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***Village of Homer Glen***

***Comprehensive Plan***

***Final Draft***

***For Adoption***

***February, 2005***

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## ***Introduction***

The *Comprehensive Plan* for the Village of Homer Glen, Illinois, sets forth long-range recommendations for future growth and development, as well as the maintenance and enhancement of the existing image and character of the community.

This *Comprehensive Plan* report summarizes the results of a sixteen-month planning program in Homer Glen, and incorporates much of the material included in previous interim reports and memoranda prepared during the course of the study.

### ***The Homer Glen Community:***

The Village of Homer Glen is located within Homer Township, in northeastern Will County, approximately 30 miles southwest of Chicago. It was incorporated in April 2001, and is one of the most recently incorporated municipalities in Illinois.

Homer Glen encompasses approximately 22 square miles of land. It is generally bordered by the Village of Lemont and unincorporated Cook County on the north, the Village of Orland Park and unincorporated Cook County on the east, the Village of New Lenox and unincorporated Will County on the south, and the Village of Lockport and unincorporated Will County on the west (see Figure 1).

Homer Glen is the fourth-largest municipality by population in Will County. Its current population is approximately 22,300, according to the split-block counts of the 2000 U.S. Census.

Homer Glen is characterized by open spaces, low-density development, and an attractive environmental setting. Will County Forest Preserve land, including Spring Creek Greenway and Messenger Woods, traverses the southern part of the Village. Over fifty percent of the community is undeveloped.

In terms of developed areas, Homer Glen is primarily a residential community.

It is characterized by single-family subdivisions with lot sizes ranging from approximately ½ acre to several acres in size. Commercial development exists in a few locations along Bell Road, 143rd Street, and 159th Street, the primary roadways that pass through the community. It is essential that all improvements and developments be compatible with and complement the Village's existing image and character.

### ***Background to the Comprehensive Plan:***

The Village of Homer Glen was incorporated for the purpose of establishing local control over the various issues impacting the environmental character and quality of life in the area, property values, and the tax base of local residents.

Since its incorporation, the Village has conducted several work sessions to discuss issues related to growth and development, and to establish initial community-wide goals and objectives. These included the preparation of a Mission Statement, as well as a list of Core Values that articulates the reasons for incorporation and provides direction for the Village Board and the various advisory boards and commissions. In addition, a workshop was conducted for residents and planning professionals, a weekend retreat for Village Trustees, and a community-wide environmental visioning process is currently underway.

The Village of Homer Glen has prepared its initial *Comprehensive Plan* in an effort to address the many issues, challenges, and opportunities confronting the new community. The planning process has involved data collection and analysis; community participation and visioning; and a thorough and open discussion of the choices, issues, and opportunities confronting the Village.

While this *Comprehensive Plan* was being prepared, Homer Glen has also been engaged in an environmental visioning process under the auspices of a State of Illinois *Green Communities Demonstration Grant*. Once the results of that visioning process have been adopted by the Village Board, they should be used as one of the tools to implement the goals of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

### ***Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan:***

The *Comprehensive Plan* will become Homer Glen's official policy guide for physical improvement and development. It considers not only the immediate needs and concerns of the community, but also highlights improvements and developments 10 to 15 years in the future.

The *Comprehensive Plan* strives to help preserve and protect important existing features and resources, coordinate new growth and development, and establish a strong and positive community image and identity.

The Plan is "comprehensive" in both scope and coverage. It encompasses the use of land; the movement of vehicles and pedestrians; the protection of open spaces and environmental resources; and the provision of parks, schools, and other public facilities. It addresses residential areas, commercial and business development, public and institutional lands, and the public rights-of-way. The Plan addresses land currently within Homer Glen's corporate boundaries, as well as adjacent unincorporated areas. Intergovernmental agreements on future boundary limits have been reached with the City of Lockport, the Village of New Lenox, and the Village of Orland Park

The *Comprehensive Plan* establishes the "ground rules" for private improvement and development. It provides guidelines by which the Plan Commission and Village Board can review and evaluate private development proposals. The Plan also provides a guide for public improvements, and can help ensure that local dollars are spent wisely and in a cost effective manner.

The *Comprehensive Plan* provides a basis for zoning, subdivision regulations, and capital improvement plans, all of which should be used to implement planning policies and recommendations.

Finally, the *Comprehensive Plan* should serve as an important marketing tool to promote Homer Glen's unique assets and advantages, and help attract new families and desirable new development to the community.

*Figure 1: Homer Glen Community Setting*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

### ***The Planning Process:***

The Homer Glen planning process has entailed a six-step work program encompassing:

- a) The analysis of existing conditions,
- b) The identification of issues and concerns,
- c) The formulation of a vision for the future,
- d) The establishment of goals and objectives,
- e) The development of plans and policies, and
- f) The preparation of final *Comprehensive Plan* recommendations.

The process was designed to produce a *Comprehensive Plan* that will accommodate desirable new growth and new development, while preserving and protecting open space, the natural environment, and the unique “countryside atmosphere” of the community.

### ***Organization of the Plan Report:***

The *Comprehensive Plan* report is divided into eight sections, as follows:

- ***Section 1: A Vision for the Future.*** This section describes, in general terms, the kind of community that Homer Glen should be in the future. It includes a vision statement for the community in the Year 2012, and a list of goals and objectives that provide more specific guidelines for the new *Comprehensive Plan*.
- ***Section 2: Land Use Plan.*** This section provides a brief overview of existing land use within Homer Glen, and presents long-range policies and recommendations for high-quality and compatible new residential, commercial, business and public development, as well as the protection and enhancement of open spaces and environmental resources within the community.
- ***Section 3: Parks and Open Space Plan.*** Environmental protection is a primary objective of the *Comprehensive Plan*. This section is intended to help the Village maintain and preserve key environmental and open space features, enhance the countryside character of the area, and provide for a more complete range of park and recreational areas to serve existing and new development.
- ***Section 4: Community Facilities Plan.*** This section is intended to assist the Village in ensuring that high-quality community facilities and services are available to local residents and businesses in the future, including schools, fire and police protection, libraries, administrative facilities and meeting spaces, public utilities, and other public and semi-public uses.

- **Section 5: Transportation Plan.** This section establishes the basis for a long-range system of roadways and multi-use trails that efficiently supports existing and future development, while maintaining and enhancing the open space character and environmental quality of the Homer Glen community.
- **Section 6: Community Character.** Homer Glen is an attractive and distinctive community characterized by high-quality residential areas; an abundance of open space; wooded areas, waterways and other natural resources; historical and cultural sites; and an agricultural heritage and tradition. This section highlights several of the features that contribute to the image and character of Homer Glen.
- **Section 7: Planning and Design Guidelines.** This section is intended to further assist the Village in promoting high-quality and compatible new development within the planning jurisdiction. The guidelines focus on a range of factors that affect the functional, visual, and aesthetic quality of new site and building development. They strive to ensure that all new developments are compatible with and enhance the unique image, quality, and character of the Homer Glen community.
- **Section 8: Implementation.** This section briefly highlights several steps that should be undertaken to begin the process to plan implementation.

The **Appendix** includes additional background materials related to the Homer Glen planning process:

- A demographic overview of the Village of Homer Glen, based on data and information included in the 2000 United States Census; and
- Local attitudes regarding the Homer Glen community, as obtained from various workshops, interviews, and surveys conducted during the planning process.

## ***Section 1: A Vision for the Future***

This section describes, in general terms, the kind of community that Homer Glen should be in the future. It includes two parts:

- The ***Vision Statement*** describes the Homer Glen community in the Year 2012. It is based on a visioning workshop at which a number of Village residents and officials reviewed existing conditions and potentials and discussed various options for the future. The Vision Statement provides overall focus and direction for the new Comprehensive Plan.
- The ***Goals and Objectives*** are designed to help achieve the Vision Statement and provide more specific guidelines for the new Comprehensive Plan. The goals and objectives strive to transform the collective community values expressed in the Vision Statement into operational guidelines for the planning program.

The materials included in this section express many ideas and concepts that cannot be shown on plan maps or depicted in other plan components. They are considered an important part of Homer Glen's new *Comprehensive Plan*.

### ***Visioning Session:***

On September 9, 2002, a Visioning Workshop was conducted to craft a *Vision Statement* that describes the Village of Homer Glen as it will be in the Year 2012.

Participants in the Visioning Workshop included Homer Glen officials, Village staff, residents, business persons, and representatives from local agencies and institutions. Following a brief discussion of the planning process in Homer Glen, the participants were divided into three small work groups. Each group included a "cross-section" of public officials, staff, residents, property owners, etc. Each group was asked to describe the Village of Homer Glen as they hoped it would be in the Year 2012. In particular, the groups were asked to articulate the accomplishments and achievements that had been made since the Village's first *Comprehensive Plan* was completed.

The *Vision Statement*, presented on the following pages, is based primarily on the workshop described above. However, the *Vision Statement* also takes into consideration the results of other work activities undertaken as a part of the ongoing planning process. The *Vision Statement* is intended to be a retrospective that chronicles the accomplishments and achievements that have been undertaken in Homer Glen since the *Comprehensive Plan* was completed.

It should be emphasized that the *Vision Statement* is intended to provide a brief, overall "snapshot" of Homer Glen in the Year 2012. While it incorporates the main ideas and recurring themes discussed at the workshop, it does not include all of the specific projects and actions suggested by the various groups and participants. However, many of the "specifics" have been incorporated into other components of the new *Comprehensive Plan* for Homer Glen.

## *Vision Statement*

**SINCE HOMER GLEN'S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WAS COMPLETED 10 YEARS AGO**, the Village has achieved a balance between high-quality new growth and development, preservation of key natural resources, and enhancement of its unique and distinguishing countryside character. The Village continues to strive toward its original philosophy of "Community and Nature...in Harmony."

### **IN THE YEAR 2012:**

Homer Glen is composed of attractive and desirable residential neighborhoods and is widely recognized as a premier low-density, single-family residential community. While the construction of large-lot subdivisions continue to predominate, several developments with smaller lots have also been constructed, each characterized by innovative site planning, conservation design, and a significant amount of open space. A limited amount of high-quality and compatible town-home developments have also been built in a few locations. All residential areas have been protected from the adverse impact of nearby non-residential uses. The rate of residential growth has been managed to correspond with the capacity of public services and infrastructure facilities to serve new development.

Substantial new development has occurred within the Village's commercial areas, which are located along the primary roadways that pass through Homer Glen. Commercial areas, including attractively designed neighborhood and community shopping centers, provide for the day-to-day needs of local residents and attract customers from neighboring communities. New commercial development has significantly enhanced the Village's tax base.

High quality new office/research and light industrial development has taken place in the western portion of Homer Glen, at selected locations along and near the I-355 corridor. This new business development has also boosted the Village's tax base.

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.

While new development has taken place, Homer Glen has successfully protected the natural resources, environmental quality, and open space character

*that have always been distinguishing features of the Village. The major environmental corridors, which contain multiple natural features and amenities, have been preserved for future generations. This has been accomplished through the enactment of various environmental protection ordinances. The Will County Forest Preserve District and Homer Township have increased their open space holdings within the community. Some horse and animal farms have been retained and some agricultural lands have been maintained to preserve the area's heritage and contribute to the character of the community.*

*New parks and recreational areas have been developed to supplement the regional open spaces and environmental preserves within and around the community. In particular, an area-wide system of multi-use trails is being implemented that will link residential areas with parks, schools, shopping, public facilities, open spaces, forest preserves, and other multi-use trails in the area. The Village continues to cooperate with Homer Township, the school districts, adjacent and nearby municipalities, and local volunteer groups to provide park and recreational amenities. The Village has also established a Parks Department to oversee these facilities and services.*

*The transportation system has been improved to serve new development and to preserve the open space character of the community. Interstate 355 is being constructed between I-55 and I-80, and this new expressway will significantly improve access to Homer Glen. The Village has worked with the state and county to formulate high-quality improvement and enhancement programs for the arterial routes that pass through the community, including 159th Street. Many of the former township roads have also been upgraded.*

*Public schools provide top-quality educational services and serve as focal points for community life and activity. A new Homer Glen high school has been constructed, contributing to the Village's overall image and identity.*

*A new Village Hall has been constructed in the Town Center area. The Village has acquired its own ZIP Code, and a postal facility is now located in the community. The Village continues to cooperate with other agencies and service districts to provide quality community facilities and services to the residents and businesses of Homer Glen. In particular, substantial improvements have been made to the utility systems serving the Village.*

*The Village's corporate boundaries have been extended to the south and west, including properties along the I-355 corridor. Boundary agreements have been established with neighboring communities and the Village has initiated ongoing communication and cooperation with its neighbors.*

*While Homer Glen continues to be comprised of diverse residential areas, a number of programs and events have been implemented to unite all geographic areas into a single, cohesive community. Community spirit and “volunteerism” continue to be hallmarks of the Village.*

*The improvements and developments that have occurred in Homer Glen during the past 10 years have been the result of a strong partnership with local residents; a representative and responsive local government; excellent leadership from Village officials; cooperation with Will County, Homer Township, and other agencies and service districts; and successful collaboration with the private sector.*

*A range of creative financing techniques has been used to implement Homer Glen’s first Comprehensive Plan without placing significant new tax burdens on the residents of the community. The Village has undertaken a number of public improvements projects during the past 10 years, financed in large part by an increased commercial and industrial tax base; grants from various agencies, organizations and governmental entities; impact fees; and cooperation and participation by the private sector*

## **Goals and Objectives:**

Planning goals and objectives are designed to help achieve the Vision Statement and provide more specific guidelines for Homer Glen's first *Comprehensive Plan*.

The goals and objectives strive to transform the collective community values expressed in the Vision Statement into operational guidelines for the planning program.

Goals and objectives each have a different purpose in the planning process:

- Goals describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.
- Objectives describe more specific actions that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

The goals and objectives presented below are based on: a) the Visioning Workshop; b) the community survey, focus group sessions, and other meetings undertaken in the planning process; and c) Homer Glen's previously prepared *Mission Statement* and *Core Values*.

### **COMMUNITY IMAGE and CHARACTER**

#### **Goal:**

*An attractive and distinctive community image and identity that builds upon Homer Glen's countryside character, unique environmental features, and abundance of open space.*

#### **Objectives:**

1. Maintain and enhance the Village's countryside atmosphere.
2. Safeguard Homer Glen's environmental features and natural resources as distinguishing features of the community.
3. Retain the attractive open space character and environmental quality of Homer Glen's residential areas.
4. Require attractive and well-designed commercial and business areas, including sites, buildings, landscaping, lighting, private signage, and parking facilities.
5. Create an attractive and distinctive new "town center" that can provide a new centralized focal point for the community.
6. Design and locate public sites and buildings so they become focal points and landmarks within the community.
7. Require high standards of design and construction for all new development within the Village.
8. Undertake design and appearance improvements along the major roadways that pass through Homer Glen, including landscaping, lighting, public signage, and community "gateway" features.
9. Preserve sites and buildings with local historical and cultural interest and value, and promote appreciation of the agricultural roots and heritage of the Homer Glen area.
10. Sponsor programs, events, and celebrations that can stimulate public involvement and participation, foster a strong community spirit and identity, and bring together residents from various subdivisions on a regular basis.

## **HOUSING and RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

### **Goal:**

*A housing stock and living environment that serve the needs and desires of local residents, attract new families to the community, and enhance the countryside character and environmental quality of the Village.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Maintain Homer Glen as primarily a low-density, single-family residential community.
2. Retain the large-lot character of residential areas; lot sizes of ½ acre and larger should continue to predominate.
3. Permit smaller lot residential developments in selected areas, provided they are characterized by generous open spaces and conservation design, and are compatible with nearby existing residential developments.
4. Consider a limited amount of high-quality and compatible new townhomes and multifamily housing in a few selected locations; resident ownership should be strongly encouraged.
5. Manage moderate residential growth so that it is consistent with the capacity of public facilities, services, and infrastructure to serve new development.
6. Protect residential areas from the encroachment of incompatible land uses and the adverse impacts of nearby non-residential uses.
7. Preserve sound existing housing through effective code enforcement and preventive maintenance.
8. Develop a community of distinctive and cohesive residential “neighborhoods,” rather than a collection of individual subdivisions.
9. Require creative site planning and residential development patterns that will preserve and enhance the environmental features and open space character of the Village.
10. Ensure that appropriate stormwater management and environmental protection provisions are included in all new residential developments.

## **COMMERCIAL and BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Goal:**

*Commercial and business development that provides local residents with needed goods and services, enhances the Village’s tax base, and is compatible with the countryside character of the community.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Increase the number and diversity of convenience commercial establishments that serve the day-to-day needs of Village residents.
2. Promote the development of neighborhood, community and regional commercial centers within Homer Glen.
3. Locate new commercial development along the primary roadways that pass through the community.

4. Encourage the development of compatible new business, light industrial, and office/ research development at selected locations along and near the I-355 corridor.
5. Require that all commercial and business areas are extensively landscaped and are served by adequate and attractively designed access, parking, and other site development features.
6. Ensure creative commercial and business area design solutions that will help enhance the open space and countryside character of the community.
7. Prevent additional “strip” commercial development within the Village.
8. Require high-quality design and construction within all new commercial and business developments.
9. Minimize and mitigate any negative impacts of commercial and business uses activities on neighboring land use areas.
10. Prepare a Property Maintenance Code to ensure the corrective maintenance and rehabilitation of older commercial and business properties that are in poor condition or do not conform to community standards.
11. Ensure that appropriate stormwater management and environmental protection provisions are included in all new commercial developments.

## **THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **Goal:**

*Preservation, protection, and enhancement of the extensive natural resources and open space areas that are essential to the overall image and character of Homer Glen.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Prepare an area-wide plan that identifies unique environmental resources and establishes a program for the future preservation, management, and interpretive use of these features for the long-term enjoyment of local residents.
2. Adopt design guidelines and ordinances for new development that support the preservation and protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Incorporate the key “environmental corridors” that pass through Homer Glen, which include flood prone areas, wetlands, surface watercourses, native vegetation, and wildlife habitats, into an area-wide open space network.
4. Restrict new development from occurring within the designated environmental corridors in order to preserve and protect important natural features and ecosystems.
5. Adopt best management practices for storm water management to ensure that new developments do not contribute run-off that increases off-site flooding or degrades water quality in surface or ground water systems.
6. Work with the Will County Forest Preserve District, Homer Township, and other agencies, organizations, and neighboring municipalities to acquire additional environmentally sensitive lands and open space areas within the Village’s planning jurisdiction.

7. Maintain a “sense of open space” throughout the community through the preservation of environmental features and the use of landscaping, berms, attractive setbacks, and roadway enhancements within all new residential, commercial and business developments.
8. Identify ways to protect and maintain the agricultural roots and heritage of the Homer Glen area.

## **PARKS and RECREATION**

### **Goal:**

*A park and recreation system that meets the active recreational and leisure needs of Village residents, and enhances the overall image and character of the community.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Actively promote and manage cooperation between the Village, Homer Township, the Forest Preserve District, and the school districts in the provision of recreational facilities and programs.
2. Prepare a long-range, comprehensive master plan for park and recreational facilities within Homer Glen.
3. Continue to encourage and support the volunteer efforts of the various active sports groups that currently provide for a wide range of recreational opportunities within the Village.
4. Establish standards for a local park system consisting of tot lots, neighborhood parks, and community parks; the local park system should complement the extensive regional open space amenities located within the Homer Glen area.
5. Create recreational facilities and programs that respond to the needs and desires of Village residents.
6. Require that land or cash donations in lieu of land for future parks and permanent open spaces be set aside within all new residential developments.
7. Develop a large public park, commons, or Village green as a part of the new “town center” development to create a central gathering place and activity area for all residents of Homer Glen.
8. Promote the development of attractive and usable public open spaces within the Village’s commercial and business areas.
9. Develop a network of multi-use trails and pathways to provide connections between subdivisions, schools, parks, shopping areas, public facilities, open spaces, forest preserves, and other multi-use trails in the area.
10. Undertake more extensive landscaping and “greening” programs along major street corridors.
11. Investigate the possibility of using the utility easements that pass through Homer Glen for low-intensity recreational uses.
12. Revise land/cash donation ordinances in order to achieve and implement park, open space, and recreation objectives.
13. Work with citizen associations, sports groups, and Township, County and State officials to explore alternative methods of funding and managing the operation and maintenance of parks and open spaces.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **Goal:**

*A system of community facilities that provides for the efficient and effective delivery of public services and enhances the Village as a desirable place in which to live and do business.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Cooperate with the various public school districts to maintain adequate school sites and facilities to serve the Village.
2. Promote the construction of a new high school in Homer Glen that can serve local students and enhance the image and identity of the community.
3. Construct a new Village Hall that provides adequate space for municipal functions and serves as a focal point for local community facilities and services.
4. Improve police protection in the community through contract services with other agencies or the establishment of a municipal police force.
5. Cooperate with the appropriate fire protection districts to maintain effective fire protection services throughout the community.
6. Cooperate with the Library District to enhance the existing Library as an important focal point and resource for the Village.
7. Promote the development of a new US Post Office within Homer Glen.
8. Work with the appropriate private utility companies to improve the provision of water and sanitary sewer services within the community.
9. Improve storm water management and facilities throughout the Village.
10. Prepare a comprehensive map of the location, type and ownership of all storm water facilities within the planning jurisdiction.
11. Attract new community facilities, such as a college or university campus, that can complement the Village's open space character and enhance the image and identity of the community.
12. Work with residents and businesses in surrounding unincorporated areas to devise a long-range plan and program for annexation.
13. Establish and maintain boundary agreements with neighboring communities where appropriate.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Goal:**

*A coordinated system of roadways, pedestrian facilities, recreational pathways, and public transportation services that provides for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians, reinforces surrounding land development patterns, and enhances the countryside character of the Village.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Adopt and apply a functional street classification system throughout Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction.

