



HOMER GLEN TOWN CENTER VISIONING



Summary of Community Engagement

JUNE 2023

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Introduction

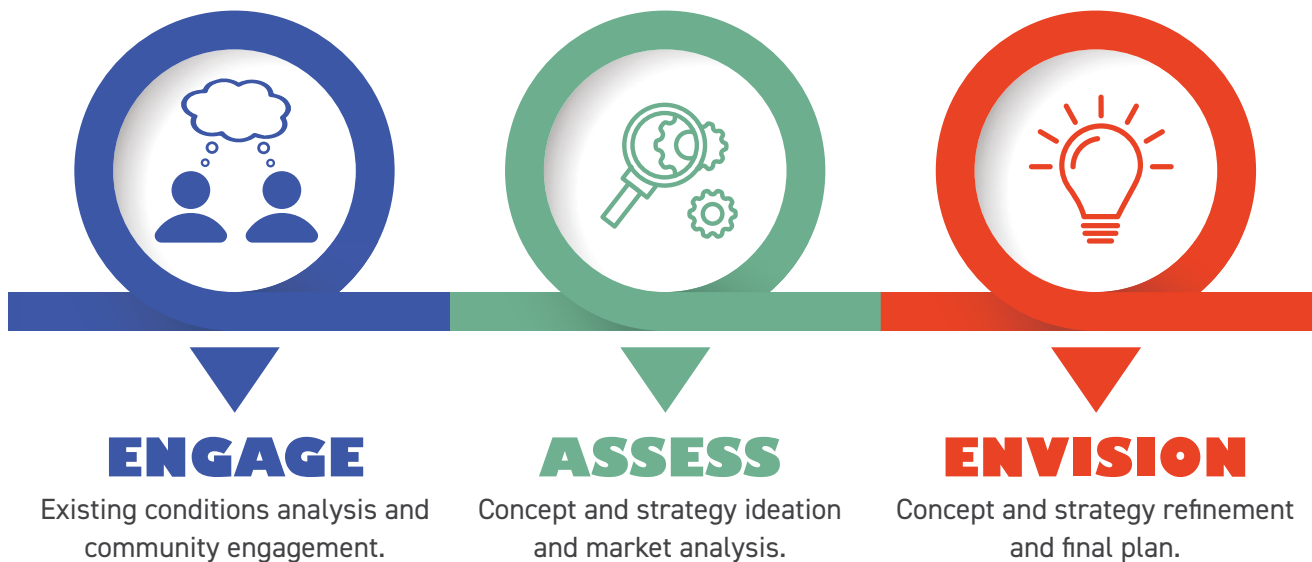
Since Homer Glen became a Village, many residents have expressed a desire for a center where people can gather, enjoy a sense of community, and support local businesses. The Village of Homer Glen engaged The Lakota Group, an urban planning and design firm based in Chicago, to embark on the visioning process with residents for a new town center. Guided by input from residents, the plan will capture the community's overall vision for a new town center, its preferred location, market viability, and a roadmap to developing the right place for Homer Glen.

The work consists of three parts:

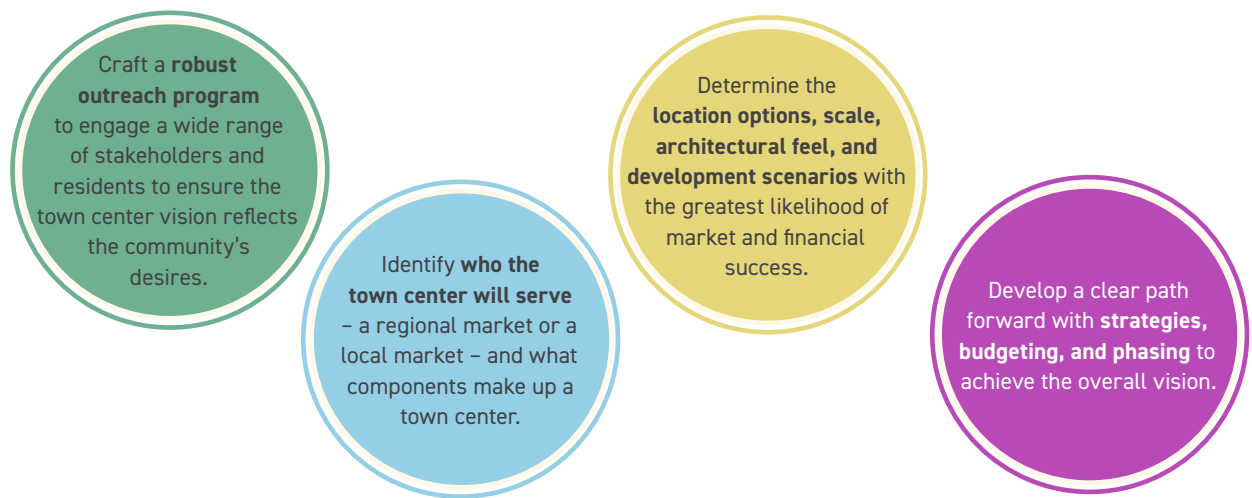
1. Community Engagement
2. Market Assessment
3. Concept Plan

This summary represents the conclusion of Phase 1: Community Engagement. The goal was to give Homer Glen residents multiple opportunities to contribute their thoughts and ideas on what a town center means to them and to engage with citizens on multiple platforms, both digitally and in-person.

PROJECT TIMELINE



GOALS FOR THE VISIONING PROCESS



The guiding principles behind the engagement process was to hear from as many voices as possible and to make it as easy as possible for anyone to participate. Engagement included:

- More than 25 listening sessions and interviews
- Communitywide survey
- Community Open House
- Email and social media messaging
- Project website (with the option to submit comments)
- Pop-up engagement booths at Homer Glen events

The goal was to meet people where they are and to value all voices equally.

Through the series of listening sessions, survey, Open House, and the pop-up booths, we heard many of the same sentiments and wishes. Therefore, the summary below may seem repetitive in parts. We view this both as an indication of relative consensus (though certainly there are some differences of opinion) and as an indication of the effectiveness of the engagement. It means that across in-person and digital outreach, most Homer Glen citizens value the same things. In many instances, interviews, survey questions, and Open House exercises asked people to dream. We recognize that not every dream for a town center may be feasible, but knowing what people want is a good place to start.

“A Town Center has been constructed near the geographic heart of the community. The Town Center, which includes municipal offices, community meeting spaces, an attractive village green, restaurants, and perhaps commercial and residential space. The Town Center will become a major new landmark and focal point for community activities.” - 2005 Comprehensive Plan



Listening Sessions + Interviews

We held more than 25 listening sessions (focus groups) and one-on-one interviews. Most were conducted in-person on March 28-30 and May 17-18, 2023, with several additional interviews conducted via video call. Group sessions consisted of three to 10 participants. The sessions were organized by theme or affiliation of the individuals and included:

- Steering Committee for Town Center Visioning
- Village staff
- Mayor
- Village trustees¹
- Plan Commission
- Community and Economic Development Committee
- School District leadership
- Residents
- Business owners
- Developers
- Homer Fest Committee members
- Environment Committee members
- Library and Homer Township representatives
- Parks and Recreation Committee
- High school students
- Senior citizens

THEMES

The purpose of the conversations was to hear diverse viewpoints rather than to facilitate consensus. Many common themes naturally emerged. There were also points of difference and we have noted those.

COMMON THEMES

Retain small-town feel and rural character. Everyone we spoke with wants Homer Glen to retain its identity as a small town and its rural character and experience. These are the reasons people choose to live in Homer Glen.

Balanced growth. Most people favor balanced growth, so long as it does not detract from the rural character.

A place for Homer Glen residents. There is a shared view that the town center should be first and foremost for Homer Glen residents, but it should be attractive enough that others would visit.

Quaint and architecturally unique. Homer Glen wants something that has a “quaint” feeling with traditional but distinctive architectural character. Some people suggested specific architectural styles or themes. Many ideas mentioned reflected elements of a historical “main street.”

¹Interviews with elected officials were individual or paired interviews. In addition to meeting with the mayor and all Village trustees at the outset, a local election was held in early April. We subsequently met with the new mayor and incoming Village trustees.

