



DOWNTOWN PLAN

Phase 3 Summary of Findings



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Draft - May 4, 2015

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Section 1.0 – Purpose

The Village of Johnsburg set aside funding for a phased planning process and study for the Downtown. Three phases have been completed to date. Phase 1 (Data Collection, Discovery, Creating Vision) and Phase 2 (Survey and Image Preference) were completed in last the few years and Phase 3 is recently completed with this document serving as the Summary of Findings. The purpose of this phase was to meet face to face with stakeholders, business owners and residents to share the survey results (Phase 2) and to gather additional feedback on exhibits and information completed to date. This input helped shape the vision and direction in order to develop a strategy for the next phase. Phase 4 will be to create the Master Plan which will serve as a guide relative to land use, development decisions, and facilitating future capital improvement projects that encourage private and public sector investment.

Section 2.0 - Process

Phase 3 started with an assessment and analysis of the findings from Phase 1 and 2 followed by a kickoff meeting. In Phase 2 the vision survey and visual preference aspect portrayed the opinions and desires of respondents. This became critical information to share with everyone through the Phase 3 process. A summary of the survey completed by 658 people is below for reference. A full copy of the results is on file at Village Hall.

Vision Survey - Summary Results

- Over 52% of responses came from people that call Johnsburg their home town
- 82% have lived in Johnsburg for more than 5 years
- Approx. 4% lived in Johnsburg but moved to a different community
- 4% own a recreational property
- 3% visit Johnsburg frequently but live outside the community
- Nearly 17% work in Johnsburg
- Over 43% shop and/or purchase professional services in Johnsburg
- 43% from women
- Age distribution:
 - 26 – 50: 42%
 - 51 – 65: 39%
 - Over 65: 16%

Attention to Aesthetics

- 81% cite the importance of aesthetics in community appearance and only 9% believe this factor is fully addressed

Sidewalks & Pedestrian Areas

- 60% indicate it's important but only 8% believe all expectations are met

Access to recreation

- 59% cite it as important - only 18% indicate the community is meeting expectations

Transportation & Pedestrian Safety

- 65% disagree with the statement that intersections involving vehicles and pedestrians are safe

Business recruitment

- Base employment and Retail

Public safety

- Some properties were identified as locations for criminal activities

Recreational facilities & programs

- 59% of the respondents indicated that this is important but only 18% believe the expectations are fully met

Observations of image preference survey

Multiple images were portrayed in the survey for single family homes, multi-family, open space, commercial, signage and institutional uses. Respondents rated each image and below are the images that were most noteworthy. As noted above full survey results are available at Village Hall.

Single family - Virtually all single-family residential buildings received favorable ratings (7 or better). Higher rated properties generally reflect quality architecture, better property maintenance and condition of the home.



Multi-family Residential - Multifamily buildings received a mix of ratings. Scale seems to be a significant factor (i.e., the more it looks like single-family the higher it's rating). Mixed use projects were not very popular.



Open space - Passive open space does not generate an overwhelmingly positive response. Well-manicured and active space generates more positive ratings.



Trails - Safer, more aesthetically pleasing pedestrian trails received higher ratings. Street markings or physical separation from vehicles was liked. Very high marks for water front trails with associated enhancements.



Commercial - Small scale retail centers, converted homes, and one to two story commercial districts received higher scores. Mixed use projects received more diverse rankings.



Signage - Signs receiving higher scores tended to be ground-mounted used quality materials and were well maintained. Lower scores were directed to larger scale signs – particularly those that are pole mounted and temporary signs.



Institutional - Higher scores were directed to institutional buildings that used quality materials, had a unique design/were aesthetically pleasing. Buildings receiving lower scores seemed to emphasize functionality over curb appeal. Scale may also impact decisions.



