

2018 STATE OF THE VILLAGE

April 17, 2018

Mayor George Yukich

I'd like to welcome everyone to the Homer Glen State of the Village presentation. First of all, I ask that you join me in thanking Chairman Mitch Hart and the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce for organizing today's event. I would also like to acknowledge some very important people and agencies.

I'd like to recognize and thank Village Trustees Carlo Caprio, Brian Burian, Keith Gray, Christina Neitzke-Troiike, Beth Rodgers and Sharon Sweas and Village Clerk Ann Holtz. Could the Village Trustees and Village Clerk who are with us today please stand? Please join me in acknowledging their continued commitment to the Village.

I'd like to thank Village Manager Mike Mertens and members of the Village Staff. It is the Village Staff who carry out the policies and directives of the Board. They make it all happen. A number of volunteer committees also give generously of their time to provide guidance and recommendations to the Village Board and staff. I want to express my appreciation to each of you for your continued hard work on behalf of the residents of Homer Glen. Would our staff members and Village committee volunteers please stand up and be recognized?

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

Our intergovernmental partnerships are a strategic priority for the Village of Homer Glen. A number of area and regional elected and appointed officials are here from governmental entities. We greatly appreciate our intergovernmental partners including representatives who have joined us here today. Please join me in thanking them with your applause.

LAYING THE GROUND WORK FOR OUR FUTURE

Improving the quality of life for our residents is at the core of what the Village does. Our priority is making certain that residents enjoy a high level of service and convenience without any municipal property tax for general operations.

Homer Glen is entering a new chapter in its development with growth opportunities knocking on our door. We are still a young Village, now just 17 years old. Unlike most Chicagoland communities that have reached maturity, we are in a position to create a

Village. Much of what we need to focus on relates to laying the foundation for our future. The choices we make now will shape Homer Glen's future. This is both an exciting and awesome responsibility.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2017, the Village Board began a Strategic Planning Process intended to create a road map for the next several years.

Last April, the Village conducted its first ever National Citizen Survey, a randomized scientific survey to capture resident opinion on aspects of community livability. This survey has been used by more than 300 communities in 45 states and is endorsed by the International City/County Management Association. The survey was administered at random to 1,500 households throughout the community and we received 501 responses, accounting for a 34% response rate.

To augment the Citizen Survey, a Stakeholders Workshop in January 2018 provided additional input. Village staff also prepared an environmental scan providing further background. The Village Board and staff then began formulating the Village's first strategic plan. In February and March, the Village Board and staff engaged in a series of planning sessions to identify strategic priorities and desired outcomes. Our collaborative process with residents and stakeholders has identified 6 (six) strategic priorities to include Economic Development, Financial Stability, Growth, Intergovernmental Partnerships, Recreational Amenities and Infrastructure.

We asked and you responded.

80% of survey respondents indicated that 'making annual investments in municipal infrastructure' was 'essential' or 'very important' for the Village over the next five years.

As part of our strategic plan, we are committing to implementing a long-term capital plan for our growing community's future. Furthermore, our plan calls for developing a long-term strategy for water and sewer rate stabilization, creating a Water and Sewer Utilities Master Plan and implementing a long-term drainage improvement program.

We asked and you responded. 77% of survey respondents indicated that 'promoting and maintaining high quality commercial development' was 'essential' or 'very important' for the Village of over the next five years. When asked what types of new development residents would like to see in Homer Glen, the top three categories were restaurants, parks and recreation areas and retail stores.

As part of our strategic plan, we are outlining several priorities to attract responsible commercial development in our community and provide clarity on the vision and strategy for our main commercial corridors and larger commercially-zoned parcels. Our marketing and recruitment strategy will continue to tell the unique story of our community and will seek to attract high quality private investment in our Village. We hear your wants and are working each and every day to responsibly grow our community.

