

# TCD3 SUMMARY REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

## Village of Downers Grove

October 12, 2009

**DRAFT REPORT**



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# INTRODUCTION

## TCD3 COMMON THEMES & OBJECTIVES

**T**otal Community Development (TCD) is a community-wide outreach effort that has been carried out by the Village of Downers Grove throughout the years. TCD is a process that is used to identify and examine all aspects of community life. It is intended to provide meaningful insight into how the Village, as well as other governmental agencies, can work most effectively to meet the needs and desires of its residents to ensure that Downers Grove continues to prosper and maintains a strong quality of life.

The Total Community Development process engages residents, business owners, and elected/appointed officials in a variety of settings and formats, resulting in the identification of community issues, concerns, proprieties and corresponding recommendations that guide long range planning in the Village. TCD1 was carried out in the 1960's, followed by TCD2 in the early 1990's; and, most recently, TCD3 in 2009. Information collected throughout the TCD process is shared with all units of local government within Downers Grove, and will also serve to provide input for updating the Village's Comprehensive Plan. TCD continues

to assist the community in defining its core values, addressing emerging issues, envisioning a preferred future, and promoting local involvement.

### TCD3

Total Community Development 3 (TCD3) was an extensive and comprehensive nine-month outreach and resident participation process that took place between March and October 2009. It was designed and implemented to maximize resident involvement and foster a healthy and open dialogue regarding community issues. As a continuation of past outreach efforts carried out in the 1960's (TCD1) and 1990's (TCD2), TCD3 represents a continued commitment to community involvement on behalf of the Village, seeking input on all issues affecting the residents and business community within the Village.

Although the Village took the lead in facilitating the TCD3 process, the Park District and local School Districts were key partners in the effort, participating in events, hosting workshops and activities, and providing crucial input on community issues and priorities. Throughout the process, it was made clear that all issues were open to discussion and that all of the local taxing bod-

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THE TCD3 PARTICIPATION PROCESS  
WAS DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED  
TO MAXIMIZE RESIDENT  
INVOLVEMENT AND FOSTER A  
HEALTHY AND OPEN DIALOGUE  
REGARDING COMMUNITY ISSUES

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ies were committed to listening to and responding to resident's concerns. The community outreach, input and participation process for TCD3 included traditional face-to-face outreach activities such as public workshops and meetings, and also incorporated new internet technologies in order to maximize participation and enhance opportunities for convenient and effective citizen participation. The community outreach and participation process included the following meetings, workshops, surveys, activities, and tools:

- Interactive Project Website
- Resident Survey – 819 responses
- Business Survey – 51 responses
- Interactive Map – 55 maps, 600 points of interest
- Initiation Workshop – 90 participants
- Neighborhood Workshops (4) – 250+ participants
- Governing Body Workshop
- Boards and Commissions Workshop
- Business Workshop – 35 participants
- Student Workshops – Elementary & Middle School
- Independent Group Submittal - 8

Detailed results from each workshop and survey are contained in an appendix under separate cover and is available at the Village Hall.

### **Notable Outcomes from Previous TCD Efforts**

Many positive community amenities and improvements have resulted from previous community outreach efforts, such as the Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital from TCD1, and improved pedestrian safety, sidewalks and downtown improvements from TCD2.

### **TCD3 Results**

Based on results from feedback received throughout the entire process, eight common “themes” were developed to facilitate discussion about issues facing the community, including infrastructure, economic development, residential, public services and facilities, parks and recreation, education, financial, and environment & sustainability.

To begin to address these areas of community concern, 34 objectives have been prepared for public consideration. The objectives describe the general desired end situations toward which planning efforts and capital improvements and expenditures should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may not be measurable and never actually be fully attained. The objectives are presented on the following two pages.

**Infrastructure**

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety throughout the Village.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure and utilities are provided and maintained throughout the Village.
- Improve existing streets and sidewalks throughout the Village.
- Improve traffic flow throughout the Village’s commercial areas and discourage “cut-through” traffic in residential areas.
- Provide increased levels of public transit service throughout the Village.
- Improve access and provision of parking in Downtown Downers Grove.
- Improve pedestrian connectivity throughout the Village.

**Economic Development**

- Improve the mix of retailers and service providers in Downtown and the Village’s other commercial corridors.
- Renovate or redevelop aging shopping centers and commercial areas.
- Stabilize or reduce the cost of doing business in the Village.
- Enhance the appearance of commercial districts.
- Promote existing commercial areas.
- Improve commercial design and development controls.

**Residential**

- Require new residential construction and extensive renovations to be compatible with existing and desired character of surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Prevent the encroachment of incompatible commercial development upon residential neighborhoods.
- Improve housing affordability throughout the Village.
- Accommodate residential renovation and redevelopment through an expedient and flexible, yet thorough permitting process.
- Consistently administer and enforce residential development regulations.





### **Village Services**

- Improve Village communication and outreach efforts.
- Continue to provide high quality levels of service to residents and businesses.
- Educate the public and build support for the proposed Village Hall and Police Station facility.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- Expand and enhance recreational programming and amenities offered at the Village's parks, schools, and other public facilities.
- Finalize a decision regarding whether or not to build a new public pool facility.

### **Education**

- Increase the diversity of courses and programs offered in local schools.
- Maintain superior schools and administrations and adequate school facilities with high educational standards for the children of Downers Grove.
- Maintain and enhance the physical relationship between school facilities and surrounding neighborhoods.

### **Public Finances**

- Maintain flexible budgets that can adapt to changing economic conditions.
- Improve transparency related to public finances.

### **Sustainability and Environment**

- Monitor and improve stormwater and basin management throughout the Village.
- Promote the use of sustainable design and development practices for new development throughout the Village.
- Promote adaptation of sustainable technologies and application of sustainable management practices to existing development throughout the Village.
- Provide exemplary leadership in sustainable design and practices.
- Provide opportunities for increased public participation in environmental advocacy.



# PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION

## RESULTS OF THE TCD3 PROCESS

**T**he TCD3 process has entailed extensive community outreach, however, its principal finding or recommendation was not one that was directly expressed by residents, but rather revealed itself as a thread that bound together the diverse range of identified community issues - the need for improved communication, coordination, and cooperation amongst residents and local units of government in addressing the full range of community and neighborhood issues.

Although the TCD3 process identified a wide range of needs, projects, and issues, few identified issues are broadly applicable or a priority for the entire community. For instance: residential teardowns are an issue in some neighborhoods, but not all; protection of the tree canopy was a priority for some areas but less of an issue for others; and, the need for a neighborhood park was identified by some, but not by residents who live in areas well served by neighborhood parks. All of these are valid concerns, but each affects different areas of the community in different ways, and may or may not be a priority for residents in

other areas. It is this realization that led to the conclusion that what was needed was a better way of effectively addressing the entire range of community issues in a manner that was more responsive to the community as a whole as well as all of its distinct areas.

### **Evolution of a Community**

As a community evolves its needs and priorities change. It is common for developing communities to have many needs that are considered “community-wide” and equally important to everyone. It is also common among developing communities to identify and reach consensus that a single issue or need is considered a top priority by a majority of residents. However, as communities evolve over time, certain areas develop differently from one another. Shaped by a variety of influences and opportunities, very distinct areas within a community begin to emerge. This evolution gives birth to unique issues and needs for each of the different areas.

