

**Village of Lombard Downtown Plan
June 2009**



Department of Community Development

Village of Lombard Downtown Plan

June 2009

Table of Contents

Section 1 – History and Background	2
Tax Increment Financing District History	2
Section 2 – Strategy Plan	4
Downtown Visioning	4
Visioning Process.....	4
Visioning Results.....	5
Detailed Results	5
Land Use	5
Image and Appearance	6
Special Events and Partnerships.....	7
Access and Circulation	7
Mission Statement	7
Goals	8
Section 3 – Action Plan	9
Step 1: Establish Downtown Boundaries/Focus	9
Step 2: Focus & Structure.....	9
Outline.....	10
Actions In-Depth.....	10
Involvement	12
Timeline	12

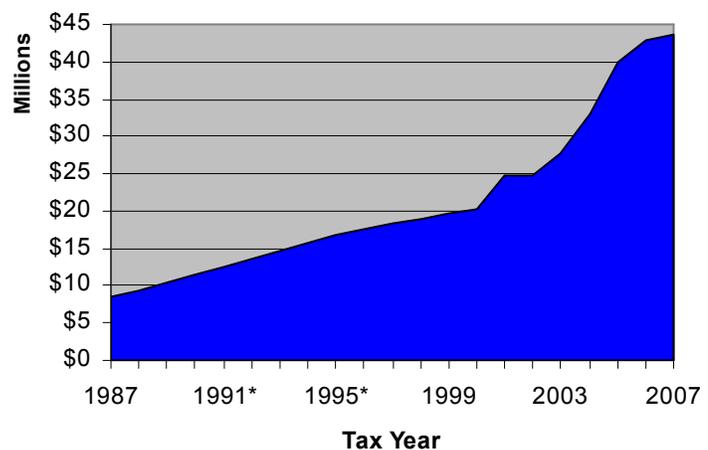
Section 1 – History and Background

Tax Increment Financing District History

Although Downtown Lombard has been the focus of much of the Village’s attention since its very beginning, the past 20 years have had an increased amount of investment. In 1989, the Village adopted its first Tax Increment Financing district for the downtown area. The TIF District, originally set to expire in 2005, was intended to be the impetus for comprehensive downtown redevelopment. By working in collaboration with the school districts, park district, and other taxing bodies, the Village was able to successfully extend the TIF on two occasions, first to 2011 and finally to 2023 (representing the maximum 35 years allowed under state statute).

Since the TIF began, the combined property value of the district has increased from \$8.4 million to \$43.6 million, an average of 20 percent each year (based on 1987-2007 equalized assessed values). Much of this increase can be attributed to large-scale redevelopment projects including Lombard Station, Parkview Pointe, Park West, Elmhurst Memorial Lombard Center for Health, and Lincoln Place. These projects have replaced obsolete and underutilized buildings with 113 new condominium units, more than 12,000 square feet of retail area, and 51, 500 square feet of medical offices with an urgent care facility.

Downtown TIF EAV Growth, 1987-2007

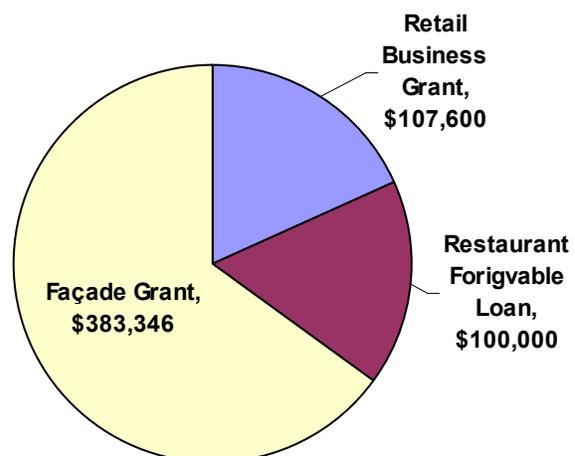


*estimated EAV for years 1988-1995, 1997 & 1998

Development interest in the downtown has had a spillover effect into adjacent areas with four new projects on the downtown periphery completed since 2006. To the west is the new Walgreens, east is the Oak View Estates condominium development, and on South Main Street are the mixed-use buildings of Main Street Place and Prairie Path Villas.

The Village has invested a significant amount of TIF money directly into private properties through the use of its grant programs. Since 1989, more than \$383,000 has been invested in 27 different properties through the Downtown Improvement and Renovation Grant Program (often referred to as the Façade Grant Program) with grants ranging from \$417 to \$50,000.