We asked and you responded. One of the recurring findings from our survey was that Homer Glen residents value parks and recreation amenities in our community. 74% of survey respondents indicated that 'making annual investments in parks and recreation facilities' was 'essential' or 'very important' for the Village over the next five years.

To solidify our commitment to parks and recreation, our strategic plan for the next 3 years outlines completion deadlines for phases of the Heritage Park development. Furthermore, the plan calls for a revisit of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, last updated in 2013, and commits to the development of a Master Bike Plan to expand our Heroes Trail system and make regional connections. Furthermore, initiatives to develop a Community Programs and Activities Plan are a top priority over the next three years.

We are currently in the process of creating a detailed action plan to guide our work over the next 3 years. We are on track to begin to tie our strategic initiatives into the next budget for our new fiscal year beginning on May 1. This strategic approach, based on us listening to you, will help ensure that the Village keeps its efforts and resources focused on initiatives that directly relate to desired outcomes for the community. Strategic planning will formalize our goals to ensure that Homer Glen continues to be the "Community of Choice."

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is a strategic priority for the Village of Homer Glen. Many of the Village's ongoing initiatives focus on laying the foundation in our still young Village. We have been laying the ground work for our future by improving our community's infrastructure, including roads, water and sewer utilities coverage and stormwater drainage.

The Village of Homer Glen has been proactive to assist our subdivisions and business owners' needs throughout the IDOT 159th Street project to expand and reconstruct the road from Will-Cook Road to Gougar Road.

Merchants know to call the Village for timely assistance in regard to any unexpected issues during road construction.

Most recently, the Village was advised that the 159th Street project could take an additional year with substantial completion not anticipated until the end of 2019. The Village has been greatly concerned for the impacts especially to businesses from an increasingly protracted time frame on the road project. It was time to get our state elected officials involved.

Representative Jim Durkin and Senator John Curran mediated on our behalf and we are grateful for their assistance. IDOT's Secretary of Transportation Randy Blankenhorn subsequently approved acceleration for the road project in Homer Glen in mid-March.

IDOT is now expediting the Homer Glen project to substantially complete the new four-lane configuration by the end of calendar year 2018. There will be additional work items that will need to be completed in 2019 such as landscaping. I want to take this opportunity to thank Homer Glen residents for your cooperation during this road construction project and I encourage each and every one of you to go out of your way to support local business owners. This improvement will be a great asset to our community and will serve to generate new economic development activity for many years into the future.

Homer Glen is taking control of its future with the upcoming construction of a \$1.3 million water main along 159th Street, from Cedar Road to Gougar Road, as well as the pending construction of the Fiddymment Creek Sanitary Sewer main.

The water main project contract is already awarded. The Village is waiting for clearance from IDOT for access to the right-of-way on the north side of 159th Street in order to begin construction. We expect access to be granted this summer and construction of the water main to take about 2 to 3 months.

The engineering plans are being finalized for the sanitary sewer main project. This project should be out to bid next month. The system is being designed to be constructed from the west to the east with service stubs at key points. The system should be operational for the properties on the west side by September. The full project should take 4 to 6 months to complete. Both of these utility extensions are essential to attract new commercial and residential development to the area.

The Village continues to build its foundation for a strong and prosperous future. The Village Board dedicated \$742,000 in funding towards drainage improvement projects in the Erin Hills, Woodbine, Meadowview, Chickasaw Hills and Wedgewood Highlands subdivisions.

CODE IMPROVEMENTS

The Village Board and staff have also focused efforts on improving the Village Code in a number of areas to be more user-friendly, business-friendly and competitive for residential and commercial development opportunities.

We lowered our residential development impact fees by 35%.

We now have a user-friendly Chapter in the Village Code entitled Land Use and Site Development. The new Code chapter consolidates and streamlines Code language, corrects earlier deficiencies and ensures consistency with the rest of the Village Code.

We updated our Building Code. The revised Building Code reflects substantial changes in construction technology, building safety and energy conservation in the built environment that have taken place since the last update in 2007.