Family-friendly. Residents want a place that appeals to families and is not just for adults. It should provide options throughout the day and allow children to play or explore with some independence.

A community gathering place. Many expressed a desire for a place where residents can come together, especially in a world fraught with tensions. Although the term “third place” (a place that is neither home nor work) did not come up specifically, it captures the feeling of what participants described.

Location across from Village Hall. With only a couple of exceptions who preferred a location on Bell Road (because it is already developed and has higher traffic counts), most expressed a preference for a location across 151st Street from Village Hall. This location was preferred for several reasons: it would be more conducive to the quaint environment they seek, and it would reinforce the idea of creating a center of community around Village Hall.



Sidewalk dining. There is a desire to be able to eat outdoors in the nice weather, and that it be in an agreeable setting, not facing a parking lot or busy street.

Low-rise. Universally, interviewees envision a low-rise development. For some, that means single-story scale. Others envisioned several stories.

Walkability. Everyone expressed a need for walkability within the town center. Many also expressed a wish for the possibility to walk (or bike) to the town center, and for connectivity with existing paths and trails.

Outdoor venues. Many people expressed a desire for an outdoor amphitheater or other community-scaled performance space.

Maintain protected open space. Everyone felt strongly that protected open space – those lands that have been purchased and protected from development – should not be impinged upon.

Restaurants and shops. Almost everyone expressed a desire for smaller-scaled shops and particularly for restaurants. The lack of variety locally causes many to leave Homer Glen for dining and they would like to have more options for eating out close to home.

Independent businesses over chains. Residents want the town center to be unique. The qualities they desire are achieved by both architecture and tenant mix. Most people desire independent businesses that would be unique to Homer Glen.

Designed with the environment. In keeping with Homer Glen's rural character, the town center should be designed with nature in mind. People had a variety of visions, but they included lush native landscaping. Additional ideas included incorporating renewable energy, water conservation, protecting natural creeks and trees, and others.

Things for kids. The town center should include things that kids can do on their own or accompanied by an adult. Ideas included a splash pad and arts-and-crafts type or experiential retail. The town center should not replicate outdoor activities already available at Heritage Park.

No rental apartments. There was near universal opposition to rental apartments as part of the town center. There was more acceptance (though not universal) around condominiums, particularly if they were designed and priced for a higher-end market.

Housing for seniors. Many participants observed that Homer Glen lacks housing options for those who want to age in place and that the town center could offer something for them in a walkable environment.

No cost to Village. If a town center is developed, there is consensus that it should be built by a private developer without financial participation from the Village. There was some openness to the idea of the Village providing some infrastructure improvements in exchange for design or other considerations.

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

There were several topics where focus group participants were more divided in their thinking. These included:

Whether to have a town center at all.

While it was a minority of the people we spoke to, some residents are opposed to creating a town center at all. Their views fall into two general categories:

- Fear that a town center will change the small-town/rural character of Homer Glen and will increase traffic.
- Opposition to spending any public funds in pursuit of a town center.

Whether to include housing.

Some of the people we interviewed opposed the inclusion of any housing in a town center development. Their views include a preference for large-lot homes, a general dislike of density, and concern that it would increase Homer Glen's population and/or put additional pressures on the schools.

Housing density.

Nearly everyone expressed concerns about density. Many could accept a modest increase in housing density, but opinions varied widely: Some favored small-lot homes while others found townhomes acceptable. Most opposed multi-family buildings, whether rental or condo.



Community Survey

With the assistance of Village staff, we prepared and distributed a web-based communitywide survey to gather additional qualitative and quantitative input and to broaden participation beyond the listening sessions (A copy of the survey instrument can be found in the appendix). The survey was distributed by email and promoted on social media through the Village's official social media channels and through informal social media networks. (The email distribution list of approximately 600 addresses was gathered from residents who had previously signed up for an event or responded to a Village invitation.) We received over 400 responses, which we considered to be excellent participation.

FAVORITE PLACES

The survey began with open-ended questions asking respondents to identify a downtown or town center in the Chicago region that they like, and why they like it. The purpose of the question was to get people to name something that already exists and consider what it is they like about the place. They are not to be replicated in Homer Glen, but they can serve as models for things Homer Glen residents want (or don't want) in their own town center. The top 10 communities mentioned are listed below. The following page shows the open-ended responses to "Why do you like it?" for the top six places.

Reference Communities	Percent of respondents who mentioned
Naperville	27%
Frankfort	18%
Lemont	14%
Downers Grove	9%
La Grange	8%
Burr Ridge	4%
Geneva	3%
Lockport	2%
Plainfield	2%
Elmhurst	1%



“WHY DO YOU LIKE THIS COMMUNITY?”

NAPERVILLE

- Walkability and accessibility
- “Great mix” of shops and restaurants; many high-end
- Entertainment
- Gathering places for residents
- Parks and outdoor spaces
- Safety and charm
- Riverwalk, green space, and natural features
- Sense of community
- Outdoor activities and events

FRANKFORT

- Quaint, charming, historic, “real”
- Small-town feel; walkable
- Central green space
- Unique businesses; “one of everything”
- Good dining options
- Sense of community; welcoming
- Events for all ages

LEMONT

- Variety of restaurants and shops
- Sense of community and events
- Outdoor activities and nature
- Quaint, intimate, unique
- Architectural variety
- Family-friendly

DOWNERS GROVE

- Walkability
- “Excellent mix of restaurants and shops”
- Independent businesses, not chains
- “Lots of options to eat”
- Sense of community; mix of community events
- Outdoor activities; outdoor concerts; farmers market
- Quaint; “nice feel”

LA GRANGE

- “Cute” restaurants and shops
- Historic; “nostalgic”
- Unique, non-chain businesses
- “Great energy”
- Outdoor seating
- Sense of community and events
- Proximity to train

BURR RIDGE

- Walkable
- Great stores/shopping
- Great dining
- Higher class
- Gym for working out
- Mix of small and large businesses

VISUAL PREFERENCE

The survey presented nine images each of commercial architecture, residential architecture, and public spaces or amenities. Respondents could select as many images as they liked. For the architecture photos, the intent was to understand what building styles and scale people prefer; for the public spaces, it was to learn what kinds of amenities or public space design people like.

COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Survey respondents were asked to select images of commercial architecture styles that they would like to see in Homer Glen's town center. They could choose as many images as they liked, so percentages do not add to 100. Commonalities among the most-preferred images include that they are low-rise (one to two-and-a-half stories) and they are mostly traditional styles, though the center image is a modern "shopping-center type" design.



PUBLIC SPACES AND AMENITIES

Survey respondents were asked to select images of public spaces and amenities they would like to see in Homer Glen's town center. Responses to this question were more evenly distributed across the nine images, with the exceptions of the gazebo and the playground. Two possible reasons are that the gazebo did not depict activation with people, and people might have seen the playground as replicating something available at Heritage Park. These "negative" responses can provide as much insight as the positive ones.

20%



59%



57%



45%



29%



66%



62%



58%



48%



RESIDENTIAL STYLES

Survey respondents were asked to select the residential styles they would like to see in Homer Glen's town center. Gradations of preference were subtler for this question than for commercial architecture or public amenities. The photo of fairly bland townhomes was least-preferred, probably because of their style rather than density. (For example, in contrast, the three-story residential building is more "dense", but received a more positive rating.) Overall, the responses illustrated less enthusiasm for housing than for the commercial examples: In the commercial architecture question, the most-preferred photo topped 70%, but in the residential question, the most-preferred image barely topped 40%.

This residential preference question (unlike the previous two) invited open-ended comments. About 35% of respondents chose to leave a comment. A majority of their comments were negative, especially in regard to apartments or multi-family housing.



SHOPPING HABITS

The survey asked about two representative types of purchases: dining out and groceries. Dining out is relevant because, in focus groups, many Homer Glen residents talked about wanting more restaurant options. Grocery shopping represents the quintessential convenience-type purchase.

