### **Final Report**

City of Elmhurst, Illinois
Strategic Planning Process Summary Report
June 2015



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### **Exhibits**

Exhibit A Focus Groups Data Summary Report Exhibit B Selected Questions and Additional Workshop Notes

### INTRODUCTION

It was a pleasure for us to work with community leadership, stakeholder groups, and other interested parties on the City of Elmhurst's 2015 Strategic Plan update initiative. As an organization, the City has placed itself among forward looking municipal governments that engage in strategic planning and goal-setting. Strategic assessments and long-term planning are hallmarks of progressive organizations and the value of strategic planning continues to be recognized by professional public and private sector organizations. Strategic planning is a process and not a one time event and is the preferred approach to guiding the City's future. Strategic planning helps leaders become proactive, rather than reactive, and lessens the need to manage crisis by crisis.

The strategic planning framework for the City of Elmhurst was designed to be a comprehensive approach. It was structured to include external input and data from a variety of perspectives including stakeholders focus groups and two-days of Council and senior management staff workshops. This process of collecting data from both the internal and external environment is a key piece of developing a strategic plan. In addition to being a scan of your environment, the City's approach provided stakeholders significant opportunities for positive civic engagement and input.

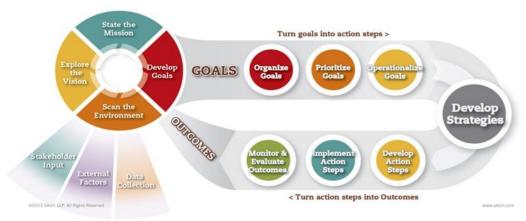
During the Council and senior management staff workshops, all participants were given the opportunity to provide input and exchange ideas. While there were differences of opinion at times, different views are not only valuable, but are to be expected on particular issues or policies in a governing environment; this is democracy in action!

Throughout the planning process, a picture of the City's present and future was in strong evidence, as was the desire to positively and proactively move forward. Keep in mind that the goals you established during this process will only be realized through the judicious use of your resources including City staff, advisors, and financial resources. As you realize from your experience as elected officials, quality work requires adequate professional staffing, expertise, time, and resources. Setting and sticking to your priorities will be an important next step. Only a limited number of objectives and goals can be effectively managed and implemented at a given time. Resist the temptation to "re-arrange" priorities as the fiscal year moves along; stick to working toward the results you want to achieve and applying those efforts to your budget preparations and in your meetings throughout the year.

In that spirit of cooperation, openness, and thoroughness, we have no doubt the City Council and the City's management staff will work together to find viable approaches and solutions for the many goals and aspirations that were identified through this planning process.

### PROCESS SUMMARY

An overview of the strategic planning model that was used for the City of Elmhurst's initiative can be seen in the illustration below. As the model visually demonstrates, strategic planning is a multi-phase process that most closely resembles an on-going cycle of gathering and assessing information, decision-making, and follow-through. The process used by the City to develop its plan closely followed this model. More explanation of the various steps, tools, and processes the City followed are detailed below.



Strategic Planning Process Model - G. Kuhn

### **External Stakeholder Input**

As previously stated, the environmental scan process was a twofold approach that included focus groups with City stakeholders with the results shared and incorporated into the two strategic planning workshops with the City Council and senior management staff. By way of definition, John Bryson defines a stakeholder as, "Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's (or other entity's) attention, resources, or output that is affected by that output."1 Those most knowledgeable about an organization (including its resources, programs, challenges, and opportunities) are by definition key stakeholders.

In January of this year, Sikich staff held nine (9) focus group sessions with a variety of stakeholders from a cross-section of the community. These stakeholders included representatives from economic development organizations, civic groups, high school students, staff, and other community institutions as well as neighborhood clusters and citizens at large. In order to maintain an optimum group size of about twelve participants, multiple sessions were held for various stakeholder groups. In total, the City sent personal invitations to roughly 105 community members to attend sessions held on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>. Open forum sessions took place at City Hall on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Open sessions were publicized in the media and on the City's website.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> John Bryson, Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan (New York: Jossey-Bass, 2004) 35.

During the focus group sessions, stakeholders shared ideas about the preferred future state of the City along with their perceptions about the City's strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities. All sessions used the same questions that were developed by the consulting team and reviewed by the City to elicit input. Sikich staff facilitated all the focus groups and used a highly participative interactive methodology known as *Nominal Group Technique*. This technique is designed to assure participants balanced opportunities to speak and share their opinions.

All sessions were characterized by a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere that fostered participant's thoughts and ideas. With the exception of the employee group, no City staff or elected officials participated in these sessions. City staff attended only to welcome and thank participants and to introduce Sikich. Sikich staff recorded all participants' ideas, in rough note form using large flip chart pads. Session notes were later transcribed and analyzed by Sikich's project team and the session data was coded for analysis using NVivo qualitative data software.

### **Focus Group Data Summary**

The data from the focus groups' input was summarized and compiled into the Focus Group Data Summary report and presented to the City Council as part of their two day Council and management staff workshops. Sikich presented highlights from the report and provided participants an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the data. Please see Exhibit A for a copy of the Focus Group Data Summary Report presented at the workshops.

### **Leadership Workshops Overview**

The Council and senior management staff workshops were held on February 20-21, 2015 at the Elmhurst Memorial Hospital. The primary objectives for these workshops were to: 1). review the City's current mission statements along with reviewing their guiding value statements for the City as an organization; and 2) develop strategic goals and objectives for the City for the next five year period. During these workshops, the City Council and senior staff participated in a variety of exercises that were designed to elicit their vision for the community and also to review their assessment of the City's strengths, weaknesses, untapped opportunities, and potential threats. This assessment is known as a SWOT Analysis. All participants had the opportunity to generate and share ideas, weigh alternatives, and further explain or refine their thinking. Following these exercises, City Council members and senior staff were asked to offer their individual goals for the City. In offering these goals, participants were asked to consider stakeholder input from the focus group data summary report.

Once the review of the current mission and value statements was completed, several other exercises designed to explore the City's current and future desired state (described below) took place. Finally, Council members and the City management team were asked to formally offer their strategic goals for the City. After the workshop's conclusion, Sikich worked with the City Manager to clarify the goals. These consolidated goals were then submitted to the Mayor, fourteen Council members, the City Clerk and City Treasurer to assign a priority ranking for each goal. All Council rankings were tabulated and arithmetically averaged to arrive at a prioritized set of consolidated goals that are presented in later sections of this report.

### SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP EXERCISES AND OUTCOMES

The Council and management staff workshop began with an interpretive opening exercise that sought to elicit participant's descriptions of the City and its overall mission. Using items that might be found in a garage sale, participants were asked to describe their chosen garage sale item and reflect on how it represented the City's mission and role. The workshop notes from that exercise are included in Exhibit B.