It is common for a young developing community to unanimously support the development of something it needs or strongly desires - a local post office, a community park, a golf course,

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THE PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION  
OF TCD3 IS THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF A BETTER MODEL FOR  
COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION  
AND COORDINATION

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a grocery store, or a downtown. But as a community evolves and matures, acquiring these desirable components along the way, it is increasingly difficult to establish consensus regarding community issues and priorities. Over time, the private and public sectors address much of the broad necessities and additional community needs can become harder to identify.

This community evolution and the challenge of identifying priority community issues can be seen in the results of the Village's past TCD efforts. Both TCD1 and TCD2 are credited with identifying and establishing consensus for priority community issues. The TCD1 (1960's) process is credited with recommending the need and desire for a community hospital – Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital on Highland Avenue, and the TCD2 (1990's) process is credited with providing consensus for sidewalks along Village streets. However, the results of the extensive TCD3 outreach process did not yield such a clearcut/singular community issue or priority.

### **TCD3 Principal Recommendation**

So how should the TCD3 process move forward at this juncture? There have been eight (8) common areas of focus and 34 objectives that, if achieved, will accomplish the mutual goals for the community. To provide direction and focus, the Action Plan has developed a number of implementation actions that will contribute to accomplishing the objectives and realizing the unified goals and vision for Downers Grove. However, not all action items are applicable to all parts of the community and almost all will be prioritized differently by residents in different areas of the community. How, then, should the actions be

prioritized when each area of the Village is unique?

The answer to this predicament is the principal recommendation of TCD3 – the development of a better model for communication, cooperation and coordination. Although not explicitly identified by any single participant, it is something that will result in more responsive local government on the key issues identified in TCD3, enhance community coordination and cooperation, and assist in establishing priorities and focus. However, there is a crucial gap to fill to achieve this new model for communication, cooperation and coordination.

The new model can be quickly advanced through enhanced intergovernmental cooperation on the many complex issues facing Downers Grove today, resulting in better economies of scale and greater efficiencies. A better understanding of the diverse goals of each agency will be produced and improved, and more comprehensive solutions will be developed; however, greater cooperation among the many governmental agencies is just one aspect of the new model. Most neighborhoods do not have an avenue to formally communicate with local government agencies.

The creation of Neighborhood Organizations or “units” would fill this gap and lead to achieving a new and comprehensive model for communication, cooperation and coordination in Downers Grove.

Neighborhood Organizations are smaller community/neighborhood units that can work directly with the Village and

other governmental entities to prioritize projects and actions, and report on issues affecting the many unique areas and neighborhoods of Downers Grove. These organizations would represent themselves as such to any elected body of government in the community, including the Village Council, School Boards and Park Boards. In essence, it is a neighbor-based approach where smaller divisions or neighborhoods are organized to provide a liaison for communication and a representative voice for issues, projects or actions affecting their neighborhoods.

This would allow neighborhoods affected by teardowns to work together with the Village to shape development regulations and better control new construction in their neighborhoods. Areas deficient in open space and recreation facilities can work with the park district to identify open space opportunities for acquisition or specific parks and recreation needs unique to their area. Today, if an issue affects a particular neighborhood, it is common to see groups of people speaking at board and council meetings under public comment, each repeating the same claim of support, issue or concern. These organized neighborhood units would be able to identify a leader or representative that could represent these groups before elected boards; and, more importantly, establish a point of contact between the neighborhoods and service providers of the community.

### **Neighborhood Organization Details**

Residents and elected officials were given the opportunity to discuss the details of neighborhood organizations at a Citizen's Summit on July 29, 2009, where general support for the new model was expressed. Discussions revolved around how to define the geographical areas for each neighborhood unit, how to select a leader, and collaboration with the Village government.

In general, people believed that elementary school boundaries could possibly provide an adequate definition for neighborhood organizations in Downers Grove. This logical and well entrenched division would yield similar sized areas and provide for an organization name and meeting location - the elementary school itself.

Several ideas were discussed relating to the identification and establishment of leaders for the different neighborhood units. Some residents indicated that individual leaders might not be necessary, and that the entire group could meet with local government representatives on a regular basis.

Collaboration between neighborhood organizations and the different government entities will vary depending on what community issues and concerns arise. The Village should identify a specific contact person to serve as the Village liaison to each neighborhood unit.

Once Neighborhood Organizations are established, it will allow for enhanced communication, cooperation, and coordination, and result in more responsive and focused efforts on the part of elected officials, organizations, and residents regarding localized issues and concerns.







# ACTION PLAN

## TASKS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

**A**n Action Plan is a planned series of actions, tasks or steps designed to achieve a community’s objectives and/or goals. It provides insight into a community’s vision for an area, and outlines desired and measurable outcomes. An action plan may serve as a community’s “road map” for the future, protecting and enhancing the unique and established character of the area.

To assist the Downers Grove community in achieving the objectives identified in TCD3, an Action Plan has been prepared to identify a list of tasks and implementation strategies. These implementation actions provide more specific detail and describe what should be accomplished to begin achieving community objectives. The implementation actions are specific and targeted, and can be used by various governmental agencies for strategic planning and to address concerns and issues in the community.

Lead governmental agencies have been identified for each of the items, including:

- Park District;
- School Districts;
- Economic Development Corporation; and,
- Village Boards and Commissions.

Others will be discussed as part of the Village’s process to update its Comprehensive Plan, started in September 2009.

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THESE IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS  
ARE SPECIFIC AND TARGETED,  
AND CAN BE USED BY VARIOUS  
GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES FOR  
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TO  
ADDRESS CONCERNS AND ISSUES  
IN THE COMMUNITY

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# ACTION PLAN

## HIGHEST COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The TCD3 process identified numerous Implementation Tasks to be undertaken by the Village and other agencies, ranging from high priority to low priority. The Action Plan presented in this section of the report highlights only those tasks which have been categorized as “High Priority”, as they are the tasks that the community felt should be of precedence in the Village. High priority items are tasks that were identified most often throughout community outreach, and were supported by a large majority of residents and stakeholders.

The table on the following two pages identifies the recommended tasks, which of the 8 common themes they relate to, as well as the time frame, lead agency and recommended next steps.

Implementation tasks that are not identified as high priority are categorized by their common theme and outlined in the proceeding sections of this report.

### Action Plan Key

#### Common Theme

As outlined in the Introduction to this report, 8 “Common Themes” were identified throughout the TCD3 process to facilitate discussion about issues facing the community. These themes included: infrastructure; economic development; residential; public services and facilities; parks and recreation; education; financial; and, environment and sustainability. The Action Plan identifies which of the common themes each implementation task relates to.

#### Time Frame

The Time Frame identifies the period of time during which the implementation task should take place. This can range from short term to long term, depending on the agencies involved, complexity of the task and feasibility.

Time frames are defined as follows:

Short: 1-3 years

Medium: 4-8 years

Long: 8+ years/long-range

#### Lead Agency

The Lead Agency is the agency that has been identified to have the directing or principal part in carrying out an implementation task. The majority of high priority implementation tasks identify the Village as the lead agency. Collaboration with the School Districts and Park District are oftentimes recommended as well.

#### Next Steps

The next steps are recommended courses of action to be taken, once a commitment to the implementation task has been identified.

