

# **DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN**



Prepared by:



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# **Executive Summary**

The Village of Johnsburg has invested significant time and financial resources over many years in order to complete this master plan. The approach was phased over time and logical steps were taken to methodically complete this study with significant input from residents and leadership of the community. The master plan envisions a healthy and vibrant downtown while protecting and preserving the qualities that give Johnsburg its' distinctive character.

It is recognized by Village leadership that short and long-term planning is needed to implement the many goals and objectives established through the process such as:



Rescue Squad Park and Tiger Field in downtown Johnsburg is an important open space asset and gathering space for the community.

- Engage the community throughout the master plan process
- Promote short and long-term planning that is not stoic but continually active
- > Implement the master plan in phases over many years

Early in process the leadership and committee identified initial goals and objectives that could be vetted with the citizens and general public of Johnsburg.

- > Strong sense of place that is unique to Johnsburg
- Create a "destination" that people are drawn to, day and night
- ➤ Vibrant downtown with a diversity of uses and activities (live, work, play) for a broad range of audiences (e.g., families, children, and seniors).
- Pedestrian friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment
- Physically and visually interconnected spaces that are safe and convenient
- > Plentiful parking and easy access
- Parks and open space that is accessible, interconnected and aesthetically pleasant
- Mixed land uses and higher density residential
- ➤ Efficient and effective transportation circulation that maximizes good access and mobility



The recent roundabout improvements are a key focal of the transportation circulation in downtown Johnsburg.

To make these goals and vision a reality, years of hard work and effort resulted in four total phases as listed and described below:

- ➤ Phase 1 Data Collection and Opportunities/Constraints
- ➤ Phase 2 Survey and Image Preference
- ➤ Phase 3 Public Involvement
- ➤ Phase 4 Master Plan

With the completion of these four phases the Village of Johnsburg hopes that this master plan will succeed by exciting the community and encourage private and public investment. Johnsburg's downtown area is a critical component of the community's quality of life which can become a vibrant center of the entire Village. This master plan can serve as a strong guide as the Village reinvests and focuses on its downtown. By implementing this master plan the Village can further advance the great qualities of this historic community.



# Section 1.0 - Phase 1

# **Data Collection and Opportunities/Constraints Analysis**

Phase 1 included data collection and opportunities/constraints analysis. Below is a brief summary of the collected information and associated exhibits.

### **Study Area**

Study Area Boundaries: The study area is generally bounded by Church Street on the north, Bay Road to the south, Spring Grove Road to the west and Hayden Drive to the north. **Exhibit 1** in Appendix A highlights the specific boundaries of the study area. **Exhibits 2 through 7** show the topography, flood areas, wetlands, hydric soils, public spaces, and utilities.

Zoning: The Village of Johnsburg Zoning Regulations establishes permitted land uses, height and area requirements, and development criteria for individual properties. Various zoning categories within the study area such as A1 (vacant lots) R1, R2, R3, I2, B1, B2 and several others. The Village has specifically established the B-5 Downtown District to regulate the core downtown area. The intent of this district as per the ordinance "is to create a combination of business and passive/active recreational uses that will blend harmoniously with the existing and future residential uses in the area." See the zoning ordinance for all existing requirements. As provided in the Recommendations section of this report, revisions to the existing Zoning Code may be needed to accommodate the vision and goals of this Master Plan.

### Infrastructure:

### Sanitary Sewer

The Village has a Sanitary Sewer Master Plan for the Downtown area to serve both the west/east sides of the Fox River. The Village has the "backbone" system established with a regional lift station, gravity sewer, and force main out to the Wastewater Treatment Plant on Route 31. Separate maps/details are available upon request.

### Water System

The Village has a water system established which serves the Shiloh Ridge Residential Development and that has been planned to be expanded into the Downtown area as development occurs. Certain areas of "Historic Sunnyside" area are served by Utilities Inc. of Illinois and they provide potable water only, (not a fire protection system); maps of that service area are available upon request. The Village does plan to have a water system that will serve the Downtown area on the west side of the river, but no plans or funding are available at this time. Concept plans for a water system to serve the east side of the Fox River have also been discussed and that will occur as new developments are brought forward to the Village.