2. Review the existing *Homer Glen Subdivision Ordinance* and adopt a new Subdivision Ordinance for all street classifications to establish standards for right-of-way and pavement widths, setbacks, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and storm water management.
3. Require pedestrian walkways along public streets and limit the construction of carriage walks (walkways immediately adjacent to the curb) within new developments.
4. Develop a comprehensive network of multi-use trails to link residential subdivision with schools, parks, shopping areas, public facilities, open spaces, forest preserves, and other multi-use trails in the area.
5. Minimize non-residential through traffic on local streets and within residential subdivisions.
6. Actively work with IDOT to encourage that the I-355 extension is constructed and that the planned interchange areas are provided within the Homer Glen planning jurisdiction.
7. Ensure that the extension of I-355 is coordinated with the upgrading of the arterial system and service roads within the community.
8. Work with the Illinois Department of Transportation to prepare design recommendations for 159th Street that will make this Strategic Regional Arterial an attractive and distinctive business corridor as it passes through Homer Glen.
9. Study the possibility of developing an attractive system of "boulevard streets" that would distinguish the major roadways within Homer Glen from those in nearby communities.
10. Create distinctive, identity-giving gateway treatments at the entries to the Village along the major roadways, at locations that will provide maximum visual impact.
11. Plan for truck movements and through traffic that will serve the commercial and business needs of Homer Glen and minimize impacts on residential areas.
12. Identify desired connections for future arterial and collector streets and transportation improvements to serve new development.
13. Work with regional agencies to create opportunities for additional public transportation within Homer Glen.

## **Section 2: Land Use Plan**

This section provides a brief overview of existing land use within the Village of Homer Glen, and presents long-range policies and recommendations for high-quality and compatible new residential, commercial, business and public development, as well as the protection and enhancement of open spaces and environmental resources within the community.

### **Existing Land Use:**

The Village of Homer Glen contains a wide range of residential, commercial, public, and institutional land uses. Since Homer Glen is a newly established and growing community, it also contains a significant amount of land devoted to agriculture, open spaces, and other undeveloped properties.

Figure 2 presents generalized existing land use, based on field surveys undertaken by the Consultant in the spring of 2002. A brief overview of existing land use is highlighted below.

**Single-Family Residential Uses.** Homer Glen is primarily a single-family residential community, and its existing residential areas are among its most important assets.

The Village contains a diverse mix of single-family areas, each with somewhat different characteristics such as street configuration, lot sizes, and size and price of homes. With the exception of older rural residences, most of the housing in the Village is rather new and much of it has been constructed during the last 10 to 15 years.

**Multi-Family Residential Uses.** Homer Glen has a number of multi-family residential developments at the present time. Existing multi-family developments include Dawnwood and Victorian Village, located on 143rd Street; and Messenger Glen (Marian Village) and Park Place Condominiums, located on 159th Street. Messenger Glen and Victorian Village are retirement/assisted living facilities.

**Commercial Uses.** Commercial uses in Homer Glen include retail, service, and office uses. Most existing commercial development is located in small centers and strip developments along the 143rd Street, Bell Road, and 159th Street corridors. Somewhat larger concentrations of commercial uses are located near the Bell Road intersections with 143rd Street and 159th Street.

**Light Industrial Uses.** Homer Glen has very little light industrial development at the present time. The small industrial park located at 159th Street and Annico Drive contains a few small businesses that cater to the needs of local residents, such as landscaping, auto repair, and small motor repair.

**Parks and Open Spaces.** Homer Glen has a significant amount of land devoted to parks, recreation, and open space, and these areas are an important part of the overall image and character of the community. Of particular note is the 2,000-acre Spring Creek Greenway, which is owned by the Forest Preserve District of Will County and is located in the southern portion of the Village. Two golf courses are also located within the community.

*Figure 2: Existing Land Use*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

**Agricultural Land.** Active farmland comprises much of the remaining undeveloped land within the Village. While agricultural land is particularly prominent in the area south of 151st Street and west of Parker Road, smaller areas are scattered throughout the Village. It should be noted that land developers own much of the farmland in Homer Glen's planning area.

In addition to agricultural lands, a number of residential properties in the western and southern portions of the Village also have associated agricultural uses, such as horse stables, breeding kennels, and small amounts of livestock.

**Public and Institutional Uses.** Public and institutional uses, such as churches, schools, governmental sites and buildings, and utility facilities, are scattered throughout the Village.

**Vacant Land.** In addition to the agricultural lands and the park and recreational areas, there are a number of vacant land parcels within the Village. While these are scattered throughout the planning jurisdiction, most are located south of 159th Street.

#### **Land Use Plan:**

Because of Homer Glen's many environmental assets, its quality residential areas, its attractive "countryside" character, and the amount of land potentially available for development, there will continue to be significant demand for new residential, commercial, and business growth during the next 10 to 15 year period.

New growth in Homer Glen will entail primarily the development of vacant and agricultural land. However, growth during the next 10 to 15 years could also entail the redevelopment of older, marginal properties, as well as the annexation of nearby unincorporated lands.

The Land Use Plan provides a guide for future land development within the Village's planning jurisdiction. It identifies which lands should be devoted to residential, commercial, business, public, and open space uses. It also describes how various land use areas should be related and interconnected.

The Land Use Plan (see Figure 3) builds upon the existing land use structure of Homer Glen. It strives to reinforce and strengthen the residential and open space character of the community. Single-family residential development should continue to predominate, and the many open space and environmental resources should be preserved and protected.

The Land Use Plan also endeavors to achieve a balance between the preservation of the significant environmental features and open space amenities that define and distinguish Homer Glen, while accommodating and promoting high-quality and desirable new development.

*It should be emphasized that the Land Use Plan is a **general guide** for growth and development within the planning jurisdiction. The Land Use Plan does not impose site development requirements. While it is specific enough to provide guidance on land use decisions, it is also flexible enough to allow for individual negotiations and the consideration of creative approaches to land development that are consistent with the policies and guidelines included in the Comprehensive Plan.*

*Figure 3: Land Use Plan*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

### **Single-Family Residential Areas**

Homer Glen should continue to be primarily a single-family residential community, and its neighborhoods and subdivisions should continue to be enhanced as important community assets.

While quality new residential development should be promoted, the rate of growth should be managed to correspond with the capacity of public services and infrastructure facilities to serve new development.

Conservation design is encouraged throughout Homer Glen's new residential developments. Conservation design is a density neutral design system that takes into account the natural landscape and the ecology of a development site. Conservation Design facilitates development while maintaining valuable natural features and functions of the site.

Conservation design promotes a contiguous area of land should be planned and developed as a single entity, in which buildings are accommodated under more flexible standards, such as building arrangements and setbacks, than those that would normally apply under conventional regulations. This will allow for the flexible grouping of structures in order to limit impervious surfaces and to conserve open space and existing natural resources.

The Land Use Plan highlights four categories of single-family residential areas. These include the following:

- **Single-Family: Moderate Density.** Existing homes located on relatively small lots characterize much of northeastern portion of Homer Glen. Derby Meadows and Old Oak Estates are two larger subdivisions that are representative of this type of residential development.

While the construction of large-lot subdivisions should continue to predominate in Homer Glen, developments with smaller lots may be permitted in selected locations, provided they are characterized by conservation design, a significant amount of open space, and the preservation of environmentally sensitive features.

The Plan highlights undeveloped properties that would be suitable for moderate density residential developments in the future, most of which are located in the northeastern portion of the planning jurisdiction near existing developments with similar lot sizes.

The moderate density category generally reflects single-family residential lots ½ acre in size. However, the precise size of lots and the development character of individual developments in these areas will be subject to review by the Village, based upon the size and character of nearby existing and planned residential developments and environmental conditions in the area.

- **Single-Family: Low Density.** Existing subdivisions with homes on lots of ½ to one acre in size are scattered throughout Homer Glen, particularly in the northern portion of the Village, and along and near several of the major roadways that pass through the community, including 143rd Street, 159th Street, and Hadley Road.
- The Plan highlights a number of undeveloped properties that would be suitable for new low-density residential developments in the future. Most of these are located in the northern and central portions of the community, and many represent an extension of similar nearby existing developments.

While the low-density category generally reflects single-family residential lots between ½ and 1 acre in size, the precise size of lots and the development character of individual developments in these areas will be subject to review by the Village, based upon the size and

character of nearby existing and planned residential developments and environmental conditions in the area.

- Single-Family: Estate. Existing subdivisions with homes on lots between 1 and 2 ½ acres in size can be found throughout Homer Glen, particularly in the northwestern portion of the community and in the area between the Messenger Woods and Homer Trails Forest Preserves.

The Plan highlights undeveloped properties that would be suitable for new estate residential developments in the future. Most of these are located in the western and southern portions of Homer Glen, and many are located along or near the environmental corridors that are recommended for preservation. Some of the land in this category might be retained for agricultural use in the near future.

While the estate category generally reflects single-family residential lots between 1 and 2 ½ acres in size, the precise size of lots and the development character of individual developments in these areas will be subject to review by the Village, based upon the size and character of nearby existing and planned residential developments and environmental conditions in the area. The Village may consider smaller lots if sewer connections are available.

- Single-Family: Rural. In order to reflect the importance of large-lot residential areas to the image and character of Homer Glen, the Land Use Plan highlights a fourth residential category entitled Single-Family: Rural.

This category would accommodate residential areas with lot sizes of approximately 2½ acres and larger. Most Single-Family Rural areas are located in the southern and northwestern portions of the community. Large lot residential areas contribute significantly to the “countryside” character of the Homer Glen community. Certain agricultural uses are also appropriate within this land use category.

### ***Multi-Family Residential Uses***

While Homer Glen will continue to be primarily a single-family residential community, the Village will consider a limited amount of new, high-quality multi-family housing in selected locations, provided the developments are characterized by innovative site planning, protection of environmental features, a significant amount of open space, and are compatible with nearby existing residential areas.

Townhouses, cluster homes, and similar developments will be considered, on a case-by-case basis, around the periphery of selected commercial areas designated in the Land Use Plan. Attractively designed multi-family developments in these locations could provide a “transition” in the intensity of land use between the commercial areas and single-family neighborhoods.

For example, as indicated in the Land Use Plan, compatible and high-quality multi-family housing will be considered in the following locations:

- Along the east side of Parker Road, just south of the Commonwealth Edison easement;
- North of the commercial area along 159th Street, east of Parker Road;
- South of the commercial area along 159th Street, west of Parker Road;
- South of the commercial area along 159th Street, east of Cedar Road;
- Along the north side of 151st Street, between Bell Road and the Commonwealth Edison easement; and
- Along the south side of 151st Street, between the commercial area and the Commonwealth Edison easement.

The Village may also consider, on a case-by-case basis, new multi-family residences as a part of mixed-use development projects in other appropriate locations.

Multi-family developments with a small maximum density are preferred in Homer Glen. Owner-occupied multi-family housing units are also strongly encouraged.

All new multi-family development should be of a scale and character compatible with nearby existing single-family homes. New multi-family development should reinforce and enhance overall neighborhood quality. Senior housing and assisted living facilities should also be provided in convenient locations to accommodate the needs of senior citizens within Homer Glen.

### ***Residential Development Policies***

The following policies will be used to guide all improvements and new developments within the areas designated as residential in the Land Use Plan.

- As new residential development takes place in Homer Glen, the Village will promote the formulation of residential “neighborhoods,” rather than separate and free-standing subdivisions. The Village will encourage new residential developments to apply the neighborhood unit concept, as outlined in the policies below.
- Neighborhoods should be designed primarily for residential use. Shopping and services, elementary schools, and parks and playgrounds should be easily accessible by pedestrians and bicycles as well as vehicles. The boundaries between neighborhoods and adjoining land use areas should be clearly defined and screening and buffering should be provided as required.
- Through-traffic should be routed around residential neighborhoods, along either arterial or collector streets. Pedestrian walkways and bikeways should connect homes with schools and other neighborhood facilities. Development should strive to maintain a neighborhood atmosphere in which all residents feel safe and secure.
- New residential neighborhoods should be served by a safe and convenient traffic circulation system with streets and roadways relating to and connecting with existing streets in adjacent areas. However, residential traffic should be separated from non-residential traffic wherever possible. New residential streets should generally follow the contours of the land and seek to highlight the natural features of the area.
- New residential neighborhoods should fit in with the surrounding landscape. Environmental corridors, natural vegetation, wooded areas, and mature trees in residential areas add greatly to the ambiance of the Village and should be maintained. Changes to the natural topography should be minimal.
- All new residential construction, including additions and remodelings, should be characterized by high-quality design and construction and should be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Stormwater management should be addressed on a comprehensive basis within all residential areas.
- Major new residential developments should be developed as “planned unit developments.” The PUD technique gives the Village maximum control over residential area design and development, and also gives the potential developer flexibility and incentives for creative and high-quality development.

Additional planning and design guidelines related to new residential developments in Homer Glen are presented in Section 7 of this Plan report.

## **Commercial Areas**

The Land Use Plan promotes high-quality new commercial and business development during the next 10 to 15 years in order to:

- a) Enhance the Village's tax base,
- b) Help relieve the tax burden that is currently borne by local residents,
- c) Provide revenues to support new Village services and facilities,
- d) Create new jobs, and
- e) Provide convenient shopping opportunities for local residents.

Commercial development, which includes retail, office, restaurant and service uses, should continue to be located primarily along 159th Street, Bell Road, and 143rd Street. However, the proposed Town Center area (discussed in Section 4 of this report) might also include small-scale commercial development.

Two types of commercial areas should be encouraged in Homer Glen:

- a) Small "neighborhood shopping areas" that serve the day-to-day convenience needs of nearby residents, and
- b) Somewhat larger "community shopping areas" that provide for a more diverse range of goods and services that serve the entire community.

Large "regional shopping areas" may be appropriate in Homer Glen in the future. While Homer Glen does not currently offer the accessibility and visibility requirements for large regional shopping developments, the eventual construction of the I-355 extension along the western edge of the Village should create opportunities for larger commercial developments in the future. In addition, regional centers should be designed to be compatible with the countryside character and open space quality of the Homer Glen community.

While convenience commercial uses that serve the day-to-day needs of Homer Glen residents should be targeted in new development, the Village might also promote a commercial theme within certain locations that would attract new customers to the community. For example, the Village might encourage the development of several high-quality restaurants within the same area, with shared parking areas, outdoor eating areas, and other shared amenities.

The key features of the commercial areas shown in the Land Use Plan are highlighted below.

- **Bell Road.** Bell Road should continue to function as a multi-purpose, mixed-use development area. The corridor should provide sites for retail, business and personal services, offices, restaurants, public and institutional facilities, and residential uses.

Somewhat larger concentrations of commercial uses should continue to be located near the Bell Road intersections with 143rd Street and 159th Street. The Village does not intend to discourage larger shopping centers along Bell Road. However, the commercial areas located along Bell Road should be characterized by retail and service uses intermixed with office developments.

Office and business uses along Bell Road should be encouraged to minimize the continuous ribbon of retail and service development along this key roadway. Office developments will create additional site landscaping opportunities and be more compatible with the existing school complex and nearby "moderate density" residential areas.

- **143rd Street.** Commercial developments along 143rd Street should include the concentration of retail and service uses located near the intersection of 143rd Street and Bell Road, and the blocks immediately east and west of this intersection.

The Village also wants to encourage a limited amount of commercial services along 143<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Land Use Plan (Figure 3) highlights several small, low-intensity commercial and business park areas at selected locations along 143rd Street. These areas are also intended to provide local retail, service and convenience establishments to serve the daily needs of residents living in adjacent neighborhoods. These small commercial areas should not impact adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- **159th Street.** Over time, it is anticipated that 159th Street will become Homer Glen’s primary mixed-use, multi-purpose commercial corridor. The 159th Street corridor should provide sites for retail, business and personal services, offices, restaurants, business parks, public and institutional, and residential uses.

Most of the commercial growth areas located along 159th Street should be designed with lot depths of approximately 600 feet. This lot depth would permit an extensively landscaped setback along the arterial street, the creative clustering of commercial buildings, shared parking areas, the consolidation of access drives, open space features, and vehicular connections between adjacent commercial properties.

In addition to commercial development, business park areas are indicated in the blocks immediately east of the proposed I-355 Tollway. These areas are characterized by significant environmental features that should be protected as the business parks are developed, and should result in attractive, high-quality business environments.

The Village might also consider townhouses, cluster homes, and similar developments, on a case-by-case basis, around the periphery of selected commercial areas along the 159th Street corridor. Attractively designed multi-family developments in these locations could provide a “transition” in the intensity of land use between the commercial areas and single-family neighborhoods

- **Other commercial areas.** Other commercial areas included in the Land Use Plan include:
  - a) Retail and service development along Archer Avenue, in the far northwestern portion of the planning area;
  - b) A small commercial area along 143rd Street, just west of the proposed I-355 extension;
  - c) A neighborhood commercial area at the intersection of Cedar Road and 167th Street; and
  - d) A mix of commercial and business uses along Route 6, in the far southern portion of the planning area.
  - e) The Village might also permit additional small neighborhood shopping areas along minor arterial and collector streets if needs arise in the future.

### ***Commercial Development Policies***

The following policies should be used to guide all improvements and new developments within the areas designated as commercial in the Land Use Plan.

- The character and appearance of new commercial developments will be quite important. All new commercial developments should reinforce the image of Homer Glen as a high-quality residential community and should be compatible with the Village's open space character and countryside atmosphere. All new commercial developments within Homer Glen should be characterized by the highest possible standards of design and construction, along with green space, and extensive landscaping in order to be compatible with the Village's countryside character.
- The design and appearance of commercial buildings, site development, landscaping, lighting, signs and graphics, and pedestrian amenities should be all of special concern within commercial areas. Commercial centers along major roadways should be designed to enhance the view from the road.
- Since commercial and business areas are located along important traffic routes, access to individual properties should be carefully controlled to minimize conflicts with through traffic. The consolidation of access drives for adjacent properties should be encouraged.
- Adequate off-street parking should be provided within all commercial areas. The consolidation of parking facilities for multiple businesses should be encouraged. Parking lots should be extensively landscaped, particularly along major streets. Shared parking should be encouraged, particularly within mixed-use development areas. All parking lots should be designed for maximum safety and ease of use.
- Commercial and office sites should be characterized by an ecological approach to storm water management. Natural drainage measures should be employed to preserve the pre-development runoff characteristics of the site, utilizing best management practices.
- In addition to new commercial development, existing commercial and business areas should also be improved and enhanced as required. Projects should be undertaken to improve the appearance of the public rights-of-way, including landscaping, lighting, signage, sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian amenities. Enhancements to private properties should include façade, parking lot, outdoor lighting, site landscaping, and signage improvements.
- Commercial areas should not adversely impact adjacent neighborhoods. Screening and buffering should be promoted between commercial and residential areas, including landscaping and attractive fencing. Commercial traffic and parking should not be allowed to "spill over" into the neighborhoods. Noise, safety and grounds maintenance should also be carefully monitored within commercial areas.
- New commercial and office development should occur in planned commercial areas. Further "strip" commercial development should be discouraged. Where possible, new commercial uses should be clustered in small groupings with shared parking areas, common access drives, and related design and appearance.