Village Grant/Loan Disbursements



In 2005, the Village created two new grant programs: the Downtown Restaurant Forgiveable Loan Program and the Downtown Retail Business Grant Program. Together, these

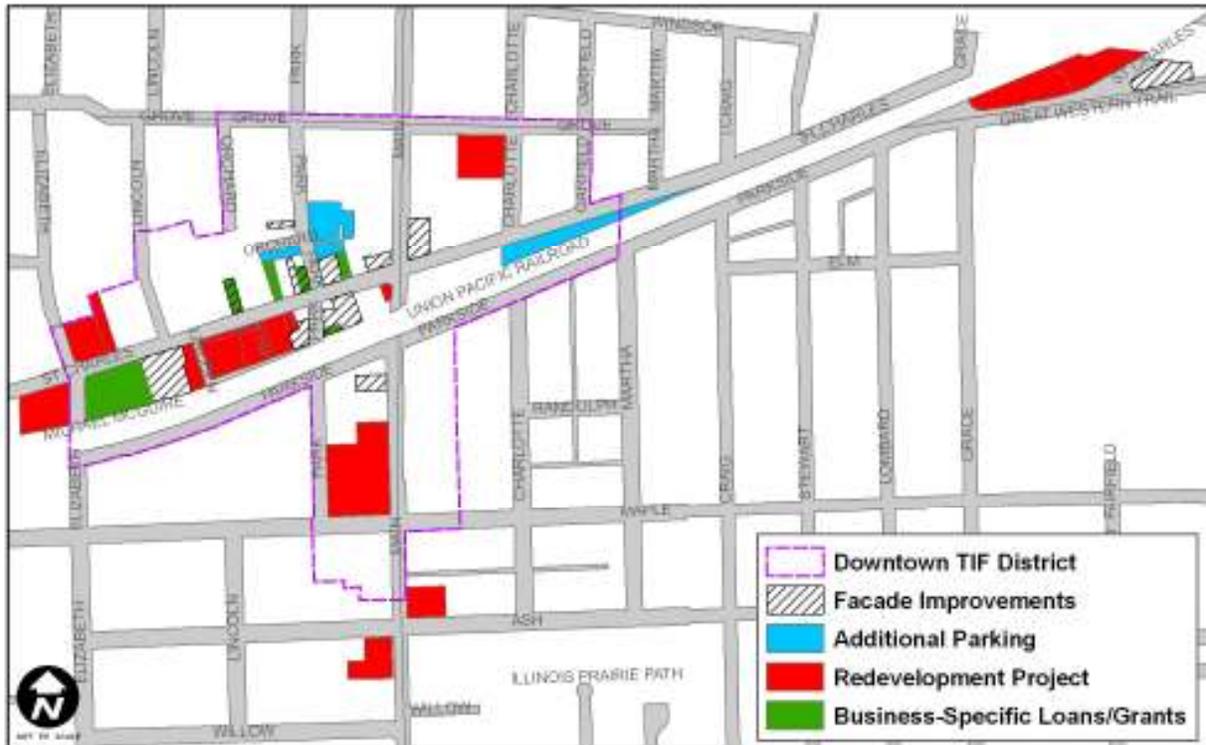
programs have allowed the Village to invest a total of \$210,600 in seven new businesses including Bricks Wood Fired Pizza, A La Mode, Bon Ton wine bar, and Clancy’s Corner Butcher Shoppe.

In addition to the new buildings and renovated façades, major capital improvements have improved the look and function of the downtown area. These have included street reconstruction, new street lighting and landscaping, new tree vaults, off-site stormwater detention, new brick paver sidewalks, and improvements to storm and sanitary sewers, and watermains. Other public amenities include the volunteer plaza at Main and St. Charles, attractive newspaper racks replacing haphazardly placed newspaper boxes, wayfinding signage for businesses along Park Avenue, and the recent train station improvements.

Parking is now more plentiful for all downtown visitors thanks to the Park/Elizabeth commuter permit lot (66 spaces), Hammerschmidt daily fee commuter lot (113 spaces), and North Park public parking lot for downtown customers, employees, and residents. Most recently, the Village added customer parking spaces along Orchard Terrace.

The Village’s investment in the downtown has gone beyond physical improvements. Cruise Nights is now in its eleventh successful season. Lombard Town Centre has been awarded more than \$300,000 for its activities, and the public art program has added a number of bronze sculptures throughout the downtown.