Priority	Implementation Task	Common Theme	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Conduct a circulation and parking needs assessment for Downtown.	Infrastructure	Short	Village	Downtown Circulation & Parking Assessment
High	Establish local ordinances and regulations to preserve and protect trees and other environmental features throughout the Village and its neighborhoods	Sustainability and the Environment	Short	Village	Research tree preservation best practices
High	Develop a Residential Design Handbook to ensure that new residential construction (including infill redevelopment and teardown construction) and additions are of an appropriate scale and character.	Residential	Short	Village	Residential Design Handbook
High	Work with environmental advocacy groups, such as the Conservation Foundation, to educate the public on the benefits of incorporating the use of green/Best Management Practices in the management of residential properties.	Sustainability and the Environment	Short	Village	Agency/Community Outreach
High	Continue to regularly update and publish information through the Village's multiple news platforms including the website, DGTV cable channel, Hometown Times newsletter, Village Corner column, E-news service, YouTube, Twitter, and RSS feeds.	Village Services	Short	Village	

\* Implementation Tasks presented in the table above are organized by time frame and then by lead agency.

\*\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Common Theme	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Attend annual Homeowners Associations meeting to update residents on Village projects and gather input.	Village Services	Short	Village	Community Outreach
High	Encourage the Park District and school districts to work together to provide indoor recreation and outdoor open space opportunities for residents to minimize tax dollar duplication.	Parks and Recreation	Short	Park District, School districts	Agency Outreach
High	Minimize the negative impacts of school athletics and other outdoor activities on adjacent neighborhoods.	Education	Short	School Districts	Community Outreach
High	Identify key pedestrian routes and budget for streetlight replacement along those routes to include pedestrian-scale lighting amenities.	Infrastructure	Medium	Village	Trails Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Financial Plan
High	Develop and implement a maintenance program that prioritizes roadway and sidewalk improvements based on a combination of condition and traffic volume.	Infrastructure	Medium	Village	
High	Maintain and expand the sidewalk network throughout the Village's commercial districts and corridors.	Infrastructure	Medium	Village	Maintenance
High	Examine alternative solutions to sidewalk construction in certain areas.	Infrastructure	Medium	Village	Policy Consideration
High	Work with Park District and school districts to coordinate park programming and extracurricular activities offered by schools and the Park District.	Parks and Recreation	Medium	Park District, School districts	Agency Outreach
High	Determine if new zoning regulations are warranted to accommodate the Residential Design Handbook recommendations and, after analysis and test applications of proposed amendments, hold required public hearings and adopt necessary Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments.	Residential	Medium	Village	Residential Design Handbook, Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Update
High	Develop a Guide to Sustainable Design and Development to assist developers and property owners.	Sustainability and the Environment	Medium	Village	Program/Initiative Research
High	Continue to develop a Long-Range Financial Plan for the Village and formally adopt long term strategies and solutions to address difficult financial decisions.	Village Finances	Medium	Village	Long Range Financial Plan
High	Expand community outreach efforts for significant proposed projects. These efforts could include additional opportunities for public review and comment such as open houses or online tools.	Village Services	Medium	Village	Community Outreach
High	Work with the school districts to review the existing parking facilities, buildings, drop off/pick up areas, and bus parking, including ingress and egress to ensure they are adequate and if not, identify opportunities for improvement.	Education	Long	Village, School Districts	School Facility Context Assessment
High	Work with the school districts to ensure proper buffering surrounding school facilities and safe and adequate access to school sites.	Education	Long	Village, School Districts	Agency Outreach

\* Implementation Tasks presented in the table above are organized by time frame and then by lead agency.

\*\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.





# COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**T**he Village’s infrastructure is the foundation of our community and affects nearly all aspects of our lives whether at home, at work, out to shop or dine, or travelling somewhere in between. Without the infrastructure provided by the Village, the County, ComEd, the State, and other, we would not be able to do many of our daily activities such as drive through the Village, take a train to work, turn on our computers to check our email, or turn on our kitchen sink to pour a glass of clean water. Maintaining high-quality infrastructure is an important role for the Village, and so too is the Village’s role as a liaison between other infrastructure providers, ensuring the “backbone” of the Village is functioning and in good repair, and expanding to meet the changing needs of our community.

The most significant infrastructure related issues identified by the community centered on the common theme of mobility. While Downers Grove’s infrastructure is comprised of a multitude of components including water and sewer, communications, power, and the local transportation network, the community focused its attention on issues related to getting in and around Downers Grove either by car, bicycle, or foot.

The majority of infrastructure comments concerned pedestrian circulation and safety, vehicular transportation, and public transportation, infrastructure provided by the Village, Metra, Pace, IDOT, the Park District, DuPage County, and others.

### **Pedestrian Circulation & Safety**

Many of the comments made by residents and elementary and middle school students related to sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use paths, crosswalks, and street lighting. Each of these items impacts the flow of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the Village and the community has indicated a desire to create safer and more convenient routes for non-motorized traffic. Sidewalks were the most significant infrastructure issue within residential areas. Several residents indicated concern in regard to a TCDII-derived policy which seeks to establish sidewalks throughout the Village on at least one side of each local street. Residents of Neighborhood 3 were the most vocal opponents to the TCDII policy. While some residents indicated opposition to sidewalks in their neighborhood, school students stated a desire to see wider sidewalks in Downtown Downers Grove.

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THE INFRASTRUCTURE CATEGORY  
INCORPORATES ISSUES OR  
CONCERNS RELATED TO ROADS  
AND STREETS, WATER AND SEWER,  
SIDEWALKS, AND OTHER TYPES OF  
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

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Several problematic areas were cited as dangerous to pedestrians attempting to cross the street including several intersections along the 63rd Street corridor, throughout the Ogden Avenue corridor, and at the Main Street rail crossing. Community members called for additional crosswalks in these two corridors as well as a new underpass or overpass at Main Street. It was also said that existing crosswalks felt unsafe as fast moving traffic does not always heed to pedestrians using the crosswalks. Both students and residents called for dedicated bike lanes throughout the community, particularly in Downtown Downers Grove. It was also indicated that increased street lighting could improve pedestrian safety in some residential areas.

### **Vehicular Transportation**

All participant groups identified traffic and congestion as a significant issue confronting the community. Many of the comments cited rail related delays along Main Street and other north-south routes, congestion in Downtown and along Belmont and Ogden Avenues, and peak hour traffic as the most noteworthy traffic and congestion issues. Several participants called for the reevaluation of the use of one-way streets in Downtown Downers Grove. As with pedestrian safety, the creation of above or below-grade rail crossings was also suggested as a means of improving vehicular congestion near Downtown. Street repairs and maintenance, including pothole repair, street resurfacing, and curb-and-gutter maintenance, were also very significant infrastructure concerns in the community. Many comments expressed dissatisfaction with the poor condition of the Village's local streets as well as state routes such as Ogden Avenue.

The business community indicated a primary concern for the flow of traffic as opposed to the condition of the roads themselves. Transportation related comments by local businesses also related to the need for additional parking. Conversely, students indicated that eliminating on-street parking in Downtown could help accommodate bike lanes and improve pedestrian connectivity. Parking and traffic enforcement were the most significant transportation related issues in residential areas.

### **Public Transportation**

The community delivered a mixed message with regard to public transportation in Downers Grove. While transit was primarily identified as a positive thing, several groups expressed a desire to reevaluate the Village's existing services, namely the Downers Grove shuttle bus. Others called for an expansion of transit services to better accommodate local needs in addition to the needs of the commuters primarily served by the existing system.

# ACTION PLAN INFRASTRUCTURE

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to infrastructure identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries.