- Open space features should be incorporated into new commercial and office development projects. These should include the preservation and enhancement of natural environmental features, as well as the provision of new open areas, squares, plazas and courtyards as focal points for pedestrian activities. All commercial and office lots should be characterized by extensive landscaping.
- Additional planning and design guidelines related to new commercial developments are presented in Section 7 of this Plan report.

### ***Business Park Areas***

Homer Glen has very little business and industrial development at the present time. However, construction of the I-355 extension, together with its planned interchange areas, should create opportunities for high-quality new business park development in the far western portion of Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction. Business park development would increase employment opportunities in Homer Glen and enhance the local tax base. Business park development could include compatible office, research, business uses, and industrial development that conform to the Village's performance standards.

It is recommended that the Village promote development of portions of the I-355 corridor, generally between 143rd Street and Bruce Road, as planned business park areas characterized by generous setbacks, well-landscaped sites, and a campus-type environment.

New business parks should be guided by an overall site development plan to ensure the coordination of building sites, traffic access and circulation, and open space amenities. The business parks should be screened and buffered from nearby neighborhoods, and should be attractive when viewed from adjacent streets and the Tollway corridor. The environmental corridors, wooded areas, and other natural features shown on the Land Use Plan should be preserved and protected as the business park areas are developed in the future.

New business park development is also indicated along the north and south sides of 159th Street corridor, west of Cedar Road. This area, which includes several environmental features to be protected, could be developed as a very attractive campus-type business park. New business and industrial development that conforms to the Village's performance standards could also be appropriate in the area south of 163rd Street. These areas are adjacent to lands that are designated for "industrial development" in the Lockport *Comprehensive Plan*.

In addition to the large business park areas along the I-355 corridor, smaller areas for office and business uses are also indicated in the Land Use Plan along the Bell Road corridor. Business and office uses in these locations will help break up the continuous ribbon of retail and service development along this key roadway, introduce additional site landscaping, and be more compatible with the existing school complex and nearby "moderate density" residential areas.

### ***Business Park Development Policies***

The following policies should be used to guide all improvements and new developments within the areas designated as business in the Land Use Plan.

- New business park areas should be located along major roadways. This not only maximizes access, visibility and exposure for new business uses, but also locates these uses around the periphery of the community and helps minimize business park traffic within other parts of the Village.

- New business park uses should emphasize office/research and industrial development that conforms to the Village's performance standards. There is a national trend toward such developments within planned business environments, and the locational assets afforded by the proposed I-355 extension suggest significant potential in this area.
- New business development should be located in planned business parks to help ensure coordination of circulation systems, lot configuration, building design, parking and access facilities, and environmental amenities. Areas designated for office/research uses should be designed and developed as unified, well-landscaped "campus" environments, capable of attracting high-quality tenants.
- New business park development should only be permitted in areas that can be adequately served by public utilities and infrastructure facilities. This includes adequate access into the business park areas from the nearby I-355 corridor. Approach routes and interior roadways must have design capacities sufficient to serve anticipated future needs.
- Limited commercial development designed to serve the day-to-day needs of business park employees and patrons should be considered within business parks at strategic locations. Commercial development should be designed as an integral part of a business park, and be sized to serve the needs of that park.
- New business parks should be designed and developed so that offices, showrooms, and similar uses occupy high-visibility locations around park peripheries. These peripheral locations should be subject to special building and site design controls to insure a high-quality appearance from major roadways and surrounding development areas.
- Major entrances into business parks should be designated by attractive "gateway" features. Gateways should include special signage, landscaping, and low-intensity lighting. Storm drainage retention ponds with aerators and other environmental features can also provide gateway features.
- Major entry roads and industrial collectors should be attractively designed and visually distinctive. These roadways should have street trees and street lighting, with accent landscaping at key access drives.
- Access to individual building sites within business parks should be via an internal circulation system. Site access from peripheral arterial and collector streets should be limited to major entrances serving the overall development area.
- Adequately screened off-street parking and loading facilities should be provided within all business sites, and the consolidation of parking areas and driveways serving two or more uses should be encouraged.
- Site improvements within business areas, such as lighting, signage and landscaping, should be well designed and coordinated in order to help create a positive identity and visual image throughout the development area.
- Particular attention should be given to screening and visual separation between business parks and other nearby land uses. The periphery of business parks should be extensively landscaped, particularly where business parks border residential neighborhoods or major roadways.

Additional planning and design guidelines related to new office and business park development developments in are presented in Section 7 of this Plan report.

### ***Parks and Open Spaces***

Homer Glen has a significant amount of land devoted to parks, open spaces and natural environmental features, and these areas are an important part of the overall image and character of the community.

The Land Use Plan recommends that several key environmental corridors that pass through Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction be preserved and protected in the future. The environmental corridors generally follow surface watercourses and drainage ways defined by the flood of record. These corridors should provide the basis for a community-wide open space system that would link residential neighborhoods with parks, schools, public facilities, and other activity areas.

In addition to the environmental corridors shown on the Land Use Plan, other natural features, such as woodlands and environmentally sensitive areas, should also be preserved, protected and, whenever possible, enhanced as new development takes place, regardless of the underlying land use.

It is possible that the Village, the Township, or some other public agency might purchase certain of these environmentally sensitive areas in the future.

More detailed recommendations for parks, open spaces and environmental features are described in Section 3 of the Plan report.

### ***Agricultural Land***

Much of the undeveloped land within Homer Glen's planning area is currently in agricultural use. While it is assumed that much of the current agricultural land will be subject to development during the next 10 to 15 year period, the Land Use Plan encourages the preservation and retention of prime farmland to help retain the agricultural heritage of the area and to enhance the countryside character of the community.

The Land Use Plan highlights properties that are currently in agricultural, equestrian, and related uses. The Village should promote and encourage the retention of these uses for the foreseeable future, in the interest of retaining the area's countryside character and heritage.

However, if the lands shown in the agricultural use classification are subject to development in the future, the land uses depicted on Figure 4 are deemed to be most appropriate at this point in time. The Village may use these "alternative" designations to evaluate related amendments to the *Comprehensive Plan*, and to review subsequent development proposals.

The Village may also consider the development of farmland preservation guidelines and the adoption of an Agricultural Preservation Ordinance in the future.

The map of alternative designations for agricultural sites should be regularly reviewed and updated by the Village.

### ***Public and Institutional Uses***

Public and institutional uses, such as schools, governmental sites and buildings, utility facilities, and churches, are scattered throughout Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction. Recommendations for public and institutional uses are presented in Section 4 of the Plan report.

*Figure 4: Agricultural Lands*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

### ***Section 3: Parks, Open Space & Environmental Plan***

An attractive environmental setting, which consists of wooded areas, wildlife habitats, wetlands, native vegetation, and small lakes and streams, is one of Homer Glen's most important distinguishing characteristics. These natural features, together with parks and other open spaces, provide scenic beauty and ecological diversity and contribute to the Village's unique image and identity.

An important objective of the Parks, Open Space and Environmental Plan is to celebrate the unique natural character and water resources of the region as distinctive features upon which to visually and functionally relate new development.

In addition, the Community Survey, conducted in early 2002, indicated that the two highest ranked advantages of living in Homer Glen were the "countryside character" and "open spaces."

The Parks, Open Space and Environmental Plan is intended to help the Village maintain and preserve key environmental and open space features, enhance the countryside character of the area, and provide for a more complete range of park and recreational areas to serve new and existing development.

Extensive environmental planning through the *Green Communities Demonstration Program* is currently underway in the Village. It is expected that the outcome of this environmental work will result in an environmental vision for the community. The Green Vision and the accompanying goals and objectives should be considered as they relate to future growth and development as well as the maintenance and enhancement of the existing image and character of the community.

#### ***Overview of the Parks, Open Space and Environmental Plan:***

Environmental protection is a primary objective of the Parks, Open Space and Environmental Plan. The Plan strives to set aside areas with special environmental and ecological value for protection from development. This creates natural areas, habitat for wildlife, and corridors for the natural flow of stormwater and the movement of wildlife.

The key features of the Parks, Open Space and Environmental Plan are the "environmental corridors" which encompass wetlands, flood plains and distinctive plant communities to be preserved. These will create a network of open space that enhances the residential neighborhoods and the image and character of the community.

This image is not only aesthetically pleasing but also essential to attracting and maintaining high quality commercial and residential development. People are attracted to beauty, quiet security and recreational opportunities close to their home and surrounding their Village.

In addition to the environmental corridors, the Plan also highlights other open space and environmental features, including Forest Preserve properties, wooded areas, existing and future park sites, recreational trails, and private recreational features. All of these open space elements are essential to the image and character of Homer Glen.

Open space can be used for pure aesthetic enjoyment as well as other passive recreation such as bird watching, nature walks and picnics. Open spaces can have areas for more active recreation either within their boundaries or adjacent to them. Active recreation such as team sports or playgrounds should be located, planned and designed so that their normal use will not interfere with the enjoyment of adjacent land owners nor degrade the natural resources and ecosystems within the open space network.

Local recreational pathways should be incorporated into the environmental corridors if they do not negatively impact environmental resources. Pathways would tie into the major regional trail system and link residential neighborhoods to each other and to parks, schools, shopping and employment areas. The intention of the plan is to create a comprehensive network of recreational pathways as described in the Goals and Objectives.

***Environmental Corridors:***

Environmental corridors, which help establish the overall structure of the open space system within Homer Glen, generally follow surface watercourses and drainage ways defined by the flood of record. Other key natural features located within or near the environmental corridors include flood plains, ridgelines, wetlands, wooded areas, and distinctive plant communities.

- Watercourses and drainage ways. The major surface watercourse, which drains east to west across the southern portion of the Village, is Spring Creek. Long Run Creek flows east to west across the northern edge of the Village. Homer Township is acquiring a 10-acre parcel west of Parker Road between 135th and 143rd Streets along Long Run Creek. Through a partnership with the Village of Homer Glen, a plan has been formulated to restore, enhance, and preserve a degraded wetland along the creek. The upper reaches of Fraction Run extend past the western edge of the Village at 167th Street.
- Ridgelines. The ridgelines—or drainage divides—shown on Figure 5 are important natural and visual features that define drainage areas within the Village.
- Wetlands. Wetlands occur within the environmental corridors and in other isolated locations. They are defined by vegetation, hydric soils, and surface and ground water conditions.
- Wooded Areas. Numerous mature woodlands and tree lines are located along and near the environmental corridors and in other areas of the planning area that are not yet subdivided.

Figure 5 highlights the environmental corridors that should be preserved and protected in the future. These corridors will create a network of green space that enhances residential neighborhoods, provides linkages between land use districts, and preserves the countryside image and character of the Village.

*Figure 5: Parks, Open Space and Environmental Plan*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

Soon after incorporation, the Village adopted four major water resource protection ordinances that require protection of many of these resources, including buffers along streams and around wetlands.

It should also be noted that Homer Glen is participating in the Green Communities Grant Program, which should result in additional information and specifics on environmental features and environmental protection within the Village's planning jurisdiction.

#### ***Forest Preserve District of Will County:***

The Spring Creek Greenway Forest Preserve includes about 2,000 acres of land, divided into two separate preserve areas.

Messenger Woods Forest Preserve encompasses 946 acres in the upper reaches of Spring Creek. A special sub-area is the Messenger Woods Nature Preserve, which covers one of the last remaining forests in northeastern Illinois that has not been changed through agricultural uses, lumbering or development.

About 1,054 acres are included in the Homer Trails Forest Preserve, which is also a part of the Spring Creek Greenway preserve.

These two Forest Preserve areas offer extensive opportunities for hiking, camping, picnicking, cross country skiing, and horseback riding.

The Forest Preserve District also has long-range plans to acquire additional properties along and near Spring Creek, in the far southern portion of Homer Glen's planning area, as indicated in Figure 5.

#### ***Homer Township Parks and Open Spaces:***

Residents of Homer Glen currently use parks and recreational areas provided by Homer Township and Will County. The Village does not own any developed park land or open space at the present time.

Homer Township owns twelve park and open space sites within Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction, as shown on Figure 5. Several of the sites are to be kept as undeveloped open space for passive recreation. The Township is considering additional acquisitions. Several of these sites are to be kept as undeveloped open space for passive recreation.

The seven Township parks located within the current boundaries of Homer Glen include:

- *Town Center Park*, located near 151st Street and Creme Road, has several lighted ball fields, an announcer's booth, concession stands, and a storage facility;
- *Culver Memorial Park*, located on Parker Road south of 143rd Street, has several ball fields but no lighting;
- *Yangas Park*, located along Will-Cook Road north of 143rd Street, is a neighborhood park;
- *Lamers Park*, located north of 159th Street east of Bell Road, is a neighborhood park;
- *Gorham Fields*, located south of 143rd Street and east of Pheasant Lane, is a neighborhood park;
- *Edmund J. Sendre Park*, located north of 151st Street and east of Greenbrier Lane, is a neighborhood park; and
- *Morris Park*, located at 163rd Street south of Leach Drive, is a neighborhood park.

Four open space properties are scattered throughout Homer Glen's planning area:

- *Purdy Open Space* is located at Gougar and Bruce Roads.
- *Paul Open Space* is located west of Gougar Road on 151st Street
- *Trantira Open Space* is located east of Gougar Road on 151st Street.
- *Welter Open Space* is located on Bell Road between 143rd and 151st Streets, in the Village of Homer Glen.

Most existing Homer Township park and open space sites are not extensively developed for recreational use, and several parks are characterized by poor accessibility.

***Other Park, Open Space and Recreational Features:***

Several other park and open space areas contribute to the image and identity of Homer Glen, and provide recreational and leisure-time opportunities for residents of the Village. These features, also highlighted in Figure 5, include the following:

- ***Wooded Areas.*** In addition to the wooded areas along and near the environmental corridors, there are numerous mature woodlands and tree lines located in other portions of Homer Glen's planning area that are not yet subdivided. The Village should work with land developers to preserve and protect these important natural features in the future.
- ***Schools.*** Local schools play an important role in providing recreational services. Schools in Homer Glen have outdoor and indoor recreational facilities that serve various needs within the community.
- ***Private Recreational Facilities.*** Two golf courses (Old Oak Country Club and Woodbine Golf Course) and the Homer Megaplex are major private recreational facilities located within the community.
- ***Stormwater Management Areas.*** Open space can also include stormwater management areas if they are designed as described in the Planning and Design Guidelines (see Section 7 of the Plan report).
- ***Neighboring Park Districts.*** Minor portions of Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction are currently served by the Lemont Park District, the Mokena Park District, and the New Lenox Park District.
- ***Cook County Forest Preserve District.*** Extensive open space and recreational facilities are provided in Cook County northeast of the Homer Glen corporate limits.

A unique aspect of recreation within Homer Glen is the degree of citizen involvement in organized athletic activities. The Homer Athletic Association involves approximately 2,000 youths in baseball and basketball programs. The Stallions youth football program serves nearly 500 youngsters and another several hundred participate in the Homer Soccer Club.

Finally, while the presence of overhead electrical transmission lines are in stark contrast to the natural character of the area, these public rights-of-way do create open space corridors with potential for use as recreational pathways, landscape treatments, and aesthetic enhancements, particularly at locations where they cross major roadways. These corridors can provide safe pedestrian pathways that are separated from vehicular traffic.

### ***Future Open Space Dedication:***

All new residential developments within the large undeveloped portions of the Homer Glen planning jurisdiction should incorporate generous amounts of open space. This policy is intended to preserve, in perpetuity, open spaces and areas of particular natural resource value as an integral part of all types of residential development projects.

Open spaces to be dedicated as a part of new developments might include the environmental corridors, wildlife habits, wetlands, wooded areas, natural vegetation, recreational trails, and park and recreational sites.

Maintenance responsibilities for open space should be established at the time of development approval. The open space could be maintained by a property owners association, a not-for-profit corporation, or a public body (such as the Forest Preserve District, school district, Village, Township, park district, etc.) as determined by the Village of Homer Glen.

The lands along the environmental corridors should receive top priority as a part of these open space dedications. While many of the lands within the environmental corridors have natural features regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to further encourage the protection and enhancement of open space, the Village might consider density bonuses for the buildable portion of a development site as consideration for the Development providing enhanced open space when, for example, the Development provides more than the amount of open space required by Village Ordinance. In some cases, the Village could work with a petitioner to seek purchase of the open space by one of the public agencies.

To encourage the preservation of natural features, the Village might also consider counting as permanent open space areas that are within privately owned and defined lots, if the resources are protected by appropriate covenants and restrictions. This approach could also apply to residential lots backing up to wooded fence rows or environmental corridors. Open space need not be publicly owned if it is determined by the Village that the objectives of environmental protection and open space preservation are met. In addition, open spaces need not be publicly owned, if the Village considers that public access is not required.

Where open space is well planned to meet the objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*, trade-offs could be considered in terms of smaller lots than the underlying zoning in exchange for creative cluster/open space and conservation design. For example, cluster/open space design is a site planning technique that concentrates buildings on a part of the site in order to preserve the remaining land for recreation, open space, agriculture or the preservation of environmentally important features. This type of development allows a reduction in lot area provided there is no significant increase in the number of lots that would be permitted under a conventional subdivision. Conservation design rearranges the development on each parcel as it is being planned so that a generous amount of the buildable land is set aside as open space.

The way to protect environmental corridors and open spaces is through the plan review process. Most important in this effort is the setting aside of areas with special environmental and ecological value for protection from development. The designated open space within a project should incorporate the environmental corridors as a priority. Setbacks from roadways, detention ponds and easements could also be included when they are improved for active or passive recreational use. This process preserves open space, habitat for wildlife, and corridors for the natural flow of stormwater and the movement of wildlife. These corridors are identified in the *Comprehensive Plan*.

As new areas of unique natural resources are identified, they should be added to the environmental corridors or areas identified as "Other Environmental Resources to be Preserved" as shown in the Land Use Plan.

### **Future Park and Open Space Sites:**

As additional park and open space sites are developed within Homer Glen, the Village should consider the following policies and guidelines regarding the types of facilities to be provided, as well as the location, design and configuration of new park sites.

- A **pocket park** (or tot lot) is a specialized recreational facility intended to serve a limited population or specific group such as small children or senior citizens. It is appropriate where the average residential lot size is less than ½ acre in size, and in proximity to townhouses, condominiums, or senior housing. An area of 2,500 to 10,000 square feet is recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association.
- A **neighborhood park** is intended to meet the recreational needs of people living in a neighborhood or subdivision. They provide for more active recreational opportunities. Where possible, neighborhood parks should be developed in association with elementary and/or junior high school sites, and should be designed and equipped to serve the needs of children from grades K through 8. Facilities and programs can then be better coordinated, and the children's identity with their neighborhood and their learning environment can be reinforced.

The minimum area recommended for a neighborhood park associated with a school site is 6 acres. A freestanding neighborhood park should be somewhat larger and should be designed and equipped to accommodate the needs and desires of nearby residents.

- A **community park** should serve an area with a radius of up to one and one-half miles. When combined with a junior high school, a minimum site area of 40 acres is recommended. When combined with a senior high school, a minimum site of 60 acres is recommended. The site size should be based upon local program needs, which might include physical education and instructional programs; school-supervised games, sports, and athletics; and school and community recreation activities. However, based upon the open space character of the Homer Glen, somewhat larger sites might be considered.
- A **Village Green** of approximately five acres in size is proposed in association with the new Town Center area. This public open space should function as a social gathering place and a location for community events such as festivals, arts and craft fairs, seasonal markets, and holiday celebrations.
- The **multi-use trail system** (discussed under the Transportation Plan) will provide safe linkages between residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, shopping areas, other public facilities, and employment centers. It should also link to existing and proposed regional trail systems.

Generalized locations for new parks are depicted in Figure 5. Except for the small pocket parks described above, park sites should be accessible from an arterial or collector street and in proximity to the multi-use trail system and the environmental corridors shown on the Plan.

As Homer Glen continues to evolve as a community, the provision of additional parks, open spaces, gathering places, and recreational areas should be considered. These facilities can promote a greater sense of community and belonging, and provide residents with new opportunities for recreation, interaction, and leisure activities.

It is also recommended that the Village undertake a comprehensive, community-wide master plan for park and recreational features within its planning jurisdiction.