Major Downtown Area Enhancements Since 1996



Section 2 – Strategy Plan

Downtown Visioning

Initially begun in 2003, the *Downtown Lombard Community Vision* is a compilation of the various projects that have been proposed or envisioned for the downtown, and is meant to share the Village of Lombard's vision for the downtown area. It provides suggestions that aim to guide growth and development toward the goals and objectives already adopted by the Board of Trustees.

In 2003, 2005, 2007 and January 2008 the Board of Trustees ranked the projects discussed within the *Downtown Lombard Community Vision* in terms of their importance to the Village. After the 2007 and 2008 rankings were tabulated, the Village Board adopted the *Downtown Lombard Community Vision* as an official policy document. This action was taken to provide a clear statement of the Village's intentions for the downtown area, and it allows staff to guide redevelopment in accordance with the goals and projects set forth in the Vision.

Since that time, many of the ranked projects have been completed or are underway, while a number of new projects and programs have been proposed. While the plan contains comments from the Village's Community Forums and both the Village Board and Lombard Town Centre have been polled on the plan's contents, the general public has not had the opportunity to engage in an open dialogue on this document.

At the September 18, 2008 Village Board meeting, the Village Board authorized and directed staff to initiate a community input process to encourage stakeholder involvement in determining appropriate land uses, site design, bulk requirements and site amenities for the 101 S. Main Street property, the Hammerschmidt Property as well as input on the downtown in general. As a result, staff engaged the services of Houseal Lavigne Associates to facilitate several workshop sessions.

Visioning Process

As set forth within the initial scope of work, Houseal Lavigne Associates was selected to facilitate the community workshops. Using automated response technologies, the consultant developed a meeting format and process to solicit valuable responses to a number of targeted questions regarding the downtown. Four public community meetings were offered, with each meeting having a selected area of focus:

- Downtown Area Resident Meeting (January 22, 2009)
- Downtown Area Businesses and Property Owners Meeting (January 29, 2009)
- Community At-Large Meeting (February 2, 2009)
- Community At-Large Meeting (February 10, 2009)



Attendees at the January 29, 2009 meeting for commercial properties.

Care was taken to ensure that as many interested parties as possible were notified about the visioning workshops. Outreach efforts included mailing invitations to all 1,300 residents and 300 businesses and commercial property owners in the downtown area and all homeowners associations in the Village. Numerous press releases were issued throughout the visioning activity.

Supplementing the community vision meetings, residents and business owners were also given an opportunity to provide additional comments through the Village’s web-site.

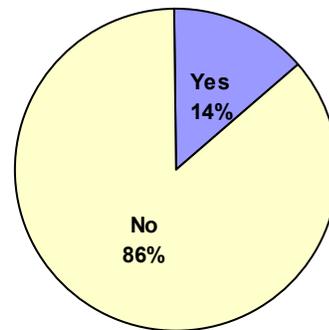
Visioning Results

The visioning efforts were intended to serve as a guide for downtown development policy and decision making. The goal of the workshops was to generate discussions and recommendations as well as specific program actions which will be directed toward guiding development decisions for the Downtown.

Over 400 residents, property owners, and business owners participated in the process. Through this effort, the Village was able to obtain a great amount of data that can be analyzed and cross tabulated individually or collectively. As a result, staff has identified four common themes raised by the stakeholders to assist the Village with driving its future Downtown Planning Goals. These include the following:

1. Land Use
 - a. Retail Uses
 - b. Restaurant and Entertainment uses
 - c. Office and Service Uses
 - d. Residential Uses
 - e. Business/Market Climate
2. Image/Appearance
 - a. Streetscape
 - b. Building Facades
3. Special Events and Partnerships
 - a. Downtown Promotions
 - b. Marketing Effort
4. Access and Circulation
 - a. Commuter and Business Parking
 - b. Pedestrian, Bicycle and Vehicular circulation

Visioning Workshop attendee response to the question “Is the current mix of uses in downtown appropriate?”