There are currently approximately 52 licensed food establishments in Homer Glen; many are quick-service or take-out. Homer Glen has three major grocery options in town: Jewel-Osco (65,000 square feet), Meijer (general merchandise with 40,000 square feet of grocery), and Aldi (18,500 square feet). Other options, including Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, Mariano's, Walmart, and others, are available in surrounding communities, including Orland Park.

WHERE DO HOMER GLEN RESIDENTS DINE OUT?

The survey question asked for the city or town where respondents last ate dinner out, and the name of the restaurant. The rationale for asking about the most recent dining experience is that people are better at reporting a specific experience rather than where they "usually" go. By asking for the most recent experience, the survey also captures the range of simple weeknight dinners and special occasions. The top five reported restaurants were:

- **Barrel & Vine:** An independent restaurant located in downtown Lemont. Menu is "New American".
- **Cooper's Hawk:** A upscale national chain with about 55 locations, mostly concentrated in the Upper Midwest with additional locations in the Washington DC area, Florida, and Arizona. The closest locations are in New Lenox and Orland Park.
- **Fat Rosie's:** A moderate price-point regional chain with four locations in the Chicagoland area serving Tex-Mex fare. It is part of the Scott Harris Hospitality group. The closest Fat Rosie's locations are in Frankfort and Naperville.
- **Phoenix Kitchen & Cocktails:** An independent, moderate-to-upscale restaurant in Homer Glen. Menu is primarily pastas, meats, and flatbreads.
- **Rosebud:** A regional, moderate-to-upscale chain with nine locations, the closest locations being Lemont and Naperville. The menu offers Italian fare.

Homer Glen residents most often dine in Lemont or close to home in Homer Glen. Lockport and Orland Park are also competitors. Cuisine preferences gravitate toward New American, Italian, and Mexican/Tex-Mex options, generally within a 15 to 30-minute drive.

Barrel & Vine in Lemont was the most popular restaurant choice, and downtown Lemont the most popular dining destination. The experiences reported in percentages (Barrel & Vine, 5% vs. Lemont, 17%) indicate that Homer Glen residents are going to Lemont to patronize multiple restaurants, not just Barrel & Vine. The same can be observed about other preferred restaurants and other preferred dining destinations.

City or town where residents dine out	
City or Town	Percent of Respondents
Lemont	17%
Homer Glen	15%
Lockport	10%
Orland Park	10%
Naperville	6%
Frankfort	5%
Burr Ridge	4%
New Lenox	4%
Oak Brook	3%
Chicago	3%
Downers Grove	3%

Restaurants where residents dine out	
Restaurant	Percent of Respondents
Barrel & Vine	5%
Cooper's Hawk	3%
Fat Rosie's	3%
Phoenix Kitchen & Cocktails	3%
Rosebud	3%
Wooden Paddle	2%
Capri	2%
Tazza	2%
Davidson's	2%
Digs on Canal	2%
Front Row	2%
Mama Onesta's	2%

WHERE DO HOMER GLEN RESIDENTS SHOP FOR GROCERIES?

Almost half of Homer Glen residents shop at the nearest grocery store option, Jewel-Osco on Bell Road. It is a large-format, standard-quality grocery store. Specialty grocers (e.g., Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Mariano's, and others) compete for some customers and most are located in Orland Park. Some Homer Glen residents are value shoppers and prefer Aldi, Walmart, and other lower-cost options. The actual percentage who shop these value-oriented stores is probably higher because survey responses skewed to higher-income households. It should also be noted that the question asked about "the last time you shopped for groceries" (not "where to you usually shop for groceries"). Many people split their basket, shopping at different stores for different types of grocery items.

City or town where residents shop for groceries	
City or Town	Percent of Respondents
Homer Glen	47%
Orland Park	22%
Lockport	8%
Lemont	5%
Naperville	1%
Willowbrook	1%

Store where residents shop for groceries	
Grocery Store	Percent of Respondents
Jewel-Osco	27%
Meijer	20%
Aldi	8%
Trader Joe's	7%
Whole Foods	7%
Mariano's	6%
Pete's	5%
Caputo's	4%
Walmart	3%
Costco	2%

WHAT TYPES OF BUSINESSES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN HOMER GLEN'S TOWN CENTER?

In response to a business "wish list" question for Homer Glen's town center, restaurants were the top desire. Some responses, like "Boutiques", were nonspecific. It should also be noted that people may envision different things for the same type of business: For example, a restaurant could be a diner or fine dining; a café, bar, or bakery could have similar ranges. In Phase 2 of this work, the market analysis, we will profile several preferred business types by industry and feasibility.

Businesses that residents would like to see in a town center	
Type	Percent of Respondents
Restaurant/Dining	77%
Boutique	25%
Coffee/Café	24%
Bar	18%
Ice Cream	11%
Clothing	9%
Brewery	9%
Bakery	8%
Gift Shop	7%
Antiques	4%
Books	4%
Children's Museum	4%
Wine	4%
Salon/Barber	3%
Home Decor	3%
Music	3%
Theater	3%
Grocery	2%
Art Gallery	2%

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR HOMER GLEN TO HAVE A TOWN CENTER?

Almost 300 people wrote in responses to this open-ended question. A majority of comments were favorable and welcoming of a town center, but there were many (though a minority) of negative responses. There was also a significant set of comments that could be characterized as neutral: they like the idea, but don't think it is viable or that there is a good location for it. A sampling of the range of comments is provided below. (Some have been edited for length.)

FAVORABLE QUOTATIONS

"I think that creating a warm town center that provides daily entertainment, (dining/shopping) that's walkable, is just adding the "what comes next" part of evolution of the Village of Homer Glen. People currently travel to other towns for the small town feeling of community and belonging, it would be nice for us to have our own, and for others to come and visit too."

"I believe it is important to have a town center to bring new businesses to our town which provides an increase in tax revenue and makes people want to live/visit Homer Glen."

"I favor a Town Center. We would then be able to be more attractive community for people & businesses."

"Right now, Homer Glen is just a bunch of subdivisions and strip malls. It would be nice to have a place that has more charm and curb appeal."

"People who live in Homer Glen need things to do! We're tired of always having to shop & dine in surrounding suburbs."

"It's time for Homer to evolve and become the city we all know it's worth being. Currently, we have very few amenities, i.e., some parks and a library. However, we need more for our children, teens and elderly. We want a place for residents to come together and truly admire, love and feel safe in the City they live in."

"A place to gather primarily. Why should our dollars go to other communities to benefit?"

"It will give Homer Glen an Identity as well as a retail community center. It will help diversify the tax base so the residents do not bear the brunt of the levies. It would provide a location for community gathering and events beyond heritage park. It should be completed with the Homer Glen master plan in mind as to not create a stale, corporate looking space."

"A small town center could provide gathering places to bring our community together as well as a curated set of amenities that will serve our community and attract others. This will bring more spending into our boundaries to help alleviate some of our revenue constraints."

"I see all of our neighboring communities growing around us and I'd love to have some of these amenities here. It's just a feeling - I drive thru these other towns and they feel more put together and homey."

NEUTRAL QUOTATIONS

"I'm split 50/50 on a town center. I would like something unique and small scale where you can walk to things or ride bikes to. Not sure if we have the right space for it and how would it meld with what is already built."

It would be nice to have a town center with new restaurants and small businesses. However, I can't envision a good location or cost-effective way to accomplish this without tax increases. It would have to draw people from other locations to support the businesses."

It seems difficult to create a man-made downtown for a place like Homer Glen that does not have the history (e.g., Lockport) to have developed one naturally over many years.

NEGATIVE QUOTATIONS

"We live in Homer Glen because it is a rural community and we don't feel the need for a town center. Many of the people that serve on village council ran on the promise of keeping Homer Glen rural and we expect village council to keep this promise."

"I truly think this is a waste of time, effort, and our money. HG has a very rural simple peaceful core and well, has no historic warm center. Nothing is wrong with that. No need to imitate others in what would most likely lead to mediocre cement floored/ steel ceilinged strip mall like shops and restaurants. All movement and change is not progress."

"I am not interested in a town center. I like the current, unique style of Homer Glen. I am also not interested in an increase in population and congestion."