*Table 1: Guidelines for Park/School Sites*

<b>Facility</b>	<b>School Site</b>	<b>Park Site<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Pupils</b>	<b>Suggested Park/School Standard</b>
<i>Elementary</i>	15 ac	6 ac	21ac	600-900	20ac
<i>Jr. High</i>	20 ac	25ac	45ac	600-900	40ac
<i>High School</i>	40 ac	25ac	65ac	1,200-1,400	60ac

<sup>1</sup>Neighborhood Park Site = 6 acres

Community Park with Play Fields = 25 acres

## **Section 4: Community Facilities Plan**

In addition to parks and open spaces, other public facilities provide important services to the residents and businesses of Homer Glen and add to the overall “quality of life” of the community. These include schools, fire and police protection, libraries, administrative facilities and meeting spaces, religious facilities, and other public and semi-public uses.

Since Homer Glen is a newly established community, it does not yet have a full complement of municipal facilities and services. Most community facilities are provided by agencies and service districts other than the Village.

The Community Facilities Plan is intended to assist the Village in ensuring that high-quality community facilities are available to local residents and businesses in the future. It should be used to help determine which facilities should become the direct responsibility of the Village of Homer Glen, and which should continue to be provided by other agencies and organizations. It should also be used by the Village and other service districts to ensure that appropriate sites are reserved for community facilities that will be needed in the future.

It is important to emphasize that the Plan presents general policies and guidelines for community facilities. The Plan is not intended to pre-empt or substitute for the more detailed planning and programming which should be undertaken by the Village and other service agencies and organizations.

For example, even though the Plan highlights generalized locations for future schools and fire stations, it does not preclude the need for the more detailed planning, programming, and site selection which fall within the purview of the School Districts, Fire Protection Districts, and other agencies and organizations.

### **General Recommendations:**

The Village will continually promote cooperation, interaction, and collaboration among the various agencies and organizations that serve Homer Glen, including the school districts, the fire protection districts, Homer Township, and other agencies.

The Village and developers should also keep abreast of the plans, policies, and projects of these other agencies and organizations. For example, future schools, fire stations, and other public facilities will be important components of Homer Glen, and their location and design should be of special concern to the Village.

Public sites and buildings should be viewed as opportunities to create civic landmarks within the Homer Glen community. New facilities should be located, designed, and developed as focal points and “signature” projects for the Village.

To the extent possible, new community facilities should be located along or near the multi-use trails highlighted in the Transportation Plan. The trail system will provide attractive settings for community facilities, and will make them more readily accessible by bicyclists and pedestrians.

*Figure 6: Community Facilities Plan*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

Community facilities should be compatible with surrounding uses and should enhance the character of the neighborhoods in which they are located. Sites should be attractively landscaped with screening and buffering provided if necessary. Traffic generated by community facilities should not adversely impact surrounding areas. Adequate and attractively designed off-street parking should be available at all community facility sites.

The Village and other service districts should be attuned to the changing needs and requirements of local residents and businesses, and new facilities and services should be provided if they become necessary or desirable in the future. As nearby rural areas are more intensely developed, community facility and service needs may change dramatically.

For example, the Village might strive to attract a college or university campus that would help reinforce the image and identity of Homer Glen, and also be compatible with the open space quality and countryside character of the community.

**Public Schools:**

Homer Glen is served by five school districts: Homer Consolidated School District 33C, Will County School District 92, New Lenox School District 122, Lockport Township High School District 205 and Lincoln-Way High School District 210. Several public school sites are currently located within the boundaries of the Village, and additional schools will be needed in the future.

- **Homer Community Consolidated School District #33C.** District 33C operates four elementary schools and one junior high school. Of these schools, Hadley Elementary School, Goodings Grove Elementary School, and Homer Junior High School are located within Homer Glen. L. J. Schilling Elementary School is located within unincorporated Homer Township, and William J. Butler Elementary School is located in Lockport.

Current enrollment of District 33C is 3,050. The district anticipates growth of 150-200 students annually, estimating 4,000 students by 2009. New schools and staff will be necessary to accommodate anticipated growth, as existing schools are currently close to capacity. Figure 6 highlights generalized locations where new school sites will likely be needed in the future.

In addition, the existing Goodings Grove School is a concern for the administration, since nearby commercial development has created traffic and safety concerns in the vicinity of the school. The lack of wastewater facilities at L.J. Schilling School is another concern of the district.

- **Will County School District #92.** Children within Homer Glen attend Reed Elementary School and the recently opened Oak Prairie Junior High School, both of which are located in unincorporated Homer Township. Children within Homer Glen also attend Walsh and Ludwig Schools located in the City of Lockport.

The current enrollment for District 92 is 1,900 students. District officials estimate an increase of approximately 75 to 100 students per year, and anticipate that existing school facilities will accommodate new growth during the next 10-year period.

- **Lockport Township High School District #205.** District 205 serves Homer Glen. Currently, all of the district's schools are located in Lockport. District 205 anticipates schools reaching capacity within the next 4 to 5 years.

To address future needs, District 205 has acquired an 82-acre site along Cedar Road in Homer Glen, and intends to construct a new high school on this site during the next 10-year period.

- **New Lenox Elementary School District #122.** District 122 serves a relatively small portion of southeast Homer Glen consisting of about 150 acres. The District has seven elementary schools and two junior high schools, none of which are located in Homer Glen.
- **Lincoln-Way High School District #210.** District 210 serves the same part of Homer Glen as the New Lenox Elementary District #122. The District has two high schools located in the City of New Lenox.

**Fire Protection:**

The Village of Homer Glen is served by four fire protection districts: Northwest Homer Fire Protection District, Homer Township Fire Protection District, Mokena Fire Protection District and New Lenox Fire Protection District. Each agency serves a different part of Homer Glen, and the agencies vary in number of staff, stations, equipment, and fire insurance rating. Each district also has somewhat different needs in the future.

- **Northwest Homer Fire Protection District.** The Northwest Homer Fire Protection District is responsible for 6.9 square miles of northern Homer Glen. The district operates two stations and employs 52 staff. Equipment used by the district includes fire engines, squads, tankers, ambulances, and utility and brush units. While current equipment and manpower levels are considered adequate, additional resources will be needed as growth continues to occur within the district. The current fire insurance rating of the Northwest Homer Fire Protection District is 5.
- **Homer Township Fire Protection District** The Homer Township Fire Protection District serves most of Homer Glen, and encompasses approximately 11.8 square miles. This district operates three stations (two in Homer Glen and one in unincorporated Homer Township) and employs 50 persons. Equipment used by the district includes engines, tankers, ambulances, a ladder truck, a grass/brush fire truck, and fire prevention/education vehicles. The current manpower and equipment levels are considered by district officials to be inadequate. Existing staff and equipment provide only enough resources to respond to one call. According to district officials, another fire station is needed to serve Homer Glen, and equipment is aging. The current fire insurance rating of the Homer Township Fire Protection District is 5.
- **Mokena Fire Protection District** The Mokena Fire Protection District serves approximately 2.7 square miles of southeastern Homer Glen. This district currently employs twelve fulltime staff positions and operates two stations. Equipment used by the district includes ambulances, engines, a tanker, a ladder truck, a grass/brush truck, and a heavy rescue squad. Plans are underway to construct and staff a third station in the Homer Glen planning area. The current fire insurance rating of the Mokena Fire Protection District is 3.
- **New Lenox Fire Protection District.** The New Lenox Fire Protection District serves 150 acres of Homer Glen that is in New Lenox Township. The District has four stations and has 18 paid firefighters and 44 paid-on-call firefighters. The current fire insurance rating is 6.

**Homer Township Public Library:**

The Homer Township Public Library, which serves all of Homer Township, was established in 1982. The library building, located on 151st Street, was constructed in 1988. The library has over 16,000 active cardholders, and in 2001 its annual circulation was 202,685.

While the library facility is in good condition, the library administration feels that the space is inadequate to serve the current and future population of Homer Glen. A study completed by a library consultant indicated the current library space of 15,000 square feet should be enlarged to serve the existing population. National standards also suggest a collection of 135,000. The size of the Homer Township Public Library’s collection is 100,000.

If a new or expanded Public Library is constructed in Homer Glen in the future, the Library should be considered within Homer Glen’s Town Center area.

**Township Facilities and Services:**

Homer Township has been in existence since 1836. The Township currently provides a number of services to Homer Glen, including: a) the Parks Department, which currently maintains twelve park and open space sites in Homer Glen’s planning jurisdiction; and b) the Highway Department, which is responsible via contract for the maintenance of public streets and rights-of-way within the Village.

- **Parks Department.** The Homer Township Parks Department is responsible for 220 acres located in the area. To accommodate anticipated future population, the department is considering purchasing additional park land. In regard to recreational programming, the Parks Department relies on private organizations to program and utilize their facilities. Athletic fields throughout the township are used by private leagues that collect fees from their participants, and provide financial assistance to the Parks Department to maintain the fields. The Parks Department has indicated that additional soccer fields will be needed in the future.
- **Homer Township Highway Department.** By way of intergovernmental agreement, the Homer Township Highway Department is responsible for maintenance of all existing streets and rights-of-way within the Village of Homer Glen. While the department is not directly responsible for new construction, it does administer and monitor contracts for road construction projects.

The Highway Department indicates a willingness to assist Homer Glen if the Village were to include road improvements in its long-range capital improvement plan.

In addition, there is a 10-acre community center site and a 31-unit senior housing complex along the west side of Bell Road, just south of the Commonwealth Edison facility.

While Homer Township will continue to serve and support Homer Glen in the years ahead, many of the day-to-day administrative tasks now performed by the Township will most likely become the responsibility of the Village in the future.

**Other Facilities and Services:**

- **Village Hall.** Since Homer Glen is a new community and does not yet have a Village Hall, the Village currently leases space in a small commercial center on the south side of 143rd Street, west of Bell Road. The Village should consider the construction of a new Village Hall in the near future, as discussed below.

- **Police Protection.** Police protection services are currently provided under contract with the Will County Sheriff's Department. The department assigns approximately 16 deputies to service the Village.

While it is assumed that police protection services will continue to be provided by Will County in the immediate future, it is recommended that the Village explore the possibility of establishing a municipal police department in the future.

According to the Community Survey and the key person interviews, construction of a Village Hall and the establishment of a Village police department are priority objectives on the part of many Homer Glen residents.

### **Town Center Area:**

The Plan recommends that the Village consider the construction of a new Town Center area to serve as a functional and visual focal point for the community.

Discussion of a new Town Center is particularly timely in Homer Glen. As mentioned above, the Village currently leases space in a small shopping center for administrative offices and public meeting space, and is considering the possibility of constructing a new Village Hall in the future. Furthermore, the Village has received a grant through the Illinois First program to help purchase land for a Village Hall.

The development of a Town Center is a priority objective of this *Comprehensive Plan*. The Village should establish a time line for the development of the Town Center area and continue to explore and pursue funding sources and financial assistance opportunities for this development.

**Definition of a Town Center.** A Town Center for Homer Glen should be defined as a specifically designated area containing several public and/or private uses that serves as a focal point for the Village and a place where people come together as a community. While municipal offices may not be essential in some communities, it is recommended that a Village Hall be a key component of the Town Center in Homer Glen.

In addition to a Village Hall and other buildings, the Town Center should include parks and open spaces, pedestrian facilities, parking areas, and other features and amenities.

The Town Center should be a unique and visually distinctive area that is easily distinguishable from other portions of the Village. It should be characterized by a common design theme that unites the various components of the area and reflects the character and identity of the Homer Glen community.

**Components of a Town Center.** The Town Center in Homer Glen might contain a combination of public and private uses, activities, and facilities. For example, these might include:

- A **Village Hall** containing, at a minimum, administrative offices, meeting rooms, and other municipal departments.
- **Other public uses**, such as a police department, a new library, senior citizen center, historical museum, postal facility, fire station, etc. Certain public uses might be located in the same building as the Village Hall, while others might be located in separate nearby buildings.
- A **Village Green** or similar public open space which could serve as a visual amenity for surrounding buildings, a recreational area, and a gathering place for community events and celebrations.

- **Civic design features** to enhance and articulate the Town Center area, perhaps including a clock tower, water feature, amphitheater, band shell, gazebo, etc.
- **Commercial uses**, such as restaurants, small retail shops, services, and/or offices.
- **Parking** sufficient to serve all public and private uses within the Town Center area.
- **Other uses** that might conceivably be located within or near the Town Center include schools and other institutions, a banquet hall, a theater, sports or recreational facilities, townhouses, condominiums, etc.

**The Role and Function of a Town Center.** A Town Center area could perform a number of important roles within the Homer Glen community. For example, since Homer Glen does not have a traditional downtown, the Town Center could serve as the symbolic heart of the Village and provide a new and identifiable landmark and “centerpiece” within the community.

The Town Center could provide a convenient one-stop location for a range of public and private services. It could provide a social gathering place and a meeting space for community events and activities. It could become Homer Glen’s signature project and help foster community pride and community identity.

If carefully developed, the Town Center could also demonstrate Homer Glen’s commitment to high-quality design and construction, open space amenities, and environmental protection and enhancement.

If it includes new commercial uses or other private development, a Town Center could also generate new revenues for the community.

**Land Required for a Town Center Area.** The amount of land required for a Town Center is dependent on the mix of uses and the quantity of development to be accommodated, as well as the density and intensity of development to be promoted.

In Homer Glen, it is recommended that the Town Center be a campus-type environment with a generous amount of open space and extensive landscaping. However, the Town Center should also have a strong pedestrian orientation and it should not be so large that walking anywhere within the area becomes inconvenient.

In addition, since Homer Glen is a new community, the Town Center area should be large enough to accommodate growth and expansion in the years ahead.

For these reasons, we suggest that the Village consider a land parcel at least 40 to 60 acres in size that could accommodate the following:

- A Village Hall, public meeting spaces, a new Library, other public facilities, and associated parking, encompassing approximately 10 acres;
- A Village Green and other public open spaces and civic design features, encompassing approximately 5 acres;
- A small retail and restaurant component, together with off-street parking, encompassing approximately 10 acres;
- If a new or expanded Public Library is constructed in Homer Glen, the Town Center area would be an ideal location.  
Expansion space of approximately 10 to 15 acres, which could accommodate other public and/or private uses in the future; and
- Active recreational and open space areas, perhaps including ball fields, tennis courts, soccer fields, playgrounds, and water retention areas.

Additional development, such as townhouses and other residential uses could also be related to and linked with the new Town Center area. These other uses could be located on adjacent or nearby properties, or could be a part of the actual Town Center site.

**Site Selection Considerations for a Town Center.** Ideally, the Town Center in Homer Glen should be located on a site that is:

- a) Near the geographic heart of the community.
- b) Close to the center of the local population;
- c) Readily accessible by vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- d) Served by public utilities.
- e) Safe and “pedestrian friendly.”
- f) Compatible with adjacent and nearby land uses.
- g) Proximate to other public or institutional uses.
- h) Visible to visitors and motorists passing through the community.
- i) Under single ownership to eliminate the need for land assembly.
- j) Vacant or in agricultural use.
- k) Free of significant environmental issues or constraints.
- l) Large enough to accommodate future expansion.

On the other hand, a Town Center should not be located on a site where its development would:

- Adversely impact significant natural features or resources.
- Require the removal or displacement of sound and viable existing residential or commercial uses.
- Require vehicles to pass through the heart of a residential neighborhood.
- Be surrounded by unattractive sites or buildings.
- Create adverse traffic, parking, or other objectionable impacts for nearby existing development.

In addition, if the Town Center includes primarily public uses, it should not be located on a site that is considered to be a prime location for new commercial or business development.

**Alternative Locations for a Town Center in Homer Glen.** Four alternative sites were identified and evaluated as possible locations for a new Town Center in Homer Glen. These include the following:

1. **Near the Intersection of Bell Road and 151st Street.** A new Town Center might be constructed along the south side of 151st Street, just west of the Bell Road intersection. There are approximately 47 acres of undeveloped land potentially available in this area. It should be noted that this site includes a large cluster of mature trees located near the intersection that should be preserved.
2. **Near the Intersection of Parker Road and 159th Street.** A new Town Center might be constructed along the east side of Parker Road, just north of 159th Street. Well over 40 acres of undeveloped land are potentially available in this area.

3. **151st Street, Between Parker and Cedar Roads.** A new Town Center might be constructed along the south side of 151st Street, across from the Homer Township Administration Building and the Homer Township Public Library. Well over 60 acres of undeveloped land are potentially available in this area.
4. **Near the Intersection of Cedar Road and 159th Street.** A new Town Center might be constructed along the east side of Cedar Road, just north of 159th Street. Well over 40 acres of undeveloped land are potentially available in this area.

**Recommended Location.** Based on the comparison and evaluation of the four sites highlighted above, the Plan recommends Site 3 as the most promising location for a new Town Center in Homer Glen.

Site 3 has two owners and is large enough to accommodate immediate development as well as future expansion. It is located close to the geographic heart of the Village and is near the center of the local population. Site 3 is adjacent to a number of existing and proposed public and institutional uses, which would help create a strong new public focal point and landmark for the community.

Site 3 is located in a high-quality environment and—if properly designed—it could become the most “pedestrian friendly” of the four alternative sites. If carefully designed and developed, a new Town Center in this location would also enhance nearby residential areas.

Site 3 could incorporate an area-wide open space and trail system that would link the Town Center with the future high school site, the proposed townhouse development to the south, as well as future commercial developments along the 159th Street corridor.

During the final phase of the planning process, an illustrative concept will be prepared suggesting how the Town Center area might be developed, consistent with the policies, guidelines, and recommendations presented in the *Comprehensive Plan*.

It should be emphasized that the proposed Town Center site is conceptual. The specific size and configuration of the Town Center will be determined at a future date. The Village should strive to balance the needs of existing property owners with the requirements of a new mixed-use Town Center development to serve Homer Glen.

**Public Utilities:**

Illinois-American Water Company (formerly named Citizens Utilities Company of Illinois) provides water and wastewater service to the majority of the developed area of Homer Township. In order to serve growth east of the proposed I-355 extension, master plans were developed in October 1995 for both of these utility services.

The Village should review and evaluate water, sewer, and wastewater plans for conformance with Homer Glen’s new *Comprehensive Plan*. The Village should work with Illinois-American Water Company and other private utility companies to ensure that utility plans are consistent with the Village’s long-range plans for future growth and development.

The Village should also evaluate possible options for sustainable wastewater facility planning and treatment that promotes reuse, recharge, reduction, and minimization of impacts.

**Wastewater Treatment.** The current Facilities Planning Area (FPA) boundaries are shown on Figure 7. The Illinois American Water Company FPA is currently served by three water reclamation facilities (WRFs): Derby Meadows, Chickasaw Hills, and Oak Valley. These are also shown on Figure 7.

The FPA master plan projects Homer Township population to increase from an estimated 25,458 in 1995 to an ultimate population of 71,812 persons. In the master plan, the planned service area was divided into drainage basins and these in turn were grouped to form service areas within which wastewater would be directed to a specified WRF.

Future alternatives were developed and evaluated for serving the projected population of each service area. The required capacity of each WRF was based upon the standard of 100 gallons per population equivalent. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Design Standards for Sewage Works estimates 3.5 persons for each single family dwelling. The recommended plan, considering both cost and environmental impacts, was to increase the capacity of the three existing WRFs. The ability to expand the WRFs will depend on the wastewater assimilation capacity of the Village's streams.

It should be noted that a major portion of Homer Glen is not currently served by public or quasi-public wastewater treatment facilities. Many residents are served by individual septic systems. This is particularly true of the areas of single-family homes developed at one dwelling unit per acre or more.

**Water Supply.** Illinois-American Water Company obtained a Lake Water Allocation for supplying high-quality Lake Michigan water to Homer Township. Lake Michigan water was brought from Bedford Park to a central delivery point in Homer Glen. Illinois American Water Company will construct, own, operate, and maintain the facilities to distribute water from the delivery point to the rest of the Township. The certified water service area is shown on Figure 7.

Facilities will be designed to meet the projected ultimate population of the service area (74,926 persons), which extends slightly beyond Homer Township. The planned water supply system was developed to meet the standards for fire flow required by varying land uses. However, limitations placed on future diversions of Lake Michigan water may limit the ability to obtain additional water allocations to serve the growing Village population.

A five million gallon water tower was constructed south of the southwest corner of 159th Street and Cedar Road, located within Homer Glen's unincorporated planning area, and subsequent ground storage units are projected for construction over various time frames to be located in the vicinity of the main booster station site.

It should be noted that some parts of Homer Glen are not currently served by Illinois-American Water Company. These areas obtain their water from individual wells.

