



COMMUNITY WEBINAR SUMMARY

The Community Visioning and Design Webinar for the Downtown Cary Strategic Plan was held on February 10, 2021. The webinar included sixteen (16) panelists and fifty-five (55) registered participants. The consultant team facilitated a presentation primarily focused on existing conditions, a community engagement summary, and presentation of various development and improvement concepts for key opportunity sites in and around Downtown Cary. The participants and panelists engaged in a live question and answer session, idea-sharing, and thoughts and preferences on different development types, scales, and uses in Downtown Cary. The following webinar summary includes a transcript of the Q/A that occurred during the webinar, the live polling results, and a summary of these results.

Q&A SUMMARY

Q. On suggested site plans with possible building layouts for commercial use should include a drive-up feature. Very necessary in Covid period but always requested by tenants.

Thank you for your comment. That is a good point.

Q. Any plans to reconfigure the bend on Rt. 14?

The Village has long term plans to consider this and work with IDOT to accomplish. However, many factors, including significant cost, would be involved. We have suggested short term solutions. We will address this later in the presentation. Thank you.

Q. Do we have a time frame on any of this?

The final Downtown Strategic Plan will include recommendations for how the Village may be able to achieve the vision. There is not specific time frame for when certain properties may develop but the plan should create a vision for the downtown for the next 10 to 15 years.

Q. Pavers could be a buy a paver with your name on it or in memory of, etc.

Bingo! That is a good idea.

Q. So, could the train parking be used for weekend events? Maybe farmers market or something?

Yes. These are potential uses for the area that could be created on the south side of the tracks.

Q. We've LOVED the closed block earlier this year!

Noted.

Q. Maplewood has great promise and could/should have a wonderful public space there as a planned redevelopment.

Thank you, we will go through a number of concepts here, and each one has a community space.

Q. Rather than all these independent parking areas, would we benefit more by a multi-story parking garage to open up those key small lots?

I think you will see consolidated parking concept proposed where vacant bank is located on Route 14.

Q. The community needs to diversify the housing stock, I agree that empty nesters need a place to move IN town. Not out of town.

Thank you for this comment. Yes, we agree a mix of housing types is needed.

Q. I would also agree that the Maplewood site needs to incorporate some open space since this area of Cary has a deficit of park space.

Thank you. We agree that there is an opportunity for that here, which is shown in each of these concepts.

Q. I live in the area that is color coded orange. How can I find out more about ideas for this area or timing. Do not need to know tonight.

Response from Brian Simmons, Community Development Director: I'm more than happy to have conversations with residents separately outside of the open house. Feel free to contact me directly either via email or in the office at Village Hall. Appreciate any feedback or concerns you may have.

Q. 4 stories seems high, how about 3 stories.

There are many factors that could influence the height of buildings. We agree that four stories might be too high in some locations, but others where it could work.

Q. It would be nice to keep the landscaped lower in keeping with single family homes. Not so high.

We agree, maintaining the character of the single-family homes and development that is compatible with these homes is an important factor.

Q. Instead of townhomes, duplex is a good idea. More one-level smaller residencies.

Thank you for the thought. We are exploring a number of ways to diversify the housing stock and transition away from the neighborhood in scale.

Q. The board was previously not interested in 5 4 story apartment buildings....

Comment noted, thank you.

Q. Cary should be discouraging the public walks right next to the street curbs. It does not work in snow times- plows on the streets constantly place snow on the walks and walks cannot be cleared. Walks behind a grass parkway protects the walks and is safer.

Thank you for the thought and comment. We certainly can accommodate parkways (lawn areas between the street and sidewalk) in these concepts.

Q. This would all depend on who purchases the property and how they can develop it, based upon ZPA and village approval. Key word being how affordable it is to develop, based upon options.

Yes, that is correct. Our hope is to give some options, but also include some key development principles that need to be followed by whoever develops the property.

Q. I live on Spring Street and met you in September. Love this community. You have lots of greens spaces and that's awesome!

Great, we're so glad you've followed the process and are participating!

Q. Concept 3 is TOO much! The streets and traffic would be negatively impacted.

Thank you for the comment. We are showing a range of ideas to find the right balance. Thank you for being thoughtful with your thoughts.