Section 3.0 - Opportunities and Constraints

The Opportunities and Constraints exhibit was created (See Appendix) which utilized the site analysis data to identify key opportunities and constraints in the study area. Key features, key connections, existing and proposed sidewalks and trails were examined as well as important intersections and potential locations for gateway signage. Additionally, three areas were examined and categorized as distinct areas of Downtown Johnsburg:

- Historic Sunnyside
- Downtown Center
- South River Area

Some of the key Opportunities and Constraints that were compiled are:

- **Strong sense of place where people can live, work and play**
- **Branded theme for the downtown/build upon existing streetscape enhancements/traditional historic design**
- **Provide gateways/way finding signage**
- **Consistent development standards/ quality design of spaces and architecture**
- **Access to the riverfront**
- **Mixed uses**
- **Convenient parking with easy access**
- **Gathering spaces /pedestrian friendly environment**

These key opportunities and goals were confirmed by leadership, business/property owners and residents of Johnsburg. The recent streetscape improvements and roundabout has established a platform from which the Village can build upon over time as the constraints can be managed and the opportunities can be realized.

Section 4.0 - Downtown Business and Property Owner Workshop

The VOJ held a public participation workshop at the Community Center on November 6, 2014 and January 17, 2015. The main purpose of the meetings was to gather feedback from the key stakeholders that are business or property owners in the study area. The open house format was utilized to provide some one on one conversation as well as opportunities for written comments to be provided. For the initial meeting, the attendees could attend a brief presentation and then visit stations that focused on the various elements of this phase. Below is a brief description of the stations:

- **Station 1 - Overall presentation**
- **Station 2 - Study area exhibits and survey results**
- **Station 3 - Downtown Center**
- **Station 4 - Historic Sunnyside**
- **Station 5 - South River**

Participants were encouraged to complete a written form concerning their comments and/or questions for each station and overall. Listed below are the written comments that were submitted. Generally the feedback was very positive and respondents are pleased with the direction of the study.

Station 1 – Overall presentation

- *Informative, very nice, thanks for your work*
- *Very informative and organized. I like the work put into it and the direction the Village is headed.*
- *Fine*

- *As a representative of St. John's church my focus would be on relieving through traffic on Church St. and completing the street, sidewalk and parking improvements as soon as funds become available.*
- *Did a good job of explaining the principles and philosophy behind the plan.*
- *Very relaxed and warm presentation. Very welcoming and thought provoking*
- *A "must" for success. Always a problem of getting a consensus of where to go. Keep up the good work.*

Station 2 - Study area exhibits and survey results

- *Informative and the results were interesting, talked about having a bigger, better public boat launch and parking.*
- *Was nice when there was someone there to explain the boards.*
- *The exhibits made it easy to understand what and where the plans are and will be exercised. The survey made it clear that restaurants, walkways and aesthetics are high on the list.*
- *Many areas to study! We need to provide somewhere for older or families who desire a dwelling with-out all of the upkeep and other tasks associated with a home on ½ to 1 ac and smaller. Condo type.*

Station 3 - Downtown Center

- *Just by adding the roundabout and sidewalks has made a world of difference. If some of the old, useless buildings can be replaced that would help out.*
- *Circle is too fast but good.*
- *I like the Rescue Squad Park, done well.*
- *"If you build" walking and biking paths that are pleasant and safe "they will come".*
- *Make the town accessible.*
- *I thought the plans for the community center/park areas were well thought out.*
- *Traffic (in-out) of triangle needs revision.*
- *Pedestrian crossing concern when traffic is heavy*
- *Very good location for "snowbird village".*

Station 4 - Historic Sunnyside

- *Living closer to this area, I do hope this can be improved and a few businesses would help out.*
- *Sidewalks un-walk able in winter time. Block sidewalks at Shilo Ridge with snow, sidewalk not shoveled.*
- *Make sewers more affordable.*
- *It is important to continue to develop retail in that area. The more people will stay and shop at home.*
- *Good to remember and keep.*

Station 5 - South River

- *The info was good, needs some work*
- *It is all potential development and ripe for new retail stores like a CVS or Walgreens, a strip center, or a restaurant.*
- *Annex (hopefully) Chapel Hill to McHenry boundary.*

General comments:

- *Lots of great ideas, roundabout looks great and Village has my full support*
- *Informative and educational presentation. I learned a lot and look forward to future information.*
- *Keep up the sidewalks for safety of our children and our seniors. Lighting is important too. Sidewalks over the bridge need to be wider and lights over the bridge would be nice.*

- *Tax breaks to keep elderly here. Maybe more Village services to aid elderly.*
- *Find a way to link the river with piers for boaters to stop off, walk into downtown and buy food, ice cream, etc.*
- *It is all a great vision for Johnsburg's future.*
- *Keep ideas coming in. Never say never.*

Section 5.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

The following recommendations and observations are created as preliminary direction for the next phase of planning. Some of these items were provided in the initial stage of Opportunities and Constraints analysis and were confirmed through the Phase 3 process. These recommendations may be revised accordingly in Phase 4 of this process; however, general consensus is that these descriptions accurately describe the opportunities and goals from the feedback gained in Phase 1, 2 and 3.

