



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Village Board of Trustees  
FROM: Village President Ben Sells  
DATE: December 15, 2016  
RE: Status of CMAP Initiatives

In 2013, the Village Board of Trustees ("VBOT") adopted a wide range of initiatives from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning ("CMAP") plan developed for Riverside. They were categorized as follows:

- Governmental -- Make government more efficient and responsive to the needs of residents and businesses;
- Infrastructure -- Improve the Village's physical integrity with an emphasis on natural beauty, public facilities, and characteristics unique to Riverside's historic legacy; and
- Community -- Increase civic interaction, strengthen the bonds among residents, enhance Riverside's sense of place, and encourage existing and prospective local businesses.

As detailed below, Riverside has made great strides in achieving these goals. Some items were discreet enough to be completed in themselves, but the overall thrust of the CMAP initiatives are by their nature ongoing. Our residents, local businesses, elected and appointed officials, and village staff have accomplished much in the past four years. We have streamlined government, improved our infrastructure, enhanced the beauty of our village, and strengthened our already strong community spirit. The CMAP plan provided a very useful tool to direct our energies, and together we have extended its scope to the betterment of our community.

### Government Initiatives

#### **1. Streamline review process for business district proposals**

##### **(a) Review commission structure and procedures**

Completed. The VBOT and staff completed a comprehensive review and made substantial reforms to the commission structure to streamline procedures and maximize efficiencies.

**(b) Review permitted and special use designations**

Completed. The VBOT made major revisions to streamline the process and reduce costs to both the Village and applicants. Revisions include permitting outdoor eating at restaurants and the establishment of bed and breakfasts. The VBOT also completed text amendments to update definitions of brewpubs and microbreweries and to allow for these business models.

**2. Update business sign ordinance**

Completed. After extensive review by the VBOT, staff, and relevant commissions, the VBOT made major revisions to the sign ordinance to update existing signage, allow for new signage, and streamline the process for approval of signage. These changes will have a significant positive impact on the look of our business districts going forward.

**3. Market storefront opportunities**

**(a) Outreach to prospective businesses**

This item is ongoing, but Village staff, the Economic Development Commission ("EDC"), and Village officials have had significant successes in reaching out to prospective businesses. The Community Development Department has created a marketing packet for prospective businesses and commercial realtors. In collaboration with the Village, Riverside Bank is producing special loan materials for new and existing businesses.

**(b) Produce Village marketing materials, including new logo and branding**

The EDC oversaw the completion of Phase One of village's marketing and branding plan in 2016. A new village logo was adopted, and a marketing video was completed as part of this plan. A new village website was also completed in 2016. Also in 2016, WTTW aired its documentary, "Ten Towns that Changed America," that included Riverside.

**(c) Produce a "How To" manual for prospective businesses**

This will be designed in conjunction with the EDC's marketing/branding research and incorporated into the new Village website.

**(d) Research installing public art and historical images in vacant storefronts**

The EDC is researching a professional window screening design for property owners to install on their vacant storefront windows (on the ground floor) to improve the image of vacant storefronts in the downtown. The EDC is discussing different themes that could be used and is exploring pricing. Staff is researching how the screening could be enforced or how the Village could partner with commercial property owners to create the program.

**(e) Improve maintenance review and regulation**

In-house adjudication has streamlined enforcement and reduced costs to the Village, and has significantly increased compliance. The Village continues enhanced enforcement of building code and property maintenance violations.

**(f) Provide incentives to existing and prospective businesses**

The VBOT authorized economic incentives for three new businesses in 2016. The Village has also instituted a facade improvement grant program that will begin in 2017.

Infrastructure Initiatives

**1. Improve Central Business District ("CBD") Streetscape**

Burlington Street resurfacing and streetscape were completed, under budget, in 2016. Quincy Street and Longcommon Road were resurfaced. The Village applied for an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant to renovate the streetscape on Quincy Street. Although the application was denied, the Village will reapply in 2017. Also in 2017, the Village will enhance existing signage and create additional wayfinding signage throughout the CBD using the new Village logo.

**2. Expand gateway signage at key intersections and add wayfaring techniques to the main streets leading to the CBD in keeping with overall Village branding campaign**

**(a) Install gateway signage on First Avenue and Harlem Avenue**

Major safety upgrades were completed at the intersection of First and Forest Avenues, including timed crossing signals, new traffic signals, and turn lanes. First Avenue gateway signage is on hold pending the EDC's marketing/branding research.

**(b) Research lighting for the Forest Avenue bridge**

The Preservation and Landscape Advisory Commissions have discussed this item and have recommended lights to be installed in 2017. This project will be completed in summer 2017,

**(c) Research a left turn signal and gateway signage on Ogden Avenue at Joliet Avenue**

In cooperation with Village of Lyons, a left turn signal is scheduled to be installed. Gateway signage is on hold pending the EDC's marketing/branding research.

**(d) Install wayfinding signage to the CBD, including directional signage for public parking**

Wayfinding signage has been installed on Harlem Avenue. Other directional signage will be installed in 2017.

**(e) Improve wayfinding techniques for bicycle paths**

On hold pending the EDC's marketing/branding research.

### **3. Make the CBD and Village easier to visit and explore**

#### **(a) Improve sidewalks and crosswalks**

The Village continues to repair and replace sidewalks and crosswalks. New crosswalks use thermoplastic markings to increase visibility, and in the CBD stamped asphalt crosswalks were installed as part of the Burlington streetscape project. Stamped asphalt crosswalks will also be installed on Longcommon within the CBD in 2017. Bollards were also installed as part of the Burlington streetscape project to enhance visibility and pedestrian safety.