Vehicular Access and Circulation: The study area includes a combination of local streets, collectors, and arterials which provides reasonable vehicular connectivity and circulation. Major roads providing access and circulation through the study area include:

- Johnsburg Road
- Chapel Hill Road
- Bay Road
- Fairview Avenue
- Spring Grove Road
- Church Street





*Pedestrian Mobility/Walkability:* Walkability in the core downtown area is currently lacking with the exception of the recent improvements along Johnsburg Road. In other areas sidewalks are either non-existent or are in poor condition.

Parking: Limited off-street and on-street parking options are located within the downtown area to serve the needs of current and future residents, businesses, and shoppers. Future public parking areas will need to be developed as shown in the master plan. Also, parallel parking on some of the streets may be possible as shown on the Streetscape Master Plan. Identifying areas appropriate for future parking expansions will be critical as the area redevelops and should be one of the highest priorities of the Village.

*Open Space:* The study area contains several existing open space areas which provide residents with recreational opportunities:

- Rescue Squad Park
- Tiger Field
- Sunnyside Park
- Others?

In the future additional open space, parks and public spaces should be added as possible as described in this report.

### *Opportunities and Constraints*

One of the important Phase 1 tasks was to create an Opportunities and Constraints Map (See Exhibit 8). This map



Future expansion and improvements are planned for Sunnyside Park which is a prominent park for the residents of Johnsburg

utilized the information collected in Phase 1 to identify key opportunities and constraints in the study area that sets the stage for the ultimate master plan. Key features, key connections, existing and proposed sidewalks and trails were examined as well as important intersections and potential locations for gateway signage. This exhibit was utilized during Phase 3 (Public Involvement) to portray the Vision and Opportunities/Constraints to the residents and business owners of the Village.

Three areas were examined and categorized as distinct areas of Downtown Johnsburg:

- ➤ Historic Sunnyside
- ➤ Downtown Center
- ➤ South River Area

Some of the key Opportunities and Constraints that were compiled are:

- Strong sense of place where people can live, work and play
- Branded theme for the downtown/build upon existing streetscape enhancements/traditional historic design
- Provide gateways/way finding signage
- Consistent development standards/ quality design of spaces and architecture
- Access to the riverfront
- Mixed uses
- Convenient parking with easy access
- Gathering spaces /pedestrian friendly environment





These key opportunities and goals were confirmed by leadership, business/property owners, and residents of Johnsburg. The recent streetscape improvements and roundabout has established a platform from which the Village can build upon over time as the constraints can be managed and the opportunities can be realized.

### Section 2.0 - Phase 2

### **Survey and Image Preference**

In Phase 2 the vision survey and visual preference aspect portrayed the opinions and desires of respondents. This became critical information to share with everyone through the Phase 3 process. A summary of the survey completed by 658 people is below for reference. A full copy of the results is on file at Village Hall.

### **Vision Survey - Summary Results**

- Over 52% of responses came from people that call Johnsburg their hometown
- 82% have lived in Johnsburg for more than 5 years
- Approx. 4% lived in Johnsburg but moved to a different community
- 4% own a recreational property
- 3% visit Johnsburg frequently but live outside the community
- Nearly 17% work in Johnsburg
- Over 43% shop and/or purchase professional services in Johnsburg
- 43% from women
- Age distribution:
- 26 50: 42%
- 51 65: 39%
- Over 65: 16%

### Attention to Aesthetics

• 81% cite the importance of aesthetics and only 9% believe this factor is addressed

### Sidewalks & Pedestrian Areas

• 60% indicate it's important but only 8% believe all expectations are met

#### Access to recreation

• 59% cite it as important - only 18% indicate the community is meeting expectations

### Transportation & Pedestrian Safety

• 65% disagree with the statement that intersections involving vehicles and pedestrians are safe

### Business recruitment

Base employment and Retail

#### Public safety

• Some properties were identified as locations for criminal activities

### Recreational facilities & programs

• 59% of the respondents indicated that this is important, 18% believe the expectations are fully met



### Observations of image preference survey

Multiple images were portrayed in the survey for single family homes, multi-family, open space, commercial, signage and institutional uses. Respondents rated each image and below are the images that were most noteworthy. As noted above, full survey results are available at Village Hall.

**Single Family** - Virtually all single-family residential buildings received favorable ratings (7 or better). Higher rated properties generally reflect quality architecture, better property maintenance and condition of the home.