Each action is accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Conduct a circulation and parking needs assessment for Downtown.	Short	Village	Downtown Circulation & Parking Assessment
High	Identify key pedestrian routes and budget for streetlight replacement along those routes to include pedestrian-scale lighting amenities.	Medium	Village	Trails Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Financial Plan
High	Develop and implement a maintenance program that prioritizes roadway and sidewalk improvements based on a combination of condition and traffic volume.	Medium	Village	
High	Maintain and expand the sidewalk network throughout the Village's commercial districts and corridors.	Medium	Village	Maintenance
High	Examine alternative solutions to sidewalk construction in certain areas.	Medium	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Create a Trails Master Plan that incorporates the trail plan recommendations of the Village, Park District, and regional agencies and pertinent input from the community.	Short	Village	Trails Master Plan
Low	Work with the Police Department and school districts to promote bicycle safety.	Short	School Districts	Community Outreach
Low	Work with the Park District to market and promote the Village's Trail System, including the posting of the existing and proposed trails system on-line.	Short	Park District	Community Outreach
Low	Conduct a Village-wide pavement study and sidewalk condition analysis.	Short	Village	Pavement & Sidewalk Condition Analysis
Low	Install "intelligent" traffic signals where feasible to provide the most efficient movement of vehicles.	Short	Village	Commercial Area Circulation & Access Study
Low	Review the existing one-way street configuration in Downtown and alter traffic patterns in areas where one-streets do not have a positive impact on traffic flow and pedestrian safety.	Short	Village	Downtown Circulation & Parking Assessment
Low	Examine the expansion of Pace Bus service to better accommodate the needs of residential areas.	Short	Pace	Transit Plan
Low	Promote Pace's Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP), including traditional vanpooling, employer shuttles and Metra feeders as an economical, convenient, and environmentally-friendly alternative to driving.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Low	Link all bus shelters to sidewalks, community facilities, employment centers and other key destinations.	Short	Pace	Transit Plan
Low	Provide bus shelters that are aesthetically compatible with other improvements. Shelters should include bus schedules and route information.	Short	Pace	Transit Plan

# ACTION PLAN INFRASTRUCTURE

## INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN CONTINUED

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
Low	Continue the Village's sidewalk repair program based on evaluations of concrete deterioration and trip hazards.	Short	Village	Sidewalk Repair Program
Low	Reassess the existing requirement for a sidewalk along at least one side of all local streets and consider potential exemption of some areas from this policy.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Continue the Village's Sidewalk Installation Program and refine the Sidewalk Priority Matrix based on an updated policy regarding the construction and placement of new sidewalks.	Short	Village	Sidewalk Installation Program
Low	Expand the Village's network of trails and sidewalks to provide better connections between the Village's residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, Downtown, and other commercial areas.	Medium	Village	Trails Master Plan
Low	Conduct an analysis of potentially dangerous pedestrian crosswalks and improve, where feasible, with additional lighting, signalization, bulb outs and/or curb extensions. The initial study should be focused on Downtown and the 63rd Street, 75th Street, Belmont Road, Main Street, and Ogden Avenue corridors.	Medium	Village	Crosswalk Analysis
Low	Conduct and implement an on-street bike lane feasibility analysis and plan.	Medium	Village	Bike Lane Feasibility Analysis
Low	Eliminate unnecessary, obsolete and dangerous curb cuts throughout all commercial areas to improve the safety and efficiency of vehicular movement.	Medium	Village	Commercial Area Circulation & Access Study
Low	Work closely with existing business owners to consolidate curb cuts by providing cross access and/or dual ingress into businesses wherever possible.	Medium	Village	Community Outreach
Low	Review existing parking in Downtown to identify opportunities to increase parking supply through changes to circulation or the orientation of existing parking spaces.	Medium	Village	Downtown Circulation & Parking Assessment
Low	If validated through a parking needs assessment and separate feasibility and engineering analysis, expand public parking facilities in Downtown Downers Grove.	Long	Village	Site Assembly
Low	New or expanded parking structures should be designed to complement the architecture and urban form of the surrounding area.	Long	Village	Design Review
Comprehensive Plan	Conduct a Transit Plan to identify key traffic generators and destinations.	Short	Village	Transit Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Work with area employers and businesses to promote and implement traffic demand management and reduction techniques including the use of public transit, carpooling, walking and bicycling.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Comprehensive Plan	Install wayfinding signage to direct vehicles to parking facilities and clearly indicate parking fees.	Short	Village	
Comprehensive Plan	Evaluate pedestrian mobility and amenities in new development to ensure that pedestrian movements are accommodated in new projects.	Short	Village	Design Review
Comprehensive Plan	If validated through a separate feasibility and engineering analysis, plan for and design a grade separated rail crossing at an appropriate location within or near Downtown. Work with other agencies to secure funding sources.	Long	Village	Agency Outreach, Application for Funding



# A HEALTHY ECONOMY

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**A** healthy economy is a vital component of the high quality of life enjoyed by Downers Grove residents. Economic development strengthens the community by providing higher quality employment opportunities to its residents, supports local businesses, and attracts new businesses to locate within the Village. Economic development is critical to developing and sustaining our tax base and revenue streams for the Village. Providing increasingly diverse shopping choices generates retail sales tax for the Village which, in turn, offsets the residential property tax burden and allows the Village to provide enhanced services and make physical improvements.

The community's comments reveal a divergent understanding of the economic development issues facing the Village. Community input indicates that while the larger public perception of the primary purpose of economic development is to attract new businesses, the primary purpose perceived by local businesses is to improve conditions for existing employers. Workshop responses from neighborhood residents focused on attracting retailers and facilitating commercial development projects. On the other hand, local government representatives and members of the business community focused their attentions on general business development strategies to stabilize local businesses, improve employment, and create a more balanced tax base. Despite these differing perspectives, all participant groups indicated support for physical enhancements to the Village's commercial districts, namely Downtown and Ogden Avenue.

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THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CATEGORY INCORPORATES ISSUES  
OR CONCERNS RELATED TO THE  
HEALTH OF THE VILLAGE'S BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL  
DISTRICTS

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### **Retail & Commercial Development**

The majority of economic development related issues identified by residents, as well as students, centered on attracting retailers and commercial development to the Village. There is concern for the current vacancies in the Village's commercial districts as well as the poor condition of some of the store fronts and aging shopping centers. Many indicated that they believed altering the mix of retailers and service providers could greatly improve the attractiveness and health of these districts. Most retail mix related comments were in regards to the Downtown area where residents called for specific store types including a grocer, hardware store and apparel store. Residents also frequently called for the physical redevelopment of several commercial sites throughout the Village. Support for development incentives was also indicated for some sites. The general sentiment of the retail mix and redevelopment comments made by residents was also echoed by elected and appointed Village representatives.

### **Business Conditions & Marketing**

The issues highlighted by the Village's business community focused much more on improving conditions in the commercial districts and improving Village policies related to business operations and development. The Village's permitting process was criticized by many in the business community who felt it was inconsistent, time consuming and prohibitively costly. Though only loosely related to economic development, residents expressed similar opinions with regard to the permitting process for residential development and renovations.

In addition to permitting costs, business representatives indicated that the costs of doing business in Downers Grove were also a hindrance. High rents, high property taxes, a potentially prohibitive sales tax rate, and other Village levied taxes and fees were all identified as a disadvantage to doing business in Downers Grove. Representatives of the Village indicated at least a partial recognition of this issue, with comments by elected and appointed officials highlighting a need to maintain tax levels, consider tax incentives for existing businesses, and examine small business assistance programs.