#### **(b) Strengthen local bicycle facilities, including rental bicycles**

A bike path serving R-B High School and connecting Riverside to Salt Creek Trail was completed in 2016. Covered bicycle racks at the Train Station and additional bike racks for the downtown to be installed in 2018 pursuant to grant funding obtained by the village. The Parks and Recreation Department has researched rental bicycle programs but existing companies are not yet moving into smaller municipal markets.

#### **(c) Develop a parking management strategy**

Underway. Staff is also researching a comprehensive green parking lot initiative.

### **4. Create a Visitor Center in the Train Station with wayfinding information, business directory, map, and history of Riverside display**

Completed. A new installation of the history of Riverside is being installed in the train station in December 2016 thanks to a joint project of the Historical and Preservation commissions.

### **5. Renovate Train Station roof**

Scheduled for 2017. The Village has received major grants for this work, including \$757,560 from the Illinois Department of Transportation and \$173,500 from Metra. This has been a long outstanding project and its completion will ensure that one of the Village's premier historic sites is protected for years to come.

### **6. Increase recreational connections to the riverfront**

#### **(a) Establish Indian Gardens Natural Area**

- **Extend walking path in Indian Gardens**
- **Emphasize Native American background**
- **Emphasize historical importance of portage**
- **Establish Nature Center at Scout Cabin**

The walking path through Indian Gardens has been extended and widened, and there is now an unobstructed continuous walking path from the Swim Club to Miller Road. The Village installed

informative posters from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to increase educational components at the Scout Cabin by highlighting nature in the surrounding area. These posters can be incorporated in programs utilizing the cabin. A map of Riverside was installed at the Scout Cabin identifying historical points of interest and describing the area's Native American background. An upcoming Eagle Scout project will provide educational information on the native forest, complementing Riverside's designation as an Arboretum by ArbNet.

**(b) Emphasize ecological importance of Hoffmann Dam restoration project**

Underway. Signage is being developed by staff with input from commissions and the VBOT.

**(c) Establish canoe and kayak livery at Scout Cabin**

Parks and Recreation Department has researched this item and there currently are no vendors interested in providing this service.

**(d) Evaluate the riverbank behind the Police Station and former youth center for a walking path**

This initiative was accomplished in 2014, greatly improving the riverview. Invasive species were removed by volunteers and staff and a native ground cover was planted. Staff evaluation concluded this area is not appropriate for public access. Staff will continue to maintain the area to insure the native ground cover becomes established.

**(e) Open up river views and support shoreline habitat restoration**

The Department of Public Works has completed extensive restoration efforts on Riverside and Bloomingbank Roads, as well as in Indian Gardens, to improve river views and restore habitat. The Frederick Law Olmsted Society has provided significant volunteer resourced in these projects. Brush clearing was accomplished along Bloomingbank Road to establish a continuous, unobstructed walking path along the Des Plaines River. Riverbank restoration along Bloomingbank Road was made to maintain a visual and sound shield to First Avenue, and this area will be monitored to determine site quality and potential for further restoration.

**7. Include sustainability as a major concern when considering all infrastructure initiatives**

The Burlington streetscape project includes pervious pavers to allow for storm water dissipating into the ground rather than running into the sewer system. The project also uses native trees and hardy perennials that will thrive in the streetscape environment. LED bulbs were installed in all up-lights and bollard lights, as well as in the Visitor Center and in street lights near the Train Station and railroad tracks. The VBOT also is considering the installation of pervious pavers in the Village's parking lots. Sustainability remains a constant focus in all infrastructure considerations and decisions.

**8. Improve trainscape**

The Public Works Department is evaluating existing plantings along the trainscape to improve visual effects and lessen the cost of maintenance.

### **9. Determine highest and best use of former youth center property**

Scheduled for 2017.

### Community Initiatives

#### **1. Develop Shop Local Campaign**

The Chamber of Commerce has an active cross-marketing campaign to encourage local shopping and is directing more funding to assist local business community.

#### **2. Support current and additional community events**

##### **(a) Expand staff support of community events**

The Parks & Recreation Department now supports Riverside Arts Weekend, Riv-inia, the Farmers' Market, and July 4th events. Farmers' Market was relocated to Centennial Plaza in 2016 to connect with the CBD, enhance accessibility, and increase pedestrian and vehicular safety.

##### **(b) Increase the number of community events**

Riv-inia was very successful in 2016, as were the FLOS sponsored craft beer tasting, and the Chamber of Commerce sponsored Riverfest. The Village now has a full roster of events planned from RAW in the spring through the Holiday Stroll. These events will be featured prominently on the Village's updated website and through media outreach.

##### **(c) Renovate Guthrie Park Memorial**

Initial donations have been received. Village will solicit designs for this project in 2017.

#### **3. Promote tourism**

See above for various accomplishments already achieved.

##### **(a) Leverage train access to and from Chicago**

This will be addressed in conjunction with the EDC's marketing/branding research.

##### **(b) Increase walking and bicycling tours**

FLOS continues to expand its programming and its walking tours were very successful in 2016. The Village will increase its coordination with local businesses for the 2017 Wright Ride.

##### **(c) Support bed and breakfast establishments**

Village code was revised to encourage bed and breakfast establishments.

**(d) Emphasize the riverfront, natural beauty, and natural history**

See Infrastructure Initiative 6. In addition, Village has contracted to begin installation of a natural wetland featuring native plantings in Swan Pond in 2017.

**(e) Research renovation of Water Tower for adaptive reuse**

Consideration of adaptive reuse will be part of a comprehensive plan for Village facilities.