**Multi-family Residential** - Multifamily buildings received a mix of ratings. Scale seems to be a significant factor (i.e., the more it looks like single-family the higher it's rating). Mixed use projects were not very popular.



**Open Space and Gathering Spaces** - Passive open space does not generate an overwhelmingly positive response. Well-manicured and active space generates more positive ratings.



**Trails** - Safer, more aesthetically pleasing pedestrian trails received higher ratings. Street markings or physical separation from vehicles was liked. Very high marks for waterfront trails with associated enhancements.



**Commercial** - Small scale retail centers, converted homes, and one to two story commercial districts received higher scores. Mixed use projects received more diverse rankings.



**Signage** - Signs receiving higher scores tended to be ground-mounted used quality materials and were well maintained. Lower scores were directed to larger scale signs – particularly those that are pole mounted and temporary signs.

**Institutional** - Higher scores were directed to institutional buildings that used quality materials, had a unique design/were aesthetically pleasing. Buildings receiving lower scores seemed to emphasize functionality over curb appeal. Scale may also impact decisions.





Overall, the survey phase provided valuable preferences from the public and citizens of the Village of Johnsburg. This information guided the master plan process and ultimately the proposed concepts provided in this report.

## Section 3.0 – Phase 3

### **Public Involvement**

Phase 3 started with an assessment and analysis of the findings from Phase 1 and 2 followed by multiple meetings with committee members, business and property owners and residents of the Village of Johnsburg. The Village understands the importance of having its citizens help shape the community's future. As such, Village leadership placed a heavy emphasis on actively involving the general public during the creation of this Master Plan. The outreach initiative involved seeking input through a variety of means including a Steering Committee, the hosting of Public Open Houses within the affected area, and formal presentations of the Master Plan to the Village Plan Commission and the Village Board. The referenced interactions helped foster communication amongst the general public, Village Plan Commission members, Village staff and elected officials.

Gathering input from the general public is a critical step in creating a successful plan. The process of expressing concerns, opportunities, thoughts, and ideas in a public forum often helps communities create a shared vision. The practice of gaining widespread acceptance improves the likelihood for the successful long-term implementation of a plan. Continued leadership and public involvement was performed throughout Phase 4. The intent will be to create a great atmosphere by which participants can voice their thoughts and opinions in a constructive and meaningful way. Some of meetings that were held are as follows:

- Committee meetings
- Two Public Open House Meetings
- Planning and Zoning Meetings
- Committee of the Whole (COW)
- Village Board Meeting

### **Downtown Business and Property Owner Workshop**

The VOJ held two public workshop meetings with the main purpose of gathering feedback from the key stakeholders that are business or property owners in the study area and residents of the area. The open house format was utilized to provide some one-on-one conversation as well as opportunities for written comments to be provided. For the initial meeting, the attendees could attend a brief presentation and then visit stations that focused on the various elements of this phase. Below is a brief description of the stations:

- > Station 1 Overall presentation
- > Station 2 Study area exhibits and survey results
- > Station 3 Downtown Center
- > Station 4 Historic Sunnvside
- > Station 5 South River



Participants were encouraged to complete a written form concerning their comments and/or questions for each station and overall. Listed below are the written comments that were submitted. Generally, the feedback was very positive and respondents are pleased with the direction of the study. Below is a summary of the comments received organized by the station or topic of focus.

### Station 1 – Overall presentation

- Informative, very nice, thanks for your work
- Very informative and organized. I like the work put into it and the direction the Village is headed.
- Fine
- As a representative of St. John's Church my focus would be on relieving through traffic on Church St. and completing the street, sidewalk, and parking improvements as soon as funds become available.
- Did a good job of explaining the principles and philosophy behind the plan.
- Very relaxed and warm presentation. Very welcoming and thought provoking
- A "must" for success. Always a problem of getting a consensus of where to go. Keep up the good work.

### Station 2 - Study area exhibits and survey results

- Informative and the results were interesting, talked about having a bigger, better public boat launch and parking.
- Was nice when there was someone there to explain the boards.
- The exhibits made it easy to understand what and where the plans are and will be exercised. The survey made it clear that restaurants, walkways and aesthetics are high on the list.
- Many areas to study! We need to provide somewhere for older or families who desire a dwelling without all of the upkeep and other tasks associated with a home on ½ to 1 ac and smaller. Condo type.