The business community and Village representatives indicated that the signage ordinance may be overly restrictive and could potentially hurt business in the long run. Residents also stated their opinions with regard to signage. In this instance, however, residents expressed a counter desire for tighter signage regulations, particularly along the Ogden Avenue corridor. Signage for the Village's commercial districts was also viewed as an underutilized marketing tool. Business representatives indicated that more joint marketing efforts were needed to increase awareness of commercial areas and the businesses they contain. In addition to signage, the use of public events was also viewed as a marketing tool. Both the business community and residents indicated a desire for more public events to be held in the Village, particularly to Downtown Downers Grove.

### **Physical Enhancements**

Regardless of how economic development is perceived, the community appears to be in universal support of actions to physically enhance the Village's commercial districts and corridors. Many of these comments were related to the need to improve the appearance of Ogden Avenue. Parking was also a common concern among participant groups. Residents frequently commented on the need to create additional parking or relocate existing parking facilities, particularly in Downtown Downers Grove. Businesses were also in support of additional parking in Downtown.

# ACTION PLAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to economic development identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries.

Each action is accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
Low	Identify funds and establish a program to assist businesses and property owners with façade improvements, landscaping, parking improvements, and modernization of aging structures and facilities.	Short	Village	Long Range Financial Plan
Low	Consider the use of incentives such as sales tax rebates, TIF, SSA, and BID funds to initiate redevelopment of key opportunity sites.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Work with utility providers to identify potential discounts for local businesses.	Short	Village	Agency Outreach
Low	Promote the use of tax credit incentives and other grant programs to fund renovation and expansion.	Short	Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DG EDC)	Public Relations
Low	Coordinate with the DG EDC and Chamber of Commerce to organize a task force whose mission is to identify opportunities to reduce the cost of doing business in Downers Grove.	Short	Village	Agency Outreach
Low	Review and update the Village's landscape ordinance to ensure new development includes sufficient landscaping.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	A way-finding signage system should be implemented to complement community gateway signage and business signage within the commercial areas.	Short	Village	Signage Study & Installation Program
Low	Install directory signs promoting businesses within Downtown Downers Grove and other commercial areas.	Short	Village	Signage Study & Installation Program
Low	Review and update signage ordinance to be flexible and easily understood while providing signage of consistent quality and uniform content throughout the Village's commercial areas.	Short	Village	Signage Study & Installation Program
Low	Review development controls to ensure that they require appropriate screening of public utilities, dumpsters, rooftop equipment, etc.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Establish an incentive program to encourage Private Property Owners to implement landscaping, façade and signage improvements to their sites, buildings and businesses.	Short	Village	Identify Funding
Comprehensive Plan	As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, conduct a detailed market analysis to determine demand for commercial space and identify opportunity sites and development capacity.	Short	Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DG EDC)	Comprehensive Plan

# ACTION PLAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN CONTINUED

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
Comprehensive Plan	Evaluate and potentially implement façade and site improvement programs in other commercial areas including the Ogden Avenue TIF district.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, identify significant sites for redevelopment and determine the use and scale of development appropriate for those sites.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Explore the purchase and assembly of large, contiguous redevelopment sites that will provide the Village with control over the quality and type of development.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan, Policy Consideration
Comprehensive Plan	As part of the Comprehensive Plan or some other independent study, establish design guidelines for the Village's other commercial areas, particularly Ogden Avenue.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	As part of the Comprehensive Plan or some other independent study, develop and plan for the Village's commercial areas.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Work with IDOT to improve the appearance of commercial areas including improved landscaping, lighting, and gateway signage consistent with the Ogden Avenue Commercial Corridor Master Plan and Downtown CBD Master Plan.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Install streetscape elements that strengthen the unified theme of the commercial areas such as benches, bus shelters, trash cans, streetlights, way finding signage and other amenities.	Short	Village	Beautification Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Develop and implement a strategic marketing and recruitment plan for targeted businesses and store types.	Medium	Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DG EDC)	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Create gateway features at key locations within the commercial areas to announce entry into Downers Grove and to distinguish the Village from adjacent municipalities.	Medium	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Consider the use of Special Service Areas (SSA) or Business Improvement Districts (BID) as a tool to improve existing commercial areas.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research



# OUR HOMES

## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

**M**any of us consider the Village to be defined by its homes, its neighborhoods and its residents. They define our community and are often one of our greatest sources of pride. For many of us, our homes also represent one of our single largest investments. Our homes provide warmth and shelter for our families and provide a backdrop for our fondest memories. We expect our neighborhoods to be well-maintained, safe, connected, and well-served by Village services and utilities. We also expect to have the option to live here, in Downers Grove, our entire lives, connected to our community. For these reasons, and many more, we are protective of our residential neighborhoods and understand the importance of having a variety of housing types and levels of affordability.

The majority of the community's comments regarding the residential areas of Downers Grove throughout the TCD3 process spoke to a desire to preserve the quality and character of existing neighborhoods and enhance the local community. More specifically, participants indicated that the creation and consistent use of design and development controls, zoning and land use controls, and code enforcement are needed to ensure that new development and neighborhood enhancements do not detract from, but rather reinforce, existing patterns of development. While preserving community character appears to be paramount, participants would also like to see additional housing options introduced to the Village's housing stock. These housing options are needed to provide diversity among local housing prices and enable young and old households to choose a home within the Village based on their varied means and lifestyle.

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THE RESIDENTIAL CATEGORY INCORPORATES ISSUES AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN THE VILLAGE'S NEIGHBORHOODS. THE MAJORITY OF COMMENTS MADE BY RESIDENTS IN THIS CATEGORY WERE IN REGARD TO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY CHARACTER, AND HOUSING DIVERSITY

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### **Preserving Community Character**

The protection of the existing character of the Village's residential neighborhoods is something that the community feels strongly about. Participants commented on community character as it related to a multitude of issues including teardowns and new development; encroaching commercial development; and, foreclosures, vacancies and property maintenance. New development was a frequent target of criticism by the community. It was indicated that development controls are needed to better regulate features such as the proportion of impervious surface, setbacks, building height, and massing. The term 'McMansion' was frequently used when addressing the issues of teardowns and preserving community character.

The opposition to the creation of new sidewalks in some neighborhoods may be related to the desire to preserve existing character. As seen from this perspective, the benefit of improved pedestrian connectivity that sidewalks would provide in some areas is outweighed by the costs to residential quality of life. New or expanding commercial development was also highlighted as a threat to residential neighborhoods, particularly in regards to the southern portion of the Village.

### **Village Process & Enforcement**

The unpredictable nature of the Village permitting and development process and inconsistent enforcement of existing laws and ordinances were frequently identified as issues among both residents and business community representatives. Overall, residents expressed a frustration with certain developments being allowed to proceed while others were mired in red tape. Residents indicated that existing ordinances related to

property maintenance and development controls were frequently ignored.

Some residents noted that the existing process has made it difficult to reinvest in their own homes. Businesses also indicated poor experience with the Village in gaining approval for a range of topics including redevelopment, renovations, and signage. The permitting process has been described as a lengthy and involved process that makes it costly to reinvest in properties. The permitting process should be user-friendly, flexible, but promote compliance. Moreover, more consistent and extensive communication of permit requirements would likely go far in improving the process.

### **Housing Affordability**

Housing affordability has emerged as a primary concern among residents. The concept of housing affordability is spoken to as it relates to the cost of living as well as in regards to long-term housing options available within the Village. High assessments and related high property taxes were frequently commented on by community members who felt assessed values were now out of line with actual property value. It was indicated that lowering property taxes would lower the cost of living for Downers Grove residents and make local housing more affordable. Other comments indicated a need for a more diverse housing stock in the Village. The community expressed a desire for senior housing as well as more affordable, smaller single family homes. Support for multi-family development was also indicated as long as it was in keeping with the scale and form of the surrounding neighborhoods.