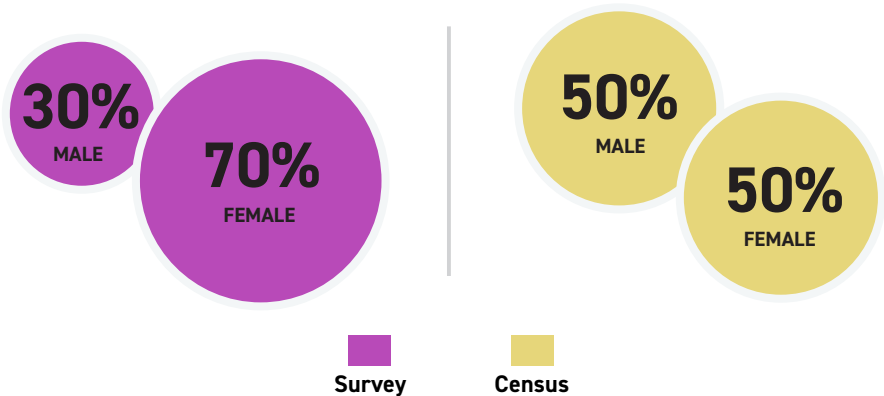
"Not a fan. Keep our town simple, clean and uncrowded."

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey included four demographic questions – gender, education, age, and income – to better understand who responded and whether the sample reflected the overall composition of Homer Glen. Because survey responses were voluntary and not completely random, the sample reflected some common skews².

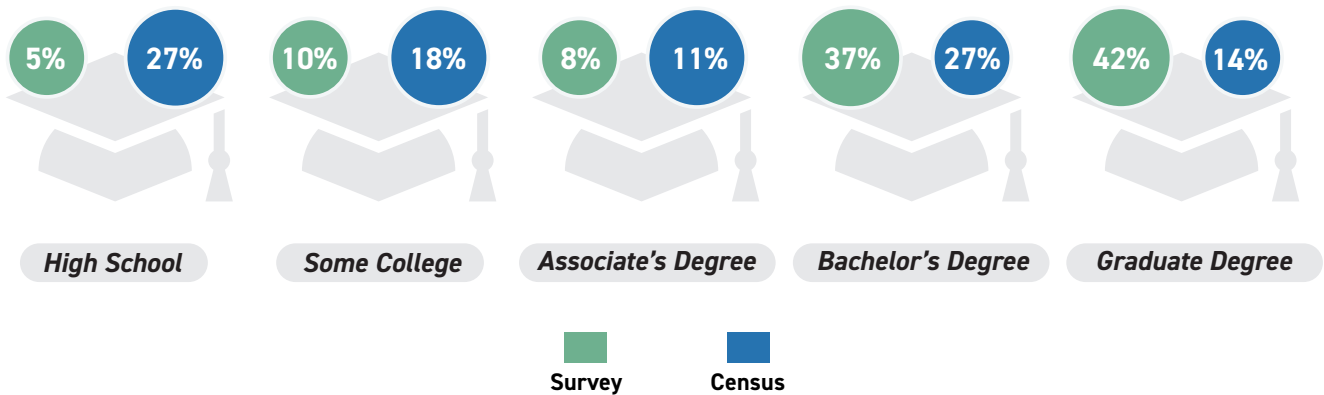
GENDER

Gender of the Homer Glen population (as would be expected) is about half male and half female. Survey respondents are often more likely to be women and that was true here, where about 67% of respondents were women.



EDUCATION

As is typical of many survey samples, respondents tend to be more highly educated than the general population. In this survey, 42% of respondents had graduate degrees, while according to the Census/American Community Survey only 14% of the general Homer Glen population have graduate degrees.

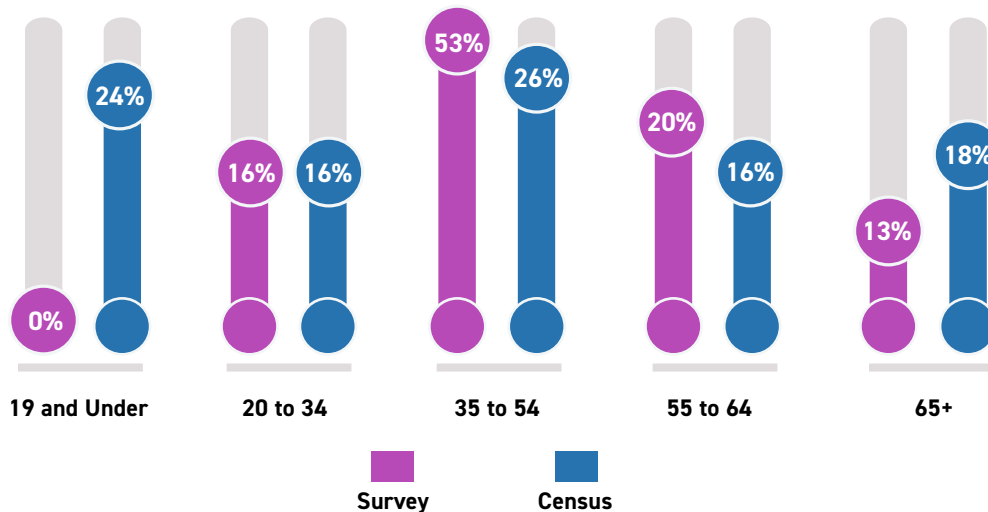


² We have used the word "Census" as shorthand for the American Community Survey. Beginning in 2005, the ACS (an ongoing sampling of the US population conducted by the Census Bureau) replaced the long-form decennial Census for detailed household information. The decennial Census is now only a count of population.

AGE

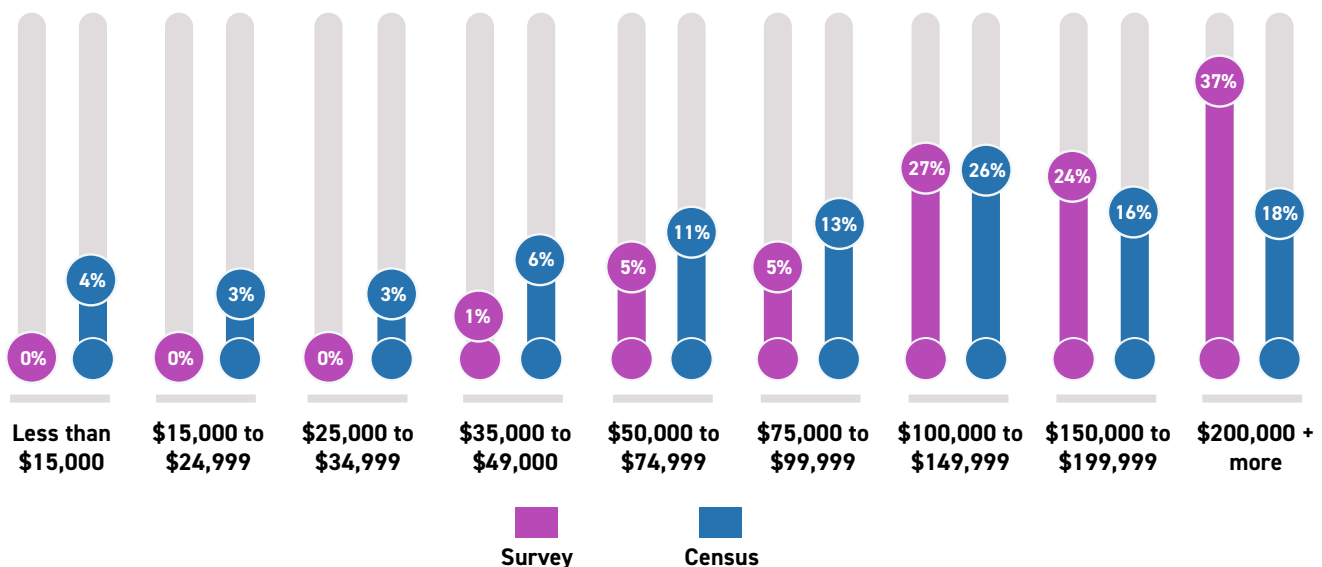
In many surveys respondents skew older, one reason being that retirees have more time to take a survey. However, the results here were different: Responses predominantly reflected those in their 30s and 40s, the family-formation and child-rearing years. In some ways, this is a core constituency for a potential town center, though the survey did not reach older residents as successfully.