### **Station 3 - Downtown Center**

- Just by adding the roundabout and sidewalks has made a world of difference. If some of the old, useless buildings can be replaced, that would help out.
- Circle is too fast but good.
- I like the Rescue Squad Park, done well.
- "If you build" walking and biking paths that are pleasant and safe, "they will come".
- Make the town accessible.
- I thought the plans for the community center/park areas were well thought out.
- Traffic (in-out) of triangle needs revision.
- Pedestrian crossing concern when traffic is heavy
- Very good location for "snowbird village".

### **Station 4 - Historic Sunnyside**

- Living closer to this area, I do hope this can be improved and a few businesses would help out.
- Sidewalks un-walkable in wintertime. Block sidewalks at Shiloh Ridge with snow, sidewalk not shoveled.
- Make sewers more affordable.
- It is important to continue to develop retail in that area. The more people will stay and shop at home.
- Good to remember and keep.



### **Station 5 - South River**

- The info was good, needs some work
- It is all potential development and ripe for new retail stores like a CVS or Walgreens, a strip center, or a restaurant.
- Annex (hopefully) Chapel Hill to McHenry boundary.

### **General Comments:**

- Lots of great ideas, roundabout looks great and Village has my full support
- Informative and educational presentation. I learned a lot and look forward to future information.
- Keep up the sidewalks for safety of our children and our seniors. Lighting is important too. Sidewalks over the bridge need to be wider and lights over the bridge would be nice.
- *Tax breaks to keep elderly here. Maybe more Village services to aid elderly.*
- Find a way to link the river with piers for boaters to stop off, walk into downtown and buy food, ice cream, etc.
- It is all a great vision for Johnsburg's future.
- Keep ideas coming in. Never say never.

Following the feedback from the residents and business owners in the Village, the next phase was to solidify the Vision, Goals, and Objectives based upon the public involvement.

### Phase 3 Recommendations and Observations

- Create elements in the master plan and streetscape concepts that will help to create the *strong sense of place where people can live, work, and play*
- Incorporate the branded theme for the downtown and build upon existing streetscape enhancements and traditional historic design
- Finalize the design and system in order to provide gateways and way finding signage
- Create *consistent development standards*, *quality design of spaces*, *and architecture* and incorporate into the zoning and subdivision regulations
- Work with the community and area residents to provide a*ccess to the riverfront* so it will serve as a central amenity for the downtown area
- Examine the ordinance and future development goals to provide *mixed uses* at appropriate locations in the study area
- Plan for short and long-term solutions to *convenient parking with easy access* in the high priority areas
- Design and create great gathering spaces and a pedestrian friendly environment
- Finalize the location and alignments of trails/sidewalks and focus on making the connections a reality between the parks, school, library, community club, business uses and residential areas.
- Create a safe, pleasing and walk able corridor from Historic Sunnyside to Historic Downtown
- Pursue funding and feasibility for creating a pedestrian bridge over the Fox River on Chapel Hill Road. This corridor should be improved for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel (north and south).
- South River Area has large acreage of undeveloped land with minimal constraints yet lacking public sewer and water



# Section 4.0 – Phase 4

### **Master Plan and Recommendations**

The purpose of Phase 4 is to develop the actual Downtown Master Plan focusing on land use, design guidelines, and streetscape components. Furthermore, this section will serve as the official "Sub-Area Master Plan" that will supersede the less detailed downtown recommendations contained in the Village Comprehensive Plan.

Phase 4 utilized all of the results and process completed in Phase 1, 2, and 3 to compile a long-term master plan and potential implementation strategy. Some of the tasks included in this phase are as follows:

- Conceptual Land Use Plan and land use recommendations.
- Conceptual Streetscape Plan (for the core triangle area of the downtown).
- Conceptual Design Guidelines (architecture, streetscape, landscape, etc.) to be utilized as a starting point for future zoning ordinance modifications.
- Recommendations regarding the transportation circulation, access and parking
- Pedestrian elements such as crosswalks, traffic calming techniques, and related hardscape improvements that will create a pedestrian friendly downtown.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations provide the Village of Johnsburg with various ideas and concepts to implement in future years. These recommendations, listed below, are aimed at providing opportunities for living, shopping, business, and recreation in the downtown. The Master Plan recommendations address key items such as:

- Balancing between preservation of the unique character yet allowing for new development.
- Expanding the Village of Johnsburg as a mixed-use environment.
- Increasing the amount of people living in the downtown to establish a larger population base to support existing and future businesses.
- Establishing improvement and development guidelines for land use areas.
- Improving vehicular circulation and parking.
- Establishing general guidelines for buildings and storefronts.
- Improving the pedestrian environment.
- Enhancing other urban design aspects of downtown.