# ACTION PLAN RESIDENTIAL

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to residential areas identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries.

Each action is accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Develop a Residential Design Handbook to ensure that new residential construction (including infill redevelopment and teardown construction) and additions are of an appropriate scale and character.	Short	Village	Residential Design Handbook
High	Determine if new zoning regulations are warranted to accommodate the Residential Design Handbook recommendations and, after analysis and test applications of proposed amendments, hold required public hearings and adopt necessary Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments.	Medium	Village	Residential Design Handbook, Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Update
Medium	Actively encourage resident participation in notifying the Village of potential code violations.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Medium	Work with home owners associations and property management companies to enforce property maintenance requirements in private residential developments, particularly with regard to foreclosed units.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Medium	Explore the creation of a property maintenance program to assist residents, particularly seniors, with affordable lawn cutting and snow removal services.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Medium	Explore the creation of a foreclosure inspection program.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Strictly enforce landscaping, screening and lighting requirements to minimize the negative impacts of commercial development adjacent to residential areas.	Short	Village	Code Enforcement
Low	Prohibit "cut through" commercial traffic in residential areas.	Short	Village	Traffic Calming Study, Traffic Enforcement
Low	Support the provision of a variety of housing types and choices within the Village including senior housing.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan, Design Review
Low	Consider increases in the fines charged by the Village for property maintenance.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Comprehensive Plan	As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, create areas of transitioning density and intensity of use between residential and commercial land uses.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, identify and plan for a range of housing types.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan





# SERVICES & FACILITIES

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

**S**ervices and facilities offered by the Village create a safe and well-organized environment for residents and businesses to thrive. Our community relies upon high quality fire and police protection that is appropriately staffed with the best personnel and equipment possible. When emergencies happen, residents and businesses expect that help will arrive quickly and that they will be taken care of to minimize any personal or property damage. Residents and businesses also look to the Village for timely and reliable services such as snow removal, refuse removal and recycling.

The diversity of comments related this topic concealed any overarching themes that might otherwise emerge in community-wide concerns related to public services and facilities. Based on the number of comments, the most significant issues related to the proposed joint Village Hall and police Station facility and Village communication and outreach, and levels of service.

### Village Hall & Police Station

The community is undecided on the need or desire for a new Village Hall and Police Station facility. A general understanding of the project appears to be lacking and there has been a mixed reception by the community as a result. Comments indicate that the Village needs to be more transparent with respect to planning for the project. While Village officials indicated unanimous support for a new facility, it is clear that they must do a better job communicating the need for the project. The community is uncertain of the advantages of the proposed concept over alternatives and has placed the onus of the Village to demonstrate need for a new facility over expansion or renovation of existing facilities.

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THE PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES CATEGORY IS A DIVERSE DISCUSSION CATEGORY THAT INCORPORATES A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES IN NUMEROUS FACILITIES OFFERED BY THE VILLAGE

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### **Communication & Outreach**

TCD3 comments indicate that the proposed Village Hall and Police Station facility is not the only area where better communication is required. Community members frequently expressed a desire for a higher degree of transparency at all levels including even day-to-day operations. It was recommended that the Village explore different methods and routes of communication in addition to enhancing current communication efforts. For example, the Village website could be updated more frequently and upgraded with additional functionality such as e-mail alerts. The Village could also actively pursue input from community on a regular basis, particularly in neighborhoods to be impacted by Village projects, such as sidewalk construction or stormwater projects, and significant developments.

### **Levels of Service**

The services offered by the Village received a variety of comment. The community was generally satisfied with the police and fire department although some criticisms of traffic safety related enforcement were offered. There was also a desire to retain and expand services currently provided by Village, namely leaf collection and snow removal.

# ACTION PLAN

## PUBLIC SERVICES and FACILITIES

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to public services and facilities identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries.

Each action is accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Continue to regularly update and publish information through the Village's multiple news platforms including the website, DGTV cable channel, Hometown Times newsletter, Village Corner column, E-news service, YouTube, Twitter, and RSS feeds.	Short	Village	
High	Attend annual Homeowners Associations meeting to update residents on Village projects and gather input.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
High	Expand community outreach efforts for significant proposed projects. These efforts could include additional opportunities for public review and comment such as open houses or online tools.	Medium	Village	Community Outreach
Medium	Improve coordination among neighboring communities and regional agencies such as IDOT and the County to coordinate efforts and minimize duplication of services.	Short	DMMC	Agency Outreach
Low	Improve customer service levels at all points of contact with residents and provide regular training to ensure that a consistent message is delivered regarding Village policies.	Short	Village	Procedural Review
Low	Build awareness of and encourage larger participation in the Village's Connect-CTY© community-wide notification system.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Low	Coordinate with the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC) and adjacent communities, including Darien, Glen Ellyn, Lisle, Lombard, Oak Brook, Westmont, and Woodridge, to assist in realizing mutual objectives and addressing issues such as traffic that transcend municipal boundaries.	Short	Village	Agency Outreach
Low	Continue to foster and expand interagency collaboration with local, county, state and federal agencies to gain experiential learning opportunities for department personnel.	Short	Village	Agency Outreach
Low	Create a publicly available alternatives analysis that identifies the costs and benefits of multiple Village Hall and Police Station facility scenarios.	Short	Village	Alternatives Analysis
Low	Conduct a comprehensive life cycle assessment for Village buildings, equipment, vehicles, facilities, and properties and develop/revise a multi-year maintenance plan and on-going maintenance program.	Short	Village	Village Facilities Life Cycle Assessment
Low	Identify funding sources such as grants to pay for the construction of new Village facilities.	Short	Village	Application for Funding
Low	Consider pursuing LEED certification for new or renovated Village facilities.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Review Village service levels to determine appropriate staffing levels and/or consultant/contractor support for all Village departments.	Medium	Village	Village Service Assessment
Comprehensive Plan	Continue to utilize the "community on-line mapping tool" introduced during the TCD3 process to gather public input on future planning issues and projects.	Medium	Village	Comprehensive Plan





# OUR PLAYGROUNDS

## PARKS AND RECREATION

**A** key factor in defining quality of life is the provision of parks, open space and recreational opportunities within a community. No matter which area of the Village you live in, there should be ample opportunities for you and your family to enjoy parks and recreation facilities. Parks should include a balance of active recreational areas and passive open space or environmental areas. This balance offers residents the opportunity to play or compete with others or simply sit and enjoy nature or scenic views. A variety of recreational facilities and amenities, such as playgrounds, sports fields, swimming pools, and multi-use trails, are examples of parks and recreation services that are important to the community.

The comments related to parks and recreation encompassed a wide variety of topics and the great majority were recommendations for new facilities and programming. While there were a multitude of suggestions for specialized facilities such as a rock climbing wall or dog walk, the creation of a public pool or water park was the most significant parks and recreation related issue identified by the community. TCD3 comments indicate that the community is relatively well served by the Village's parks and recreation facilities, but there is an unmet demand for additional programming across all age categories. Moreover, additional pedestrian and bicycle linkages are needed to improve access and enhance the use of the Village's parks and open space.