Q. Bike trail integration as well?

Absolutely!

Q. I know this village is afraid of the density boogeyman, but the truth is Cary is on a path to financial insolvency and needs to more productively use its available land.

Thank you for the comments. Any development which does occur would need to be reviewed for its potential impact (both fiscal and physical) on the community.

Q. Adding housing that can bring 500+ new residents into our Core Business District is key to attracting developers.

Thank you for the comment.

Q. Don't you need to revisit your plans regarding train use since many commuters will continue to work remotely and will not be traveling to Chicago every weekday? I am a 36 year resident of Cary and have commuted downtown for 38 years.

Metra is aware that the ridership is currently substantially impacted due to the pandemic; However, they are currently anticipating that ridership will eventually increase and possibly return to prior levels. Plans are designed to minimize impact to existing parking demand but increase access to transit through other development or housing types.

Q. How will further development affect my property taxes in the future?

That remains to be seen and is a hard question to answer. We are not expecting significant increases. Keep in mind this is a long-term plan and new development or improvements would occur independently over time.

Q. Any chance of having rental units in some of the buildings?

Yes, it's possible. We have seen apartment demand in Cary.

Q. 500 is a lot! Where do the park, drive, etc?

New residential development would be required to ensure that parking and access issues are addressed and do not impact the existing neighborhood.

Q. How about a bridge over the train tracks at the station?

That's an interesting idea - will make sure to pass it along to Metra.

Q. Lakota Group.....Do you have thoughts on how to effectively turn the tide that has existed regarding a Maplewood redevelopment? Community education? Financial benefits?

Yes, we will provide strategies and recommendations in the final plan. Thank you.

Q. Is there any possibility/talk of moving the library to the downtown area?

Not at this time. The library moved to their existing building in the '90's and recently expanded their services there.

Q. Can we use some of the parking?

Any Metra parking that is used will need to be replaced somewhere else for Metra use.

Q. How are you going to work into the concept a drop off area / Kiss & ride area at the Train Station.

As we refine the design we will be sure to address this as it relates to the plaza concept(s) and street realignment. We will work with Metra and Pace to ensure we think of the functionality.

Q. We don't want to be Arlington Heights are Palatine with high buildings.

Comment noted, thank you!

Q. Cary NEEDS more apartments. We need more types of housing options.

Agree, thank you.

Q. Many planners are talking about "TAAS" (transportation as a service) which is reducing the need in many.

That's an interesting concept, thank you for the comment.

Q. What funding sources are being explored such as grants?

We will be exploring different options as we refine the plan to find grants and other sources to help implement different components of the plan. We aren't quite there yet, but will get there as we move forward.

Q. Metra should be optimistic but realistic too Many workers will have hybrid work schedules going forward and will never return to full time commutes to downtown.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. Good comment - would love more senior housing.

Thank you for the comment. We think there needs to be more housing made available for all generations.

Q. Who would pay for that new Metra parking than?

It depends on whether the parking results in a net increase in commuter parking at the station. Metra generally does not fund replacement parking spaces, but Metra is open to working with the village to secure funding for commuter parking expansion.

Q. Can development/restaurants be planned along the river front area?

The river front is outside of the planning area for this project. The Village's Comprehensive Plan however encourages mixed-use and commercial development of the Jack's Channel property which fronts onto the river.

Q. Was the Jandus Road area just south of Main explored for improvements?

A concept plan for this portion of the plan was not developed similar to the downtown core/Maplewood site. There are plans for pedestrian improvements to improve connectivity to the downtown.

Q. Cary's schools are not burdened. The fact is that enrollment is far lower than it was 10-15 years ago. Cary needs to modernize its housing options as the population ages and the average household size decreases.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. I'm in the downsizing senior group, early 60s. Since you mentioned older homeowners who have children gone....I would really like housing that wasn't a multi-story townhome. I would like to buy or rent in the future, so a one-level condo type situation would be preferred. Any ideas on that?

Yes, we agree and understand that single level homes are an important consideration and should be included as they are preferred by some.

Q. Maplewood redevelopment is a key piece to this overall redevelopment process. To date, the acquisition cost has been the impediment to moving forward.

Thank you for the comment.