**Storm Water.** There are underground storm water sewers serving portions of Homer Glen, and a system of drainage ditches and man-made detention ponds. Each individual development is required to provide its own stormwater management facilities in accord with the Village's Subdivision and Water Resource Ordinances. Consequently, numerous detention ponds are scattered throughout the planning area.

The Village should prepare a comprehensive map of the location, type and ownership of all storm water facilities within Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction.

**Pipeline and Power Transmission Corridors.** Pipelines and transmission corridors exist throughout the Village of Homer Glen and developers should consider these locations as development is recommended.

*Figure 7: Public Utilities*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

## ***Section 5: Transportation Plan***

The transportation facilities that serve residents and businesses in Homer Glen consist of the roadway system, public transportation, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation facilities. The network of transportation facilities provides access to the Village from surrounding areas and enables the movement of people and vehicles within and around the Village.

The efficiency and convenience of the transportation system will significantly affect the quality of life within the community, and will influence opportunities for attracting desirable new investment and development in the future.

The primary purpose of the Transportation Plan is to establish the basis for a long-range system of roadways and multi-use trails that efficiently supports existing and future development, while maintaining and enhancing the open space character and environmental quality of the Homer Glen community.

The Village should use the Transportation Plan to:

- a) Secure the rights-of-way for new roadways and trail systems prior to or concurrent with land development;
- b) Determine the impact of proposed developments on the area-wide transportation system;
- c) Work with land developers to provide the transportation improvements required to serve new development;
- d) Establish design standards for the various types of new roadways and pathways to be provided within the planning jurisdiction; and
- e) Anticipate the long-range financial requirements for transportation system improvements and establish the basis for funding support and assistance.

The Planning and Design Guidelines, presented in Section 7 of the Plan report, also address selected features intended to make the roadway system more functional and more attractive.

### ***Existing Roadway System:***

Homer Glen is served by a system of roadways under the jurisdiction of the State of Illinois, Will County, and the Village.

The major east-west street serving the Village is Illinois Route 7, also identified as 159th Street. The only other state routes are Illinois Route 171, which cuts diagonally across the far northwest corner of the Village's planning jurisdiction, and Illinois Route 6, which cuts diagonally across the far southeast corner of the planning area. The major north-south roadway is Bell Road.

Bell Road and 159th Street are seriously congested during peak hours. Additional capacity is needed in terms of widening, left turn lanes and coordinated traffic signals. Standards for setbacks and access controls are needed to reduce negative impacts of future development along these major roads.

Improvements are also needed to link these major roadways with various neighborhoods and activity areas within the Village.

Several Will County roads currently connect with and provide access to the major streets highlighted above. In addition to the Will County roads, Will-Cook Road is a Cook County roadway that borders Homer Glen on the east.

The majority of streets providing access to properties in Homer Glen were previously Township roads that are now a part of the Village's street system. While many of these streets have curbs and gutters, others are typically paved, two-lane roads with drainage ditches on each side.

The two-lane Township roads were not designed to serve the greatly expanded population and the commercial and institutional growth that has taken place in the area over the last two decades.

The lack of an adequate roadway system designed to handle current and future needs was a problem frequently mentioned in the Community Survey. According to the survey, "traffic problems" are the second highest ranking disadvantage of living in Homer Glen.

The key person interviews conducted as a part of the planning process also suggest that many residents and public officials believe that the lack of an adequate roadway system hinders the ability to attract the desirable new commercial development needed to bolster the Village's tax base and provide goods, services, and jobs to the local residents.

### ***Functional Classification System:***

Classifying roadways according to their function is an important element in the planning process. Not all roadways within Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction are intended to serve the same purpose, and, therefore, should not have the same design characteristics.

The two major considerations in functionally classifying roadways are: a) the level of access, and b) the mobility which they provide. There is an inherent conflict in addressing the need for a roadway to provide mobility, while allowing for adequate access to abutting properties.

Regulating the number of driveways and side streets is necessary on arterials to enhance their primary function of mobility. Conversely, the primary function of local roadways is to provide access, the implementation of which causes a limitation on mobility. Therefore, the extent and degree of access control is a significant factor in defining the functional category of a roadway.

Four functional classifications are recommended for public streets within Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction, as discussed below and illustrated in Figure 8. During the final phase of the planning process, an illustrative cross-section of each street classification should be prepared, consistent with the policies and guidelines included in the *Comprehensive Plan*.

*Figure 8: Transportation Plan*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

### ***Interstate Highway:***

Interstate highways provide access to destinations beyond Homer Glen and the surrounding region. Their limited number of access points and physical design permits travel at higher speeds, and they are generally used for travel over longer distances than are the other classifications. The Federal Highway Administration has jurisdiction over the nation's interstate highway system.

Interstate routes convenient to Homer Glen include Interstate 80, an east-west highway just south of the Village; and Interstate 55, which runs generally north-south from Chicago to St. Louis and beyond.

Interstate 355, a north-south tollway, currently terminates at I-55. An alignment for the proposed extension of I-355 from I-55 south to I-80 has been established by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) within the western portion of Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction, although outside the Village's current corporate limits. Interchanges to the I-355 extension are proposed at 143rd Street, IL Route 7 (159th Street), and US Route 6.

The I-355 project has achieved environmental clearances. When the project is constructed, the two east-west roads with connections to the proposed expressway will experience a significant increase in traffic volumes. Both 143rd Street and 159th Street will be impacted by the new induced traffic, much of which will originate outside of Homer Glen. This will increase congestion and negatively impact the Village, unless IDOT also undertakes improvements along the two arterial streets and along the other major roadways that feed traffic to them.

IDOT is also proposing a new bridge crossing of the Des Plaines River from Caton Farm Road extended to Bruce Road (east of the river). IDOT intends to construct this new roadway to the proposed I-355 extension and then north to 159th Street. The Village of Homer Glen has proposed an alternate alignment for this extension.

### ***Principal Arterial:***

Principal arterial routes serve the primary centers of activity within the Village. They are generally characterized by the highest traffic volumes and the longest trip lengths. They are roadways which have intercity continuity, regional importance, and provide reasonably continuous routes through the Village. For the purpose of this Plan, major arterials are roads that typically carry traffic volumes greater than 12,000 vehicles per day (vpd), and are usually under the jurisdiction of the state or county governments.

East-west roadways proposed as principal arterials are:

- 143rd Street,
- 159th Street (IL Route 7), and
- US Route 6, which crosses the southeast corner of the planning jurisdiction.

North-south roadways proposed as principal arterials are:

- Bell Road, north of 159th Street, and
- Archer Avenue (IL Route 171), which crosses the northwest corner of the Village's planning jurisdiction.

In the past, there has been discussion about a frontage road along 159th Street. This concept was set forth in the *Homer Township Land Use Plan*. The purpose of the frontage road was to separate through traffic from local access, and to provide access to properties along the corridor if IDOT constructed a barrier median that limited access along this Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA).

However, the Transportation Plan does not recommend a frontage road along 159th Street for the following reasons:

- a) The visual impact of a continuous frontage road is not compatible with the Village's "countryside character;"
- b) A frontage road would impact many existing properties;
- c) Acquisition would be costly and time consuming, as well as disruptive to existing property owners;
- d) Access to adjacent properties would not be substantially improved; and
- e) The cost of constructing and maintaining a continuous frontage road would lie heavily on the Village of Homer Glen.

The Village should work closely with IDOT to promote an attractive boulevard cross section for 159th which is consistent with other SRA roadways in the region. Even though there is a barrier curb, the median can be landscaped to create an attractive and distinctive appearance more in keeping with the character of Homer Glen. Signalized intersections (at one-half or one-quarter mile intervals) could permit "U turns" providing access to adjacent developments. In addition, the State would pay to construct and maintain the roadway.

Likewise, the Village should work closely with IDOT to promote an attractive boulevard treatment along Bell Road (an SRA), including an attractive landscaped median, to make this key north-south roadway more distinctive as it passes through Homer Glen.

**Secondary Arterial:**

Secondary arterial routes interconnect with and augment the major arterials. While they accommodate trips of moderate length and provide slightly less mobility than the major arterials, they also provide more emphasis on property access. Secondary arterials can also include routes that serve major traffic flows between various districts within the Village. For the purpose of this Plan, secondary arterials are facilities that typically carry between 5,000 and 12,000 vpd, and can be under the jurisdiction of the County, Township, or the Village.

East-west roadways proposed as secondary arterials are:

- 131st Street,
- 151st Street, and
- 167th Street,

North-south roadways proposed as secondary arterials are:

- Gouger Road/Lemont Road,
- Crème Road/Cedar Road, south of 143rd Street,
- Parker Road,
- Bell Road, between 159th Street and Hadley Road, and
- Will-Cook Road, located on the eastern edge of the Village.

**Collector Street:**

Collector streets provide both property access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Collectors differ from arterials in that they penetrate into these land use areas, distributing trips from the arterials throughout the area to their ultimate destination. For the purpose of this Plan, collector streets are facilities that carry between 1,000 and 5,000 vpd, and are typically under the jurisdiction of the Village. Roadways within the collector street classification can be further classified by the primary land use that they serve in order to provide continuity between the *Comprehensive Plan* and the Subdivision Ordinance (such as an industrial collector, a commercial collector, or a residential collector).

Roadways proposed as collector streets are:

- Cedar Road, north of 143rd Street,
- 139th Street/King Road, north of 143rd Street,
- 147th Street, west of Creme Road,
- 163rd Street, from Gouger to Cedar,
- Bell Road, between Hadley Road and Will-Cook Road,
- Bruce Road/Chicago-Bloomington Road/Hadley Road, and
- Lauffer, Bruce, Hass, and Marti Roads, in the far southeast quadrant of the Village.

New north-south and east-west collector streets are also proposed north of 159th Street between Cedar Road and Parker Road in order to serve the proposed Town Center area and other new commercial, residential, and institutional development within this key area. It should be noted that these are generalized locations, not actual alignments.

Additional new collector streets should be determined as the Village reviews new subdivisions in the future.

**Local Streets:**

Local streets should be laid out in conformance with officially adopted Village Plans and Ordinances. Local streets include all roads not in one of the higher classifications. They primarily permit direct access to abutting properties and provide connections to the higher order roadways. Non-local traffic should be discouraged on these streets by designing them for lesser speeds (such as using more narrow rights-of-way or other traffic calming measures) and using appropriate signs and signalization. For the purpose of this Plan, local streets are facilities that carry less than 1,000 vpd, and are under the jurisdiction of the Village. As with collector streets, local streets may be further classified by the primary land use that they serve in order to provide continuity between the *Comprehensive Plan* and the Subdivision Ordinance.

**Multi-Use Trails:**

The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and the Openlands Project have developed a *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Implementation Program*, which includes several linkages within Homer Glen's planning area.

The program identifies proposed trails along the extension of I-355; within the east/west and north/south power line rights-of-way; and along Spring Creek.

According to the Greenways Plan, the trails in Homer Glen would eventually link to other regional bikeways, hiking trails, and outdoor recreation areas associated with the forest preserves and the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor.

To maintain a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians, the Village should promote the development of an area-wide system of multi-use trails to link residential areas with parks, schools, shopping, public facilities, and other trails in the area.

Figure 8 highlights a preliminary community-wide trail system consisting of:

- Trails along the Spring Creek corridor, which passes through the Spring Creek Greenway Forest Preserve;
- Trails along other environmental corridors that pass through the Village;
- Trails along the power line rights-of-way that pass through the community; and
- Trails along several roadways, including 159th Street and the I-355 extension.

The Village should explore opportunities for additional multi-use trails along selected roadways within the planning jurisdiction. Attention should be given to reserving adequate rights-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safe crossings along busy streets, and controlling traffic speeds on streets where pedestrian and bicycle traffic is to be promoted.

The multi-use trails shown on the Transportation Plan Map are conceptual. The specific size and alignment of the trail systems will be determined at a future date. In determining the alignments of the trail systems, the Village should strive to balance the needs of existing property owners with the presence of existing environmental features and the requirements of a new trail system that will serve the entire community. The Village should also consider the use of landscaping and buffering along such trails.

***Public Transportation:***

In general, the residents of Homer Glen currently have little or no direct access to public transportation. Only one Pace bus route, which extends along 143rd Street, serves the Village. Metra commuter rail service is available in the neighboring communities of Lockport, Orland Park, Lemont, and New Lenox.

As the Village continues to develop in the years ahead, public transportation should be substantially improved. The Village will support Homer Township's effort to provide bus service for elderly residents within Homer Glen.

## **Section 6: Community Character Plan**

Homer Glen is an attractive and distinctive community characterized by high-quality residential areas; an abundance of open space; wooded areas, waterways and other natural resources; historical and cultural sites; and an agricultural heritage and tradition. This established “community character” helps distinguish Homer Glen from neighboring communities and makes it a desirable place to live, work and do business.

As Homer Glen experiences new growth and development in the years ahead, its traditional character may become threatened. Therefore, it is essential that all improvements and developments be compatible with and complement the Village’s existing image and character.

This section highlights several of the features mentioned in previous sections of the Plan that contribute to the image and character of Homer Glen. It also highlights several new elements that should be preserved, protected and enhanced in the future.

The *Comprehensive Plan* promotes increased public awareness of this important aspect of Homer Glen and encourages new discussion and consideration of “community character” as new development projects come under review in the future. The Village might consider an awards program to recognize new development projects that significantly enhance “community character.”

In addition to the physical features highlighted below, many other community characteristics add to the image and character of Homer Glen, including a strong community spirit, a tradition of volunteerism, and various community events, celebrations, and activities. These other aspects of Homer Glen’s “community character” should also be nurtured and enhanced in the future.

### ***Environmental Features:***

An attractive environmental setting, which consists of wooded areas, wildlife habitats, wetlands, native vegetation, and small lakes and streams, is one of Homer Glen’s most important distinguishing characteristics. These natural features, together with other open spaces, provide scenic beauty and ecological diversity and contribute to the Village’s unique image and identity.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to help the Village maintain and preserve environmental features and enhance the countryside character of the area. In general, the key environmental features are the “environmental corridors” which encompass wetlands, flood plains and distinctive plant communities to be preserved. These will create an open space network that enhances the residential neighborhoods and the image and character of the Village.

Homer Glen’s participation in the *Green Communities Grant Program* should result in additional information and specifics on environmental features and environmental protection.

### ***Parks and Open Spaces:***

In addition to the environmental corridors, Homer Glen has a significant amount of land devoted to parks, open spaces, wooded areas, forest preserve properties, and private recreational areas. These open space features are also an important part of the overall image and character of the community and should be preserved in the future.

As additional park and open space sites are developed within Homer Glen, the Village should establish guidelines regarding the types of park and recreational facilities to be provided, as well as the location, design, and configuration of new park sites. The Village should also prepare a comprehensive master plan for park and recreational facilities.

***Agricultural Land:***

The *Comprehensive Plan* encourages the preservation and retention of prime farmland to help retain the agricultural heritage of the Homer Glen area and to enhance the countryside character of the community.

The Plan highlights properties that are currently in agricultural, equestrian, and related uses. The Village should promote and encourage the retention of these uses for the foreseeable future, in the interest of retaining the area's countryside character and heritage.

***Historic and Cultural Resources:***

There are a number of historical and cultural sites scattered throughout Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction that contribute to the overall image and character of the area. These sites were identified in the *Rural Historic Structural Survey of Homer Township*, undertaken in September 2002 for the Will County Land Use Department and Will County Historic Preservation Commission.

These historical and cultural sites, highlighted in Figure 9, are divided into the following categories:

- Significant properties (potentially or currently listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*);
- Locally significant sites;
- Contributing farmsteads and elements;
- Historic church sites;
- Historic cemeteries; and
- A potential "heritage corridor" in the vicinity of Hadley Road and Chicago-Bloomington Road.

The Village should consider more formal procedures for recognizing and designating structures and districts with historic value and explore techniques that could help maintain and preserve these resources for future generations. Property owners should be encouraged to retain and restore historic structures.

*Figure 9: Historical and Cultural Resources*

*This page is a placeholder only. The Adobe .pdf document is available separately.*

**Residential Areas:**

Homer Glen should continue to be primarily a single-family residential community, and its neighborhoods and subdivisions should continue to be enhanced as important community assets.

While residential areas with lots of at least ½ acre and larger should continue to predominate, the Village also desires to promote and protect large-lot estate and rural residential areas that are essential to the countryside character of the Homer Glen community.

New residential neighborhoods should fit in with the surrounding landscape. Natural environmental features should be preserved and protected. Environmental corridors, natural vegetation, wooded areas, and mature trees in residential areas add greatly to the ambiance of the Village and should be maintained. Changes to the natural topography should be minimal.

**Commercial and Business Areas:**

Homer Glen's commercial and business areas occupy highly visible locations along the major streets that pass through the community.

The character and appearance of new commercial developments will be quite important. All new commercial developments should reinforce the image of Homer Glen as a high-quality community and should be compatible with the Village's open space character and countryside atmosphere.

Commercial and business development should be characterized by the highest possible standards of design and construction. The design and appearance of commercial buildings, site development, landscaping, lighting, signs and graphics, and pedestrian amenities should be all of special concern within commercial areas. Commercial centers along major roadways should be designed to enhance views from the road.

Large new office and research uses should be located in planned business parks to help ensure coordination of circulation systems, lot configuration, building design, parking and access facilities, and environmental amenities. Areas designated for office/research uses should be designed and developed as unified, extensively landscaped "campus" environments, capable of attracting high-quality tenants.

**Public Facilities:**

Public sites and buildings should be viewed as opportunities to create civic landmarks within the Homer Glen community. New facilities should be located, designed, and developed as focal points and signature projects for the Village.

To the extent possible, new community facilities should be located along or near the multi-use trails highlighted in the *Comprehensive Plan*. The trail system will provide attractive settings for community facilities, and will make them more readily accessible by bicyclists and pedestrians.

### ***Town Center Area:***

The Plan recommends that the Village consider the construction of a new Town Center area to serve as a functional and visual focal point for the community.

The Town Center should be a unique and visually distinctive area that is easily distinguishable from other portions of the Village. It should be characterized by a common design theme that unites the various components of the area and reflects the character and identity of the Homer Glen community.

The Town Center should serve as the symbolic heart of the Village and provide a new and identifiable landmark and “centerpiece” within the community. The Town Center should provide a convenient one-stop location for a range of public and private services. It should provide a social gathering place and a meeting space for community events and activities. It should become Homer Glen’s signature project and help foster community pride and community identity.

If carefully developed, the Town Center could also demonstrate Homer Glen’s commitment to high-quality design and construction, open space amenities, and environmental protection and enhancement.

### ***Street Corridors:***

Street corridors are among the most visible parts of Homer Glen and they are major determinants in how the community is perceived by residents, visitors, and passing motorists.

While tree-lined streets are a distinguishing feature of Homer Glen’s residential areas, more attractive treatments should be undertaken along key roadways, particularly Bell Road, 143rd Street and 159th Street. Improvements might include roadway resurfacing, improved sidewalks, new street trees and street light fixtures, more distinctive signage, and underground utilities. Attractive street corridors can create a strong identity for the Village and further distinguish it from nearby communities.

“Welcome” signs should be installed at several locations where major roadways enter the Village. More extensive lighting and landscaping treatments might be provided at selected locations. “Way-finding” signage should also be installed to better direct motorists to the Town Center, major commercial and business districts, and other activity areas.

When the I-355 extension is constructed, many visitors and passing motorists will get their first impression of Homer Glen via views from the expressway. All development visible from the expressway should be well maintained and attractively landscaped. The Village should work with the Tollway Authority to ensure that attractive landscaping is implemented along the I-355 corridor and at the interchange areas in Homer Glen. The Village should also work with the Tollway Authority to ensure that nearby developments in Homer Glen are effectively buffered and protected from the noise levels generated by the I-355 extension.

Recreational pathways should be incorporated into the environmental and other open space corridors that pass through the community. Pathways should tie into the major regional trail system and link residential neighborhoods to each other and to parks, schools, shopping and employment areas. The Plan strives to create a comprehensive network of recreational pathways throughout the community.

## ***Section 7: Planning and Design Guidelines***

The Land Use Plan depicts the type and location of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses proposed for the Village of Homer Glen at full development. The Land Use Plan also includes policies and recommendations regarding the density and character of new development, as well as the relationships among land uses and the linkages and connections between development areas.

The Planning and Design Guidelines are intended to further assist the Village in promoting high-quality and compatible new development within the planning jurisdiction. The guidelines focus on a range of factors that affect the functional, visual, and aesthetic quality of new site and building development. They strive to ensure that all new developments are compatible with and enhance the unique image, quality, and character of the Homer Glen community.