# Recommendation #1 - Maximize Opportunities Along the Fox River Corridor

Provide better access to the Fox River

The Fox River is a key asset for the Village of Johnsburg, however, the amount of public access is limited. This incredible natural resource offers recreation and scenic views for the individuals who own property along the edges but this Master Plan recommends increased public open space at key areas and potential redevelopment of some areas.





Currently the access to this amenity is lacking with the exception of areas like Frank Schmitt Park. This Master plan recommends access be improved further by increasing the amount of sidewalks and trails that connect public open spaces and the Fox River.

### Environmental Sensitivity

The *Downtown Master Plan* also recommends environmentally-sensitive techniques be utilized where feasible in order to preserve and enhance this valuable natural feature. Various innovative stormwater techniques can be utilized such as Rain Gardens and other Best Management Practices (BMP's). These

solutions will ensure steps are being taken to protect and preserve the Fox River. These innovative techniques allow infiltration of runoff into the ground to recharge the groundwater and aquifer water resources. The natural systems can occur in parking area medians, with native landscape material that absorbs and cleanses the water before releasing to the adjacent creeks and the Fox River. Additional techniques to achieve these goals are minimizing impervious areas such as excessive concrete and asphalt areas, roofs, etc. that have significant impacts on reducing runoff.



# Recommendation # 2 - Expand the Amount of Existing Open Space within the Study Area

The study area offers some recreational opportunities for its residents. Dedicated open spaces include Rescue Squad Park, Tiger Field, Frank Schmitt Park and Sunnyside Park. However, this plan recommends the Village develop additional open spaces per the Land Use Master Plan (Exhibit X) and pursue the open space goals such as:

- Expand Sunnyside Park to the west and provide additional parking areas
- Create an open space area along the Fox River west of Chapel Hill Road on the north side
- Provide Fox River access in the southwest corner of the study area and preserve existing trees east of the access area as a nature area/public park
- South of Bay Road and east of Chapel Hill Road
- Provide safe trails and sidewalk connections throughout the study area and connect the parks and other downtown features



- Provide stronger pedestrian and vehicular access to Rescue Squad Park primarily from the north side
- Preserve major stands of existing trees (e.g., south of the Fox River west of Chapel Hill Road
- Create new and expansive open spaces in future developments (southeast of Bay Road/Chapel Hill Road intersection.
- Increase public access to the Fox River

As the Village grows and the study area develops more types of open space will be needed. This includes expanding on the existing parks and the creation of future open space areas that will offer neighborhood-scale to regional-scale uses (i.e., soccer fields, playground equipment, picnic shelters, etc.).



# Recommendation # 3 – Identify and Implement Priority Public Infrastructure Projects within the Study Area

Much of the sewer and water infrastructure within the study area is lacking or is in need of expansion in order to achieve the goals in this master plan.

The Village has created overall Master Sewer concepts to serve the west/east side of the Fox River and the Facility Planning Area Amendments have been approved and are used as a guide as development occurs. The engineering plans have also been completed and are used as areas show interest. The Village currently owns and operates the Shiloh Ridge Water System and plans for expansion with additional wells, wellhouses, and elevated water storage towers which have been master planned, on both the west and east side of the river within the downtown planning area, but until development occurs and or funding sources are available, the service options are limited.



Existing sanitary lift station north of the Fox River. Infrastructure improvements and expansion are needed to ensure growth in downtown Johnsburg.

### *Infrastructure improvements*

This Master Plan recommends the following infrastructure improvements:

- Sewer -- continue to extend the sanitary sewer per the approved plans as development or neighborhoods show interest.
- Water continue to plan for a fire rated water system on both sides of the west/east side of the Fox River as development/funding opportunities occur.