#### PART I: MISSION/VALUES REVIEW AND VISIONING EXERCISES

### **Mission Review**

After the opening garage sale exercise, the facilitators asked participants to reflect on their comments and offer their thoughts about the City's current mission statement. Below are participant's thoughts about the mission statement.

### **Thoughts About Current Mission Statement**

- Communicates desire for a high quality of life
- Mission is greater than sum of its parts unique
- Expectations will continue to evolve
- Not too wordy respects our citizens and businesses
- Highlights safety and quality of life; the current statement is inclusive
- Responsive not sure of this word we are aligned with what's going
- Might be a little long, a little wordy, tries to be everything
- 90% of people don't know what our mission statement says; the bottom line is what is at the core—the Public
- Safety, strong finances mutual aid are what staff and Council should focus on
- Superior services are part of our current mission statement; it is a citizen expectation
- Mission statement provides direction and a connection between Council and Staff
- Statement encourages us to ask the question; "Is this part of our mission?"
- Mission statement promotes a culture of superior staff, responsiveness, and superior quality of life; respect is important.

#### **Values Review**

Using these thoughts about the current mission statement as well as ideas generated in the opening exercise, the workshop participants were asked to offer their thoughts about the City's organizational values statements.

### **Thoughts About Organizational Values**

- Our vision should not to be too narrow
- Our mission is harder to pin down; it is more than core services there are other important assets such as cultural, activities, and volunteerism
- Adaptable to change
- Cutting edge-leader-in the forefront; best in class
- Innovative (TIF agreements are an example)
- Responsive to residents and public input
- Proactive (not just reactive)
- Consistent and fair; this dovetails with responsiveness to residents
- Integrity, transparency, ethical
- RESPECT-colleagues, individuals; we are open to new ideas
- Superior service highest level
- Fiscally responsible
- Fiscally conservative
- Fiscally conservative, but careful in planning for the future
- Competitively aware of other communities; we compete for visitors
- Strategic use of resources
- Visionary look into the future and where we should be
- Dependable and visionary; balance the two
- Predictable now, in past, and in future; consistent
- Thorough in our evaluations and analysis
- Fast is not necessarily good, but thorough is good
- Inclusive
- City supports the needs of our stakeholders and vice-versa
- Building community (figuratively); we build community with each and every decision we make
- Family oriented
- Respected by others looked up to by other organizations
- "The Elmhurst Way" we are a leader in the County, State, and nationally; we do it the "right-way" and the best way
- We respect and value relationship with City staff and teamwork by staff

Although participant's comments about the City's mission and values differed in some respects, the consensus of the workshop participants was that the current mission and values statements adequately reflect not only the City' core mission, but that the statements represent the values the City seeks to adhere to in executing its mission to the citizens of Elmhurst.

### Visioning

Following the opening exercises, each workshop participant was asked to pause and reflect on their future vision for the City. This was a brainstorming exercise where any and all ideas about the City's desired future were encouraged and shared. Participants engaged in this exercise by considering the phrase:

"When I return to Elmhurst, in 15 to 20 years, I hope to see...., or, I think I will see....."

The notes presented below are the thoughts and views offered by participants as recorded by the facilitator on flip chart paper.

### Think/Hope We Will See

### Council Thoughts and Comments:

- Hope to see a vibrant downtown with modern and time honored architecture with much to offer visitors; bustling without being congested
- City still provides high levels of service, while asking for proper funding levels to support those services
- Wide range of housing options that appeal to a full range of ages and incomes
- Sense of community vibrant, active, and involved; changes in methods of transportation including: changes in cars; google drive; electric cars; bicycle lanes; access to Metra via shuttles. shopping, businesses, and offices within walking distance of the train; more gathering spots and a community center for sporting and other activities; fiber wired
- Downtown is vibrant with a plaza and ice skating rink
- Council has maintained the current Council's integrity and vision
- Hahn Street is developed
- Good Council with integrity, but with 7-9 members
- Think I will see a change in our housing stock; rising property tax rate fueled with tax problems and loss of diversity economically
- Hope I see active and engaged residents; broad economic base Diverse housing stock and Chicagoans' openness to local food, and green initiatives

### Think/Hope We Will See

- Hope to see a physically expanded downtown with intergovernmental agreements that take resident's perspectives to heart
- I see a redeveloped North York corridor and revitalized Elmhurst Industrial Park to add to our economy assisted by a west access to O'Hare
- Promote broad-based housing stock
- Twenty years from now our housing values will be unbeatable firm and strong; this would be our report card on success.
- Unique downtown that is vibrant and attractive and that: makes us keep up; makes us different; has two more anchors destinations in downtown to keep shoppers coming; more technology for downtown; transportation; and restaurants and specialty shops.
- I see more housing diversity with rentals, condos, apartments, and larger houses that reflects our concern about affordability
- Our population will be more diverse
- More attention to the environment downtown; we will have taller buildings and newer homes, but some older homes will remain
- Downtown will be vibrant and reflect a good mix of uses and businesses
- Revitalized industrial area.
- Library will adapt the most and expand and change with technology to be an information hub
- Changes in transportation including underpasses and overpasses
- We'll be able to manage water and water will be a key asset
- I see greater community resources including a shared community recreation center, arts center, a cultural campus, and a shared 2,500 seat theatre or auditorium
- Policies that are adaptable to changing with the times and that respond to the future
- Suburban setting to change to meet the needs of future residents

### Management Staff Thoughts and Comments:

- Fire Department will change to all hazard response. More preventative
  in its focus; part of an integrated health focus; more health intervention
  services home care might be in our future to reduce number of patients
  returning to hospital setting; continue preparations for natural or man
  made disasters
- Museum will be part of more dominant arts and culture community. Arts
  will be recognized as contributing to better economic health. Arts
  museum contributes to the "it" of Elmhurst; be part of new ways of
  experiencing personal interaction with the museum both with
  technology and face to face

### Think/Hope We Will See

- Consolidated administrative functions of the Park District to optimize and maximize use of our resources and produce economics of scale; the impact of technology will be much less paper exchange and new payment methods (accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll and electric billings); revenue mix will be about the same, but State actions will have big impact
- State actions and economic development will be critical to our overall health and viability
- Technology will be greater and greater. It will be at the forefront. Our needs are outstripping the time and resources of today; tomorrow's employees will need technology skills; communication needs and expectations will also grow, evolve, and expand; for example, the demand will grow for 'in the field' technology and devices
- Maintain and be proactive in our building codes and regulations to adapt to business needs
- Public Works emphasis on more energy efficiency and renewable energy use; Public Works is seen as a steward of the environment rather than just infrastructure; Public Works has a greater role in transportation planning; we design our infrastructure to be more inviting, attractive, and pedestrian friendly; our staff mix is more technology oriented and possesses different skills; it will be an integrated workforce, but we will always need construction skills
- See rising crime and displacement of crime from Chicago to the west; this will impact us and we will need to be prepared to address it; we may need more support staff to help our sworn staff; there will be more online crimes and financial crimes; need greater financial and technology skills for investigators; slight increase in juvenile crime and drug offenses; more technology including cameras and license plate readers; need to harden targets; see more pressure to provide instant communications with our residents and provide regular ongoing updates
- State is still struggling with pensions and this fact will intrude on local decisions. Storm hardened community; still be highly regarded with a reputation as a leader; our workforce will be more diverse; continue to be more adaptable; our workforce will be innovative and will develop and design alternate models; IT is going to be more important and more dominant part of all our strategies

### PART II: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The next workshop session was a review and accounting of the internal and external factors present in the environment that can and do impact the City's core mission. This is a fundamental exercise in any strategic planning process known as a SWOT Analysis.

