and community leaders are largely responsible for the sound growth and development of the Village of Sugar Grove.

In the year 2014 . . .

*T*he much anticipated "town center" projects have both been completed. Not long ago Sugar Grove had a limited amount of shopping opportunities and most residents traveled to nearby communities for their shopping. With the two distinctly different commercial centers that have been developed, residents now patronize local businesses and retail sales-tax dollars remain in the community. At the intersection of Illinois 56 and Galena Boulevard, a more contemporary pedestrian oriented commercial shopping and residential area has been developed. This mixed-use development has become a major focal point of the community, providing residents and visitors with a pedestrian environment that offers shopping, dining, entertainment, recreation, and housing opportunities. The other town-center development represents the community's "civic core" and has reestablished Downtown Sugar Grove and Main Street as the vibrant pedestrian-oriented shopping district it once was. Consisting of civic, commercial and residential uses, Downtown Sugar Grove is once again a traditional downtown and a destination for the community.

*T*o minimize the impacts on municipal services and infrastructure, growth has occurred outward from the geographic center of the community. Leapfrog developments in the Village's agricultural areas have been discouraged, and a wide range of housing opportunities exist

within the community. Most of the residential development that has occurred has been single-family housing. A mix of housing sizes and product types has created a housing market that provides affordable housing opportunities for first-time homebuyers and seniors, as well as high-end developments complete with golf courses and swimming and tennis clubs for move-up buyers. Higher density development has been built appropriately around the "town center". The condominiums, town homes, apartments and senior housing developments have enabled a diverse population to call Sugar Grove home.

The local tax base is diverse and strong as a result of significant industrial, business and commercial growth over the last decade. Commercial service, business park, and industrial uses surround the airport, taking full advantage of this transportation resource. Corporate office buildings and other business uses, including a conference center, have been developed along Interstate 88. Commercial developments, in addition to the "town center", have been built along major roadways providing the community with grocery stores, restaurants and convenient service uses.

Despite the growth that has occurred, the large natural resource areas that distinguish Sugar Grove from nearby communities have been preserved and protected. The Forest Preserve's and Park District's open space practices and policies, together with the Village's sound subdivision regulations and development practices, are largely responsible for the numerous park sites, forest preserves, preservation areas, and the greenway network that connects residents with park sites and regional trails.

The community has invested heavily in its infrastructure and community facilities. A new fire station has been built on Municipal Drive and is staffed by full-time firefighters. Other Village departments, including public works and police have also expanded to keep pace with growth. Several new schools, including a high school have been constructed. Although some students are still transported by bus, most of the children safely walk or bike to the schools conveniently located near their homes. Much of the school construction has been financed by a strong land-cash donation ordinance, requiring developers to address impacts created by their development.

*A*s growth has occurred within the community, the Village has implemented the Transportation Plan developed by the Village's traffic engineer. The growth and development has financed much of the improved transportation infrastructure and most vehicle congestion and safety concerns have been addressed. Improved relationships and communication with KDOT, IDOT and Illinois Tollway Authority has resulted in a smooth implementation of the Transportation Plan. Key transportation projects that have been completed include the widening of Illinois Route 47, and the construction of a full interchange at IL 47 and Interstate 88.

A more regional view of community issues has fostered an improved political climate in the community. Improved relationships between the Village and other public organizations has allowed the community to plan for its ultimate growth and address resident concerns. The recent creation of the Aurora-Sugar Grove Airport Authority has addressed most of the community's concerns regarding the airport's operation and expansion. Boundary agreements with Aurora, North Aurora, Montgomery, Big Rock, Elburn, Yorkville, Plano and Batavia have allowed Sugar Grove's elected officials to accurately plan and effectively manage the growth and development within their planning jurisdiction.

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