We streamlined our planned unit development process. Smaller commercial and industrial developments involving a single building of less than 50,000 square feet now require only site plan approval and no longer require a public hearing for entitlement.

Restaurants can now offer up to 15% of their seating in a new outdoor seating amenity for customers with a simpler Village Board permit. The requirement for a special use permit is dropped. Similarly, liquor sales for retail and restaurants are subject to Village Board permit approval without the need for a special use permit. A review of our use table for non-residential zoning districts is currently underway. Again, we are in the process of improving and updating our Zoning Code to be more user and business-friendly.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Financial stability is a strategic priority for the Village of Homer Glen. The Village is committed to financial excellence and integrity.

For the 16th year in a row, the Village of Homer Glen has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Standard & Poor's reports the Village's Bond Rating at "Double A Plus," a rating of strong capacity to meet all of our financial commitments.

The Village's \$8.8 million general operating budget forecasted an operating surplus before transfers of \$600,000 for the current fiscal year. The upcoming fiscal year will also have a balanced general fund operating budget and forecasted surplus. This budget will support outstanding services and significant public park and storm water improvements.

And on a very positive note, the Village made its last payment on the incentive agreement with Homer Town Square last December. This means that the Village now receives and retains 100% of the 1% Sales Tax generated from the Jewel-Osco-anchored shopping center, saving the Village \$135,000 next fiscal year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is a strategic priority for the Village. Home owners and businesses see the opportunities and have made tremendous investments in Homer Glen.

Homer Glen welcomed 53 new single-family homes to our community last year and issued 241 new home permits over the last 5 years. Retailers are attracted to housing activity, so it is great to see this uptick.

The Village has been successful in attracting new businesses while at the same time expanding and retaining existing businesses. We are pleased that Menards has made significant reinvestment in their Homer Glen store. Menards has added a new customer mezzanine and an improved special order area in the main store and has doubled their outdoor lumber yard.

Popular Davidson's Bar & Grill expanded their footprint. Bank of America is in the process of building a new facility at 143rd and Bell Road.

We welcomed the following new businesses in 2017: Chipotle Mexican Grill; Starbucks; WOW Sushi; Kenootz Pizza; Circle K Shell; Busey Bank; CIBC Bank; ISU Coverall Insurance Group; Sal's Philly's; Lou Malnati's; and, Frontera Sur Mexican restaurant.

The Village realized \$5.99 million dollars of new construction and remodeling work by both new and existing businesses last year. The Village Board and I appreciate this confidence and we thank every business that is investing in the strong and vibrant future of our community.

Nearly 40,000 square feet of commercial space was filled as a result of new and retained business activity last year. 12 new businesses opened. 17 existing businesses were retained in Homer Glen through expansions, remodeling and new ownership.

Hallmark Corporation acknowledged their confidence in Homer Glen when they took over our local store for the retiring franchisee. Front Row similarly took over Mullets restaurant and national retailer Big Tex Trailer World acquired Wild Bill's RV and Outdoor Center.

Our newest businesses in 2018 include Infuego Furnishings, VIP Nails and Enterprise Rent-A-Car. At Ease Craft Beer Pub just opened last weekend.

More new businesses are on their way. We look forward to We Escape, a new escape room concept, opening soon.

Additionally, I have some breaking news! Dialysis Care Center has purchased the former Midwest Bank Building on Bell Road. The former bank building will undergo some improvements to become the national corporate headquarters for Dialysis Care Center. The new corporate headquarters will bring 250 employees into Homer Glen at this location. We look forward to Dialysis Care Center opening their U.S. headquarters in Homer Glen.

The Village's growing retail base generates a significant amount of sales tax revenue that helps the Village to operate without levying municipal property taxes or utility taxes for general operations. So, I am very happy to report that retail sales are trending strong.