Detailed Results

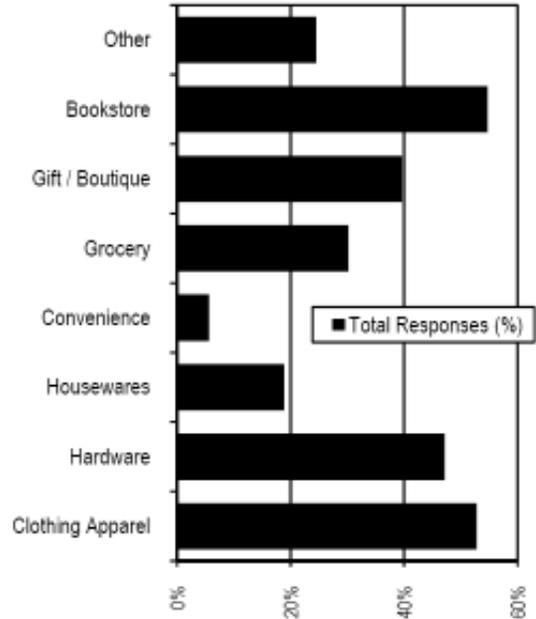
Land Use

The majority of residents and businesses expressed a desire for a larger mix of uses. Residents stated that the Downtown needed more shopping, dining and entertainment uses while the most business owners and operators wanted uses that could increase pedestrian traffic. As a result, five categories were identified as areas of focus:

- a. Retail Uses

- i. A lack of variety and the need for higher quality was identified as a main concern.
- ii. Bookstore, clothing store and hardware stores were identified as the most underrepresented uses.
- iii. 50% of participants indicated that they purchase goods within the Downtown 1-5 times per month.

Visioning Workshop attendee response to question regarding desired retail uses



b. Restaurant and Entertainment Uses

- i. Brewpub/tavern, Theatre and family restaurant were identified as the most underrepresented uses.
- ii. Residents suggested more outdoor dining and drinking establishments.
- iii. Residents and businesses suggested more live entertainment.

c. Office and Service Uses

- i. Although many participants indicated that there was not enough variety of office uses, many others felt there needed to be increased foot traffic.

d. Residential Uses

- i. Most participants felt there were no issues with residential; however, a few expressed a concern about too many condominium vacancies.
- ii. There was a desire by the participants to have senior housing.

e. Business/Market Climate

- i. Many participants indicated that vacant store fronts were one of the biggest issues facing downtown.
- ii. Most business owners and operators felt that Downtown Lombard is staying the same or changing for the worse.

Image and Appearance

The overall appearance and image of Downtown Lombard was identified as an area of concern from most participants. The majority of people felt that the rehab/reuse and streetscape could contribute the most to the image of Downtown. As a result, two categories were identified as areas of focus:

a. Streetscape

- i. When asked why other Downtowns were perceived better, most participants responded by stating they had a better streetscape and pedestrian

environment. They also indicated these improvements were lacking within Downtown Lombard.

b. Buildings/façades

- i. Participants felt that vacant buildings and storefronts were one of the biggest challenges facing Downtown.
- ii. Over 60% of the businesses were not familiar with the Village’s façade grant program.

Special Events and Partnerships

Many Downtown businesses owners and operators expressed a need for more efforts toward increasing awareness of businesses. As a result, two categories were identified as areas of focus:

a. Downtown Promotions

- i. Nearly all business owners felt there should be more special events.

b. Marketing

- i. Over 60% of the businesses said that current promotional efforts had a low impact on their business.
- ii. Nearly half of the businesses felt that festivals and special events needed to be improved.



The Lilac Time Arts & Crafts Fair is an annual downtown special event.

Access and Circulation

Participants expressed some concerns regarding access and circulation, particularly at key locations of the downtown. However, participants were less concerned with parking. As a result, two categories were identified as areas of focus:

a. Commuter and Business Parking

- i. Many of the Downtown businesses felt that there was not enough business parking.
- ii. Overall, most of the participants felt parking was not an issue.

b. Pedestrian, Bicycle and Vehicular Circulation

- i. Many participants expressed a desire for better pedestrian/bicycle underpass.
- ii. The majority of people felt that pedestrian amenities should be encouraged.

Mission Statement

The Village’s 1998 Comprehensive Plan contains the following objective relating to the downtown: “We will emphasize Downtown Lombard as the central, mixed-use, and civic activity center of the Village of Lombard.” Staff believes that this objective continues to serve as the

underlying mission of the Village's intention for the downtown. Accordingly, this statement should be reaffirmed as the mission statement for the Downtown Plan.