In two different exercises, participants were asked to identify what constraints and practical difficulties are likely to be encountered in the future or would make it difficult to achieve the desired future described in the vision statements. The exercise called on participants to explore the organization's strengths and weaknesses. The notes that follow are the thoughts and views shared during the environmental scan exercises as offered by the participants and as written by the facilitators on flip chart paper.

#### **Exercise A: Surrender or Lead Exercise**

The first exercise was a pre-SWOT assignment entitled 'Surrender or Lead.' In this exercise, participants developed responses to some simple, but thought-provoking statements. The participant's responses were recorded and discussed. Responses to the structured statements are presented below. As a guide for readers, participants were asked to fill in the blanks to the statements below:

1.	We want to	, but	
2.	We need to finally		
3.			biggest impact on ou
	future.		
Statemen	t 1: We want to	.but	

- We want to grow and thrive, but other governmental bodies are in our way.
- We want to consolidate the Park District as a City department, but not sure the public is ready yet.
- We want to get control of labor costs, but state politics are in the way.
- We want to improve and expand our services, but other governmental bodies are in our way.
- We want a major downtown destination, but we can't have contiguous space.
- We want to solve our flooding issues, but are constrained by the complexity of the issue and availability of funding.
- We want to go from good to great, but we need to work as a team.
- **We want to** maintain a community of wide ages and incomes, **but** it became harder for seniors and young adults to find housing that works for them.
- We want to go from good to great, but we need to work as a team.
- We want to mitigate the effects of flooding, but economic and political realities make
  it difficult.

- We want to ensure we have a viable City and community of future, but we need appreciate societal change in our decisions.
- We want to attract a more diverse business mix, but continue to assist in business
  development including incentives only when approached.
- **We want to** work with park and schools on flooding, **but** other governmental bodies are in our way.
- We want to have a thriving downtown and businesses, but we're limited by Oakbrook's restriction and covenants.
- We want to excel and on be a cutting edge, but still keep it fiscally affordable.
- We want to change perceptions that we can' work together at institutional level, but we need to overcome parochial views by some and leverage our collective assets.
- We want to make the community safer, but we need to work within our legal and constitutional frameworks.
- We want to work together with other civic intuitions, but being resistant to change and not truly collaborative is stymieing our efforts.
- We want to accelerate our economic development, but we need to always consider its effects on the community.
- We want to be this amazing community, but we can't exist in isolation.
- We want to be financially secure, but we don't control or influence our larger economy.

### Statement 2: We need to finally

- We need to finally plan without politics.
- We need to finally be glad were doing strategic planning and getting guidance from the Council on goals and priorities
- We need to finally "create our future" this is a process with short-term and long-term goals. Get moving.
- We need to finally resolve the City's flooding problems.
- We need to finally invest in a first class sports facility.
- We need to finally address and examine the architectural design, height, and feel of our downtown to assure a vibrant downtown. We need adequate assets like parking etc.
- We need to finally take action based on vision and not be afraid of status quo. We can't please everyone.
- We need to finally improve drivability and mobility to get around the community – streets, size, railroad crossings
- We need to finally expand the footprint of downtown grow north, expand and enhance other business areas Spring, Vallette Road, North York, Butterfield etc.
- We need to finally consolidate the Park Board with the City
- We need to finally work more cooperatively and broadly with larger regional planning bodies (economic, transportation, and public safety).

- We need to finally resolve the storage collection problem at the museum.
- We need to finally complete the Hahn Street development project.
- We need to finally pull the trigger and "do something" not over plan make a decision, can't make everyone happy. Let's move forward.
- We need to finally have something other than Italian restaurants and yogurt shops.
- We need to finally build a community sports center and create other community and economic development possibilities to also bring others to town.
- We need to finally educate stakeholders on the impacts of solutions to the flooding problem.
- We need to finally focus on economic develop initiative and action
- We need to finally stop thinking of the past and get stuck. We need to focus
  on the future in our decisions and actions.
- We need to finally accept that we can position ourselves in front of and promote ourselves to targeted industries and businesses compatible with free market philosophy.

Statement 3:	will have the biggest impact on our
future	

- What the State and Federal governments do will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Technology and the impact of State Government will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Neighbor communities will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Resident involvement will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Smart and balanced economic development will have the biggest impact on our future.
- External financial burdens and mandates (pension and health care) will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Our City's leadership will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Economic development and finances including other government's finances will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Capitalizing on easy transportation access and economic development initiatives will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Our own economic development actions will be our biggest hedge on externalities and will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Technology and the changes it will bring will have the biggest impact on our future.
- We will have the biggest impact (our actions and decisions) on our future.
- Finances will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Today and the strategic planning outcomes will have the biggest impact on our future.
- Intergovernmental relationships will have the biggest impact on our future.

### **Exercise B - SWOT Identification**

Participants were next asked to use the outcomes of 'Surrender or Lead' as a starting point to develop and discuss the internal and external factors that can potentially impact the success of the City, both negatively and positively. The participant's responses, categorized as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats (SWOT) appear below. This was designed as a "rapid fire" exercise and as such, the listing of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is abbreviated and not meant to be a series of complete statements.