Sales tax receipts year to date through March 2018 are up by 4.9% from the same period last year. We are on track to receive \$3.5 million from the 1% Sales Tax by fiscal year end.

Please remember that for every \$100 you spend at Homer Glen retailers, \$1 comes back as sales tax revenue to support local roads, police and other community services.

On March 14, the Village Board provided initial approvals for a new commercial center development at the southwest corner of 143rd Street and Bell Road. The overall Planned Unit Development and Phase One site plan approval was granted for Homer Glen Bell Plaza on 9.4 acres at this prominent corner. The developer is in lease negotiations and intends to break ground on Phase One for the first 3 buildings this spring. The ultimate build out will have 8 commercial buildings adding about 45,000 square feet to our inventory of commercial space. The site plan includes two positions for restaurants with drive-thrus and outdoor seating. The process from the time the developer closed on the purchase of the site to the Village approvals just mentioned was a very efficient two and one-half (2.5) months. HOMER GLEN IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS! PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD.

Several other properties are under contract with significant potential to serve as catalysts for economic development. These key properties include the 13.5-acre site north of the Home Depot; a 32-acre property fronting 159th Street west of Cedar Road; and, 120 acres of a 159th Street site commonly known as the Dunn property. The developer prospects are doing their due diligence and feasibility studies now. I am looking forward to announcing new development plans for any of these proposals that may move forward for formal consideration by the Village Board.

Related to future development, the Village of Homer Glen recently formalized a Boundary Agreement with the Village of Lemont. A formalized Planning and Boundary Agreement

is beneficial for both the existing property owners and our two communities as we plan for future development. The Agreement establishes 135th Street to Will-Cook Road as the permanent boundary between Homer Glen and Lemont. Lemont gains access to the triangle area colored pink with the condition that future planning for the property be of a commercial nature. Sales tax derived from this Shared Tax Area would be split between the communities on a 50/50% basis. Property tax will be shared on a 50/50% basis in the event that the Shared Tax Area does not produce sales tax. Moreover, Homer Glen has the ability to work with Lemont to access utility services for the property to the southeast of the triangle property for any future redevelopment. We appreciate the spirit of cooperation with the Village of Lemont to formalize this intergovernmental agreement.

RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Recreational Amenities are a strategic priority for the Village.

We dedicated a new 2.7-acre park for the community located in the Evelyn's Gate North subdivision last July. The new park features a picnic pavilion, playground and walking path.

We more recently completed a 3.5-acre public park next to the Goodings Grove subdivision. The new Goodings Grove Park includes a walking path, a basketball court, a playground and a large picnic pavilion that is open for all Homer Glen residents. A grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in the amount of \$170,500 supported about 37% of the cost to develop the new park.

A park dedication ceremony is planned for July 14. In conjunction with the dedication ceremony, the Parks and Recreation Committee is coordinating a special event featuring sidewalk chalk art. There will be a judged competition among participants and a number of "featured artists" will be on display. Please mark your calendars for "Chalk-It-Up" on Saturday, July 14.

The Village is halfway through construction of Phase One improvements for Heritage Park, the new 100-acre park that will establish a focal point and gathering place for our community. Phase One work includes a 1.5 mile multipurpose trail, site roadway, landscaping, lighting, utilities and other work that will lay the foundation for future amenities. 136 new trees will be planted as part of Phase One.

Work will also begin this spring on the east portion of the site to construct stormwater wetlands, bioswales and rain gardens as part of a water quality improvement project for the Long Run Creek Watershed, supported in part through Section 319 funding from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

These improvements were also identified as solutions to improve drainage in the Woodbine subdivision area through a study we conducted in 2015.

We are excited to provide a beautiful landscape within Heritage Park, while also mitigating drainage issues in our community and improving water quality within our watershed. In total, the Village will receive \$521,704 in grant funding, covering 60% of the total project cost.