The Planning and Design Guidelines will be used by Village staff, the Village Board, the Plan Commission, and other boards and commissions in reviewing specific proposals for new development. Architects, property owners, and developers should also use the guidelines as a reference as they prepare plans for projects for the Homer Glen community.

The Village may establish an Architectural Review Committee to review, monitor and work with developers, architects, and builders in implementing the guidelines.

The Planning and Design Guidelines are divided into seven categories:

1. Small residential subdivisions;
2. Major residential subdivisions;
3. Environmental corridors;
4. Commercial development;
5. Business parks;
6. Major intersection areas; and
7. Architectural design for non-residential structures.

While the Planning and Design Guidelines should be considered a “supplement” to other Village codes and ordinances, many of the guidelines presented here may eventually be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and/or Subdivision Ordinance.

### ***Residential Development:***

The Land Use Plan recommends that Homer Glen continue to be primarily a single-family residential community, and that its neighborhoods and subdivisions be enhanced as important community assets.

New residential development should reflect the quality and character of the Homer Glen community. New residential development should also be evaluated as an integral part of the surrounding neighborhoods and land use areas.

Considerations in evaluating new residential development include:

- a) Compatibility with adjacent and nearby uses;
- b) The availability of public services and facilities;
- c) The character of the landscape;
- d) The continuity of the local roads, walkways, pathways, and open spaces; and
- e) Protection from traffic and other undesirable impacts.

The Village will use the following guidelines in reviewing and evaluating plans for new residential development:

1.0 ***Small residential subdivisions and residential infill development:***

- 1.1 New development should be consistent with the Land Use Plan and compatible and harmonious with the character of adjacent buildings and the existing landscape.
- 1.2 Natural features, including significant existing trees and vegetation, topography, wetlands, and drainage characteristics, should be protected and incorporated into the planning and design of the subdivision.
- 1.3 Private roads and driveways serving more than two single-family dwelling units are discouraged unless a desirable development can only be achieved through the reduction of curb cuts on public rights-of-way by the use of a private drive.
- 1.4 New subdivisions should be linked to the surrounding street system in a safe and logical fashion. Major entrances and exits should include appropriate sight lines, be aligned with other selected drives and intersections, and incorporate appropriate geometrics and traffic control measures to ensure safety, capacity, and operational efficiency.
- 1.5 “Flag lots” lend themselves to a rural, countryside atmosphere and help to reduce curb cuts. They will be designed to meet Homer Glen’s current ordinances and building code requirements acceptable to the highway and fire departments. They will require highly visible addressing for the safety and protection of residents.
- 1.6 Curb cuts onto arterial and major collector streets should be minimized.
- 1.7 Dwellings adjacent to arterials and collector streets should be set back further from the right-of-way than homes located on local streets.
- 1.8 Retention areas should be designed to accommodate localized storm water runoff and to promote joint retention with adjacent landowners. Retention areas should also be designed as visual and open space amenities within a development area.
- 1.9 New subdivisions should incorporate lot and circulation patterns that reflect the established street system and the pattern of nearby existing development.
- 1.10 In order to achieve an orderly and unified development pattern, smaller subdivisions should relate to and connect with the anticipated future development of contiguous undeveloped lands. New development should not create small “islands” or enclaves of unrelated land uses, or result in subdivision patterns that cannot be incorporated into the broader, area-wide circulation and land use systems.
- 1.11 All new development must comply with the appropriate Village plans, policies, ordinances, and standards as amended following the adoption of the new *Comprehensive Plan*.
- 1.12 Storm water management within residential developments should consider the hydrological implications of nearby off-site development and other areas within the watershed in order to resolve potential problems in a cost effective manner. Careful site planning, appropriate landscape materials, proper wetland buffers and sedimentation basins and filters, erosion control, and tree preservation should be important components of a comprehensive storm water management plan.

In addition to the guidelines presented above, many of the guidelines related to large scale subdivisions, presented in Section 2.0, should also apply to small subdivisions and infill development.

- 2.0 **Major Residential Subdivisions:** There are many large tracts of vacant or agricultural land within Homer Glen's planning jurisdiction that could be developed as major new subdivisions or mixed-use planned developments.

In addition to the applicable guidelines for small subdivisions presented above, the following guidelines should be used to regulate the development of these larger scale developments.

- 2.1 The internal street systems that are a part of new developments should be designed to discourage through traffic movements.
- 2.2 Site design should minimize storm water run-off by minimizing paved areas for streets, driveways, and sidewalks and by incorporating native vegetation and natural areas which will absorb storm water.
- 2.3 Storm water management within residential developments should consider the hydrological implications of nearby off-site development and other areas within the watershed in order to resolve potential problems in a cost effective manner. Careful site planning, appropriate landscape materials, sustainable floodplain and wetland buffers, sedimentation basins and filters, erosion control, and tree preservation should be important components of a comprehensive storm water management plan.
- 2.4 Retention areas should be designed to consider maintenance requirements, water quality, visual characteristics, recreational and wildlife values, as well as hydrologic criteria.
- 2.5 Useable and accessible open space must be provided as a part of all new residential developments. Parks and open spaces should serve the residents of the development and the Village as a whole. Land designated for public open space should not be sold for development at a later date, and methods should be established to assure their maintenance in perpetuity.
- 2.6 New residential developments should include appropriately scaled open spaces and pedestrian linkages to area-wide facilities that serve the recreational needs of Homer Glen residents.
- 2.7 "Conservation design" techniques should be employed to achieve preservation of environmentally and aesthetically valuable areas (possibly including prime agricultural land) while providing for an overall subdivision density that makes the development economically feasible.
- 2.8 Where possible, an internal multi-use trail system should be incorporated into the design of residential developments to increase bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to schools, public facilities, employment and shopping areas, and parks and open spaces.
- 2.9 Site planning within new residential developments should include the use of effective and attractive buffers to protect residential areas from adjacent arterial roadways and non-residential development.
- 2.10 An "anti-monotony" theme should be implemented for major subdivisions to promote diversity among housing products, densities, and site development characteristics.

### ***Environmental Corridors:***

- 3.0 Plans for new development within Homer Glen should respect the natural features and open space characteristics of the existing landscape. In general, all of the environmental corridors highlighted in the Land Use Plan should be preserved and protected in the future. New developments should also consider the open space and recreational needs of existing and future residents of the Village.

The protection and preservation of open space and environmental corridors can be achieved by implementing the following guidelines:

- 3.1 Floodplains, wetlands, areas of ecological and archaeological significance, and mature wooded areas should be preserved as open space. The continuity of the environmental corridors highlighted in the Land Use Plan should be maintained. Where feasible, the corridors should be used for recreational activities, wildlife habitat, and multi-use trails.
- 3.2 Easements should be granted within new developments to provide linkages to the multi-use trails along the environmental corridors, and to enable trail system extensions that would permit connections to parks, open spaces, and environmental areas.
- 3.3 Public access to the streams/creeks and lakes within the planning jurisdiction should be provided for recreational purposes and for the general enjoyment of residents and visitors. Where possible, views to streams/creeks and lakes from public rights-of-way should be preserved to enhance the unique image and character of the Homer Glen.

### ***Commercial Development:***

- 4.0 The Land Use Plan promotes high-quality new commercial and business development within Homer Glen during the next 10 to 15 years in order to enhance the Village's tax base, create new jobs, and provide convenient shopping opportunities for local residents. Most commercial uses should continue to be located along the 159th Street, Bell Road, and 143rd Street corridors.

The character and appearance of new commercial developments will be quite important. All new commercial developments should reinforce the image of Homer Glen as a high-quality residential community and should be compatible with the Village's open space character and countryside atmosphere.

In particular, "strip" commercial developments will be discouraged. Strip development refers to a string of commercial uses located on individual zoning lots, lined along a public street. Strip development is characterized by excessive curb cuts, turning movements and signage; small, separate parking lots; and a lack of continuity or compatibility in site planning and design.

The following guidelines regarding new commercial development should be implemented:

- 4.1 New commercial development should be provided in planned centers with a unified design.
- 4.2 Curb cuts along adjacent public streets should be limited, and the use of shared driveways, common parking areas, and side street access should be encouraged whenever possible.

- 4.3 Site planning for commercial developments should protect existing trees and natural resources, and employ generous setbacks that will enhance the open space character of the community.
- 4.4 The architectural design of commercial developments should project a design quality that enhances the economic viability of the business and the visual quality of the public rights-of-way. Projects should include:
  - a) A unified design scheme for tenant signage;
  - b) The screening of trash collection, parking, and loading areas;
  - c) Appropriate setbacks that reflect surrounding uses;
  - d) Properly scaled landscaping;
  - e) Interior and exterior lighting that does not project beyond the property line;
  - f) A unified pedestrian circulation system; and
  - g) Appropriate storm water detention areas.
- 4.5 Signs related to commercial developments should be compatible with the architecture of the structure. Free-standing signs should relate to the design of the tenant/wall sign.
- 4.6 Outdoor storage areas associated with commercial and business developments should be required to be screened from public view by a berm, fence, or landscaping.
- 4.7 All roof-mounted mechanical equipment should be screened from public view on all sides by parapet walls, roof-structure, or other screening devices. Such screens should be compatible with the materials, colors, and design character of the building of which they are a part. Structures that are not required to be screened, such as flues, stacks, intake and exhaust hoods, should be painted to blend with the building.
- 4.8 Loading areas should be screened from public view. They should be located and configured to accommodate truck movements without interrupting traffic flow on adjacent public streets, blocking access for emergency vehicles, or interfering with public parking.
- 4.9 Parking lot lighting should comply with ordinances and provide for safety, illumination and security.
- 4.10 Storm water management within commercial areas should conform to the guidelines presented in Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of these Design Guidelines.
- 4.11 New commercial and public construction should reflect an architectural style that distinguishes Homer Glen's unique community image and character.

***Business Park Development:***

- 5.0 The Land Use Plan recommends that the Village promote development of portions of the I-355 Tollway corridor, generally between 143rd Street and 163rd Street, as planned business park areas.

A business park provides for a unified development pattern in a campus-like setting, and helps promote quality business and office uses. Business parks typically entail more site amenities and green space, generate fewer vehicle trips, create less noise from site activities, and have a lower intensity of lighting and signage than retail commercial uses. Office buildings are generally not utilized during the evening hours and weekends, which reduces the potential for conflicts with residential activities.

The following guidelines regarding business park development in Homer Glen will be utilized:

- 5.1 Business park developments should be compatible with the surrounding community in terms of low pollution levels (light, noise, air, etc.); the routing of trucks and other traffic; the design character of nearby areas; and the extensive use of open space.
- 5.2 Business park developments should be buffered from nearby residential uses through the use of large setbacks, landscaping (such as trees, shrubs and berms), or by mutually compatible land uses, such as open spaces or institutional uses (such as schools, churches, utility facilities, and governmental buildings).
- 5.3 Business park developments should be readily accessible from major streets so that truck and employee traffic is not routed through residential areas. New business park developers should contribute to the cost of infrastructure and other public improvements required to accommodate business park developments.
- 5.4 Site planning for business park developments should protect existing trees and natural resources, and employ setbacks that will enhance the character of the streetscape.
- 5.5 All ground mounted transformers and utility equipment should be screened from public view through the use of landscaping.
- 5.6 Other aspects of business park design and development should conform to the guidelines and standards highlighted above for commercial and residential development, including outdoor storage areas (Section 4.6); roof-mounted mechanical equipment (Section 4.7); outdoor lighting (Section 4.9); and storm water management (Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

### **Major Intersection Development:**

- 6.0 “Major intersection areas” are defined as the areas around the intersection of two or more arterial streets.

Major intersections are among the important visual and functional areas within the community. They generate significant traffic on a daily basis. They are often the most intensely developed parts of a community, and are frequently the focal point for commercial and business development. In addition, they are the most highly visible areas to both residents and visitors to the community.

The *Comprehensive Plan* promotes careful and controlled development of these major intersections. The safe and efficient handling of traffic, the creation of attractive thoroughfares, and the promotion of high-quality building and site development are key objectives.

The following guidelines for non-residential development near major intersections will be utilized:

- 6.1 Buildings at major intersections should be set back a greater distance from the right-of-way, with extensive landscaping along the major roadways.
- 6.2 Parking to serve developments at major intersections should be set back a large distance from the right-of-way, with the intervening space being extensively landscaped. Parking lots may be located either in front of buildings or behind buildings.
- 6.3 Curb cuts should be of such a distance away from major intersections so as to provide safety and ease of traffic flow.
- 6.4 Commercial developments at major intersections should incorporate high-quality landscape design in front and back of new buildings, and a pedestrian-friendly environment that extends for the full length of all perimeter yards.
- 6.5 The visual and functional integrity of wetlands, steep slopes, and other natural features adjacent to major intersections should be preserved.
- 6.6 Signs near major intersections should be set back an appropriate distance from the right-of-way to protect sight lines. Signs should be low-profile, with a landscaped base. Signs should reflect the uncluttered streetscape which is to be promoted at all major intersections in order reduce motorist distraction and enhance the image of the community.
- 6.7 Lighting installed for individual developments near major intersections should be compatible with ordinances and the goal of preventing glare and light trespass onto adjoining properties. Consistent light fixture design should also be encouraged.

### ***Architectural Design for Non-residential Structures:***

- 7.0 All new public buildings and non-residential private developments should be characterized by high-quality architectural design and construction and should reflect Homer Glen's unique community image and character.

The guidelines presented in this section are intended to: a) enhance the value of public and private properties by promoting a distinctive architectural design quality; and b) help ensure that new buildings blend in with the natural character of the landscape and the countryside character of Homer Glen.

To achieve these objectives, the following guidelines for building and site design will be utilized:

- 7.1 Materials such as standard size brick, stone and glass should be encouraged as the dominant exterior cladding. These materials should be used on all four sides of new public and non-residential buildings.
- 7.2 Designs which are characterized by masonry construction, textured surfaces, attractive detailing, and pitched roofs with large overhangs, should be promoted for new public buildings and commercial developments.
- 7.3 Landscaping incorporating native species whenever possible should be encouraged adjacent to structures in order to separate buildings from walkways, parking lots, and access drives, and to articulate these site design features.
- 7.4 Covered pedestrian walkways should be promoted along the front face of commercial buildings, where windows or entrances are located.
- 7.5 The exterior walls of new public and non-residential buildings should be articulated by structural elements and attractive architectural details (such as brick coursing, wood trim, color, pilasters, horizontal bands, windows, sculptures, wall light fixtures, etc.) in order to reduce the apparent scale of large structures, and to enhance façade treatments.
- 7.6 Entryways to new public and non-residential buildings should be clearly identified so they are easily visible to customers and patrons when entering the property.
- 7.7 Other aspects of non-residential design should conform to the guidelines and standards above, including (Section 4.6); (Section 4.7); (Section 4.9); and (Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

## **Section 8: Implementation**

The *Comprehensive Plan* sets forth an agreed-upon “road map” for growth and development within the Village of Homer Glen during the next ten to fifteen year period. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the *Comprehensive Plan* Committee, Village staff, the Village Board, the Plan Commission, and the Homer Glen community. The final Plan represents the consensus of all involved.

However, in many ways the planning process in Homer Glen has just begun. Completion of the *Comprehensive Plan* is only the first step, not the last.

This section briefly highlights several next steps that should be undertaken to begin the process of plan implementation. These include:

- a) Adopt the *Comprehensive Plan* and use the Plan on a regular basis;
- b) Review and update the Zoning Ordinance;
- c) Review and prepare other codes and ordinances as needed;
- d) Develop and adopt a Capital Improvements Program (CIP);
- e) Promote cooperation and participation among various agencies, organizations, community groups and individuals;
- f) Prepare an implementation “action agenda;”
- g) Explore possible funding sources and implementation techniques;
- h) Enhance public communication; and
- i) Update the *Comprehensive Plan* on a regular basis.

### ***Adopt and Use the Plan on a Day-to-Day Basis:***

The *Comprehensive Plan* should become Homer Glen’s official policy guide for improvement and development. It is essential that the Plan be adopted by the Village Board and then be used on a regular basis by Village staff, boards and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the community in the years ahead.

### ***Develop a Homer Glen Zoning Ordinance:***

Zoning is an important tool in implementing planning policy. It establishes the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties, and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted.

Homer Glen has temporarily adopted the Will County Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance until the Village completes its first *Comprehensive Plan* and adopts its own zoning ordinance suitable to guide the community in the future.

The Will County Zoning Ordinance is currently being reviewed by the Homer Glen Zoning Commission, which will recommend changes and additions to be reviewed and acted upon by the Village Board.

While the *Comprehensive Plan* does not entail the preparation of new zoning or development regulations, it should help the Village organize and “set the stage” for these important follow-up actions.

The Plan sets forth policies regarding the use of land within the Village and establishes guidelines for the quality, character and intensity of new development to be promoted in the years ahead. The Plan’s policies and guidelines should greatly assist the Village in formulating new zoning and development code regulations that can better reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the Homer Glen community.

**Review Other Codes and Ordinances:**

In addition to zoning, the Village should consider other codes and ordinances that govern land and building development and the natural environment. These might apply to stormwater regulations, watershed plans, open space dedication, parks and recreational areas, impact fees, appearance guidelines, etc. The Village might work with Will County to determine which of these codes and ordinances would best be administered by the Village or the County.

**Develop a Capital Improvements Program:**

The Village should develop and adopt a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) as a part of the municipal operating budget. The CIP can help program and schedule future public improvements to be undertaken within the Village and help ensure that public dollars are spent in a cost effective manner.

For example, the CIP might address: a) roadway improvements; b) street lighting; c) parks and recreational facilities; d) storm water facilities; e) sanitary sewer facilities; f) sidewalks and multi-use trails; g) Village sites and buildings; h) public landscaping; etc.

**Continue to Promote Cooperation and Participation:**

The Village of Homer Glen should assume the leadership role in implementing the new *Comprehensive Plan*. In addition to carrying out the administrative actions and many of the public improvement projects called for in the Plan, the Village may choose to administer a variety of programs available to local residents, businesses and property owners.

However, in order for the *Comprehensive Plan* to be successful, it must be based on a strong partnership between the Village, other public agencies, various neighborhood groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector.

The Village should be the leader in promoting the cooperation and collaboration needed to implement the new *Comprehensive Plan*. The Village's "partners" should include:

- Other governmental and service districts, such as the school districts, the fire protection districts, the Library, Homer Township, Will County, the private utility companies, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Forest Preserve District, etc;
- Local institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce and various churches and religious organizations;
- Local banks and financial institutions, which can provide assistance in upgrading existing properties and facilitating desirable new development;
- Builders and developers, who should be encouraged to undertake improvements and new construction that conform to the Plan and enhance the overall quality and character of the community; and
- The Homer Glen community, since all residents and neighborhood groups should be encouraged to participate in the on-going planning process, and all should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions on improvement and development decisions within the community.

***Prepare an Implementation Action Agenda:***

The Village should prepare an implementation “action agenda” which highlights the improvement and development projects and activities to be undertaken during the next few years. For example, the “action agenda” might consist of:

- a) A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken;
- b) The priority of each project or activity;
- c) An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and
- d) A suggestion of the funding sources and assistance programs that might potentially be available for implementing each project or activity.

In order to remain current, the “action agenda” should be updated once a year.

***Explore Funding Sources and Implementation Techniques:***

While many of the projects and improvements called for in the *Comprehensive Plan* can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or can be funded through normal municipal programs, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance.

The Village should continue to explore and consider the wide range of local, state and federal resources and programs that may be available to assist in the implementation of planning recommendations.

***Enhance Public Communication:***

The Village should prepare a brief summary version of the new *Comprehensive Plan* and should distribute it widely throughout the community. It is important that all local residents, businesses and property owners be familiar with the Plan’s major recommendations and its “vision” for the future.

The Village should also consider additional techniques for responding quickly to public questions and concerns regarding planning and development. For example, the Village might prepare a new informational brochure on how to apply for zoning, building, subdivision and other development-oriented permits and approvals. It might also consider special newsletter or Web page features that focus on frequently raised questions and concerns regarding planning and development.

***Update the Plan on a Regular Basis:***

It is important to emphasize that the *Comprehensive Plan* is not a static document. If community attitudes change or new issues arise which are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the Plan should be revised and updated accordingly.

The *Comprehensive Plan* should be reviewed at least every two years to reflect the changes that have occurred and to incorporate the recommendations that have been accomplished. In addition, a major update to the Plan should be undertaken at least every 10 years.

