

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Report for the Village
7/21/2020

SUBJECT:	SUBMITTED BY:
Council Member New Business	David Fieldman Village Manager

SYNOPSIS

At the request of Commissioner Kulovany, the following proposals have been placed on the New Business Agenda:

Direct staff to:

- *Work with the Architectural Design Review Board to Review, Evaluate and Recommend Amendments to the Downtown Design Guidelines and Downtown Pattern Book*
- *Consider Amending the Review and Approval Process for Certain Construction Projects in the Downtown and at Catalyst Sites to Require Review by the Architectural Design Review Board*

Pursuant to Village Council policy, this topic shall be a discussion item only to allow the Village Council to direct staff to prepare an action for consideration at a later date.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Strategic Goals include *Steward of Financial, Environmental and Neighborhood Sustainability*

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Action at the discretion of the Village Council. If the Village Council directs staff to undertake this project, staff will analyze Commissioner Kulovany's proposal and identify and analyze other options intended to achieve the project objectives.

BACKGROUND

Commissioner Kulovany submitted the following request for consideration by the Village Council as New Business:

**Proposal to Have the Architectural Design Review Board
Conduct Early Design Concept Reviews**

Objectives

- Ensure that Downtown and Catalyst sites are developed in a way that will best attract diners, shoppers, new residents and new businesses to Downers Grove to help maximize the benefits to the Village and its residents.
- Allow for public visibility much earlier in the planning process than the current method to increase community buy-in and support of new and re-developed projects.

Rationale

- Downtown Downers Grove is the symbolic heart of the Village, serving as the civic and social focal point of our community.
- It is essential to the Village that Catalyst sites are developed in the best interest of the Village and its residents.
- Now is a strategic time for the development of the downtown and catalyst site areas before we get new applications.
 - We got lucky with the DuPage Medical re-development. They could have easily applied a coat of paint and the Village would have had little recourse.
- We need to ensure that downtown and catalysts sites are developed and re-developed with durable and high-quality materials.
- We need to ensure that new developments and re-developments are in substantial compliance with the “Design Guidelines for the Downers Grove Downtown Business District” (Downtown Design Guidelines).
- We need to ensure that downtown and catalysts sites are developed and re-developed in a way that enhances and does not detract from surrounding buildings.
- The ADRB has the right make up to take on this task and they do not currently have much to do.

Proposed Duties

- Review and evaluate whether the existing Downtown Design Guidelines and the “Village of Downers Grove Downtown Pattern Book” (Downtown Pattern Book) are effective tools for achieving the policy goals specified in the downtown section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Review and evaluate whether the existing Downtown Design Guidelines and Downtown Pattern Book require updating or changes.
- Make recommendations to the Village Council from time to time on recommended improvements to the Downtown Design Guidelines and the Downtown Pattern Book.
- Review proposed exterior plans for development or re-development of buildings during the early stages of design in the Downtown Business District and Catalyst Sites, as identified in the “Village of Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan”
- Ensure that designs are in substantial compliance with the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Recommend for approval or denial to the Village Council all applications for Certificates of Approval.

ATTACHMENTS

Presentation Submitted by Commissioner Kulovany

DOWNTOWN DOWNERS GROVE



Architectural Design Review Board

Early Concept Review for Downtown & Catalyst Sites

Rich Kulovany

Early Design Concept Review Topics

- Issues
- Questions
- What to Avoid
- Characteristics of a High-Quality Downtown
- Recommendations

Issues

(What prompted this?)

- Citizens Upset About Main and Maple Project
 - Residents frustrated that they have too few opportunities, too late in the process to have any meaningful visibility into a project
- Developer potentially enters a market under adversarial circumstances, unnecessarily
 - Developers prefer that a municipality and its residents welcome their projects
- Staff and Council have limited tools to enforce compliance with *Downtown Design Guidelines*
- Current and future development will determine the quality and success of Downtown Downers Grove for the next 50-100 years
- We need an attractive Downtown to compete with other suburbs for diners, shoppers, new residents and new businesses



Questions

- How do we ensure projects are durable and use high quality materials?
- How do we ensure buildings complement and enhance or at least don't detract from (an eclectic) downtown and catalyst sites?
- Should the 2009 *Downtown Design Guidelines* be updated?
 - Should the *Downtown Design Guidelines* be mandatory or just a guide?
- Should the 2008 *Downtown Pattern Book* be updated?
- How do you balance community expectations for downtown & catalyst sites with owners' property rights?
- How do you protect and enhance the quality and character of downtown & catalyst sites?
- How do you give Staff and Village Council more tools to request positive changes, without impeding the development process?