### **SWOT EXERCISE**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul> <li>Technology</li> <li>Geographic location</li> <li>Involved citizens</li> <li>Partnerships with other governments</li> <li>Quarry</li> <li>Elmhurst College</li> <li>City staff</li> <li>Transportation access (rail, bus, airport, and highways)</li> <li>Financial position. Fiscal health. AAA Bond rating</li> <li>Museums</li> <li>Lean City staff</li> <li>Reputation</li> <li>Value of real estate and housing costs</li> <li>Age and maturity of community</li> <li>Have a great hospital</li> <li>Retiring TIF's</li> <li>Economic diversity</li> <li>YMCA</li> <li>Size of the Council</li> <li>Residents, volunteers, and talent</li> <li>Prairie path and trails</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Technology</li> <li>Lack of full involvement of citizens</li> <li>Traffic/increased traffic</li> <li>City communications</li> <li>Lean City staff</li> <li>Politics</li> <li>Perhaps not giving the minority voice enough credence in conversations</li> <li>How a minority opinion is stated</li> <li>Old, aged infrastructure</li> <li>Land locked</li> <li>Retiring TIF's</li> <li>Limited office space choices</li> <li>Can sometimes lose balance because of the attention given to business versus residential</li> <li>Business mix and lack of diversity</li> <li>Size of the Council</li> <li>Property owners with lack of incentive or lack of need to redevelop or change</li> <li>Internal bureaucracy</li> <li>Business familiarity and acceptance of code and regulations</li> <li>Facilities and playing fields for</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Recreational facilities. Open and passive programs and pools etc.</li> <li>Critical infrastructure: rail, pipelines, hospitals</li> </ul>	recreation     Airplane noise     Location of downtown and traffic congestion
Library	<ul> <li>Can be constrained by community values in some ways</li> </ul>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul> <li>School system both public and private</li> <li>Senior Center, Senior Programs, and Senior Housing</li> <li>Theater</li> <li>Highly educated and high income demographic</li> <li>Our commissions</li> <li>Faith community and churches</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Downtown is not a "major" destination</li> <li>Outdated zoning and planning</li> </ul>

### **SWOT EXERCISE**

Opportunities	Threats
<ul> <li>Technology</li> <li>Location</li> <li>More civic engagement</li> <li>Partnerships with the business community</li> <li>Quarry</li> <li>Commuter rail</li> <li>Elmhurst College</li> <li>Transportation access</li> <li>Museums</li> <li>City communications</li> <li>Reputation</li> <li>Industrial parks and commercial properties</li> <li>Structure of City committees and possible changes such as renaming or refocusing their mission</li> <li>Rethinking urban sprawl. People live longer</li> <li>Prairie path and trails</li> <li>New revenues from redevelopment</li> <li>Proximity to airport</li> <li>Our commissions</li> <li>Competition with other municipalities and cities</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Technology</li> <li>Geographical location</li> <li>Lack of civic engagement</li> <li>Inaccurate information by the new media and attacks without creditability</li> <li>Colleges and their future financial health</li> <li>Traffic</li> <li>Politics</li> <li>Real estate housing costs</li> <li>Out dated and aging infrastructure</li> <li>The economy</li> <li>State legislature</li> <li>Federal Government</li> <li>Man-made and natural disasters</li> <li>Deteriorating intergovernmental relations</li> <li>School infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>Critical infrastructure, rail, highways, and pipelines</li> <li>Airplane noise</li> <li>Competition with other municipalities</li> </ul>

### PART III: GROUP GOAL IDENTIFICATION/CONSOLIDATION

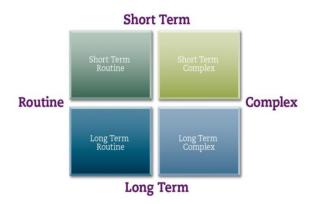
### Exercise A: Goal Identification - Time/Complexity Classification

The final discussion session provided a forum for the collaborative identification of strategic goals and objectives necessary to achieve the future vision of the City. With the preceding sessions serving as a sound foundation for goal setting, the culminating session was a healthy presentation of ideas and goals as expressed by participants, beginning with members of the City Council. Each participant was allotted time to highlight their most important policy or program goals that he or she thinks the City should accomplish in the next one to seven years. In order to encourage people to introduce and discuss ideas of all types, participants were instructed that goals could be highly specific or general.

In the next exercise, participants were asked to classify each goal according to a matrix model of complexity and time (created by Dr. Gerald Gabris and depicted below). Specific criterion was used to classify a goal as short-term or long-term and as complex or routine. This final piece of the goal development exercise allowed decision-makers to cluster goals of roughly the same type together, so that when prioritization occurred, participants could avoid the problem of comparing "apples to oranges," in terms of the type of goals being prioritized against each other.

The agreed upon criteria for the classifications were as follows: short-term goals were those that could or should be completed (or substantially underway) in the next two to three years while long-term goals were any that fell within a three to seven year time span. Complex goals were those that required extraordinary resources, specialists, funding, or the agreement of outside organizations or agencies. Routine goals, although not necessarily simple, were goals that could be accomplished upon unilateral decision of the Council and within present budget streams, or with minor revenue enhancements or reallocations.

### Goal Classification Grid (Dr. Gerald Gabris)



### **Exercise B: Goal Consolidation**

After the conclusion of the workshop, the Council and other appointed staff were asked to work with the facilitators to consolidate goals and refine or clarify some goals where appropriate. This process resulted in a final listing of goals from the prior exercise into logical groupings. The combined and consolidated goals were reviewed and converted to ranking sheets that maintained the agreed upon criteria for both time and complexity. The unranked goals developed as part of Exercise A and B can be found in Exhibit B.

### PART IV GOALS PRIORITIZATION AND FINAL RANKINGS OF GOALS

The results of the Council and senior staff's goal identification and prioritization exercises are presented on the pages that follow. A summary presentation of the top three goals, within each quadrant of the time and complexity matrix is below:

### **Top Three Goals Within Time/Complexity Matrix**



	CITY OF ELMHURST 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN SHORT-TERM COMPLEX GOALS		
GROUP AVG.	GOAL ID#	GOAL DESCRIPTION	
2.20	A/E	Stormwater Project Advancement  Complete at least two stormwater projects with Park District and two with the School District  Complete the Quarry and I-290 Projects	
3.80	1	Complete the Hahn Street Project or substantially complete this project	
3.80	F	Refine stormwater plan options and be prepared for a fiscally viable 'Plan B' including working with DuPage County on possible 'Plan B' approaches	
5.64	В	Review and refine the zoning code as it pertains to the downtown and other key areas	
6.21	Н	Begin implementation of the North York Corridor Plan and begin to undertake 2-3 specific improvements or projects within the corridor	
6.21	J	Develop and implement a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (City-wide) that includes the Economic Develop Commission's input	
7.29	С	Complete a 'Downtown Plan' from (North Avenue to Church and Grace to Arlington) to eliminate perceived divide caused by Union Pacific Railroad in all aspects (commercial, residential, cultural)	
7.64	Y	Undertake a feasibility study for consolidation and sharing of administrative services and other backbone functions with the Park District	
8.77	D	Undertake and complete a feasibility study for a community activity and recreation center	
9.40	0	Continue to monitor and work with Commonwealth Edison to resolve electric service reliability in the community	
9.93	M	Examine and study the use and creation of new TIF Districts for the City's southern commercial areas	
10.14	N	Create an Elmhurst 'Signature Event' for tourism and economic development	
11.64	Q	Conduct a feasibility study for a new municipal government complex facility	
12.29	w	Conduct a feasibility study to examine the relocation of Fire Station #1 and the Fire Training Tower for possible redevelopment of sites	
12.87	ВВ	Improve and broaden the role of the Heritage Foundation for promotion of annual giving and planned giving	