About 20% of the Homer Glen population is 19 or younger, but the survey was not directly distributed to this group. (They are not likely to be on Village email lists and less likely to follow social media feeds where Village business is discussed – and where the survey was promoted.)



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The survey sample under-represents lower-income Homer Glen households and over-represents higher-income households, particularly at the top of the range. Only 18% of Homer Glen households earn over \$200,000 per year according to the Census/ACS, but 37% of survey respondents reported incomes at that level. It is therefore not surprising that shopping and dining preferences lean more upscale than might be common for an “average” Homer Glen household.



Community Events

In partnership with Village staff, we hosted kiosks at three community events over spring and early summer 2023: Kite Fest, Stargazing, and Homer Fest. Primarily, our purpose was to engage people in conversation, answer questions, and invite them to scan a QR code and take the Community Survey. We also included one activity board (also used at the Open House) inviting people to use sticky notes to identify things they would like to be able to do in Homer Glen's town center. Responses included the following:

Community pool	Nicer restaurants	Park district/ community center	Family-friendly	Splash pad
Soccer field	Team-building low ropes; high ropes	Affordable and accessible	Community festivals	People want to be in community instead of working at home
Senior services, bus services for seniors	Meeting place for activities	Shopping and Businesses	WiFi internet	High-end condos/ residences
Unique; not somewhere else	Fountain	Zipline	A place for outdoor concerts! Outdoor musicians	Alcoves, peaceful, semi-private
Child-friendly park area	Make it like downtown Frankfort or Burr Ridge	Nicer restaurants	More open space for events and businesses	Nicer restaurants

Open House

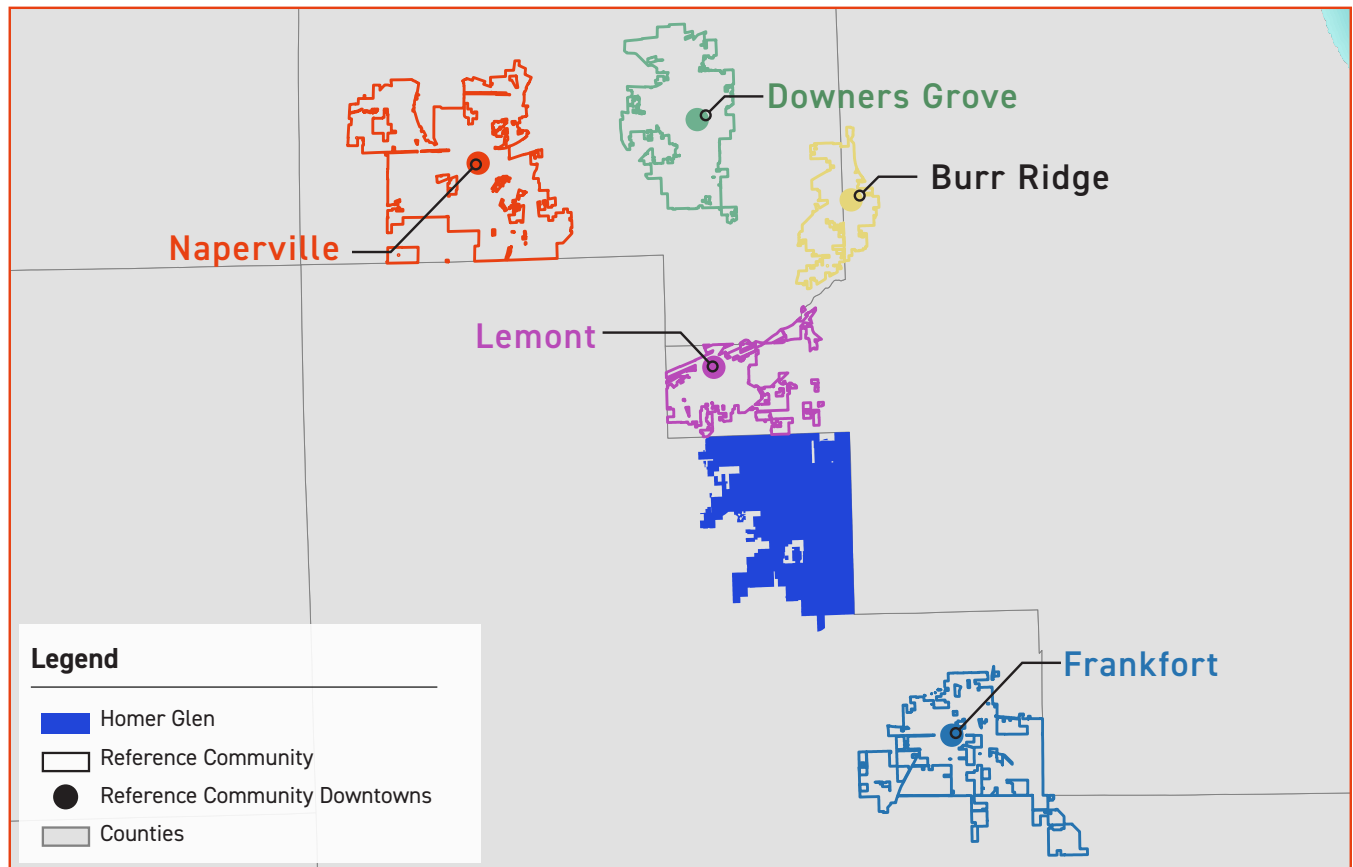
We held a community Open House at Village Hall on the evening of May 16, 2023. About 50 people participated in the workshop.

REFERENCE COMMUNITIES

Based on the survey results, we identified five downtowns or town centers that Homer Glen residents like. We called these “Reference Communities”. Reference communities can help us understand: Why do Homer Glen residents visit other downtowns or town centers? What makes these places thrive? How does Homer Glen want its town center to be similar – or different?

The following pages provide an overview of five reference communities: Downtown Naperville, Downtown Lemont, Downtown Frankfort, Downtown Downers Grove, and Burr Ridge Village Center. The data presented highlight quantifiable characteristics, such as population density, demographic profiles, commercial spaces and uses, and housing attributes.

REFERENCE COMMUNITIES MAP



DOWNTOWN NAPERVILLE REFERENCE AREA

Reference area: Quarter-mile radius around the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Washington Street, represented by the orange circle below.



Population

150,000

Naperville

700

Downtown Naperville



Population Density
(people per square mile)

3,800

Naperville

3,500

Downtown Naperville



Median Household Income

\$133,500

Naperville

\$125,600

Downtown Naperville

COMMERCIAL



One- to Three-Story
Commercial



Mix of Local and Chain
Businesses

1K-20K

Typical Storefronts
(Square Feet)

Historic downtown with key features including the Dupage River, proximity to a Metra line, and a Complete Street design along Jefferson Ave.

HOUSING



112

Housing Units

54%

Owner-Occupied

46%

Renter-Occupied

Less residential within reference area than other downtowns; some single- family, some multi-family.

CHARACTER IMAGES



LARGE SIDEWALKS WITH DINING



RIVER WALK



WALKABLE

DOWNTOWN NAPERVILLE FEEDBACK

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Naperville the most:

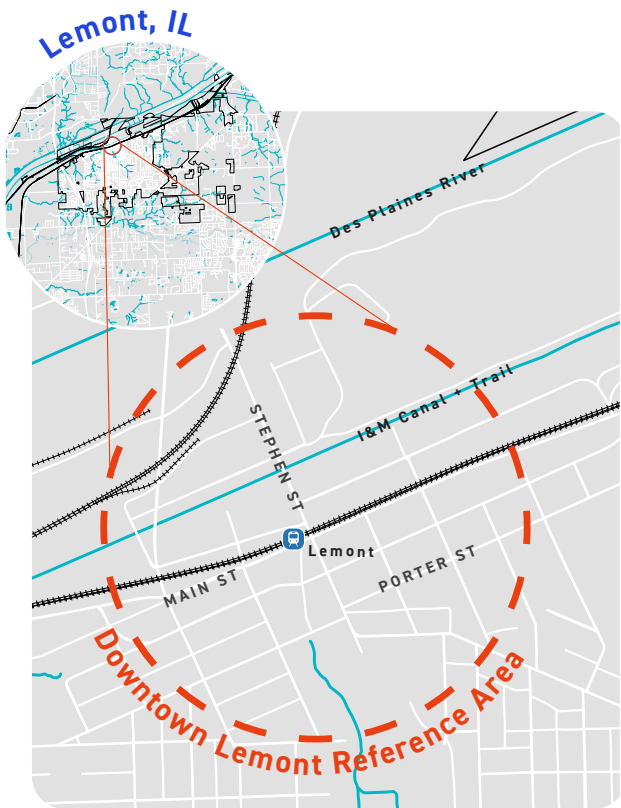
- Vibrant feel with a lot of variety
- Energy, night life, community
- Great parking
- Amazing restaurants
- Walkable
- Public transit
- Love the mix of commercial and Mom & Pop
- Great restaurants
- Great gathering locations for large crowds
- Love the walkable downtown, the mix of retail shops – clothing, boutique. Great restaurants.

