

Introduction

One of the initial steps toward the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan update was to conduct an inventory of Lake in the Hills' needs, opportunities, assets and constraints. This was accomplished by:

- Carrying out a windshield survey of with Village staff to identify and evaluate existing land uses, trends of development, and physical factors that affect the growth and development of Lake in the Hills;
- Interviewing the seven-member Planning Advisory Committee. Primary planning issues, redevelopment opportunities, and visions for Lake in the Hills were ranked for consideration as part of the plan update; and
- Conducting interviews of six persons that the Village Planning staff and Planning Advisory Committee identified as having a stake in ensuring the continued success of the community.

All three processes were key toward identifying the planning issues currently facing Lake in the Hills, and developing the focus of this plan update. The **Existing Land Use Map** and **Planning Factors Map** were created from the windshield survey, base maps received from Lake in the Hills, aerial photographs, and plat maps (see **Figures 1.0** and **2.0**, respectively). **Appendix A** provides a summary of the participatory exercise conducted with the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). This summary documents the top areas of interest identified by the Committee into three categories:

- Assets, strengths and unique characteristics;
- Needs, constraints and problems; and
- Opportunities.

Also, a 31-question community survey was sent to 1500 households in May 2001. The purpose of this survey was to solicit input on the plan from residents in the community. The questions were targeted toward determining residents' opinions on:

- Housing in Lake in the Hills;
- Rural atmosphere;
- Growth and development;
- Public services;
- Community identity;
- Traffic and Transportation; and
- Economic development (retail, industrial and office).

A copy of this survey can be found in **Appendix B**.

The selection of the households was at random. Five hundred and seventy-eight (578) or 39% of the 1500 surveys were returned. Survey results are included in **Appendix B**. They are presented as:

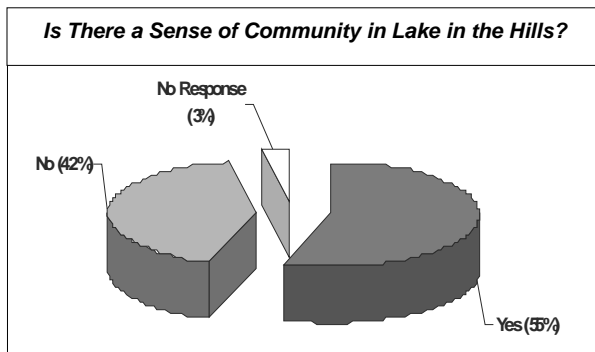
- Color charts and graphics.
- Text summaries of the overall responses presented as follows:
 - All residents;
 - Residents west of Randall Road; and
 - Residents east of Randall Road.

Residents responding to the survey:

- Were generally between the ages of 31 and 44;
- Have lived in the community for six or more years;
- Live in a single-family detached home;
- Have an annual household income of \$71,000 or more; and

- Have children under the age of 18 living in their home.

The input received from the Planning Advisory Committee, the six interviews of community stakeholders, and the sample of the resident population were used to identify and respond to key factors that influence growth and development in Lake in the Hills.



This chapter summarizes the important factors that influenced the plan update, based on community participation and input. Planning factors that were considered as part of this plan update include problems, needs and opportunities related to:

- Community identity;
- Economic development;
- Housing;
- Open space and recreation;
- Environmental; and
- Traffic and transportation.

The consideration and analysis of each led toward the preparation of the land use recommendations, goals and objectives, design guidelines, and strategies for plan implementation that can be found in subsequent chapters of this document.

Also, the plan respects the boundary agreements reached with its neighbors. Therefore, recommendations for annexation of lands within the community's planning jurisdiction

are based upon these agreements. The **Planning Factors Map** shows the more than 1,200 acres outside the existing corporate boundaries that were targeted for future development.

Community Identity

Residents in Lake in the Hills continue to value rural character, open space and environmentally sensitive resources. Most have a strong sense of community, but believe that the Village lacks identity of its own. Also, many residents do not identify themselves as living in Lake in the Hills, but instead consider themselves as a resident of a particular subdivision in the Village. The following were identified as needs and opportunities for creating community identity:

- Increase the open space and parkland in Lake in the Hills;
- Build upon existing annual events, such as the air show and summer festival;
- Attract specialty retail and restaurants;
- Create a “pedestrian-friendly” center, where unified architecture, building orientation, landscaping, plazas and other public spaces are used to encourage residents to shop, dine, and gather with friends;
- Beautify the boundaries of the Village through landscaping and signage; and
- Create a community center that attracts residents to socialize and recreate with one another.
- Expand the Village Hall area to serve as a focal point that contributes to a positive sense of community by bringing residents together in this area.