Goals

Staff has consolidated the issues and concerns raised at the visioning workshops into five major goals. These goals reflect the key desires and focus areas of those who attended the workshops:

1. **Economic Development:** Attract, expand and/or retain businesses in the downtown area for Lombard Residents.
2. **Design & Image:** Improve the overall image of the downtown.
3. **Partnerships:** Encourage the cooperation and participation of residents, businesses and property owners.
4. **Compatible Development:** Promote new development that compliments existing properties.
5. **Access & Circulation:** Improve overall access in and around the downtown area, including promoting development that compliments pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic.

Section 3 – Action Plan

With the initial public outreach efforts completed, the next phase of the ongoing planning effort is to undertake directions, strategies and policies for advancing the downtown review. The Action Plan shall establish specific actions and a timetable that can best achieve results based on the five goals set forth in Section 2 – Strategy Plan.

Step 1: Establish Downtown Boundaries/Focus

The five aforementioned goals were policy and/or topic based directives. However, a geographical focus to the goal recommendations is also suggested. Prior to undertaking any actions, an essential first step is to define the boundaries of the downtown. This step is necessary to focus the Village's efforts and set priorities in order to ensure that the goals of the Downtown Plan are met.

The visioning workshops provided clear direction on this matter. All respondents indicated that the Downtown TIF District is "downtown," while less than half of respondents felt that any of the adjacent areas to the east, west, or south are "downtown." Accordingly, the Village's downtown planning efforts (including all actions outlined below) should focus on the Downtown TIF area to maximize the greatest visual and economic impact of public or private activities and investments. Other important perimeter areas, including East St. Charles Road and South Main Street, may be addressed subsequent to initial actions being taken with regard to the Downtown TIF. It is therefore recommended that public funding opportunities and priorities should be focused upon the downtown core area.

Downtown TIF District Boundaries



Step 2: Focus & Structure

Two key work products will guide all subsequent actions related to fulfilling the goals of the Downtown Plan: a market study and a property inventory. The market study will provide data necessary to move forward on items related to Economic Development and Compatible Development. Similarly, the property inventory will provide a starting point for addressing issues related to Economic Development, Image, Partnerships, Compatible Development, and Access.

The market study and property inventory will each allow for additional follow-up activities to take place. The following outline lists these actions (in no particular order) and references the goals to which each action relates. Although staff has already begun to address several of the issues identified in the visioning workshops, such as text amendments related to live entertainment, other items will develop directly from the results of the market study and property inventory.

Outline

Below is an outline of the steps to be considered as part of this effort. In parenthesis is the related goal set forth in Section 2 (page 8).

- A. Market study (Economic Development, Compatible Development)
 - a. Grant assessment (Economic Development)
 - b. Marketing strategy (Partnerships)
 - i. Theme (Partnerships)
 - ii. Grant promotion (Partnerships)
 - iii. Special events (Partnerships)
 - c. Residential assessment (Compatible Development)
 - d. Identification of desirable businesses (Economic Development)
 - i. Fill vacant storefronts (Economic Development, Partnerships)
 - e. Code changes (Economic Development, Image, Compatible Development)
 - i. Land uses (Economic Development)
 - ii. Signage (Image)
 - iii. Live entertainment (Image)
 - iv. Outdoor dining (Image)
 - v. Rezoning (Image, Compatible Development)
- B. Property inventory (Economic Development, Image, Partnerships, Compatible Development, Access)
 - a. Target areas (Image)
 - i. Aesthetics (Image)
 - 1. Continuity (Image)
 - 2. Public art (Image)
 - 3. Gateways (Image)
 - b. Business interviews (Economic Development)
 - i. Business owner issues (Partnerships)
 - c. Pedestrian environment (Access and Circulation)
 - i. Union Pacific (Partnerships)
 - ii. Bicycle connections (Image, Compatible Development)
 - d. Parking inventory (Access and Circulation)

Actions In-Depth

A number of visioning recommendations or suggestions pertain to activities that directly relate to regulations and functions under the Village's control. These activities include changes to the Village Code. While the steps and activities noted above are within the Village's control and can be completed without significant external effort, a number of activities will need to be undertaken that will require external actions. These include actions that require external input (i.e., citizen input, organizational comments) as well as professional services (e.g., a marketing consultant).

The **market study** will provide valuable data on the size and characteristics of Downtown Lombard's customer base and the purchasing behavior of those consumers. This information will detail what customers are looking for and can guide business and property owners to better meet those needs. This essential component of the plan may best be achieved through the use of a specialized market study consultant.