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THE PARKS AND RECREATION CATEGORY INCORPORATES ISSUES OR CONCERNS RELATED TO THE CREATION, EXPANSION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE VILLAGE'S PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AS WELL AS THE PROGRAMS AND AMENITIES OFFERED AT THOSE FACILITIES. THESE AREAS CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE, IMAGE, CHARACTER, AND DESIRABILITY OF THE VILLAGE

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### Pool

As a whole, the community is undecided with regards to the pool issue. There are passionate community members both in favor and against the creation of a public pool facility. Some of those who support the pool also expressed concerns regarding long-term costs of the project. Regardless of their position on the issue, most TCD3 participants indicated a desire to resolve the issue.

Several suggestions for arriving at a definitive conclusion to the issue were presented by community members including a voter referendum and exploring agreements with neighboring public and private pool facilities such as the Downers Grove Swim and Racquet Club or Maple Hill Recreation Pool. In the time since the conclusion of TCD3 community outreach efforts the Downers Grove Parks District announced use agreements with the Maple Hill Pool and the Lombard, Woodridge, and Butterfield Park Districts. The success of these agreements will likely play a significant role in determining the community's continued demand for or opposition to a public pool.

### Programming Enhancements

TCD3 participants offered a multitude of suggestions related to improving the programs and facilities offered at existing parks. Comments included requests for additional child programming, teen programming, adult programming (particularly in the evenings), and senior programming. It appears that nearly all segments of the community desire expanded programming options such as classes and group activities, volunteer opportunities, and organized sports.

Comments related to a need for additional park sites were rare and were limited to the areas of the Village to the west of Belmont Avenue and to the south of 75th Street. The limited number of requests for new parks indicates the community feels well served by the existing parks and open space. Requests for additional trails and a more comprehensive bike path network also indicate a general desire to be better connected to existing park. In sum, the community is seeking better access and more structured opportunities to enhance their use of existing parks and facilities.

# ACTION PLAN PARKS and RECREATION

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to parks and recreation areas identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries. Each action is accompanied

by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Encourage the Park District and school districts to work together to provide indoor recreation and outdoor open space opportunities for residents to minimize tax dollar duplication.	Short	Park District, School districts	Agency Outreach
High	Work with Park District and school districts to coordinate park programming and extracurricular activities offered by schools and the Park District.	Medium	Park District, School districts	Agency Outreach
Low	Conduct an assessment of current Park District program offerings and community demand for expansion or enhancement of existing programming and creation of new programs.	Short	Park District	Park District Facility and Program Assessment
Low	Identify grants and secure alternative funding for park development and acquisition.	Short	Park District	Identify Funding
Low	Conduct a community survey to assess existing facilities and amenities and community demand for expanded or new amenities.	Short	Park District	Park District Facility and Program Assessment
Low	If it is determined that demand for a community pool exists, consider pursuing a referendum to construct and maintain the community pool.	Medium	Park District	Policy Consideration
Comprehensive Plan	Work with the Park District to secure funds, such as grants, to create additional connections and new segments in the Village's Trail System.	Short	Park District	Agency Outreach
Comprehensive Plan	As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, incorporate appropriate feedback from the Downers Grove Park District and identify potential park site locations in underserved areas of the community.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Evaluate the effectiveness of current shared-use swimming agreements with neighboring public and private pool facilities and school districts.	Short	Park District	Pool Needs and Alternatives Assessment
Comprehensive Plan	As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, work with the Park District to identify potential locations for a community pool based on the location of neighboring facilities and community demand.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan





# OUR SCHOOLS

## EDUCATION

**T**he Village is served by two School Districts; District #58 and District #99. Together, these districts provide a well-respected and highly regarded school system serving the students of Downers Grove. A strong school system not only educates our children and prepares them for the workforce, but also provides an important place for residents to meet their neighbors and build a stronger sense of community. Good schools, such as those found in Downers Grove, also play a crucial role in building and maintaining home values by increasing demand from families who want to live within district boundaries and the Village.

It is difficult to abstract any significant community-wide issues from participant comments related to education in Downers Grove. The significant number of course and programming recommendations indicates a demand for a more a curriculum that is more readily tailored to the needs of students. Increasing the diversity of available courses and programming may be difficult given the community's requests for a more streamlined and financially responsible school administration. Ultimately, retaining high educational standards may be the top priority, but community members appear to believe this can be done through the expansion of courses and programs offered.

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THE EDUCATION CATEGORY  
INCORPORATES ISSUES OR  
CONCERNS RELATED TO  
THE ADMINISTRATION AND  
PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS AND THE CREATION,  
EXPANSION AND MAINTENANCE OF  
THEIR FACILITIES

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### **Wider Diversity of Courses/Programs**

TCD3 participants offered a variety of suggestions for changes to the existing curriculum and programs offered at Downers Grove schools. Though a multitude of items were discussed, those items most often commented on included expanded language and fine arts education, continued support of athletics, additional opportunities for vocational training and working with local businesses, opportunities for pre-school, and options for all day kindergarten. Given the number of comments related to courses and programs, it is not surprising that some participants offered somewhat conflicting opinions. For example, one comment may call for the elimination of certain math classes while another may call for expanded math and science course offerings.

### **School Administration**

TCD3 participants also offered a range of comments related to how they believed the operation of the Village's two school districts could be improved. As with course and programming suggestion, administrative concerns covered a variety of topics. The most commented on issues related to school administration touched on the topics of the length of the school day and academic year, parent outreach and involvement, fiscal responsibility, disputed school policies, the quality of teachers, teacher compensation, and issues with the school board election process. Of these comments, the most frequent topics of discussion were school finances and educational standards.

# ACTION PLAN EDUCATION

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to education identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries.

Each action is accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Minimize the negative impacts of school athletics and other outdoor activities on adjacent neighborhoods.	Short	School Districts	Comprehensive Plan
High	Work with the school districts to review the existing parking facilities, buildings, drop off/pick up areas, and bus parking, including ingress and egress to ensure they are adequate and if not, identify opportunities for improvement.	Long	Village, School Districts	School Facility Context Assessment
High	Work with the school districts to ensure proper buffering surrounding school facilities and safe and adequate access to school sites.	Long	Village, School Districts	Agency Outreach
Medium	Encourage the Park District and school districts to work together to provide indoor recreation and outdoor open space opportunities for residents to minimize any duplications in taxpayer dollars.	Long	School Districts, Park District	Agency Outreach
Low	Review the curricula on a regular basis to ensure that the needs of students are being met and that the children of Downers Grove are prepared for the workforce.	Short	School Districts	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Evaluate the costs and benefits associated with extending the school day or academic year.	Short	School Districts	Policy Consideration
Low	Evaluate demand and capacity for preschool opportunities and all-day kindergarten.	Short	School Districts	Policy Consideration
Low	Consider the expansion of opportunities for parental involvement.	Short	School Districts	Policy Consideration
Low	Improve upon fiscal responsibility in the administration and operation of the Village's school districts.	Short	School Districts	Procedural Review
Low	As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, work with the school districts to identify their long term plans for expansions or new school developments.	Short	Village	Comprehensive Plan





# FISCAL HEALTH

## FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**T**he financial health of the Village is a reflection of the ability of the Village Staff to properly plan, budget and implement the current operations and budget of Downers Grove. Given the state of today’s economy, it may be more important than ever to control expenditures and focus on gaining revenues. Just as many families across Downers Grove and the country are reexamining their financial situations, so should the Village. It is vital that the Village plan for long term financial sustainability without increasing the already heavy financial burden placed on resident and businesses.