	CITY OF ELMHURST 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN SHORT-TERM ROUTINE GOALS		
GROUP AVG.	GOAL ID#	GOAL DESCRIPTION	
2.13	G	Continue to implement and refine stormwater policies, regulations, and approaches across the City	
2.79	К	Develop an aggressive and enhanced public information and communication plan for key City initiatives and improve general information flow to the public including:  • Develop specific public information and education plans focused on stormwater  • Develop a personalized communication plan that includes a platform for residents to identify and select their personal communication preferences  • Develop a unified branding approach	
3.27	R	Undertake a financial trend analysis and contingency plan study to prepare for revenue changes including contraction of intergovernmental revenue sources	
4.00	Т	Identify the top five development sites in the City and establish a City timeline and schedule for making those sites marketable	
4.71	4.71 P Develop a revised and updated technology strategic assessment study and keep our plann technology evaluations and implementation going		
5.69	5.69 X Implement and complete process improvement reviews across City departments and use the results to identify technology upgrades		
6.07	L	Complete and implement a sustainability plan for the City including composting	
6.57	AA	Develop an enhanced marketing and branding program for the museums	

	CITY OF ELMHURST 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN LONG-TERM COMPLEX GOALS		
GROUP AVG.	GOALID#L GOALDESCRIPTION		
2.27	LL	Complete additional stormwater mitigation projects that fit with our eventual/approved long-term stormwater plan	
3.00	IL/JL	Work to identify, attract, and site another 'destination' anchor tenant for downtown; make successful progress towards growing, strengthening, improving, and enhancing our downtown and the Elmhurst downtown experience (this incorporates the 'donut hole')	
4.53	OL/QL	Undertake steps to successfully attract a large industrial anchor tenant to our industrial park; finalize a development plan for the Business and Industrial Park and for Riverside Drive	
5.43	BL/KL	Conduct a feasibility and cost impact study of potential outsourcing and service delivery options including partnerships and consolidations; explore ways to provide services on a larger and broader regional and shared basis (e.g. joint purchasing; shared administrative functions)	
5.50	RL	Undertake a traffic management and efficiency study that focuses on reducing congestion, improving mobility, addressing access to expressway ramps, and mitigating the impacts of 'cut thru' traffic	
5.71	NL	Build, complete, and open a community cultural and athletic facility	
5.93	ML	Complete a Land Use Plan that accommodates and promotes the desire for development of an office corridor in the City that includes Class A office space	
7.71	EL	Undertake an economic development and re-vitalization plan for the new Elmhurst Hospital area	
8.07	AL	Work with the Union Pacific Railroad to conduct a long-term rail station upgrade study	
8.29	TL	Initiate and conduct an arts and culture impact and opportunity plan	
8.60	CL	Conduct a long-term analysis and plan for 'future focused' transportation including: electric vehicles charging stations; bike lanes and bike paths; walkability; and car rental options (Zip Car, Goggle Car)	

	CITY OF ELMHURST 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN LONG-TERM ROUTINE GOALS		
GROUP AVG.	GOAL DESCRIPTION		
2.13	DL	Conduct a long term tax and revenue diversification analysis to assess the City's financial weaknesses and vulnerabilities especially related to sales and property tax flows	
2.40	2.40 FL Take steps during our zoning and planning updates to minimize the frequency and need for variances and process change requests		
3.13	3.13 VL Identify, implement, and expand enhanced technology in Police services including security cameras and other technology		
3.20	3.20 GL Review and evaluate the unincorporated areas of Elmhurst that have a potential for annexation		
4.13	4.13 PL Work to better integrate the properties on County-Line Road into the community		

### **CONCLUSION**

This Strategic Planning Summary Report represents the 2015 update of leadership's vision and goals for the City. The City Council's ideas and prioritized goals were revisited, refined, and refreshed within the context of the current operating environment and, therefore, are a working guide for both the City Council and Management staff to pursue through the budget process and, through staff and community actions. This report is designed to capture the topics and processes of your discussions and as previously stated, should be used to assist the City in the budget process and in developing the City's action plans for 2015 and beyond.

One noted organizational observer summarized the challenges of progress this way:

"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and change amid order..."

A.N. Whitehead

You have an ambitious and exciting couple of years of work ahead of you. Best of luck to all as you work through these important issues and goals as an organization.

Gregory T. Kuhn, Ph.D. and Cristi Musser, MPA Process Facilitators

### **E**XHIBITS

- Exhibit A Focus Groups Data Summary ReportExhibit B Selected Questions and Additional Workshop Notes

### **Exhibit A**

Focus Groups Data Summary Report



# City of Elmhurst

Strategic Plan 2015

**Focus Groups Data Summary** 

February 13, 2015



"[Strategic planning is] a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it. To deliver the best results, strategic planning requires broad yet effective information gathering, development and exploration of strategic alternatives, and an emphasis on future implications of present decisions" (Bryson, 1995)<sup>1</sup>.

### STAKEHOLDER INPUT: FOCUS GROUP APPROACH

Focus groups were selected as a key method of data collection from the community as part of the City's 2014-15 Strategic Planning initiative. Focus groups were selected as an effective and efficient tool to gather community perspectives because they generate contextual data and points of interest from cross-sections of the community that are difficult to discern via survey instruments. Focus groups are a frequently used data gathering technique that provides descriptive data and input using a conversational, interactive format in a small group setting with experienced facilitators. As a means of data collection, they provide an ideal mechanism for encouraging participants to consider and express their current and future visions for an organization and the community.

The focus group sessions for Elmhurst's project were conducted in a designed setting where a facilitator from Sikich asked all participants a single set of pre-selected questions. While the results—the collected data—do not rise to the level of statistically valid random sample information, the data is rich in depth and includes not only contextual perspectives, but also includes a vigorous mix of themes along with nuanced perspectives. Further descriptions of the methodology used for each approach is detailed below.

### **Focus Groups Methodology**

In January of this year, Sikich staff held nine (9) focus group sessions with a variety of stakeholders from a cross-section of the community. These stakeholders included representatives from economic development organizations, civic groups, high school students, staff, and other community institutions as well as neighborhood clusters and citizens at large. In order to maintain an optimum group size of about twelve participants, multiple sessions were held for various stakeholder groups. In total, the City sent personal invitations to roughly 105 community members to attend sessions held on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>. Open forum sessions took place at City Hall on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Those sessions were publicized in the media and on the City's website.