Q. Did you think about some attraction in downtown? To attract tourists and people from surrounding areas?

That's a good thought. I think much of the discussion about attracting people from other communities is really about strengthening the downtown with uses and entertainment that is accessible in the core.

Q. When would a market study be completed for this area? Is that something that the developer would be expected to prepare or have you already prepared this document.

As part of the existing conditions report the consultant team performed a market analysis.

Q. What is the timeline for when construction would begin? And how long would it take?

Currently, these are planning-level ideas meant to educate and get feedback on the best land use and balance for downtown, so there isn't a hard and fast projected construction schedule yet. Thank you for your comment.

Q. I don't think that this development needs to include affordable units.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. I commuted to the city for a long time and Cary is at the limit of how far you want to commute.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. Rents would be determined by market supply and demand. Renting and owning are very different though. Some people, like me, prefer the ease of renting. I don't want to own.

Thank you for sharing, that is a preference for some residents.

Q. People don't rent because of cost, they rent because they want the flexibility. Renting now days is expensive.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. I feel young people will want to be closer. This area seems more geared toward single family and aging adults.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. I've been here 11 years and have lived in Lake Zurich and Hawthorne woods so just a comment.

Thank you for your comment.

Q. My biggest concern about the area east of Route 14 is where you would put stormwater detention for this redevelopment.

Any development would need to provide adequate storm water detention in compliance with the County/Village's code requirements. A former development proposed for the east side in early 2000's incorporated stormwater within Veteran's Park for the project.

Q. Love the food truck idea!

Thank you!

Q. Have you seen Cook Park in Libertyville!! Exactly that, with "lunch on the park" every Friday!

Yes, we are familiar, thank you!

Q. Don't forget that the open space behind the Northwest Highway Concept 1 is in floodplain.

Yes, we are aware. This needs to be considered.

Q. Like using rear orientation for Northwest Hwy area as access to an from NWY highway is dangerous with amount of traffic.

Thank you, noted.

Q. Would there be a connection for pedestrians from the east side to the west side of NW Hwy?

Yes, we have explored this. It is in one of the upcoming concepts.

Q. Does the grant include funds for execution or is this just planning?

It's just for the planning, but we will identify funding and implementation strategies in the final plan.

Q. What happens to the golf course business and Dairy Queen?

These concepts look at the potential for the area. There may be opportunities for those business to be incorporated into any new development or relocate elsewhere within the Village.

Q. Can you change the access to this site from Route 14 to entering on 2nd street and extending the neighborhood road into a public space area?

Good idea, stay tuned for the next concept.

Q. Does current village code allow drive-throughs downtown? If so, that should change.

Current B-1 zoning does not permit drive-through restaurants.

Q. So, construction would not be until 2022 at the earliest and likely 2023? | Grant funding, redeveloper engagement, design, civil, construction and then commercial and residential construction. Projected completion in 2024/2025?

That's a logical take on the process. Developers would need to engage the community as well, but we are trying to provide a guide that represents the elements the community wants to see.

Q. Empty Bank option ,If retail has a synergy with commuters it would be great and the 1st st access would make it better from a safety and ease of access.

Thanks for your comment - that's a great point.

Q. Based on the last poll question, my biggest concern is that if people don't believe higher residential density is a priority, we will not be able to sustain businesses. I don't want any single family homes on the Maplewood property. We really need higher density residential. Thanks for your guidance on these plans.

Thank you for the comments.

Q. I hope the Village Board is open to these great concepts.

Thank you.

POLL SUMMARY (Bold = highest ranking, italic = second highest ranking)

1. What type of Residential uses would you like to see in Downtown Cary? (select all that apply)

- **Mixed-use Buildings** (16/20) 80%
- *Townhomes* (11/20) 55%
- Apartments (10/20) 50%
- Small Multifamily buildings (9/20) 45%
- Condos (7/20) 35%
- Single Family (5/20) 25%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The results show a preference for mixed-use buildings which would generally consist of commercial uses on the first floor and residential uses on the upper floors. Buildings in the three to four story range would be of appropriate height, mass and scale in Downtown Cary. Townhomes, apartments and smaller multi-family buildings also received some interest. These product types are conducive to the existing scale and character of the Downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods, and could be potential successful developments. Condominium units and single-family homes were the least preferred residential uses. Single-family homes are not appropriate in the downtown core area or along major thoroughfares, due to land use conflicts.