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Naperville the least:

- Too crowded
- Too commercial. Want more quaint stores

DOWNTOWN LEMONT REFERENCE AREA

Reference area: Quarter-mile radius around the intersection of Main Street and Stephen Street, represented by the orange circle below.



Population

18,000

Lemont



Population Density
(people per square mile)

2,100

Lemont

744

Downtown Lemont

3,720

Downtown Lemont



Median Household Income

\$115,400

Lemont

\$118,611

Downtown Lemont

COMMERCIAL



One- to Two-Story
Commercial



Predominantly
Independent Commercial

1K-2.5K

Typical Storefronts
(Square Feet)

Historic downtown with key features including the I & M Canal, narrow streets and walkable pathways.

HOUSING



404

Housing Units

72%

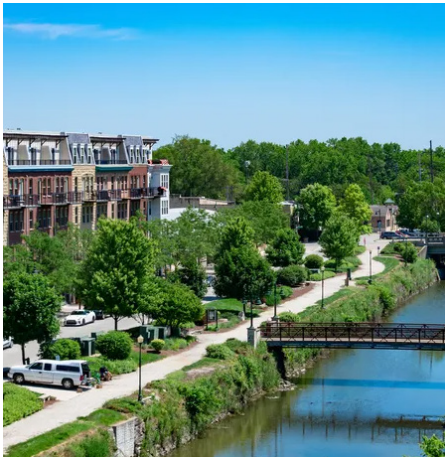
Owner-Occupied

28%

Renter-Occupied

Mostly single-family housing and some multi-family housing within the reference area.

CHARACTER IMAGES



RIVER WALK



NARROW WALKWAYS



QUAINT FEELING

DOWNTOWN LEMONT FEEDBACK

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Lemont the most:

- Architecture and space; variety
- Awesome restaurants
- Restaurants; ability to walk to events
- Like the mural
- I love it because it's fun and close to home

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Lemont the least:

- Horrible parking
- Too many bars; need more restaurants
- Too much residential
- Inhibited by residential and industrial
- Not enough of a mix of restaurants, retail
- Apartments, condos
- Keep housing out of the mix

DOWNTOWN FRANKFORT REFERENCE AREA

Reference area: Quarter-mile radius around the intersection of Nebraska Street and White Street, represented by the orange circle below.



Population

20,300

Frankfort



Population Density
(people per square mile)

1,300

Frankfort

558

Downtown Frankfort

2,790

Downtown Frankfort



Median Household Income

\$141,500

Frankfort

\$154,487

Downtown Frankfort

COMMERCIAL



One- to Two-Story
Commercial



Predominantly
Independent Commercial

1K-2.5K

Typical Storefronts
(Square Feet)

Historic downtown with a small-town scale, nearby park, and walkable neighborhood.

HOUSING



230

Housing Units

93%

Owner-Occupied

7%

Renter-Occupied

Smaller single-family homes in and around the downtown area.

CHARACTER IMAGES



OUTDOOR DINING



CONNECTIVITY



SMALL TOWN FEEL

DOWNTOWN FRANKFORT FEEDBACK

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Frankfort the most:

- Charm is everything
- Love Frankfort idea
- Love the character and old-town down-home feel
- Like the central green space surrounded by retail
- Like small-town feel; very community oriented
- Like Mom & Pop businesses
- Great selection of restaurants and space for gathering
- Open space for gathering
- Architecture; space and variety
- Love the bike path
- Love the open community space for bands, festivals
- Love their farmers market
- Love the mix of businesses. Good restaurants, retail
- Love small businesses and local feel; love live music

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Frankfort the least:

- Multi-story condos [outside of the downtown area]

DOWNTOWN DOWNERS GROVE REFERENCE AREA

Reference area: Quarter-mile radius around the intersection of Main Street and Curtiss Street represented by the orange circle below.



Population

50,200

Downers Grove



Population Density
(people per square mile)

3,400

Downers Grove

1,600

Downtown Downers Grove

8,000

Downtown Downers Grove



Median Household Income

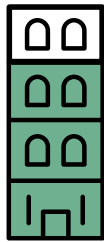
\$109,000

Downers Grove

\$115,421

Downtown Downers Grove

COMMERCIAL



Mix of One- to Three Story Commercial



Mostly independent with few Chain Businesses

1K-5K

Typical Storefronts (Square Feet)

Historic downtown with a walkable main street that follows a “complete street” design, blending pedestrian and vehicle access, as well as outdoor dining.

HOUSING



1,036

Housing Units

64%

Owner-Occupied

36%

Renter-Occupied

Mix of single-family (including townhomes) and multi-family within the reference area.

CHARACTER IMAGES



SIDEWALK DINING



MAIN SQUARE



WALKABLE ENVIRONMENT

DOWNTOWN DOWNERS GROVE FEEDBACK

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Downers Grove the most:

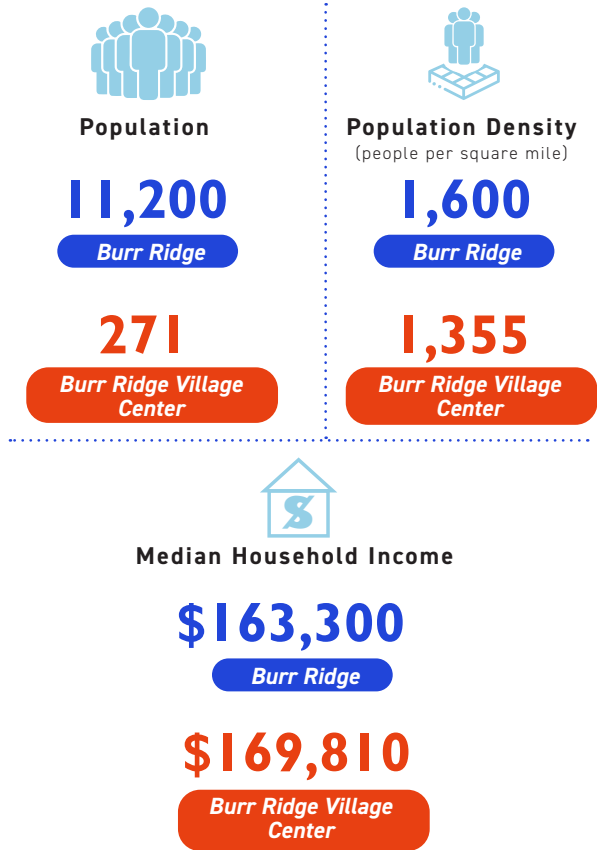
- Great ambiance
- Plenty of trees, lost of nature
- Ample room for foot traffic and dining
- Like the open area in the center to host fairs, music; like the band shell

Participants liked the following features of Downtown Downers Grove the least:

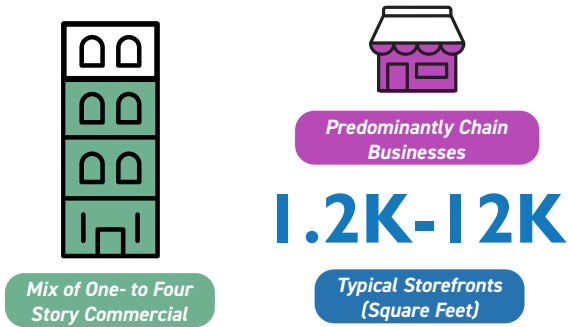
- The multi-story condos have destroyed the friendly atmosphere
- Not enough parking
- Too much construction currently
- Too much traffic through center

BURR RIDGE VILLAGE CENTER REFERENCE AREA

Reference area: Quarter-mile radius around the intersection of McClintok Drive and Burr Ridge Parkway represented by the orange circle below.