## *Comprehensive Plan Definitions*

The following definitions shall apply for purposes of interpretation and implementation of this *Comprehensive Plan* and do not necessarily have the same meaning when used in other ordinances of the Village:

**Buffer** – Open spaces, landscaped areas, fences, walls, berms, or any combination thereof, used to physically separate or screen one use or property from another so as to visually shield or block noise, lights, visual intrusion of privacy or other nuisances.

**Boulevard** – A street style characterized by its generous median island and curb buffer area widths, typically lined with trees and extensively landscaped giving it an attractive and distinctive appearance.

**Buildable Land Area** – The net land area remaining in a development after streets, right-of-ways, easements, wetlands, floodplains, storm water retention and detention areas, and other land donation requirements have been removed from the gross land area amount.

**Business Park** – A tract of land that is planned, developed in a campus-like setting and operated as an integrated facility, consisting of office, industrial, warehousing and light assembly uses with a higher percentage of office space than in a typical industrial park and with consideration given to overall on-site vehicular circulation, parking, building orientation and design, utility needs and open space.

**Cluster Homes** – A type of development that permits a reduction in lot area and bulk requirements, provided there is no increase in the number of lots permitted under a conventional subdivision or any increase in the overall density of the development, for the purpose of preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas, or agriculture, and with the provision of amenities or improvements.

**Conservation Design** – Conservation design is a density neutral design system that takes into account the natural landscape and the ecology of a development site. Conservation design facilitates development while maintaining valuable natural features and functions of the site.

**Conservation Design Development** – A contiguous area of land to be planned and developed as a single entity, in which buildings are accommodated under more flexible standards, such as building arrangements and setbacks, than those that would normally apply under conventional regulations, allowing for the flexible grouping of structures in order to limit impervious surfaces and to conserve open space and existing natural resources.

**Density, Gross** – The number of dwelling units per unit of land.

**Density, Net** – The total number of dwelling units per acre of land determined by subtracting the acreage devoted to streets and their right-of-ways, storm water retention and detention areas, bodies of water, public parks, school and municipal sites, open space, wetlands and floodplains from the gross acreage of the site and then dividing the result by the minimum required lot area of the appropriate residential zoning district.

**Density Bonus (Incentive Zoning)** – The granting, by the approving authority, of additional density in exchange for the developer's provision of public benefits or amenities.

**Dwelling, multi-family** – A building containing two or more dwelling units, including units that are located one over the other.

**Dwelling, single family** – A building containing one dwelling unit that is not attached to any other dwelling by any means.

**Dwelling, townhouse** (single-family attached dwelling) – A one-family dwelling in a row of at least two such units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more vertical fire-resistant walls.

**Enhanced Open Space** - Any land or water that is set aside, dedicated, designated or reserved (in perpetuity), which is otherwise buildable or has been significantly enhanced and improved by the developer beyond the requirements of then current Village Ordinances in furtherance of the uses hereinafter set forth, with a very low ratio of structure coverage to land area, if any, and which is used for purposes including conservation, resource management, preservation of natural features or historic sites, passive non-intrusive recreational activities and, where appropriate, to provide for active recreational uses for the benefit of Village residents which are consistent with the overall goal of utilizing natural areas in a manner that will best enhance and improve them for future generations.

**Environmental Corridor** – A network of open space created by linking various parcels of open space together, consisting of but not limited to, wooded areas, meadows, water bodies, wildlife habitats, ridgelines, wetlands and floodplains, and areas with established native plant communities.

**Facilities Planning Area (FPA)** – A state designated, planned service area for collection of water, wastewater and sewage for distribution to designated wastewater treatment facilities.

**Flag Lot** – A buildable lot where access to the lot is obtained by way of a narrow strip of land (usually no wider than thirty feet from a dedicated right-of-way). The minimum buildable area of the lot shall not include the area of the access strip.

**Flood Plain** – That portion of land where the surface elevation is lower than the base flood elevation and subject to temporary inundation during floods.

**Green Space** – Land shown on a development plan, master plan or official map intended for conservation, preservation, recreation, landscaping or park area.

**Incompatible Land Uses** – When one or more land uses abut each other and create a negative impact on the public's health, safety or welfare for one or more of the uses.

**Multi-use Trail** – A trail planned for more than one use which might include biking, hiking, walking, jogging, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, etc. Motorized vehicles are prohibited.

**Open Space** – Any land or water that is set aside, dedicated, designated or reserved (in perpetuity), with a very low ratio of structure coverage to land area, if any, and which is used for purposes including conservation, resource management, preservation of natural features or historic sites, passive non-intrusive recreational activities and, where appropriate, to provide for active recreational uses for the benefit of Village residents which are consistent with the overall goal of utilizing natural areas in a manner that will best preserve and improve them for future generations.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD)** – An area, which is developed under unified control, established under a plan so as to permit greater flexibility and more creative design for the development of residential, commercial and industrial areas than would be possible under zoning district requirements. A PUD is intended to promote a harmonious variety of housing options, a higher level of amenities and the preservation of natural features and open space.

**Quasi-public Use** – A use owned or operated by a nonprofit, religious, or philanthropic institution providing educational, religious, or similar types of programs.

**Setback** – The distance between a structure or man-made improvement and any lot line.

**Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA)** – A major arterial roadway intended to supplement the existing and proposed expressway facilities by accommodating a significant portion of long-distance, high volume automobile and commercial vehicle traffic.

**Water Reclamation Facility (WRF)** – A plant for treating wastewater and sewage.

**Wetland** – Land that is inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, under normal conditions, a prevalence of vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. A wetland is identified based upon the three attributes: (1) hydrology, (2) soils and (3) vegetation as mandated by the current Federal wetland determination methodology.

## ***Appendix A: Demographic Overview***

This section provides an overview of the data and information included in the 2000 United States Census as it relates to the Village of Homer Glen. An understanding of the local population provides an important foundation for the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Since Homer Glen is one of two communities in Northeastern Illinois that have incorporated as a municipality after the 2000 Census was completed, the demographic overview presented here was done at the block level in order to most closely estimate the current demographic characteristics of the community. The list of blocks that were included as a part of the incorporation of Homer Glen was obtained from the official list as submitted to the Illinois Secretary of State and the United States Census Bureau.

This demographic overview is based upon data gathered from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. While information is available from the 1990 Census for household composition, age, race, occupational employment and income, similar data is not yet available from the 2000 Census. Data from the 2000 Census is being released over a three-year time period. Basic population and housing information are currently available. As more information becomes available, additional analyses may be undertaken to ensure an adequate understanding of demographic conditions within the community.

The demographic overview presented below includes an assessment of: a) population and household characteristics; b) racial and ethnic identification; and c) housing unit trends and characteristics. In general, for Homer Glen, the demographic overview indicates:

- a) Significant population growth in Homer Township and Will County;
- b) Large increases in population between the ages of 45-64;
- c) A high percentage of children and large increases in the number of children;
- d) A predominantly White population, with small Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American segments;
- e) An increase in housing units and in the percentage of owner-occupied units; and
- f) A very high owner-occupancy rate and a very low vacancy rate.

In order to analyze trends and develop a “snapshot” of the larger community area, both 1990 and 2000 data for Homer Township have also been included.

### *General Overview*

- The Village of Homer Glen, Will County, Illinois, is located in the Chicago Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area. Will County is part of the six-county region that makes up greater “Chicagoland.” Homer Glen was incorporated in 2001 and is located approximately 36 miles from Chicago’s Loop.

### *Population (see Table 2)*

- Homer Glen’s official population count at the time of incorporation was 22,269 persons. Approximately 77% of the population of Homer Township resides in Homer Glen. As of April 2000, the official population of Homer Township (“the Township”) was recorded at 28,992, an increase of 7,528 people (or 35%) over the 1990 population count. This change somewhat mirrors the growth trend observed within Will County (“the County”). The 2000 Census indicated that the County grew by 40%, for a total population of 502,266.
- At this point in time, it is not possible to make statements regarding the growth trends in Homer Glen; however, both Homer Township and Will County have grown at a very high rate over the last ten years. That trend is expected to continue, and Homer Glen will likely see growth in its population as well.

#### *Age Distribution (see Table 2)*

- The median age has increased over time, mirroring larger population trends. In 2000, the median age in the Township was 35.8; it is estimated that the current median age of Homer Glen residents is 42.3 years.
- Almost 40% of the population in Homer Glen is under the age of 19. The Township's under 19 population grew by approximately 38% over the past ten years.

#### *Households (see Table 2)*

- Household formation generally exceeds the rate of population growth, largely as a result of the increase in single-person households, longer life expectancies, single-parent households, and the rate of divorce. A by-product of these trends is a decreasing household size. However, the current general demographic trends indicate that the household formation rate is slowing, single-person households are increasing, and divorce rates are stabilizing.
- The Village of Homer Glen contains 6,778 households, with the average household size being 2.9 persons per household. This is a very slight difference as compared with Homer Township, which has an average household size of 3.2 persons per household.
- In keeping with the general population increase in Homer Township, the number of households has increased. Between 1990 and 2000, the Township gained an additional 2,849 households, an increase of 46 percent.

#### *Racial/Ethnic Composition (see Table 3)*

- The vast majority of Homer Glen's population identifies themselves as "White" (96.5%). The largest minority group is Latino/Hispanic, which accounts for 6.3% of the population.
- In Homer Township, the vast majority of the Township is White (96.5%). This has remained generally consistent over the last ten years. The Black/African American segment has grown by a large percentage (194.1%) but is still a very minor percentage of the total population (0.3%). The same is true with the Hispanic/Latino sector, which has experienced an 84.1% increase in population, but is only 3.5% of the total. Overall, Homer Township's racial composition has changed very little.

#### *Housing (see Table 3)*

- Almost 2,900 housing units were added to Homer Township over the last ten years, an increase of 46 percent. Over the 10-year period, there was an addition of 2,828 (48%) owner-occupied housing units and 21 rental units.
- Homer Glen captures approximately 74% of the total housing units located within the Township. Homer Glen has a higher rate of owner-occupancy than the rest of the Township (97% versus 63%). The vacancy rate in Homer Glen is very low, at 2%.

#### *Income*

- Data from the 2000 census have not been fully tabulated and released yet. However, based on 1999 estimates for Homer Township, the percentage of individuals in poverty was only 2.1 percent, which was lower than the national average. It may be safe to assume that the poverty rate in Homer Glen in 2000 will be near or less than other comparable averages.

### *Comparisons to Will County and to Illinois*

- In order to make the above referenced figures for Homer Glen more meaningful, it is useful to compare the community to the larger context. For example, over the same time period (1990-2000), the population in Will County grew by 40.6 percent, and overall in Illinois by 8.6 percent. Homer Township grew by 35 percent.
- The population of Homer Glen is younger than the rest of Will County and Illinois. In Will County, 30 percent of the population is under eighteen; while in Illinois, 26.1 percent is under eighteen.
- Homer Glen has a more homogeneous population than Will County, which is 81.8 percent white; 28.7 percent Hispanic/Latino; 10.5 percent Black/African American; and 2.2 percent Asian. For the state of Illinois, the figures are: 73.5 percent White; 15.1 percent Black/African American; Hispanic/Latino 12.3 percent; and Asian American, 3.4 percent. Homer Glen's population is mainly White (96.5).
- The average number of persons per household in Homer Glen is similar to that of Will County. In Will County, the average number is 2.94 persons per household, while in Homer Glen, the number is 2.85. The average for Illinois is 2.63 persons.
- The Village of Homer Glen has an owner-occupied housing unit rate of 97 percent, which is higher than the owner-occupancy rates both in Will County (83.1%) and Illinois (67.3%).
- The 1997 estimated median household income for Will County was \$54,061, which is \$12,882 higher than the rest of Illinois (\$41,179). Will County's estimated poverty rate was 6.5 percent in 1997. Illinois had an estimated poverty rate of 11.3%.

### *Future Growth in Homer Township and Will County*

According to projections prepared by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, based on 1990 census data:

- Will County's population is expected to increase to between 738,046 and 822,743 in 2020, an increase of 47%-64% over the 2000 population counts. Homer Township is expected to see its population grow to between 47,551 and 53,751 in 2020, an increase of 64%-85% over the 2000 data.
- The number of households in 2020 in Will County is projected at 256,826 (53% growth over 2000 data) to 287,589 (72%); Homer Township's households will increase to 15,258 (68% increase over 2000 data) to 17,481 (93% growth over 2000 data) in 2020.

**Note: The above estimates vary based on two scenarios: the lower number reflects the existing conditions alternative; the higher number is based on the south suburban airport alternative.**

Table 2: Population and Households, 1990-2000  
Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan

	1990 Homer Township		2000 Homer Township		1990-2000 Change Homer Township		2000 Homer Glen	
	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	21,464	100%	28,992	100%	7,528	35%	22,269	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>								
Number of Households	6,225	100%	9,074	100%	2,849	46%	6,778	100%
Average household size	NA		3.2		NA		2.9	
<b>MEDIAN AGE</b>	NA		35.8		NA		42.3	
<b>AGE DISTRIBUTION</b>								
Under 5 years	1,888	8.8%	2,700	7.2%	272	11%	1,879	8.1%
5-77 years/* 5-19 years	5,285	24.6%	7,269	25.7%	1,984	38%	6,607	29.7%
7 8-24 years/*20-24 years	1,736	8.7%	1,428	4.9%	-308	-18%	1,081	4.9%
25-44 years	7,802	36.3%	8,762	30.2%	960	12%	6,138	27.6%
45-64 years	3,734	77.4%	7,649	26.4%	3,975	105%	6,105	27.4%
65+years	1,079	4.7%	1,784	6.2%	765	75%	1,341	6.0%

\* The 2000 Census provides data in slightly different cohort groups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Table 3: Race and Ethnicity, 1990-2000

Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan

	1990 Homer Township		2000 Homer Township		1990-2000 Change Homer Township		2000 Homer Glen	
	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	21,464	100%	28,992	100%	7,528	35%	22,269	100%
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>								
White	21,005	97.9%	27,987	96.5%	6,982	33.2%	21,491	96.5
Black or African American	34	0.2%	100	0.3%	66	194.1%	77	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	24	0.1%	15	0.1%	-9	-37.5%	2	0.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	289	1.3%	431	1.5%	142	49.1%	346	1.6%
Some other race	112	0.5%	198	0.7%	86	76.8%	7	0.0%
Two or more races	0	0.0%	261	0.9%	261	100.0%	131	0.6%
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO</b>								
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	547	2.5%	1,007	3.5%	460	84.1%	1,411	6.3%
Not Hispanic or Latino	20,917	97.5%	27,985	96.5%	7,068	33.8%	21,506	96.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

*Table 4: Housing Profile, 1990-2000  
Homer Glen Comprehensive Plan*

	1990 Homer Township		2000 Homer Township		1990-2000 Change Homer Township		2000 Homer Glen	
	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent
<b>OCCUPANCY STATUS</b>								
Total housing units	6,355	100%	9,310	100%	2,955	46%	6,891	100%
Occupied housing units	6,225	98%	9,074	94%	2,849	46%	6,778	98%
Vacant housing units	130	2%	236	6%	106	82%	114	2%
<b>TENURE</b>								
Occupied housing units	6,225	100%	9,074	100%	2,849	46%	6,778	100%
Owner-occupied housing units	5,943	95%	8,771	96.6%	2,828	48%	6,587	97%
Renter-occupied housing units	282	5%	303	3.3%	21	7%	191	3%

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

## **Appendix B: Committee Workshop**

This section summarizes the results of the Comprehensive Plan Committee Workshop conducted on February 7, 2002.

The workshop consisted of a series of five questions regarding the Village of Homer Glen. Committee members were asked to answer each question independently, using the questionnaires provided. Several of the questions were then discussed with the group. Committee members were asked to return their completed questionnaires at the conclusion of the meeting. A total of twenty-one questionnaires were received.

The Committee's overall response to each question is highlighted below.

### **A. Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the Village of Homer Glen.**

- *Concern over the tax base within the Village was mentioned 24 times.* Of these responses, 12 mentioned the need to attract commercial development to increase the tax base within the Village. Specific issues raised included the need to study the balance of commercial and residential land uses, the need for commercial land uses at 143<sup>rd</sup> Street and Bell Road, and the need to attract commercial uses despite the "not in my back yard" attitude.  
Increasing taxes were a concern of 4 respondents. Specifically mentioned were increasing property taxes, the need to control tax increases, and residential growth on lots of ½ acre causing property taxes to rise.
- *Concerns over the increasing pressure for new development received 10 responses.* Three people mentioned a concern over housing densities, including high-density housing. Two participants were concerned about the rate of growth, especially of residential subdivisions. Other issues mentioned included over-development, overcrowded subdivisions, uncontrolled development, the need for developers to pay impact fees, and the need to control the growth of development that is supplying school-age children to the Village.
- *Issues relating to the Village's schools were also mentioned 10 times.* In general, the quality of the schools was the main concern. Overcrowding was mentioned 7 times. In addition, participants mentioned funding issues and the need for schools to receive impact fees from builders.
- *Local transportation issues elicited 9 responses.* While most respondents were primarily concerned with general traffic flow and the roadway system, specific comments included the need to increase road capacity and safety, and reduce traffic congestion. One respondent mentioned a general concern about infrastructure, and one mentioned the need for safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways.
- *Seven participants mentioned Village services.* Water and sewer issues were the most common concern with 3 responses. Issues included the need to expand the water and wastewater system and the need for a better relationship with Illinois-American Water Company (formerly Citizens Utilities) to ensure water and sanitary sewers for new developments. Police and fire protection were mentioned twice. Other comments included the need to determine public versus private services, money for Village services, and the FPA (Facilities Planning Area), which is concerned with maintenance and growth of wastewater treatment facilities.
- *The proposed I-355 extension was a concern noted by 6 participants.* Specific concerns included the impact of the I-355 corridor on local roads and the impact of development around the corridor.
- *Five participants mentioned concerns over annexation and expansion.* Specifically mentioned were the need to expand west, annexation of Bell Road, and boundary issues with Lockport. One respondent noted the need to promote a good relationship with Homer Township.

- *Open space, park, and recreation issues were mentioned by 4 participants.* Issues mentioned included the appropriate use of open space; the need for parks and recreational facilities; and a concern that open spaces and parks are not accessible by pedestrians.
- *The need to maintain the “identity” and “lifestyle” within the Village was also mentioned by 4 participants.* In general, respondents mentioned the need to maintain the quality of life within Homer Glen. One response noted the lack of a community identity.
- *Other issues receiving more than one response:* The loss of the rural character and the need to retain the Village’s rural flavor and atmosphere (3 responses); the need to develop a town center (2); the need for boundary agreements (2); and the possibility of developing an industrial corridor in an appropriate area (2).
- *Issues receiving one response:* Flooding; the need for a community theater and arts/entertainment development; preservation of air, water and soil quality; divisiveness and the lack of a common vision; the need for shops and restaurants; developing a strategic plan and a stormwater management plan; and the desire for large lot sizes versus property owners desire to maximize profit from land sales.

**B. Identify the one issue or concern that you believe no one else will mention.**

- *Parks and recreation issues were mentioned by 4 participants.* Issues included determining which government agency will own and operate parks and recreation facilities; the need for a park department or planner; recreation for older groups; and child-friendly and family-oriented parks, recreation, and outdoor sports.
- *Issues receiving more than one response included:* Environmental issues including a concern over increased development bringing more air, water, and land pollution (2 responses); and the need to staff and fund an economic development program, including a staff position for an economic development professional and a planner (2).
- *Issues receiving one response:* School overcrowding; annexation; storm water management; keeping horses in the area; light pollution; establishing boundary agreements with Lockport and New Lenox; traffic; bicycle and/or walking trails to shopping centers and schools; flooding; preservation of natural habitats; and Lockport building subdivisions within the Village (Homer Glen in effect paying for Lockport developments).

**C. List, in order of importance, the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.**

In tabulating the responses to this question, the issues ranked first received three points, the issues ranked second received two points, and the issues ranked third received one point. According to this ranking system, the most important issues are as follows:

- *High taxes (13 points)*
- *Gain control of development within the planning jurisdiction and FPA (13)*
- *Need for a balance between commercial and residential land uses (10)*
- *Bring in more businesses (8)*
- *Pressure for high-density (multi-family) development (7)*
- *Pace of development is too fast (7)*
- *Protect and preserve the environment and natural habitats (7)*
- *How to finance Village services (6)*
- *Boundary agreements to the north, south and west (5)*
- *Other responses receiving more than one point: Protecting the quality of life of existing residential areas (4); annex more land (4); retention of rural flavor and lifestyle (4); attract commercial devel-*

opment at 143rd Street and Bell Road (3); Lockport (3); flooding (3); preservation of environmental and water quality (3); plan, fund, and staff an economic development program (3); decrease housing density (3); roadway congestion (2); stormwater management plan (2); define desirable and undesirable development and create an economic development program to attract the desirable uses (2); hire a staff planner (2); and maintain intergovernmental cooperation at all levels (2).