2. What commercial uses would you like to see in Downtown Cary? (select all that apply)

- **Restaurant / Café / Pub** (18/19) 95%
- **Specialty Food Shops** (18/19) 95%
- *Retail Shops* (13/19) 68%
- Office & Co-working Space (12/19) 63%
- Recreation/Entertainment (12/19) 63%
- Personal or Professional Services (9/19) 47%
- Health and Wellness Services (8/19) 42%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The trend for desirable uses leans more toward food and food service uses. Food service uses also represent social and community spaces that allow residents, families, and friends a chance to come together. These results were not surprising, especially in light of last year's Pandemic. Retail spaces and office, recreation/entertainment uses were also preferred, along with co-working spaces. Co-working spaces allow flexible office space that can be used/rented on a short term or even hourly basis. These spaces may prove to be in future demand, given the change in working environments, due to the pandemic. Less than 50% of participants expressed interest in other personal or health services.

3. How do you travel to and from Downtown?

- **Driving** (15) 71%
- *Walking* (3) 14%
- *Commuting with Metra* (3) 14%
- Biking (0) 0%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

As expected, most participants drive to Downtown Cary, and a small number of residents walk. This may signify the need to increase housing supply, with a variety of options in and around Downtown Cary. Improvement and enhancement to walking and biking networks would encourage other modes of transportation, increasing walkability to and from Downtown Cary.

5. Which of the following represent high priority initiatives? (choose up to 5)

- **Business attraction and retention** (14/17) 82%
- **Sidewalk and streetscape improvements** (14/17) 82%
- *Improved walkability and pedestrian safety* (11/17) 65%
- Public events and festivals (10/17) 59%
- New Residential Development in Downtown (8/17) 47%
- New improved public spaces (8/17) 47%
- Improved bike and mobility options (6/17) 35%
- Additional commercial uses (4/17) 24%
- Public art, placemaking and wayfinding (4/17) 24%
- Improved parking conditions (0/17) 0%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Initiatives aimed at business attraction and retention, and public realm improvements ranked high according to participants. The Village is pursuing a range of streetscape and public realm improvements in the Downtown area, which aligns with participants' needs, as presented in this survey question. Similarly, improved walkability and pedestrian safety, along with additional public events ranked high. Participants also voted new residential uses and improved public spaces as preferred initiatives. Improved parking did not receive any responses, indicating that parking was not of great concern to webinar attendees.

6. On a typical day, how easily can you find parking?

- **I typically have to search for a spot, but find one** (7) 44%
- *I always find a convenient place to park* (5) 31%
- I can usually find a convenient place to park (4) 25%
- I often have difficulty finding parking where/when I want (0) 0%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The majority of participants do not have a problem finding a place to park in Downtown Cary. No participants have had difficulty finding parking (0% voting). Overall, the results above suggest that parking is adequate for residents and visitors in Downtown Cary. However, the large supply and minimal use of Metra parking, due to the current Pandemic, has resulted in underutilized parking spaces. If both on-street and off-street parking options remain adequate and convenient, current parking concerns should be alleviated.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Overall, the workshop offered the community a chance to review the team's analysis of the area, and engage in various development and improvement concepts for opportunity sites in and around Downtown Cary. Development concepts were focused on the Downtown core along Main Street between Spring St and High Rd; the Maplewood school site; Metra parking area and Spring Street plaza; properties along Route 14/NW Highway, north of the Metra station; the vacant Bank site and Main Street/Route 14 intersection; and the vacant Village-owned site on the corner of Main Street and 2nd Avenue.

Participants shared questions, ideas, comments and concerns over the various concepts. Overall, participants were in favor of the Plan's recommendations, offering positive feedback in regards to development types, scale and proposed uses in the Downtown area. This engagement opportunity provided the consulting team with direction needed to move the Downtown Plan forward, with preferred development types in key locations throughout the study area. Feedback gathered during this webinar will help shape the vision for Downtown Cary, and prioritize development opportunities for the Village and its partners.

Next Steps

The consulting team will initiate **Phase 3: Implement**, which includes the preparation of the draft and final Downtown Strategic Plan.