Approach

Introduction:

As the plan began evolving, multiple public meetings and opportunities for public and partner input were held including the following:

As no plan will move forward without the support of the people it will affect, public input was sought before the design began. An automated phone survey was administered to each registered voter within Shorewood with a record breaking participation rate and favorable responses for improvements within the study area.

Along the DuPage River the study area consists of land adjacent to the River within the Village of Shorewood stretching from Hammel Woods Forest Preserve to the north and Interstate I-80 to the south. Along Illinois Route 59, the study area goes from Black Road to the north to Seil Road to the south. Along U.S. Route 52, the study area goes from Brookshore Drive to the west to Interstate I-55 to the east.

Background

Identified in comprehensive planning updates from 2007 as an area that needed individual study, this project began as two pieces of a holistic approach, a corridor study and a riverfront study.

Retail development pressures in the form of a new commercial lifestyle center along Route 59 and I-55 to the south as well as an expanded interchange at I-55 and Route 59 revealed emerging traffic patterns and a potential new visitor base for Shorewood. The major east-west arterial in the Village is Route 52, which intersects Route 59, the DuPage River, and I-55. A corridor study along Route 59 including the intersection of Route 52 will help identify challenges and opportunities for improving visitors experience while travelling through and to Shorewood.

The DuPage River, long seen as an untapped asset, began taking priority in 1996 after a flood event which displaced many residents and ultimately led to the acquisition of flood prone areas along the River. To date, the Village has acquired over $2,800,000 in property from willing sellers with the assistance of Federal Emergency Management Association Flood Mitigation funds. The landholdings are now large enough to plan for public amenities in these otherwise uninhabitable properties.

Route 59, the DuPage River, and I-55. A corridor study along Route 59 including the intersection of Route 52 will help identify challenges and opportunities for improving visitors experience while travelling through and to Shorewood.

While not specific in nature, the questions gave the planning team an understanding of the types of uses that were desirable and would be supported.

The opportunity and analysis phase of the study revealed clear messages that became the core purposes for the master plan. They are to:

• Preserve and protect the natural resources along the DuPage River, including water quality, erosion control, habitat development, tree preservation / replacement, and general education and stewardship of these resources. The hope is to grow conservationists of future generations by immersing visitors in the beauty of the River.

• Develop a guide for development and improvements that will occur within the study area, promoting a strong identity for the Village but balancing realistic expectations of the development community.

• Engage the community along the way at every interval. The plan will not be functional if it is not supported by leadership, staff, and the citizens of Shorewood.

• Align planning efforts with efforts already underway, specifically working together with partners of the DuPage River Trail to advance this regional link.

• Planning, although flawed upon adoption, will help the Village act on opportunities that arise in the future. This plan should guide decisions, yet be flexible enough to adapt to ever changing conditions and economies.

Purpose

The opportunity and analysis phase of the study revealed clear messages that became the core purposes for the master plan. They are to:

• Preserve and protect the natural resources along the DuPage River, including water quality, erosion control, habitat development, tree preservation / replacement, and general education and stewardship of these resources. The hope is to grow conservationists of future generations by immersing visitors in the beauty of the River.

• Develop a guide for development and improvements that will occur within the study area, promoting a strong identity for the Village but balancing realistic expectations of the development community.

• Engage the community along the way at every interval. The plan will not be functional if it is not supported by leadership, staff, and the citizens of Shorewood.

• Align planning efforts with efforts already underway, specifically working together with partners of the DuPage River Trail to advance this regional link.

• Planning, although flawed upon adoption, will help the Village act on opportunities that arise in the future. This plan should guide decisions, yet be flexible enough to adapt to ever changing conditions and economies.

Program Definition

The program for the master plan was not defined in the traditional manner by dictation from leadership, but it evolved over time as the leadership team absorbed knowledge, input, and ideas.