Economic Development

Strengthening the Village’s tax base through economic development is a focus of the 2002 plan update. Lake in the Hills needs property and sales tax benefits to continue to provide the level of services expected and enjoyed by its residents.

The **Planning Factors Map** shows four areas that were considered as opportunities for economic development. These include properties:

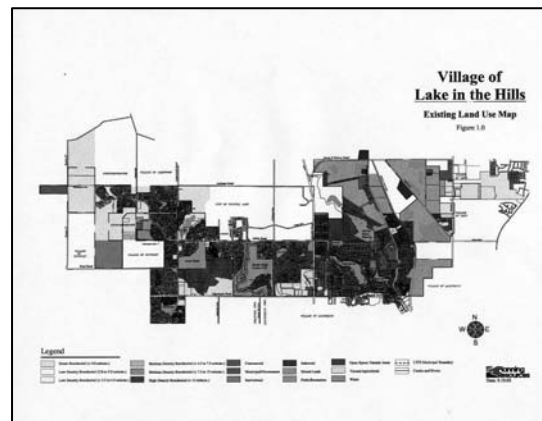
- Along Illinois Route 47 in the northwest quadrant of the Village;
- South of Ackman Road and east of Lakewood Road;
- In the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Randall Road and Algonquin Road; and
- Mined lands that are ready to be reclaimed. These properties are located in the northeast quadrant of the community, south of Rakow Road and along both sides of Pyott Road.

New retail facilities, business parks, low-rise offices, and a hotel/office center were considered to be opportunities for Lake in the Hills. Most of the residents responding to the survey indicate that they shop in Crystal Lake, rather than Lake in the Hills. They indicated that they wanted to see quality restaurants, discount stores, and entertainment uses (such as a fitness center, performing arts center, comedy club, etc.), in addition to general retail uses. Residents and the PAC also noted that there is a need to diversify employment opportunities in the Village by adding corporate centers with professional offices, and expanding existing light industrial or warehouse distribution facilities.

Three of the four areas considered as key development opportunities have frontage along arterial streets such as Illinois Route 47, Illinois Route 31 and Algonquin Road (see **Planning Factors Map**). This provides good visibility and access for new development, which is essential for the type and intensity of land uses that were identified as opportunities for future development.

Although parcels located south of Ackman Road do not front directly on an arterial street, plans for Ackman Road, a collector roadway, include roadway widening and a future extension west to Illinois Route 47. These transportation improvements will enhance economic development opportunities considered for properties east of Lakewood and south of Ackman Road to meet the needs of the growing resident population in this area.

After evaluating the four opportunities for economic development (apart from infill of commercial and industrial uses), the PAC decided that economic development opportunities should be further developed for three of the four key parcels targeted for such development. Therefore, the plan includes more specific recommendations for land use, design, and implementation, as well as concept plans for three areas (see **Chapter IV, Sub Area Plans and Future Land Use**).



This level of detail was developed to better illustrate the Village's overall intent for future development in these key areas. Because there have been several petitions to the Village for retail commercial development on properties at the northwest quadrant of Randall and Algonquin Roads, the Planning Advisory Committee determined that properties at this location did not need more detailed study.

Housing

More than 46% of the community's developed land area (excludes roads, water and vacant or agricultural lands) consists of single- and multiple-family residential dwellings. Most of the housing in Lake in the Hills caters to the families with young children. Ninety percent (90%) of the acres devoted to land uses have been developed with single-family or multiple-family residences on lots that are 8400 square feet or smaller. This size lot has enabled the Village to offer affordable housing choices to its existing and new residents. However, it has limited the Village's ability to construct larger homes that satisfy executive and "move-up" housing markets.