Recommendations and Observations

- Create elements in the master plan and streetscape concepts that will help to create the ***strong sense of place where people can live, work and play***
- Incorporate the ***branded theme for the downtown and build upon existing streetscape enhancements and traditional historic design***
- Finalize the design and system in order to ***provide gateways and way finding signage***
- Create ***consistent development standards, quality design of spaces and architecture*** and incorporate into the zoning and subdivision regulations
- Work with the community and area residents to provide ***access to the riverfront*** so it will serve as a central amenity for the downtown area
- Examine the ordinance and future development goals to provide ***mixed uses*** at appropriate locations in the study area
- Plan for short and long term solutions to ***convenient parking with easy access*** in the high priority areas
- Design and create great ***gathering spaces and a pedestrian friendly environment***
- Finalize the location and alignments of trails/sidewalks and focus on making the connections a reality between the parks, school, library, community club, business uses and residential areas.
- Create a safe, pleasing and walk able corridor from Historic Sunnyside to Historic Downtown
- Work in partnership with other governmental entities to pursue a pedestrian bridge over the Fox River on Chapel Hill Road. This corridor should be improved for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel (north and south).
- South River Area has large acreage of undeveloped land with minimal constraints yet lacking public sewer and water

Next Step – Phase 4

The purpose of Phase 4 is to develop the exhibits (i.e. Downtown Master Plan) and final report focusing on theme and character, land use, design guidelines, streetscape, development decisions, and facilitating future capital improvement projects that encourage public and private sector investment. Furthermore, the report will serve as the official “Sub-Area Master Plan” that will supersede the less detailed downtown recommendations contained in the Village Comprehensive Plan.

Phase 4 will utilize all of the work and results of Phase 1, 2, and 3 as a base to compile a successful long term implementation strategy. Some of the tasks and deliverables that will be included in the Sub-Area Master Plan will be:

- Conceptual Sub-Area Master Plan and land use recommendations.
- Conceptual Streetscape Plan (for the core triangle area of the downtown only).
- Conceptual Design Guidelines (architecture, streetscape, landscape, etc.) – to be utilized as a starting point for future zoning ordinance modifications.
- Theming and Character (includes trash receptacles, fencing, way finding signage, or any other items not already selected as part of previous projects).

Additionally, other key planning recommendations and components of Phase 4 will be addressed in the final report such as:

- Recommendations regarding the transportation circulation, design speeds, and intersections.
- Pedestrian elements such as crosswalks, traffic calming techniques, and related hardscape improvements that will create a pedestrian friendly downtown.
- Parking recommendations. On-street and off-street parking opportunities that will provide convenient accessibility, but not dominate the downtown street scene.
- Accessibility and ADA compliance recommendations.
- Recreational opportunity areas.
- Phasing, funding and implementation strategies.

Continued leadership and public involvement will be performed throughout Phase 4. There will be approximately nine meetings with various formats. The intent will be to create a great atmosphere by which participants can voice their thoughts and opinions in a constructive and meaningful way. Some of the potential meetings are as follows:

- Three meetings with staff/leadership
- Public Open House Meeting
- Economic Development Committee Meetings
- Planning and Zoning Meeting
- Committee of the Whole (COW)
- Village Board Meeting

It is anticipated that the timeframe for Phase 4 will be approximately one year. At the end of this phase the final report will be completed which will document all phases. **A final and critical task will be to modify the B-5 Downtown District regulations or creating an overlay district.** After approval of the official Master Plan the Planning/Zoning Board could be responsible for discussing, updating and moving forward with these efforts. All of these completed tasks will provide a strong direction and long term strategy for a successful Downtown Johnsburg.