The market study will inform decisions made with regard to a grant assessment, development of a marketing strategy, residential assessment, identification of desirable businesses, and code

changes. Using the information from the market study, an in-depth **assessment of the Village's grant programs** should be undertaken to ensure that the "right" businesses are being attracted and that the programs meet the needs of those specific business types. The market study will also include an **assessment of the residential market** in Downtown Lombard, which will guide future development on the vacant, Village-owned properties.

The data from the market study will also enable the development of a targeted **marketing strategy** for Downtown Lombard. This marketing strategy will include a defined **theme** designed to best promote the assets of the downtown. **Promotion of the Village's grant programs** will be an important component of marketing the downtown to new businesses. An analysis of current and potential new **special events** would also be part of the marketing strategy. With its approach toward promotion, organization, and economic restructuring, Lombard Town Centre should play a key role in implementing the marketing strategy.

The market study will **identify desirable businesses**, allowing Lombard Town Centre's business recruitment efforts to be better targeted toward those businesses that are preferred or likely to be patronized by Downtown Lombard customers. This will help achieve the objective of **filling vacant storefronts**.

Finally, the market study will provide information on necessary **code changes**. These changes could pertain to allowable **land uses** (for example, what additional land use should be permitted in the downtown area) **signage, outdoor dining**, or other areas. Following the comments made in the visioning workshops, staff has already begun the process of modifying the Village's regulations on **live entertainment**. **Rezoning** could be considered for certain properties in order to better meet the market demands for those properties, particularly along East St. Charles Road west of Grace Street.

The second major undertaking, the **property inventory**, will involve a parcel-by-parcel examination of existing conditions in Downtown Lombard. All private and publicly-owned properties will be included, and the results of the inventory will identify where additional improvements could be made.

The results of the property inventory will allow the downtown to be split up into **target areas** that will focus in improving the **aesthetics** of those areas. The plans for the target areas may encourage some sort of visual **continuity** among properties. Opportunities for **public art** will be incorporated in the target areas, as well as the establishment of welcoming **gateways** into the downtown. Lombard Town Centre has already undertaken an initial review of landscape aesthetics within the downtown and staff is reviewing the costs, design opportunities and on-going maintenance issues pertaining to additional landscape enhancements.

Business interviews will be conducted as part of the property inventory. This will provide valuable one-on-one contact between business owners and staff, and it will also allow staff to identify and address specific **business owner issues** that can be addressed on an individual level.

Issues identified in the property inventory will also highlight issues pertaining to the **pedestrian environment**. Two related issues that staff has already identified include working with **Union Pacific** on a potential pedestrian underpass for Park Avenue, as well as the need to better **connect existing trails** to Downtown Lombard.

The final component related to Downtown Lombard's physical landscape would be a **parking inventory**. Although Village staff has prepared and updated a study of the Village's commuter parking facilities, there is not current data available on the usage of public non-commuter lots, on-street parking, or usage of private off-street parking lots.

The inventory and market analysis activities will provide additional direction to the Village as it pertains to the Village properties at 101 S. Main Street (the former DuPage Theater site) as well as the undeveloped Hammerschmidt property. While existing market conditions may not be favorable to development at the immediate timeframe, this effort should recognize that market conditions will change. Moreover, should public or civic oriented uses be desired at these locations as determined through subsequent analyses and public input, the background analyses will be instituted in facilitating the development effort.

Involvement

Various elements of the Action Plan will be brought before Village committees for review and discussion. For example, Public Works Committee may discuss streetscape alterations, the Economic and Community Development Committee would review any changes to the Village's grant programs, and the Plan Commission would review any changes to the Zoning or Sign Ordinances.

External associations and organizations will also be involved in undertaking the elements of the Action Plan. Lombard Town Centre, in particular, will fulfill the items associated with the marketing strategy and filling vacant tenant spaces as part of its responsibility to work toward improving Downtown Lombard. The Lombard Area Chamber of Commerce may also be consulted for the marketing strategy as well as the business interviews, and other organizations (such as the Lombard Park District) may be pulled in as needed.

Additional public input will be incorporated throughout the implementation of the Action Plan. Any code changes will be made through the public hearing process (which incorporated public participation), and, beyond that, the Village will take extra steps to ensure that business owners and property owners are kept informed about and consulted on any proposed changes that could affect their businesses. These notifications will take place through an updated Downtown Plan website, emails, and regular mailings.

Timeline

The market study and property inventory should be completed no later than October 2009. The secondary actions should be undertaken subsequent to the market study and property inventory and completed no later than September 2010.