The community’s thoughts regarding Village finances were straightforward. Comments were often very general, calling for improved fiscal responsibility. The community wants the Village to take current economic conditions into account by making needed adjustments to both revenue streams and expenditures and planning for long term financial sustainability.

### Adjusting to Current Economic Climate

The sentiment expressed in community comments indicates that the current economic downturn is exposing inefficiencies the current operations of the Village. Many TCD3 participants asked that the Village minimize expenditures to account for lost tax revenues and identify new funding sources such as grants or offering certain services on a use-based fee. The community does not wish to increase property taxes to make up for lost revenue.

### Public Information

A degree of uncertainty is also present in TCD3 comments, with community members questioning how projects that have been proposed by the Village, such as the Village Hall and Police Station facility, will be funded. This uncertainty appears to be related to a perceived lack of transparency regarding Village finances. The community’s apparent mistrust of Village finances may be related to requests for a more open dialogue regarding significant planning efforts and projects and transparency at all levels. The community has expressed a desire for more open communication regarding large expenditures. Some have even suggested requiring approval of large expenses by voter referendum.

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THE FINANCIAL CATEGORY  
INCORPORATES COMMENTS  
RELATED TO THE FISCAL HEALTH OF  
THE VILLAGE. COMMENTS WITHIN  
THIS CATEGORY WERE TYPICALLY IN  
REGARDS TO THE VILLAGE BUDGET,  
REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES,  
AND THE CURRENT STATE OF THE  
ECONOMY

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# ACTION PLAN FINANCIAL

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to finances identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries.

Each action is accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Continue to develop a Long-Range Financial Plan for the Village and formally adopt long term strategies and solutions to address difficult financial decisions.	Medium	Village	Long Range Financial Plan
Low	Increase efforts to identify alternative sources of funds such as grants to fund a wide range of public projects including, but not limited to parks and recreation enhancements, transportation improvements, economic development related projects, and social services.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Evaluate the use of fee-based services for some Village services that are currently provided for free community-wide.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Coordinate with adjacent communities, including Darien, Glen Ellyn, Lisle, Lombard, Oak Brook, Westmont, and Woodridge, to assist in realizing mutual objectives and save tax dollars through shared costs and economies of scale.	Short	Village	Agency Outreach
Low	Expand community outreach efforts for significant projects and Village expenditures.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Low	Provide additional opportunities for public review and comment such as open houses or online tools.	Short	Village	Community Outreach



# OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

## SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**P**rotecting our environment and our natural resources are important goals for the community. To ensure that our children and grand children enjoy the same quality of life, it is important for us to minimize our negative impact on the environment. We can do our share by walking more, increasing our recycling, seeking out and using alternative energy sources such as solar power and low-emission vehicles, and using other green technologies and best management practices. “Greening” the Village by adding trees and landscaping will not only improve the appearance and image of the community, but it will also improve the environment.

Many of the community’s comments related to the other umbrella categories touched on the topic of protecting or enhancing the environment. TCD3 participants expressed a desire to make physical improvements, including infrastructure enhancements, and change Village policies to promote the long term health of the local environment.

### Stormwater

The issue of stormwater management and flood control was the single most important environment related issue among the community. Many residents, business community representatives, and government representatives identified stormwater infrastructure projects as a priority for the Village in the near term. In addition to creating the infrastructure necessary to accommodate larger stormwater volumes, community members also recognized the importance of taking steps to minimize long term contributions to stormwater run-off. Residents in particular called for design guidelines to minimize the amount of impervious surface created in new development.

### ‘Greening’ the Village

Community members also proposed long term investment in the ‘greening’ of the Village through the use of beautification projects, landscaping, and enhancements to public areas. Tree protection was a significant issue in residential neighborhoods where new development and infrastructure projects were perceived as a threat to their much valued green character. The green aspects called for by the community do not stop at landscaping and plantings. Many TCD3 participants expressed a desire for more sustainable design requirements for new development as well

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THE SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT CATEGORY INCORPORATES COMMENTS RELATED TO THE VILLAGE’S NATURAL FEATURES AND GENERAL ECOLOGICAL HEALTH. COMMENTS FREQUENTLY RELATED TO STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AS WELL AS VILLAGE POLICIES RELATED TO CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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as improved energy efficiency in public and commercial buildings. Community members also called for the increased use of alternative energy sources in the Village, including the use of alternative fuel-equipped vehicles within the Village fleet.

### **Green Options for Residents**

In addition to sustainable development controls and energy use, TCD3 participants expressed a desire for additional opportunities to do their part in greening the Village. Both residents and students stated that the existing recycling programs should be expanded. Suggestions included larger recycling bins for residents, recycling bins in public areas, and offering more frequent opportunities to recycle electronics and compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) light bulbs. Students also indicated that they wished there were more volunteer opportunities for activities such as litter pick-up.

# ACTION PLAN

## SUSTAINABILITY and ENVIRONMENT

The table below identifies a series of actions to be taken by the Village to address issues related to sustainability and the environment identified in the previous section as well as those items highlighted in the individual participant group summaries. Each action is

accompanied by a list of responsible parties, potential funding sources, and optimum timing of implementation.

\* The actions listed here represent the thoughts, interests and priorities of those who participated in the many data gathering opportunities offered during TCD3. They are not commitments made by any agencies to address or implement the actions.

Priority	Implementation Task	Time Frame	Lead Agency	Next Steps
High	Establish local ordinances and regulations to preserve and protect trees and other environmental features throughout the Village and its neighborhoods.	Short	Village	Research tree preservation best practices
High	Work with environmental advocacy groups, such as the Conservation Foundation, to educate the public on the benefits of incorporating the use of green/Best Management Practices in the management of residential properties.	Short	Village	Agency/Community Outreach
High	Develop a Guide to Sustainable Design and Development to assist developers and property owners.	Medium	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Consider the use of pervious paving materials in public parking lots and encourage private developers to use this and other run-off reducing technologies.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Recognize and publicize sustainable development projects and actions in the Village.	Short	Village	Community Outreach
Low	Pursue alternative sources of funding such as grants to facilitate 'green' improvements to public areas.	Short	Village	Application for Funding
Low	Consider incorporating the use of solar powered street lights into future roadway improvements and street lighting replacement.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Consider the use of "full cut-off" street lights that reduce light pollution and spillover onto adjacent properties.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Consider pursuing LEED certification for the construction of future Village facilities.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Provide priority parking spaces for no- and low-emissions vehicles in public parking facilities and encourage the provision of similar spaces in private parking facilities.	Short	Village	Policy Consideration
Low	Work with transit providers to improve service routes and encourage increased use of transit throughout the Village.	Short	Village	Agency/Community Outreach
Low	Install environmental education and signage in locations with natural areas and significant vegetation.	Short	Village	Signage Study and Installation Program
Low	Provide recycling bins in public areas.	Short	Village	Program/Initiative Research
Low	Work with energy providers and other entities, such as Community Energy, Inc., to create a Renewable Energy Program that enable Village residents and businesses to purchase electricity from renewable sources in the State of Illinois.	Medium	Village	Agency Outreach
Comprehensive Plan	Create a Public Areas Beautification Plan for the Village which should include recommendations for improving and increasing green space.	Short	Village	Public Areas Beautification Plan
Comprehensive Plan	Plan and budget for beautification elements to be incorporated into planned infrastructure improvements such as landscaped parking lots, planted medians, landscaped sidewalks, and street trees.	Long	Village	Public Areas Beautification Plan, Long Range Financial Plan