

Long Grove

MAY 2006

IMPROVEMENTS Q&A

Long Grove to Hold May 30 Open House on Downtown Area Improvements

This Q&A will address questions about the upcoming May 30 open house on downtown area improvements.

Q. What can you tell me about the May 30 open house?

A. The Village will have an open house on **Tuesday, May 30, 6:30–8 p.m.** at Woodlawn Middle School, 6362 Gilmer Road (just west of the intersection of North Kruger Road and Gilmer Road). The purpose of the open house is to provide information to the community and receive feedback regarding the need and the process for potential improvements in the downtown and the adjacent area, also known as the B1 Zoning District and B1A Sub Area Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The open house will provide basic information regarding costs and financing options. There will not be a formal presentation at the open house. The attendees can come and go as they wish, viewing exhibits, talking to staff, asking questions and providing comments.

Q. What improvements are under consideration?

A. The improvements under consideration are sidewalks, lighting, underground utilities, way signage, parking, village facilities, and a deep well and water distribution to serve existing and potential new business.

Q. Why are these improvements needed?

A. Residents and visitors to the downtown find walking on the existing uneven cobblestone sidewalks difficult, especially with strollers or wheelchairs. Existing downtown lighting limits evening uses and does not promote a sense of security. Unsightly overhead utility lines and poles conflict with the historic character of the downtown. Also, residents have expressed a desire for more restaurants and neighborhood retail. A deep well would provide additional capacity to serve businesses, and potentially residents, in this area. The sales tax revenue attributed to the downtown area has been steadily declining since 1999, and providing improvements can help ensure the future viability of the downtown area and provide necessary sales tax revenue for the village.

Q. What are the goals of these improvements?

A. The goals include:

- Improved pedestrian accessibility and safety.
- Reduced potential vehicle–pedestrian conflicts.
- Provide infrastructure to support existing and potential businesses.
- Provide improvements that can be maintained at reasonable cost.

- Coordination with Lake County on Old McHenry Road improvements.
- Benefit to the entire community because of the continued and increased viability of downtown.
- Ability to provide opportunity for neighborhood retail to better serve residents.
- Reversing the trend of declining sales tax and sales revenue downtown.
- Improved downtown shopping experience.
- Enhance the appearance of the historic downtown area.

Q. How much would these improvements cost?

A. Current estimates, if all the improvements are made, are between \$3 million to \$8 million, depending on options selected. The Village Board will be making a decision regarding the need for and ability to incorporate all or some of the proposed improvements. The Village will be updating the estimated costs of improvements as the project proceeds over the next few months.

Q. How would the Village pay for the improvements?

A. Illinois villages have a number of options to fund improvements of this type. They include:

- General Funds
- General Obligation Bonds
- Non-Home Rules Sales Tax
- Grants
- Bank Loans
- Special Service Assessment
- Tax Increment Financing

A more detailed description of these financing options will be provided at the open house. It is likely that a combination of several of the above options would be necessary to fund a project of this type.

Q. What are General Obligation Bonds?

A. General Obligation Bonds refer to debt issued by the Village. The debt can be repaid from a variety of sources including sales taxes, special service taxes, tax increment, or a combinations thereof.

Q. What are SSAs?

A. SSAs or special service areas refer to a method to finance capital or operating expenses related to a specially defined area
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within the Village. For example, an SSA was recently established in Long Grove to promote downtown. The costs for these activities are paid for by a special tax on downtown properties.

Q. What is tax increment financing?

A. Tax increment financing (TIF) is a financing tool created by the Illinois Legislature in the late 1970s to help encourage development and redevelopment. Under TIF, property taxes currently generated by the properties continue to be paid to all taxing agencies. The tax revenue that results from the increased value of the new development, also called the “tax increment”, goes to pay for public improvements within the TIF district including site costs such as acquisition, demolition, water, sewer, utilities, and street improvements.

Q. Is this a backdoor attempt for the Village to gain the authority to condemn property?

A. No. Since the Village was incorporated in 1956 it has never condemned property. There is no interest at this time in condemning residential property and the Village would use condemnation if necessary on vacant property or a portion of commercial property for public safety and improvements.

Q. How would the improvements impact me as a taxpayer?

A. We know that this is an important issue but it is too early to know the answer to this question yet. Once a decision is made regarding the scope of public improvements and the financing methods, the impacts will be provided to the public. We are expecting that this information will be available at the second open house later this summer or fall.

Q. What criteria will the Village use to determine the type or mix of types of financing methods that should be used?

A. The suggested evaluation criteria are listed below. The Village Board would like to get public feedback from the open house on May 30 before finalizing the criteria:

- Affordable to those paying costs.
- Equitable cost distribution among those paying costs.
- Practical to administer.
- Legally applicable for the specified improvements.

Q. Hasn't the Village considered downtown improvements before?

A. Yes, downtown needs have been discussed many times. The most recent planning effort ended when officials decided the specific plan was too ambitious to pursue. The issue is active again because the reasons for the improvements remain.

Q. What's the timetable for the decision-making process?

A. The timetable for the decision-making process is as follows:

Study Phase

- **May 30, 2006** – Open house to gain public feedback on process, potential improvements and evaluation criteria.
- **Summer 2006** – Open house to gain public feedback on evaluation of selected improvements, funding methods and estimated impacts.
- **Fall 2006** – Village Board discussion and decision regarding selection of public improvements and funding sources.

Implementation Phase, if necessary

- **Fall/Winter 2006** – Finalize funding sources and advertise for bids for selected improvements (if a decision is made to proceed).
- **Winter/Spring 2007** – Award bids and authorize work (if a decision is made to proceed).
- **Spring 2007 to ?** – Construction of improvements (if a decision is made to proceed).

Q. Why should I come to the open house?

A. Your feedback will help decision-makers as they determine if and how to proceed. The Village Board is committed to getting public feedback on this important issue before they make a decision. There will also be valuable information there and experts you can talk to, express your opinion and learn more. There will be a comment card to fill out and those comment cards will be shared with the Village Board.

Q. Who can I contact to learn more?

A. First, come to the open house. Second, you can check the Village's Web site at www.longgrove.net. Finally, you can contact the Village Manager, Dave Lothspeich at (847) 634-9440 if you have questions about the potential improvements or the open house.