During the focus group sessions, stakeholders shared ideas about the preferred future state of the City along with their perceptions about the City's strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities. Again, all sessions used the same questions that were pre-selected by the City to elicit input (see the Exhibits for the list of questions). Sikich facilitators used a highly participative interactive methodology known as *Nominal Group Technique*. This technique is designed to assure participants equal opportunities to speak and share their opinions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Bryson, John M. (1995). Strategic Planning For Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide To Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers

All sessions were characterized by a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere that fostered participant's thoughts and ideas. With the exception of the employee group, no City staff or elected officials participated in these sessions. City staff attended only to welcome and thank participants and to introduce Sikich. Sikich staff recorded all participants' ideas, in rough note form, using large flip chart pads. Session notes were later transcribed and analyzed by Sikich's project team and the data input into NVivo qualitative data software.

The qualitative data from the transcribed notes were then scanned and coded to reveal *key themes*. The approach used in analyzing the data and developing key themes took three basic forms:

- 1. Key theme identification
- 2. Key word or phrase coding
- 3. Interpretive impressions

One of the first analyses undertaken was to glean and identify key themes inductively—"from the ground up". The initial analytical iteration employed a computer assisted coding system of key phrases, words, or terms. Using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 10, all participant responses were coded (categorized) by question, group, category of the comment, and theme and sub-theme to determine how often they occurred across all groups and all questions. Comments covering more than one theme were included in each applicable theme area.

In addition to inductive coding, NVivo 10 allowed the project team to return to the focus group notes and study the context in which an emergent theme was discussed. The results were revealing and highlighted key topics or issues that should be weighed and considered when proceeding with strategic planning discussions. The results of this analysis are presented below.

### **KEY THEMES ANALYSIS**

As previously stated, the first step in the analysis was to review the comments and identify overarching themes. NVivo 10 software was then used to further clarify themes including those that that may have been overlooked in the first pass of the data. After all comments were organized and categorized, NVivo was used to generate numerical tallies of the frequency of each theme or sub-theme by question and across all questions. The presentation below reports the data highlights, organized by distinct theme category and major overall theme. Additional narrative was included to give the reader a flavor of the theme or sub-theme. The items preceded by an arrow are samples from the actual comments offered by participants on each theme.

### THEME CATEGORY

Categories	Numerical Frequency
City Government	406
Economic	269
Community	251
Character	145

### **MAJOR OVERALL THEMES**

The chart below shows a numerical count of all themes across all focus groups and questions. These themes represent the participants' concerns and ideas that were most frequently mentioned as answers.

### Elmhurst Focus Group Data Highlights Major Themes in all Categories

Major Themes	Numerical Frequency
<b>Economic Development</b>	103
Planning and Zoning	99
Quality of Life	96
Education - Schools- College	55
Cultural Profile-Museums, etc.	41
Stormwater-Flooding	39
Downtown	37
<b>Business Attraction-Marketing</b>	36
Services	33
Elected Officials-Council	32
North York Area	30

#### DATA HIGHLIGHTS FOR MAJOR THEMES

As previously stated, the first step in the analysis was to review the comments and identify overarching themes. NVivo 10 software was then used to further clarify themes including those that that may have been overlooked in the first pass of the data. After all comments were organized and categorized, NVivo was used to generate numerical tallies of the frequency of each theme across all questions and by question. Additional narrative was included to give the reader a flavor of the input and comments for each of the top ten themes. The items preceded by an arrow are the actual comments offered by participants on each theme.

### Theme I: Economic Development (103)

The most frequently cited theme was that Elmhurst needs a strong, balanced economic development plan and the vision, commitment, and leadership to implement economic development programs. Overwhelmingly, participants cited economic development as critical to the long-term vibrancy of Elmhurst and the greater Elmhurst community.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

We need a definitive Economic Development Plan to set priorities to stimulate economic activity and growth (of our community) in the longer term.

### Theme I: Economic Development (103) (Continued)

- Have the City effectively market Elmhurst and the uniqueness of our cultural institutions.
- > Generate greater focus and vision and mission about economic development activities.
- Our economic development should be so strong that we have rebates on property taxes.
- Enhance and concentrate economic development in the hands of a top economic development person.
- > Faster economic development initiatives and outcomes.

Although not mentioned as frequently as the major ideas and themes above, participants made numerous comments about the need for a balanced business environment. Examples of comments in this area are cited below.

- More things (variety) in town that are different and interesting—too many yogurt shops, too many banks; we need diverse shopping and businesses.
- Make sure we have variety with what's being developed.
- We don't need any more banks, nail salons, marginal stores, and yogurt shops.
- Retail destination is an opportunity, but we need to do a better job planning for retail. What kind of businesses and restaurants should be here?
- ➤ Hope for a vibrant City center and much stronger mix of residents, local business, retail, entertainment, restaurants and offices.
- There is an opportunity to create more diversified retail in our community.

### Theme II: Planning and Zoning (99)

Participants repeatedly cited their opinion that the City needs a comprehensive land use plan to guide development and an updated zoning code that dovetails with that plan.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this theme general theme include:

- Lack of updated comprehensive plan. Our old zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan needs attention and is a significant issue.
- Update our comprehensive plan and our zoning ordinance which are building blocks for development.
- > Update comprehensive plan and create action items.
- Let's not approve any more variances until a complete zoning code and comprehensive plan are adopted. One exception may be for truly "unique circumstances."
- Review and integrate zoning codes to compliment and support a new comprehensive plan.
- We need a comprehensive zoning code review.
- Hope we have a new comprehensive plan for City and not just area plans.

### Theme III: Quality of Life (96)

The quality of life theme was mainly centered on the question of how the participant would describe Elmhurst to someone who was considering moving to the City or locating a business in the City. The overwhelming response was very positive with answers centered on the high quality of life in Elmhurst and its many assets.

### Theme III: Quality of Life (96) (Continued)

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- Convenient, accessible, great location.
- Our location is paramount.
- Location (train and proximity to Chicago, expressways, etc.) is tops and the best in Chicago.
- Our overall location in the Metro area is great and yet you feel as if you are away from the City- it's an amazing phenomenon.
- Easy excess to 290, 294, and I-88.
- Great place to live—great restaurants and services. The people here are the best.
- Family friendly, safe, trees, sense of community.
- Great community spirit.
- Welcoming to everyone.
- Livable town with entertainment, shopping, schools, hospital, doctors, and churches.
- We're a complete community.
- Character and culture of volunteerism.