The next area of Heritage Park to be constructed will be the Active Core. This area will feature tennis courts, pickle ball courts, sand volleyball courts, bean bag, bocce and horseshoe activity courts, fitness stations, a challenge course, nature-based play structures, and a sensory garden with a variety of native habitats and educational components. The final design of the active core will be released in the near future. This area is expected to be substantially completed this coming fall.

At its complete buildout, Heritage Park will feature a Village Green with an amphitheater and performance stage, playgrounds, a disc golf course, a splash pad and so much more.

The park will also be the future home to Homer Fest, beginning in June 2019, as well as other community events.

The Village will be hosting an expanded annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, beginning in 2018. More events are in the planning stages. We look forward to opening up Heritage Park to residents.

It is critical that we ensure residents can access the new Park. Another Heroes Trail extension is in the early planning stages to provide neighborhood linkage to Heritage Park. The extension will link the existing Heroes Trail at its westward terminus at Heatherwood Drive further west to the Park.

The Village of Homer Glen has a lack of local parks in the Old Oak, Golden Oak and Chickasaw area. The Goodings Grove School Park serves as the neighborhood park and playground for this area of the community. Additionally, local sports groups utilize the ball fields adjacent to the school on nights and weekends.

The Village recently completed an extension of the Hero's Trail that now connects the school site with the path system making the park even more accessible to the local community.

The Goodings Grove Parent Teacher Organization has lead a grass roots effort to have the outdated and well-worn playground area replaced with facilities that are modern and inclusive to all children. The PTO has fostered intergovernmental cooperation and non-profit assistance to help solve a local community need. Through fundraising activities, the PTO has committed \$60,000 to School District 33C to update the playground facilities.

The Village plans to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with District 33C to have the Village participate in funding a portion of this upgrade as the park serves as a local park amenity. The concept would be for the Village to allocate \$40,000. This funding, along with the \$60,000 from the PTO, would be combined with School District funding for a \$250,000 budgeted park redevelopment.

The park would be available for public use after normal school hours in the afternoons, evenings, and weekends as well as during the summer months.

This is a great example of how government entities can work with local community organizations to solve a community need in an efficient and cost effective manner that benefits both the local taxpayers and the recreational needs of neighborhood children.

All of our hard work in planning for parks, including listening to and involving the community in planning and design, is bearing results. The Village Trustees and I thank residents for your participation in the planning process and we are proud to see these new park facilities coming online.

Before I leave the topic of amenities, our new Village Hall at Heritage Park is also serving resident needs with the availability of meeting space. The Community Room at Village Hall has been available to residents for over a year now. We have around 9 HOAs that use it, as well as the Girl Scouts and the Homer Glen Junior Womens Club. The available dates get booked up quickly. The Village Trustees and I are pleased that our new Village Hall building is serving this meeting space need in the community.

BALANCED GROWTH

Balanced growth is a strategic priority for the Village. Our future is changing and we want to grow thoughtfully. We want to grow in a way that is acceptable for Homer Glen values.

The desired outcomes that have bubbled up in the course of our strategic planning process include a more diverse housing stock, enhanced open space and community character and a more walkable community. The Village Board is taking the time to figure out what our community wants and this will be an evolving process. This truly is an exciting time in the shaping of our community for the future.

CLOSING

We have a great community and much to be proud of in Homer Glen. Our Village continues to be acknowledged for its quality of life and achievements ranging from safe

city rankings to excellence in financial reporting and environmental stewardship recognitions.

Your continued active participation in Village initiatives is important as we move forward. The Village Trustees and I are happy to work with each of you here today as we continue to create Homer Glen's bright future.

Please visit the Village website to sign up for automatic news alerts and my Mayor's Blog.

The Village Facebook page is just one year old and has over 1000 Follows. Please follow the Village's Facebook page and contact the Village staff when you need assistance.

Thank you for your kind attention and for taking the time out of your busy schedule to join us today. The Village Trustees, staff and I will stay around to answer any questions you may have. Enjoy the rest of your day.