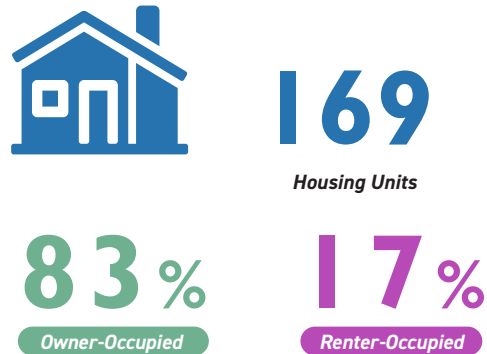


COMMERCIAL



New town center with walkable streets and shops centered around a Village Green.

HOUSING



Predominately multi-family housing above ground-floor retail spaces.

CHARACTER IMAGES



WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE



VILLAGE CENTER



NEW DEVELOPMENT

BURR RIDGE VILLAGE CENTER FEEDBACK

Participants liked the following features of Burr Ridge Village Center the most:

- Good restaurants
- Walkable; traffic is controlled
- Great mixed-use, residential, and high-end restaurants
- Good restaurants, good shopping, good concerts
- Nature; walkable

Participants liked the following features of Burr Ridge Village Center the least:

- Great but gathering space not central enough
- Lacks charm
- This trend is out – all the stores are empty. NO multi-family housing [in Homer Glen]

VISUAL PREFERENCE

As in the Community Survey, the Open House presented three visual preference boards: Commercial Styles, Public Spaces and Amenities, and Residential Styles. Each board presented 12 images, including the nine used in the Community Survey. Participants used sticky dots to identify the types of architecture or amenities they would most like to see in Homer Glen's town center. In large part, the preferences expressed at the Open House broadly echoed those expressed in the Community Survey. Where there were preference differences, they may be attributable to the relatively smaller number of workshop participants compared to the online survey.

COMMERCIAL STYLES

The preferred images indicate a preference for traditional architectural styles and urban design that includes sidewalk dining or sidewalk amenities.



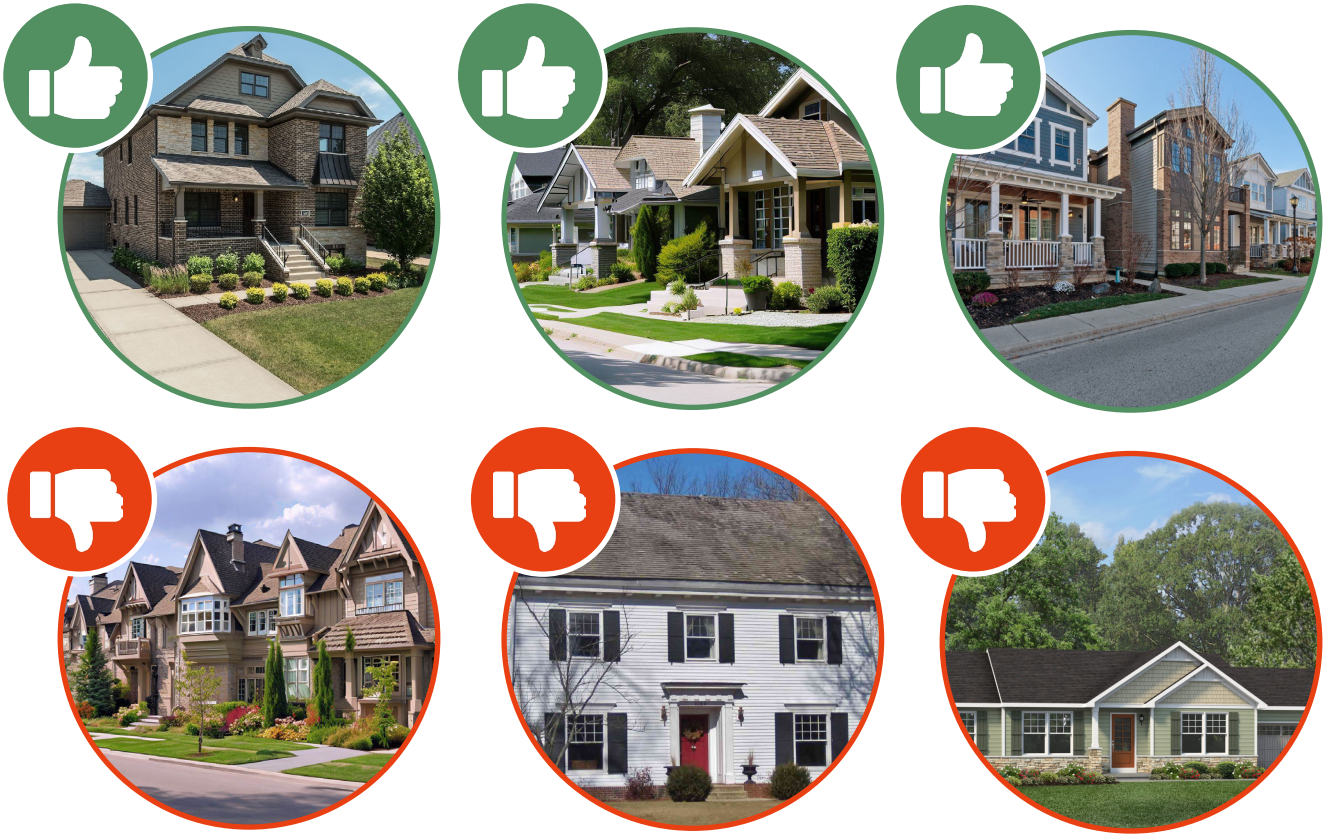
PUBLIC SPACES AND AMENITIES

Participants liked almost all of the images about equally, with the exception of the gazebo on a town square. It is possible this image did not resonate because it is devoid of people.



RESIDENTIAL STYLES

Residential images received fewer dots overall, likely a reflection of participants' mixed feelings about including residential in Homer Glen's town center. The most-preferred image was of a home in the Evlyn's Gate North development in Homer Glen [Image 1]. Bungalow-style homes and detached single-family homes on small lots were also preferred.