### Theme IV: Education and Schools (55)

The quality and reputation of the Elmhurst schools was cited in answer to several questions including what participants hoped to see for Elmhurst 10-15 years in the future. Schools and the element of being a college town were seen as true assets and contributors to Elmhurst's quality of life.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- ➤ I hope to see that York High School continues to be aggressively pushed for its academic profile and performance.
- Schools and their rankings and results are strength.
- Good schools, public, private, college, Christian, Catholic. They all make us a great community.
- Unified School District 205 is a great advantage.
- Continue to maintain quality schools.

Several participants expressed the concern however, that the schools needed to be improved or updated. Representative comments of that idea are the following:

- Viable schools and buildings that are maintained and not falling apart are needed.
- Improve schools especially for students on north side.
- I'd like to see our schools updated and improved.

In addition to comments about Elmhurst's primary and secondary schools, participants also cited Elmhurst College as a strong community asset.

### Theme IV: Education and Schools (55) (Continued)

- ➤ Elmhurst College is an under utilized asset.
- Our college and museums elevate our intellectual expectations.
- Events and speakers at the College are a great draw.
- Capitalize on talent at the College: both students and faculty.
- College offers culture and is a vibrant part of the community.

### Theme V: Cultural Profile and Opportunities-Museums (41)

The City's cultural assets were a major theme overall and were particularly cited under the more general category of Community. Although participants also cited the City's special events, Park District, and the Library, the City's overall "profile" of cultural assets and museums were frequently mentioned in answer to several questions.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- Great cultural institutions: Library, Park District, Elmhurst Art Museum; Lapidary Museum.
- Cultural places and points in town (three museums) including a movie theatre museum.
- Cultural institutions are still here (library, art museum, historical museum), but they may need City dollars to survive.
- Mies van der Rohe house and our museums and Lapidary Arts museum.
- Wilder Mansion.
- > Elmhurst Symphony.
- > Full-funding for Elmhurst historical museum. Provide more funds.
- Cultural assets, museums, and the Library are important and well supported.

### Theme VI: Stormwater - Flooding (39)

The City's flooding and stormwater management issues were cited in answer to numerous questions. Participants expressed the concern that this issue needs to be addressed because it is negatively impacting both individual properties and the perception of Elmhurst with potential residents and businesses. Participants also expressed the desire to see this issue resolved without impacting the City's open space assets. Addressing stormwater and flooding issues was cited by several participants as a top priority.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

### Theme VI: Stormwater - Flooding (39) (Continued)

- Mitigate stormwater management issue. It is a huge stigma for Elmhurst.
- Public's perception with respect to stormwater management is negative and isn't being resolved.
- Upgrade existing stormwater short-term and long-term infrastructure without using open space.
- Fix stormwater problems without using open space.
- > Stormwater management-there is no quick fix. We do not have enough cooperation to make our vision happen. We need to increase our time horizon thinking on this issue.
- > Develop a program of individual incentives for property owners to make improvements that address stormwater problems.
- Continue to address solutions and long-term approaches to flooding and stormwater management.
- > Watch for flooding issues especially because large homes tend to exacerbate flooding.
- ➤ City is not getting a handle on flooding problems in town administrator after administrator and still same problem.
- Intergovernmental plan to address flooding. We need a viable approach or plan and then finalize and complete it.
- Solve and resolve the issue of impermeable surfaces and flooding.

### Theme VII: Downtown (37)

Just behind the issue of stormwater and flooding were comments made by participants about the City's downtown area. Many comments centered on the idea of a vibrant downtown that includes mixed uses and the City's role in developing a master plan for downtown. Comments included a variety of economic development suggestions. Although the goals of the participants making these comments seem to be conceptually close, many ideas were offered to achieve this vision.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- > Downtown is vibrant with national retail, three times larger and attracting families and people. It would be a place to be.
- Develop a vibrant downtown.
- > Bustling downtown with people, foot traffic, lots of development and the population density to create that foot traffic.
- Vibrant diverse downtown that is open at night.
- > The future of downtown is tied to a balance and mix of density.
- Thriving downtown and expanded and improved the areas North of I 290, but do this in a holistic way.
- > Daycare center downtown near parking structure to draw people downtown.
- > Promote more indoor and outdoor spaces for downtown restaurants.
- > Downtown density should be about one-half of what I'm hearing discussed.
- I don't think density should be limited. Let the market decide.

### Theme VII: Downtown (37) (Continued)

- Get downtown residential projects underway and completed.
- Aggressive rebuilding and redevelopment efforts in the downtown business district and other business districts.
- > Signage in downtown design, appearance, and maintenance.
- Our downtown was built forty years ago and as a result it has a small footprint and low density.
- Develop a master plan for downtown. At present it doesn't seem connected. Add a fountain and green space.
- ➤ Thriving downtown and expanded and improved areas North of I-290, but do this in a holistic way.
- Decide, determine and resolve what our downtown is going to be and implement our vision.

### Theme VIII: Business Attraction and Marketing (36)

Most focus group participants clearly understood the important role marketing and branding play in business attraction. Although the words marketing and branding were used interchangeably, participants believe more of the City's attention needs to be focused on marketing the City and its assets.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this theme general theme include:

- > Have the City effectively market Elmhurst and the uniqueness of our cultural institutions.
- Exploit and market our town, our assets, our quality of life, and uniqueness.
- > Establish guidelines and a program for attracting businesses to our industrial park.
- Improve and enhance our marketing communications and branding. What we are doing now isn't working so the money for this is not well spent.
- Perception of Elmhurst versus competitive communities. Elmhurst wins the location part of the equation, but loses on Parks and pure or general perceptions.
- Marketing campaign that emphasizes return on investment for business and/or residents
- We don't have a "Face of Elmhurst"; develop our brand and identity and share it.
- Attracting working couples to move from Chicago. We should market the City to those young people who are building families and are looking for a place to relocate that's close to the City and is a great place to live.

### Theme IX: Services (33)

Overall, focus group participants viewed the City's services and staff as high quality and viewed the City government as well managed. There were however a collection of individual ideas for improvements or efficiencies.

### Theme IX: Services (33) (Continued)

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- Good municipal services.
- Good government is a key.
- Very good Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments.
- Citizens are demanding regarding public services.
- Our City services are second to "none." This adds to our quality of life.
- Our City services are an asset. This is not well known or recognized enough.
- Install "deduct" meters and base sewerage charges on water usage (there are examples).
- Reinstitute our Animal Control Program.
- Growth and re-growth of the urban forest "Tree City USA", the Ash Borer has hurt our urban canopy; let's replant.
- More emphasis on senior services to keep seniors in our community. Let's truly have age diversity.
- Conduct Police outdoor roll calls (meet and greets) twice a week in neighborhoods. The advantage of this program is that officers meet residents take questions and hear their concerns.
- ➤ Hiring in-house paramedics. Paramedics on contract are not equivalent in terms of quality of services and staff turnover.
- Leaf pick up could be improved.
- > Snow removal techniques are very good, but some improvement in some areas should be explored.