On October 17, 2009, both staff and leadership visited comparable communities with riverfronts and business districts to evaluate successes, failures, and ideas that might be appropriate to Shorewood. In addition to personal travels by several members, the team specifically targeted Naperville, Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles, and Elgin, Illinois. See Appendix for detailed notes of the tours, but general observations noted below would guide the program.

• Provide multiple types of strong river access including boat launches and gathering nodes or pockets for people to pull off and rest.

• The Riverfront should offer places for people to relax, gather, and take in the scenery with primary usage being passive recreation and gathering.

• Make strong connections to adjacent commercial and residential.

• The plan needs some kind of attraction which can be the sum of all parts.

• Programming was seen as important to the success of the space. Provide opportunities for entertainment and small gatherings.

• Art, sculpture, and memorials add interest and should be encouraged.

• Amphitheaters, shelters, restrooms, and overlooks were identified as positive elements for inclusion.

• The master plan should be flexible allowing for change over time.

• Natural areas with prairie planting should be considered to help with funding. Application for these types of areas existing along the southern stretches of the river.

• Mixed use development at the core intersection area should have a hard edge, with more formal geometry paving and structures. Waterfront restaurants were identified as an exciting opportunity.

As the plan began evolving, multiple public meetings and opportunities for public and partner input were held including the following:

Joint Village Board, Planning and Zoning and Park and Recreation Committee Input Meeting March 3, 2009
User Input Survey June 18, 2009
Joint Village Board and Park and Recreation Committee Input Meeting November 16, 2009
Joint Village Board and Park and Recreation Committee Input Meeting January 18, 2010
Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting January 28, 2010
Public Hearing February 23, 2010
Forest Preserve District of Will County February 2, 2010

Meeting summaries from all of these meetings are included in the Appendix. All meetings indicated positive feedback with constructive comments aimed at bettering the project. In addition, a project web site was constructed that allowed direct e-mail access to the design team. http://www.hitchcockdesigngroup.com/shorewood.html
Study Area and Site Context
Opportunity Analysis Summary

Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Following the 1996 floods, the Village has made acquisition of properties in the DuPage River floodplain a priority. This is evident by the quantity of parks they have created along the river.

This intersection of two major arterials is highly visible. It has significant potential for commercial development. Competition will be high for land at intersection. Intersection is not pedestrian friendly.

Strong northern anchor for DuPage River Trail through Shorewood. Provides parking and a canoe launch to the public.

Bridges do not highlight the natural amenity they are crossing. Opportunities to gain access under bridges for trail connection and to create urban gateways at crossings.

Village of Shorewood

The topographic features along the DuPage River vary significantly along its stretch through Shorewood. There are vistas along the bluff lines as well as steep banks that prevent most development.

Interchange improvements are planned for Route 59 at Interstate 55. New development spurred by these roadway modifications area also anticipated thus creating a second gateway to Shorewood.

Along Route 59 Commerical development pressure in the R-1 and R-MH zoning classes along Route 59.

Private ownership of major parcels along the river should be considered for future easements or acquisition opportunities for parks appropriation.

The character of Shorewood's bridges crossing the DuPage River is mostly functional and not pedestrian friendly. Opportunities exist to create a design vocabulary that connect users across the river as well as to the river.

DuPage River Trail connections set for inter-agency collaboration. Support trail plans.

Athletic Field Park Opportunity to connect to Joliet's Athletic Field Park as the southern terminus of Shorewood’s portion of the DuPage River Trail.

Floodplain & Floodways

The DuPage River has established floodplain and floodway data that restricts development within these boundaries. Parks and trails are allowable floodplain uses and should be considered in these areas.

Northern Limit of Shorewood Route 59 Corridor

Precedent for new development along the corridor has been set at Black Road and Route 59. Opportunity to improve and build upon the framework already established.

Floodplain & Floodways

The DuPage River floodplain has established floodplain and floodway data that restricts development within these boundaries. Parks and trails are allowable floodplain uses and should be considered in these areas.

All movies and both shows from the Hollywood portion of the DuPage River Trail.