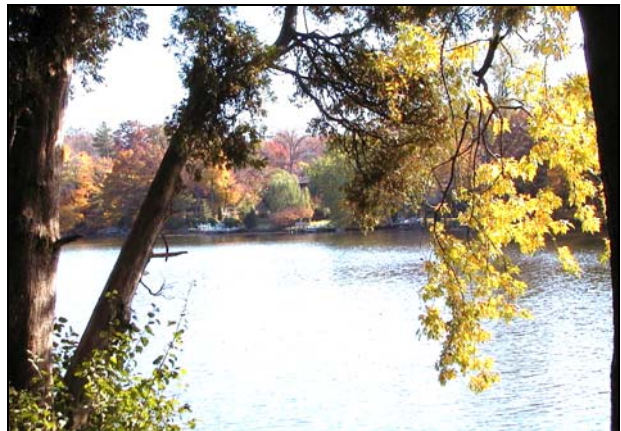
Residents, the PAC, and individuals interviewed as part of the public participation process expressed a desire to limit the number of acres that could be developed for new subdivisions, in favor of increasing economic development opportunities, parks and open space. There was a consensus that where new housing is proposed, it should meet markets that are not already provided, so that residents have housing choices as their families grow. Examples include:

- **Senior Housing** — Although Del Webb's Sun City community for seniors is in neighboring Huntley, the Planning Advisory Committee believes that more affordable options needed to be provided for Lake in the Hills' seniors; and

- **Executive or "Move-up" Housing** — Single-family homes that range from \$250,000 to \$350,000 and up were identified as a market niche that would help diversify the community's housing stock, as well as provide options for families looking to move into larger homes as their children grow.

Open Space and Recreation

The PAC and residents who responded to the community survey indicated that one of Lake in the Hills primary assets is the rural character that exists because of the fens, streams, wetlands and lakes. These natural resources differentiate Lake in the Hills from most Chicago-metropolitan area communities.



The PAC recognizes that most of the parks and natural features in the Village are located east of Randall Road (i.e, the fens and lakes), and that more open space and recreational opportunities are needed to serve the newer subdivisions west of this arterial street. They also identified mined lands east of Virginia Road as having the potential for adding open space lands to the community once mining of sand and gravel deposits in these areas is completed.

Concurrent with the update of the Village's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Parks Department was completing an Open Space Master Plan. This plan identifies park and

recreation needs in the community (i.e., new ball field and other active recreation facilities), and establishes the location of trails throughout Lake in the Hills to link open space and recreational features together. Recommendations of this plan incorporate, where appropriate, proposals of the Park Department's plan, including the:

- Development of a major park and a recreation facility along the east and west sides of Haligus Road, south of Miller Road that includes a community center and pool;
- Establishment of playgrounds and mini-parks with new development;
- Construction of recreational trails; and
- Renovation of existing parklands and facilities.

Environmental

The Village is home to many wetlands, marshes and fens that host a variety of threatened and endangered plants and animals. Also, Lake in the Hills draws its water from both deep and shallow aquifers, and depends upon the wetlands, to recharge (or replenish) and cleanse the potable water supply.



For these reasons, the Planning Advisory Committee decided that developing guidelines or techniques that protected or enhanced these resources should be considered as an important component of this plan update. Items identified for consideration included:

- Protecting important resources (i.e., wetlands) from fill associated with new development;
- Enhancing water quality through best management practices that reduce stormwater runoff and:
 - Allows water to infiltrate directly into the ground, rather than being directed into a traditional stormwater basin before it is released overland; and
 - Uses native plants to filter and seasonally take up, or assimilate pollutants; and
- Creating large landscaped buffers around those areas (such as the Fen and Exner Marsh) where threatened and endangered plants and animals are known to exist.

Traffic and Transportation

Most residents surveyed recognize that traffic is becoming more congested as a result of new development in Lake in the Hills and neighboring communities. Ninety percent (90%) of those responding to the survey indicated that traffic is a problem, and that Algonquin Road, Illinois Route 31 and Randall Road should be improved.

All of these arterial streets are scheduled for roadway widening in the near future. Also, Miller and Ackman Roads will be extended west toward Illinois Route 47 to provide an east west connection between Route 47 and Illinois Route 31 (see the **Planning Factors Map, Figure 2.0**). The Planning Advisory Committee agrees that land needs to be set aside

for future roadway widening with each development proposal, so that these roadway improvements can be achieved.

The PAC believes that some of the traffic congestion can be mitigated by providing close-to-home employment opportunities for Village residents, many of whom have long commutes to centers of employment in the Chicago metropolitan area. Also, encouraging residents to drive to the Metra stations in adjacent communities rather than driving cars to work, would help reduce congestion and, therefore, commute time.