### Theme X: City Council (32)

Overall, participants thought the Council was doing a good job. Suggestions for improvement were not oriented to any one specific area of concern. The comments below represent a sampling of the thoughts and ideas offered.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- Sense of vision by the Council on our quality of life, don't just focus on revenues.
- Passive versus active listening by Council.
- Make sure our Council and elected officials keep their eye on the public good and the common good, not factions and special interests.
- We need a balanced vision.
- Need to energize our next generation of leaders for the town. Let's court them, involve them, and support them (Jaycees may be an avenue).
- Think/hope that we have a vibrant community led by the community, not special interest groups (special interest groups are not necessarily negative, but should not control).
- Our thinking and vision is too constrained.
- > Stability in our leadership has been good.
- More professionalism by some Council members. We have good staff.
- More involvement by residents in Council meetings

### Theme XI: North York Area (30)

Most of the comments offered by participants with respect to the 'north of North Avenue area' or North York Road centered on the thought that the North York area needed greater attention for economic development and/or redevelopment. Participants also cited the need for a comprehensive plan for this area.

The following are representative phrases, phrasing or statements from responses. They are illustrative only and are not presented in any particular order of frequency or importance. Examples of statements made around this general theme include:

- > I'd like to see the North side of town developed and improved for commercial business.
- ➤ Develop a strategy and approach to capitalize on redevelopment of the North York corridor we have a real opportunity now.
- ➤ To the North side or North end it would be great to have a large institutional type of facility; a community asset (like indoor recreation, facility) which could be a catalyst for the whole corridor.
- A fully developed North York business district would add so much.
- Mariano's is a start, but more is needed. We have a real opportunity.
- North York Road near Grand Avenue by Churchville. It's an eyesore and needs a shot in arm. It doesn't look like, or feel like Elmhurst (North of North Avenue to Grand Avenue).
- We need to work hard to make I-290 and Grand Area and Mariano's area vibrant and not full of "off" uses (such as nail salons).
- Plan for North York and take steps and actions to stimulate the area.

### **Summation**

As mentioned in the opening sections of this summary, information presented here reflects condensed data or highlights from areas where the Study Team identified findings that may be beneficial to leadership's environmental scan. As such this focus group summary should be viewed as an entre to exploratory feedback and insights from the community.

### **Exhibit B**

Selected Questions and Additional Workshop Notes

## City of Elmhurst 2015

### **Focus Group Questions**

1.	Imagine that you left the City of Elmhurst tomorrow and didn't return until 2025 or 2030. What do you think you would see, or hope to see, in the community when you return?
2.	If you were meeting with a new neighbor, friend or colleague considering Elmhurst for the location of their residence, business or a place to work, how would you describe the community?
3.	Are there any "hidden" assets or strengths of the City that others may overlook or not be aware of?
4.	As you look into the future, are there any unidentified or important opportunities for the City to capitalize on?
5.	As you look into the future, are there any challenges or shortcomings that should be addressed or examined?
6.	Can you list 1 or 2 short-term issues or goals you feel the City should explore? (By short-term, the facilitators mean any goals, objectives, services or issues that the participant would like to see explored/addressed within the next two years).
7.	Can you list 1 or 2 longer term issues or goals you feel the City should explore? (By long-term, the facilitators mean any goals, objectives, services or issues that the participant would like to see explored or addressed by City government within the next 3-6 years)?
8.	If you could improve, create or change one important feature or goal of the City, (e.g., if you had a magic wand to help you with this) what would that one item or goal be?

# Exhibit B Workshop Notes Exercise 1.

Participants were asked to introduce themselves by picking from a selection of yard sale items the one item that they believe represents the City of Elmhurst. Below are the results of that exercise.

### Yard Sale Items that Represent the City's Mission and Vision\*

- 1. Ruler Measure what we accomplish and set expectations in our Mission Statement
- 2. Compass Community looks to the Council to provide direction; we are tasked with balancing intervening and allowing; the quality of our citizen's lives is impacted by our decisions (2)
- 3. Yellow Hard Hat Chosen for its safety and construction implications (4)
- 4. We provide first class services, amenities, and infrastructure (4)
- 5. Pipe We provide clean water; also Public safety services (Police/Fire)
- 6. Statute of Lincoln Integrity and honesty; Council has it
- 7. Ambulance Safety (private ambulance); robust private side growth; first class amenities
- 8. Cable Connector Upgrade infrastructure
- 9. Police Car Public safety is the main justification for government (includes police, fire, but also public works (roads, sidewalks, sewer);the glue is economic development (7)
- 10. Hammer We build partnerships between the police force and community; we also build safety and security for the community
- 11. Acorn (Buckeye) Mission is to grow and nurture our town and the people in it; we provide dependability for citizens this stability is what residents look for and are expecting
- 12. Police Officer Safety; infrastructure is also a key; keep small town feel and character; this is part of our vision (6)
- 13. Flexible Protractor (Engineering tool) How does the City provides basic services (engineering); we should focus on the bigger picture of how we serve our citizens in a proactive way (small to large view)
- 14. Brick Figuratively Our services and mission should be forward looking and creative; we can build on this mission and vision
- 15. Police Safety, law order (3)
- 16. Squad Car Respect and it signifies a good quality of life
- 17. Statute of Lincoln Honesty, integrity, character, culture infrastructure, safety, history, vision for future
- 18. Fire Truck/Ambulance Safety, security not only Police and Fire but also Public Works and roads
- 19. Hard Hat Public works infrastructure; City needs to grow and expand infrastructure for future development not only to service residents, but also to serve other departments

<sup>\*</sup>Number in parenthesis indicates the number of other participants agreeing with the statement for that exercise.

- 20. Whistle Protection services (all core services) and fostering sense of community
- 21. Coil Represents flexibility and the ability to change as required by the community; this is important
- 22. Ruler– basic services are important, but we can't do anything without a strong financial base; we need strong financial core to sustain our services; sound fiscal responsibility is necessary to provide long-term viability of our investments and ability to change as world changes
- 23. Connector City serves as a connection to lots of things in town schools, parks, county; we provide and our job is to provide a strong base to the community, so that we can maintain a good quality of life
- 24. Pipe Infrastructure system and basic government services purpose facilitate coordinate, improve, and plan
- 25. Fire Engineer Public safety. We provide lots of things, but the most important is public safety – best equipment, best trained staff; this is our core; we need to maintain a strong core
- 26. Coil Notebook Give and take is ever present; we need to be sensitive to the outside world. Elmhurst is a black hole in that people come and want to stay; the City binds us together; as a city government, we want to provide the core services Elmhurst expects

<sup>\*</sup>Number in parenthesis indicates the number of other participants agreeing with the statement for that exercise.