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Palatine's retail centers and neighborhoods rank as top priorities in planning village's future

By: suetermaat
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Palatine residents and business owners want more walking and bike paths between neighborhoods and continual development of key commercial areas, according to a preliminary draft of the village's 20-year planning document.

The village board on Monday night unanimously approved a report that compiled months of surveys and open house comments that will be used to create a final comprehensive plan, which outlines how the village should be developed over the next two decades.

One of the key conclusions related to the redevelopment of retail along Northwest Highway, said Leslie Pollock, principal consultant for Chicago-based Camiros, which has been hired to draw up the plan.

Currently, the Northwest Highway retail corridor is made up of mostly retailers on small lots, which could be consolidated into larger commercial and retail developments, Pollock said.

Another significant consideration for the village is the continual redevelopment of retail along Dundee and Rand roads, he said.

It's now a mix of big box retailers and strip malls, but in a few years that kind of shopping configuration could be outdated in favor of a more pedestrian-friendly, town center-type of commercial developments, he said.

The village should attempt to get ahead of the trend, creating a downtown atmosphere for retailers where smaller roads fronting shops and traffic circles are incorporated into what could become more of a shopping district, he said.

"In 20 years, we will not see a lot of strip malls, so we should think about how this will change," Pollock said. "You can develop it more like an urban center than just a series of strip mall centers."

Also, the village should consider adding and connecting biking and walking paths since residents who attended the open houses and filled out the surveys indicated they wanted to link up neighborhoods that are now separated by major roadways, Pollock said.

The board's vote allows Camiros to move onto the next step in the process, which is to get feedback on the consulting firm's conclusions drawn from village comments.

The village expects to hold between four and five open houses this summer to hear from residents and business owners before the consulting firm drafts a tentative comprehensive plan, said Village Manager Reid Ottesen. The exact times, dates and locations have not yet been decided, Ottesen said.

The drafted plan will go through a vetting process at open houses and plan commission meetings before the village board votes on it, he said.

The road to updating Palatine's comprehensive plan began last year when the village gathered opinions from residents at open houses and from online surveys on the village's Web site.

The last time the village updated its plan was in 1990. At that time, the challenge for the village was how to develop swatches of open land and whether to incorporate fringe neighborhoods into the village, said Jeanne Kamps Lindwell, a Camiros' principal consultant.

Palatine nearly doubled its population from 38,000 in 1990 to about 70,000 today, but with the village mostly developed and land agreements with unincorporated areas in place, those issues are less pressing now, she said.

By Sue Ter Maat, TribLocal.com reporter

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