Impression

- **Barrington has a balanced approach**
 - The Architectural Review Commission (ARC) makes recommendations to the Village Board regarding the exterior appearance of new commercial and multi-family construction. It also functions as the Village's historic review commission.
 - ARC established to protect the character of their downtown



What To Avoid...

- ...projects that negatively affect Downtown
- ...not giving the community early opportunity to view and comment on proposed Downtown & Catalyst projects
- ...a development process that does not allow a community to buy into a project
- ...even if changes are requested by Staff, a builder is not obligated to honor those requests
- ...dictating architectural styles & detail



Under current code, a building like this is permitted by right

Why Not Downers Grove???



How can Downers Grove get buildings that look less like this.....



Picture Courtesy Marq on Main

.... And more like this?

Characteristics of a High-Quality Downtown

Creating Places of Enduring Value

- Establishes a sense of place
 - Distinct from other commercial developments like big-box stores, regional malls and other outlying corridors
- Supports the character of the downtown
 - Contributes to the overall success of downtown
- Unlike larger developments that are a snapshot of a specific time, downtowns evolve over time



Characteristics of a High-Quality Downtown

- Downtown is multifunctional.
 - Employment, shopping, worship, tourism, housing, government services, dining, entertainment, lodging, and cultural attractions
 - Compact, walkable area
- Pedestrian friendly and walkable
- Encourages people to congregate or gather
- Promotes human activity and attracts others
- Creates a high level of community “ownership”



The Road to a High-Quality Downtown

Provide high quality projects throughout Downtown

- What is the best way to ensure high quality design and construction standards?
- How do you best provide and maintain good suburban design?
 - To complement surrounding buildings
 - To protect and enhance existing property values
- To build upon the small town, village aspects of Downers Grove in the downtown core



Benefits of a High-Quality Downtown

Make downtown a desirable development location

- Encourage economic development
 - Favors small business owners
- Establish a streamlined review and approval process
- Sets guidelines for the community in advance
 - Provides clear direction for developers to incorporate into the plans **early in the process**
 - Allows citizens to provide feedback earlier in the process which increases buy-in
 - Buildings planned according to pre-approved Village standards helps avoid projects that don't fit in



Main St. Naperville

Design Considerations



- Alcoves provide increased number of shop windows
- Shade trees and benches encourage people to meet and linger downtown
- Creates a “sense of place”



When is one story not always the best solution?

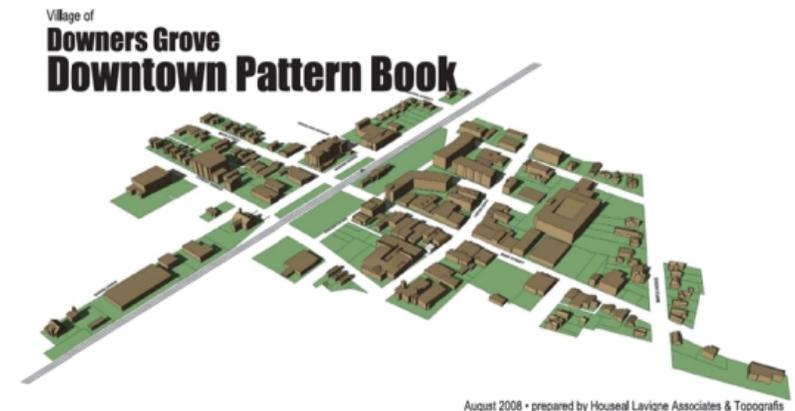


Attractive rear entry from parking lots

Recommendations

Village Council to Direct the Architectural Design Review Board to:

- Evaluate and make recommendations to the Village Council on potential improvements to:
 - Downtown Design Guidelines (DDG)
 - Downtown Pattern Book (DPB)
- Review preliminary plans for planned developments in the Downtown Business District and Catalyst sites to ensure substantial compliance with the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Issue Certificates of Approval for these developments.



Thank You!



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