- Responses receiving one point: lack of identity; active/outdoor recreation; reduce school crowding; and the need for a town center.

**D. Identify three (3) specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken within Homer Glen.**

- *The development of a town center was mentioned by 7 participants.* Specific suggestions included the development of a commercial center, the building of a Village Hall, and developing a town center as a way to create a “personality” for the Village.
- *Commercial and/or industrial development was noted by 6 respondents.* Most responses mentioned the need to attract more businesses and commercial development to the Village. Creating a commercial base and the desire to annex the Dominick’s, Meijer, and/or Reliant Group properties into the Village were also mentioned.
- *The creation of additional staff positions and committees were mentioned by 5 people.* Comments included the need to hire an economic development director, a professional engineer, and a planner. In addition, the need to form a planning committee to focus on commercial development was mentioned. One participant noted the need to form an economic development committee to identify and target industrial uses, determine undesirable and desirable industrial uses, and define an appropriate industrial corridor.
- *Future annexations were mentioned by 4 participants.* Two people noted a desire to annex land west, along 159<sup>th</sup> Street, and one person mentioned the Bell Road annexation.
- *Four people mentioned the need to create boundary agreements with surrounding communities.* One person stated that agreements should be made only when the Village is in a strong negotiating position and one person specifically mentioned the need for agreements with Lockport.
- *Water and sanitary sewer improvements were also noted by 4 participants.* Suggestions included Village-owned water and sewer, and establishing a water/sewer plan that would entice landowners outside the Village to annex (particularly to the west and land in contention with Lockport and New Lenox).
- *Projects and improvements with more than one response:* Parks and recreation, including the creation of a park district and establishing outdoor parks and recreation and a maintenance program (3 responses); local traffic operational improvements (159<sup>th</sup>, 143<sup>rd</sup>, Cedar, Parker, and Bell), long-term traffic planning, and the widening of 159<sup>th</sup>, 143<sup>rd</sup>, Bell, and Cedar (3); pedestrian/bicycle/horse paths throughout the Village (2); corridor planning for I-355, including limiting its negative impacts (2); creating an identity (2); environmental planning to preserve the natural qualities of the area in all developments (2); open space preservation including a “set-aside” of critical lands and the development of a plan to purchase and maintain undisturbed open land (2); and developer impact fees to cover the cost of residential development (2).
- *Projects or improvements receiving one response:* “Welcome to Homer Glen” signs on major roads; community activities (fireworks, fairs, etc.); stormwater management plan; develop a strategic plan governing land and sewers; work on intergovernmental cooperation; implement policy regarding residential density; avoid Orland-type “concrete” development; and control taxes.

**E. What are the primary strengths and assets of Homer Glen?**

- *Community involvement/hard-working, educated, and talented citizens (17)*
- *Rural character, open space, natural habitat, environmental quality (16)*
- *Location (4)*
- *Volunteer efforts (4)*
- *Schools (2)*
- *Quality of life (2)*
- *Ability to plan for the future (2)*
- *Sense of community and neighborliness*
- *Atmosphere that encourages individuals to bring kids into sports and recreation without public funding*
- *Strong family values*
- *Have a Village to build on*
- *We are a new community – we can learn from established communities in order to limit pitfalls and mistakes*

## **Appendix C: Community Survey**

In order to obtain widespread community input and participation early in the planning process, a Community Survey was prepared for distribution within the Village of Homer Glen. The Survey included a series of questions regarding existing conditions, needs, and potentials within the community.

In March of 2002, the Community Survey was mailed to approximately 8,000 properties in the Village. Of the surveys distributed, more than 1,100 surveys were completed and returned to the Village. Western Illinois University was retained to tabulate the responses. The results of the Survey are extensively documented in report materials prepared by Western Illinois University.

This section provides a brief summary of the responses to the Community Survey and highlights the implications of these responses for Homer Glen's initial *Comprehensive Plan*.

### **Survey Respondents**

- *While the survey was distributed to properties within all four "quadrants" of Homer Glen, the majority of the respondents were from the northeast quadrant of the community (43.7%). The southwest quadrant had the lowest percentage of respondents (11.2%)*
- *Nearly one-third of the respondents have lived in the Homer Glen area for between 11-20 years, with 26.2% of respondents having lived in the community for 6-10 years.*
- *Almost a third of the respondents live on residential lots that range from ¼ to ½ acre in size, while almost 24% live on lots ½ to one acre in size.*
- *Over half of the respondents described the area near their home as "suburban."*
- *Just over one-third of the respondents were in the 51 to 65 year-old age bracket; and almost one-third were in the 41 to 50 year-old age bracket.*

### **Survey Highlights**

An overall "snapshot" of the responses to key questions is presented below.

- *A large percentage of respondents work in the suburbs: 22.7% identified the south suburbs as their place of work, and 22.1% said they work in the western suburbs. Very few respondents commute to downtown Chicago.*
- *Commuting patterns are related to place of work. The vast majority of respondents (71.6%) drive a private automobile to work.*
- *The top five advantages of living in Homer Glen included: 1) the countryside character; 2) open spaces; 3) feeling of safety and security; 4) opportunities for large residential lots; and 5) the quality of residential lots.*
- *The top four disadvantages of living in Homer Glen included: 1) high property taxes; 2) traffic problems; 3) lack of parks and recreational areas; and 4) the loss of natural areas.*
- *Nearly 93% of respondents are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of life in Homer Glen, and almost 20% feel it has gotten better since 1990. Twenty-six percent of respondents feel that it has stayed the same over the last decade.*
- *Refuse collection, fire protection, and snow removal were the top ranked community services. On the other hand, public transportation, parks, and recreational facilities were generally ranked "fair" or "poor."*

- *In terms of what respondents would like to see developed in Homer Glen, hiking and biking trails, more open spaces for passive recreation, and more parks for sports and active recreation were cited most frequently.*
- *A strong majority of the respondents (73.3%) would recommend Homer Glen as a good place to live, while 57.5% would recommend Homer Glen as a good place to locate a business.*
- *When asked about Homer Glen's growth, over half of the respondents said the pace of development was "too fast," while 34.3% said that it was "just right".*
- *Most respondents (68.3%) who favored expansion expressed a preference for westerly growth toward Lockport, to include a portion of the I-355 corridor. Fifteen percent of respondents did not favor expansion at all.*
- *With regard to new single-family residential development, most respondents said that their preference would be homes on ½ to one acre lots.*
- *When asked about multi-family housing development, almost 60% of the respondents did not favor the addition of multi-family housing.*
- *If multi-family development is constructed, townhouses and senior citizen housing were the preferred housing types. Over 40% of the respondents preferred to see multi-family developments located within planned developments.*
- *When asked what types of new development are desirable in Homer Glen, restaurants were mentioned most frequently, followed by parks and recreation areas, and open spaces. Retail stores were also frequently mentioned.*
- *Most residents felt it was very important (58%) or somewhat important (22.2%) for Homer Glen to add to its non-residential tax base.*
- *Several questions were asked regarding a "town center." Over half of the respondents believe that Homer Glen should have a town center as a focal point for the community.*
- *While responses varied, the most frequently mentioned locations for a new town center were: 1) around/near the library; 2) in the 143rd and Bell Road area; and 3) along Bell Road (non-specific locations).*
- *The types of facilities that most respondents felt should be included in a town center were public buildings, shops, and public open space.*

### ***Implications for Comprehensive Plan***

The results of the Community Survey will continue to be reviewed and considered as the planning process continues.

However, several major “themes” seem to emerge from the Survey that will have important implications for Homer Glen initial *Comprehensive Plan*. These include the following:

- *The countryside character of Homer Glen is important to its residents. Large lots, open spaces, and natural areas characterize the Village currently, and residents want to preserve these features in the future.*
- *Many respondents suggested the need for recreational facilities, both active and passive parks, the development of hiking/biking trails, and desire for additional public open space.*
- *Overall, residents appear to be happy with the “quality of life” in Homer Glen. Most respondents would recommend the Village to others as a good place to live and do business.*
- *In terms of future growth and development, the survey also provides some important initial insight regarding:*
  - a) New single-family development, including lots sizes;
  - b) The amount and type of new multi-family development;
  - c) The amount and type of new commercial development;
  - d) The need to address roadways and traffic conditions within the community; and
  - e) The desire for a new “town center” as a focal point for the community.

## ***Appendix D: Key Person Interviews***

Confidential interviews were conducted with 11 individuals to discuss existing conditions, concerns, and potential opportunities within the Village of Homer Glen. Persons interviewed included residents, public officials, and representatives from local businesses and institutions. A list of interviewees can be found at the end of this section.

Interviews were conducted during April 2002. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Each interviewee was asked a series of questions regarding the Homer Glen community.

Overall responses to key questions are summarized below.

### ***What kind of community is Homer Glen? Why do you believe a person would choose Homer Glen as a place to live or do business?***

The interviewees generally described Homer Glen as a rural, growing, peaceful community with excellent natural features, open spaces, and recreational opportunities. Homer Glen is a community with a large amount of highly valued vacant/developable land to be managed and coordinated in the future. Since the Village is new, it is much less congested than more urbanized places and still retains a small-town atmosphere. The community is large and comprises many varying areas, with no real focal point or identity. Homer Glen is viewed as an excellent place to raise children, since it is safe and has good schools. The Village is primarily residential, and so most residents work elsewhere and have relatively long daily commutes. The Village benefits from good officials and sound leadership.

### ***What do you believe are the primary assets and advantages of Homer Glen?***

According to the interviewees, the greatest advantages of Homer Glen are its countryside character and open space features. Many interviewees also mentioned the benefit of having a large amount of available undeveloped land.

Other frequently mentioned assets were the Village's commitment to plan and to listen to the views of local residents on various issues; the opportunity to create something new and to control the growth and development in the future; the well-maintained, high quality subdivisions; and the availability of large lots for single family development.

The interviewees also noted the benefit of the many volunteer-led youth sports programs, Lake Michigan water, good family values, and good schools.

### ***What do you believe are the primary weaknesses or disadvantages of Homer Glen?***

According to the interviewees, the greatest disadvantages of Homer Glen relate to traffic, including increasing congestion and an inadequate roadway network.

Other weaknesses of the community that were cited include the lack of a tax base other than residential, and overcrowding of schools due to large increases in the Village's population.

The interviewees also noted the disadvantage of not having a *Comprehensive Plan*, a "town center" or central community gathering place, and an established police force. Other weaknesses included difficulty in achieving consensus on community issues; the homogenous population and the lack of diversity; the reliance on the automobile to get anywhere; the use of 159<sup>th</sup> Street as a bypass for Lockport residents; and the need to support the I-355 extension project.

***Please share with us your ideas, comments and concerns about the following aspects of Homer Glen:***

### ***Single-Family Development***

According to the interviewees, the primary concern was to ensure that the high quality of existing residential development was maintained and continued in new subdivisions. “Cheap” housing should be avoided.

A number of interviewees expressed concern over establishing minimum lot size standards, although suggestions regarding the most appropriate lot sizes varied significantly. Suggestions ranged from a low of one-half acre to a high of fifteen acres. While noting that minimum lot sizes need to be established, many interviewees also mentioned the need to ensure affordability for young families and seniors who wish to live in the area. Single-family developments should remain low in density so as to retain the countryside atmosphere of the community. Single-family areas should be safe, encourage resident interaction, and should be similar to newer subdivisions in the western suburbs with winding streets, water features, trees, parks and trails.

It is important to work towards balancing the population growth with the cost of public services, including schools. Also, the location of single-family areas should be closely examined so as to not inhibit the ability to designate areas for commercial or other uses.

### ***Multi-Family Development***

Most interviewees agreed that quality multi-family development is necessary to meet the changing needs of the Homer Glen’s population and to encourage diversity within the community. It was noted, however, that multi-family developments should be limited and their impact on local schools should be examined. The need for senior housing in the community was mentioned as an essential form of multi-family development. While a few interviewees suggested locations for multi-family areas, some said it should be integrated with larger single-family subdivisions and others suggested that it be clustered together near commercial, employment, and public uses. One interviewee stated that multi-family developments should not be high-rise construction.

### ***Commercial Areas***

Nearly all of the interviewees agreed that commercial development is necessary for the future of Homer Glen. Many participants noted the need for commercial uses to relieve the property tax burden from the residents and to provide convenient local shopping to reduce the need to drive to neighboring communities.

The most frequently mentioned location for commercial development was along 159th Street. In addition, a number of interviewees mentioned the need to develop a “town center” that would include businesses, a post office, and the Village Hall. Possible locations included 151st Street across from the Township office, or on Bell Road near 143rd Street. Other possible locations for commercial uses included the frontage areas along major roads, Bell Road and areas near the I-355 interchange.

The need to attract large office/research/light industrial uses was also mentioned by a few interviewees. In general, such uses should be well located and well designed. They should be developed at key locations, and big box and auto dealerships should be constructed near I-355 interchange locations.

Finally, the need to develop and maintain a functional roadway network that will support commercial uses was mentioned.

### ***Natural Environment***

The interviewees all agreed that it is essential to preserve the open space and natural qualities of Homer Glen. It is important to identify what areas and corridors should be preserved and protected. According to the interviewees, the Village should acquire, link, and improve open spaces, and should require that open space and natural areas be incorporated into all new subdivisions. Natural areas within the Village should provide both active and passive recreation for the residents.

Other concerns included the need to restrict overbuilding, funding sources to purchase and/or preserve natural areas, and the reduction in affordability of residential properties due to the designation of large amounts of natural land as permanent open space.

### ***Traffic Circulation***

The need to support the I-355 extension was a common response. In addition, most interviewees pointed out the need to relieve traffic congestion and solve capacity issues through road improvements along 159<sup>th</sup> Street, 143<sup>rd</sup> Street, Bell Road, Route 6, and Cedar Road. The poor traffic flow and inadequate roadway network are viewed as a constraint to successful economic development and a hindrance to local residents. There is a need to expand the major arterials to four lanes before the I-355 extension occurs. Most interviewees also noted that the interchange locations should become a part of Homer Glen wherever possible. Additional comments included the need to maximize east-west traffic on 159<sup>th</sup> Street and to improve the intersection of 143<sup>rd</sup> and Bell Road.

### ***Parking***

Parking is not currently viewed as a major issue in the Homer Glen community. The interviewees did mention that car ownership in the area is high and that all new developments, including the “town center” and any mixed-use developments should ensure adequate amounts of parking.

### ***Public Transportation***

Most interviewees noted the need to improve public transportation or provide some form of shuttle service for senior citizens within Homer Glen. It is important to determine the overall need for public transportation and to investigate funding options. It would be beneficial to the community to have good public transit service, including a commuter rail station on an extended Metra service line.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

As Homer Glen develops, the interviewees suggested that the Village consider the creation of a Park District, and an overall park plan to guide park and recreation facilities. When this occurs, the relationship between the Homer Glen Park District and Homer Township should be closely examined.

New parks are needed within Homer Glen for both active and passive recreation. Additional playing fields are necessary, as are multi-purpose centers, and trails and/or pathways. Parks throughout the community should be linked together with a multi-use trail system.

Many existing facilities within Homer Glen are underutilized and may provide additional recreational opportunities. These include playing fields when the sports season is over and school auditoriums and athletic fields. New residential developments for younger families should incorporate active recreation amenities. In addition, a new “picnic park” could provide a variety of activities including ball fields and fishing areas. One interviewee stated that there were enough park and recreation amenities in Homer Glen currently.

### **Schools**

According to the interviewees, schools in Homer Glen provide quality educational services to the community. In order to maintain the value of residential properties and to continue to attract new development, Homer Glen must work towards maintaining the quality of the school system. The fast rate of growth is a major concern. As the population expands, class sizes are rapidly increasing. It is important to balance school resources and the cost of new growth. Suggestions included expanding the tax base to support schools, imposing an impact fee to offset the staffing and operational costs of new students, and accepting land donations rather than cash donations for schools and related uses. Some interviewees pointed out the need to create links between schools and parks/recreational facilities within the Village.

### **Other Community Facilities**

Other needs related to community facilities included a “town center” that incorporates a variety of uses and provides a central community-gathering place; a Village Hall; a police department; a park district center; and an adequate roadway network.

### **Public Utilities and Infrastructure**

The utilities and infrastructure (except for roads) within Homer Glen are currently adequate, but should be improved and expanded as development occurs. Road improvements to ease traffic flow and congestion are essential as the population continues to grow. The use of Lake Michigan water is sufficient. One interviewee noted that Homer Glen should purchase the utility company to gain control over growth (by controlling water and sewer expansion) and to create additional income for the Village. In addition, the use of water and sewer lines for residential development is beneficial and all new developments should run on public or quasi-public systems instead of private septic and well systems.

### **Community Appearance**

The interviewees generally agreed that the open and friendly countryside appearance within Homer Glen should be preserved by incorporating landscaping, including trees, water features and open space, in all new subdivisions. In addition, farms should be preserved where possible and subdivisions should be buffered with landscaping from surrounding areas. Other suggestions included developing commercial design guidelines, architectural controls, and signage regulations. The appearance of Homer Glen would be enhanced with the development of a town center. One respondent suggested constructing a farm museum and using a barn as a gathering place in the town center.

### ***Are there any specific geographic areas or “hot spots” that you believe require special attention as a part of the new Comprehensive Plan?***

The most predominant “hot spot” in need of special attention were the arterial corridors that pass through the Village. Other responses included defining a site for the town center, and determining the proper areas to acquire, preserve, and develop parkland. One interviewee noted that it is much more important to work at fitting all the various pieces together rather than focusing on any single location.

### ***What do you consider the single-most important issue confronting Homer Glen today?***

Responses included: a) developing a *Comprehensive Plan*, establishing a Planning Commission, and establishing good technical support for the Planning Commission; b) resolving issues and setting priorities about funding for a police force, Village Hall, park district, and road improvements; c) creating an identity that accurately reflects the community; d) developing a town center that incorporates practical/functional uses and public open spaces; e) the I-355 extension project; f) controlling residential density; and g) diversifying the tax base through the development of commercial uses.

***If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement, what would it be?***

Responses included: a) commercial development on 159<sup>th</sup> Street; b) development of a town center; c) I-355 extension; d) tying major arterial roadway improvements to the I-355 extension; e) establish an arterial network that is attractive and has the capacity to meet the community's needs in the future; f) establish a Homer Glen Police Department; g) annex as much land as possible; h) develop public space that is representative of the community; and i) create and adopt the necessary Village ordinances.

***What questions should have been asked that weren't?***

Interviewees noted the need to address such issues as a zoning ordinance, design guidelines, landscape ordinance, commercial development standards, and criteria for locating church sites.

Other questions included: a) what communities should Homer Glen learn from or mirror; and b) what kind of place does Homer Glen want to become.

***Other comments:***

Other concerns mentioned during the interviews included: a) defining the communication and coordination of various governmental units; b) provide a clear definition of "where is Homer Glen"; c) need for Homer Glen's own zip code; d) strive for an "open community," a community that protects growth with a sense of welcome; e) continue to use the new Township zoning map; and f) need to define where commercial uses should go and appropriately fill in residences around them; the opposite will not work.

***List of Persons Interviewed:***

***Bill Crowley***, Resident and supporter of incorporation.

***Jim Daley***, Manager, Gateway Manufactured Homes, lived in area for 16 years.

***Frank Dunn***, Road Commissioner and life long resident for 70+ years.

***Bud Fazio***, Homer Township Supervisor, lived in area for 9+ years.

***Reverend Kelly Fryer***, Cross of Glory Church, lived in the Township for 10 years.

***Richard Maier***, Superintendent, Will County School District 92, lived in Homer Glen for 6 years and Lockport for 31.

***Bill McEnery***, Gas City, Mid Iron Golf Club, homeowner and horse farm owner, lived in Homer Glen for most of his adult life.

***Ronald Svara***, Will County Board Member.

***Jerry Wilharm***, President, Circle W (John Deere), resident of the area for 30 years.

***Chester Wirtz***, Chamber President and Business owner.

***Betty Woods*** (recently deceased), Homer Seniors.