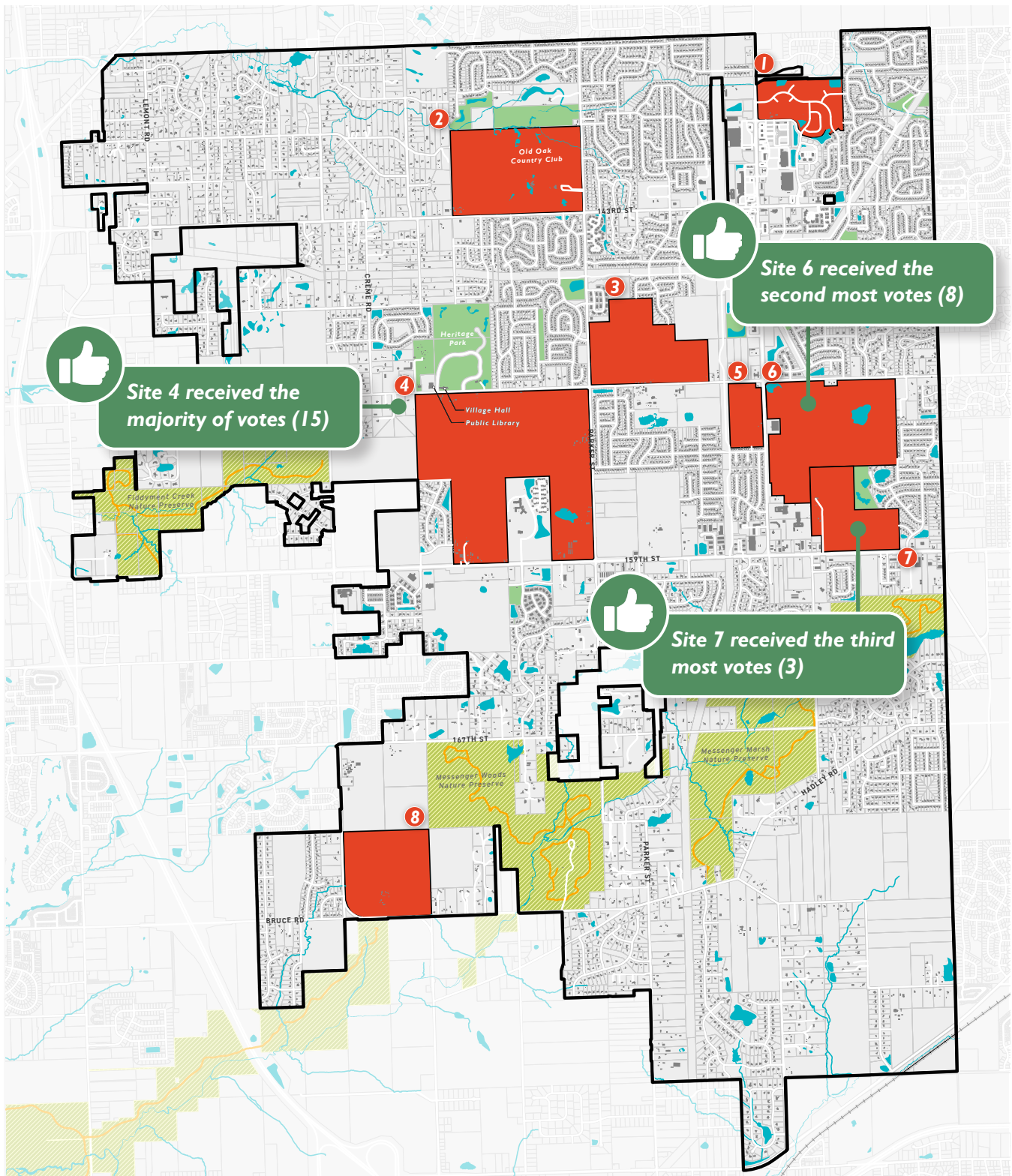
FUTURE VISION

This exercise asked participants what they would most like to be able to do in Homer Glen's town center. Responses included:

Mom & Pop shops	Wine bar	Walkable	A good family restaurant	Small shops and nice housing
Restaurants	Farmers Market	Quiet small restaurants to enjoy conversation with friends	Great shopping, good restaurants	Coffee shops
Local coffee shop	Renewable energy! Solar and wind	Wineries and breweries	Entertainment and community events	Boutique shops
Local family restaurant	Fire pits	Lots of incorporated nature, trees	Lunch and drinks	Outdoor community areas
Locally-owned bike shop	Unique shopping	Boutiques	Family-friendly restaurants	Brewery

SITE PREFERENCE

One of the exhibits illustrated eight potential sites for a town center. Participants were asked to place a sticky dot on their preferred location. The most-preferred site was the location directly across 151st Street from Village Hall. The second-most-preferred site was at the southeast corner of 151st Street and Bell Road.



GROUP EXERCISE: BUILD YOUR OWN TOWN CENTER

The final exercise at the Open House had participants gather in groups around six round tables to “build your own town center”. Each table had five to eight people. Supplies included a stack of about 50 image cards depicting commercial structures and uses, public amenities, residential buildings of various styles, and public art and placemaking. Each table was also equipped with large drawing paper, crayons, and markers, sticky notes, and tape. Groups were instructed to discuss and lay out a vision of a town center. Each table assigned a notetaker.

The discussions were energetic and creative. For example, one table “built” their town center using the card images and taping them in concentric circles, with denser commercial uses at the center surrounded by open spaces and a variety of housing. After about 25 minutes, the notetakers from each group reported on their table's discussion. There were many themes of agreement and a few areas of difference.

Areas of general agreement:

- Family orientation
- Restaurants
- Outdoor dining
- Unique retail and independent businesses
- Beautiful outdoor spaces; incorporating nature in the design
- Areas to play
- Incorporating some housing
- Attention to cost to the Village
- Aversion to rental apartments



Areas of difference:

- Level of development density desired
- Level of housing density desired
- Preferred location of town center
- Whether to include retail (beyond restaurants)



Summary

This summary of engagement activities represents the first of three parts to envision and develop a supportable concept plan for Homer Glen's future town center. Like any initiative that invites public input, public sentiment does not fit neatly into a set of consensus priorities. What clearly emerged from the range of engagement initiatives was a community leaning or "center of gravity": Most people favor a small, quaint center where they can gather to experience a sense of community and where they can engage in small-scale commercial activities, particularly restaurant dining. Most people see their preferred location as being across from Village Hall. The engagement findings acknowledge that opinions vary. Some residents aren't sure this would work; others are opposed to the idea because they worry it will detract from Homer Glen's rural character.

The next steps in this process are to analyze the market to determine what would be economically supportable in the context of competition, demographics, geography, and other factors. Then, based on both the engagement and market findings, develop several concept plans for what a viable town center could look like.

Appendix

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

Welcome!



HOMER GLEN TOWN CENTER VISIONING

Homer Glen wants a place – a center where residents can gather, enjoy a sense of community, and support local businesses. The Village of Homer Glen has engaged The Lakota Group, an urban planning and design firm based in Chicago, to embark on the visioning process with residents for a new town center.

This survey is an opportunity to tell us what kind of town center is right for Homer Glen!

The survey will take about five minutes.

To learn more about the visioning process, check out the project website www.HomerGlenTownCenterVisioning.org

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

What Downtowns and Town Centers Do You Like?

Please name a downtown or town center in the Chicagoland region that you like:

Name of downtown or
town center

Why do you like it?

Is there another downtown or town center *someplace else* that you like?

Name of downtown or
town center

Why do you like it?

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

Visual Preference: Commercial

Click the images of the commercial architectural styles you would like to see in Homer Glen's town center. You can select as many as you like!



What types of businesses would you like to see in Homer Glen's town center? (List up to three)

1.
2.
3.

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

Visual Preference: Public Spaces

Click the images of the public spaces and amenities you would like to see in Homer Glen's town center. You can select as many images as you like!

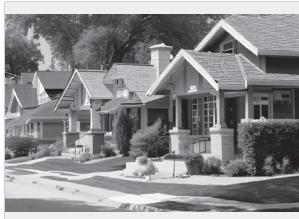


Additional Comments?

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

Visual Preference: Housing

Click the images of residential styles you would like to see in Homer Glen's town center. You can select as many images as you like!



Additional Comments?

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

Where Do You Shop?

Thinking of the last time you went out for dinner, where did you go?

City or town?

Name of restaurant?

Thinking of the last time you shopped for groceries, where did you go?

City or town?

Name of grocery
store?

Why do you think it's important for Homer Glen to have a town center and how do you think it would contribute to the community? (If you *don't* favor a town center, you can share those thoughts here, as well.)

Homer Glen Town Center Visioning

Tell us about yourself!

What is your age?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 19 or under | <input type="radio"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 20-24 | <input type="radio"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 | <input type="radio"/> 75-84 |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 | <input type="radio"/> 85 or over |
| <input type="radio"/> 45-54 | |

What is your gender?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Female | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Male | |
| <input type="radio"/> Prefer to self describe | |

Are you a resident of Homer Glen?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|

If you answered, "no" - where do you reside?

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

What is your total household income? (All sources, before taxes)

- ☐ Less than \$15,000
- ☐ \$15,000 to \$24,999
- ☐ \$25,000 to \$34,999
- ☐ \$35,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$149,999
- ☐ \$150,000 or \$199,999
- ☐ \$200,000 or more

Thank you for your time! To learn more about the visioning process and the upcoming workshops, check out the project website www.HomerGlenTownCenterVisioning.org.

If you'd like to stay in touch and receive project updates please share your contact information below!

Name

Email Address