### Roadway improvements

This Master Plan recommends the following roadway improvements:

- Continue to work with McHenry Council of Mayors and McHenry County Department of Transportation on Johnsburg Road, Spring Grove Road, Chapel Hill Road, and Bay Road to upgrade, expand, and share in the funding opportunities
- Continue to connect our existing roadways to the proposed development opportunities and incorporate the Complete the Streets design criteria and details (sidewalks, paths, lighting, landscaping)



# Recommendation #4 – Incorporate Consistent Streetscape, Gateway and Wayfinding Signage Improvements at Key Locations

Streetscape improvements including gateway and wayfinding signage are critical components of a successful downtown. The Village of Johnsburg has made significant improvements along Johnsburg Road, including the round-about. The new roadway improvements, ornamental lighting, special paving, sidewalks, planters and landscaping have been widely accepted and praised by citizens and visitors.

This master plan recommends future phases of this treatment, primarily at the following high priority areas:

- Church Street from Spring Grove Road to Johnsburg Road
- Johnsburg Road from roundabout east to Fairview Avenue
- Chapel Hill Road from roundabout southeast to Bay Road

Future streetscape improvements are needed on other streets within the study area, however, these are the most important corridors in the downtown. It will also be a logical extension of the recent streetscape improvements on Johnsburg Road.



### Gateways and Wayfinding Signage

Gateways and wayfinding signage are an important component of the *Downtown Master Plan*. These features can help motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists find specific locations in the downtown area, navigate through the core area, find available parking lots, and locate major activity areas and destinations. It is critical that appropriate viewing areas are identified for the gateways and wayfinding signage based on their location along major streets, proximity to landmarks/areas of interest.

Lack of wayfinding signage prohibits visitors from discerning their arrival into the Johnsburg downtown area. Proper signage in the downtown will help to create an identifiable theme or "sense of place" and more importantly navigate people to important aspects such as public parking. The Conceptual Streetscape Plan (**Exhibit xx**) identifies examples and potential locations for the above referenced improvements.



### Recommendation #5 - Create a Pedestrian Friendly Environment in the Study Area

The *Downtown Master Plan* calls for a pedestrian friendly environment with well-designed streets and streetscape improvements as described above. The following recommendations focus on the pedestrian and bicyclist in order to encourage a safe, comfortable, pleasant environment. Some of the design aspects to consider are as follows:

- Pedestrians are effectively separated from moving traffic (wide sidewalks or medians).
- Pedestrians can cross the street safely and easily at designated locations, such as clearly marked crosswalks.
- Intersections are designed to reduce pedestrian crossing distances (bump outs).
- Safe refuge (resting) islands are provided periodically for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Barriers are minimized designed for people with disabilities, older adults and children (ADA compatibility with curb ramps, etc.).
- On-street parking is provided in some areas, but does not dominate the street scene.
- Public parking areas are provided in key locations (center of the triangle area-rear of properties facing Johnsburg Road, Chapel Hill and Fairview)
- Vehicle access, speeds and geometrics are designed with the pedestrian in mind.



Well marked crosswalks and signage should be expanded throughout downtown Johnsburg to create a more safe pedestrian environment.

In order to achieve the design aspect goals listed above, many improvements are needed. Some of these improvements have already been implemented on Johnsburg Road, west of the roundabout. In order to provide safe and convenient pedestrian circulation, sidewalks will need to be completed, pedestrian crossings added and some sidewalks will need to be widened, repaired, or in many cases constructed where no walk currently exists. The information below describes some potential techniques to achieve a more walkable environment in downtown Johnsburg.

### Pedestrian Environment

The primary pedestrian routes within downtown Johnsburg will be the sidewalks. While some of the sidewalks within the downtown area are in fair condition, sidewalks in other areas are either completely missing or in poor condition except where the improvements on Johnsburg Road have occurred. As identified by residents in the survey sidewalks should be a primary focus to ensure it is easy for residents and visitors to navigate the downtown area. See Exhibit 9, showing the conceptual streetscape improvements including multiple sidewalk additions where currently none exist.

The Streetscape Master Plan identifies a continuous, safe and attractive sidewalk system throughout the study area. Some the goals to make the downtown area pedestrian friendly are as follows:

- Improve walks in areas devoid of sidewalks
- Provide efficient mobility and direct routes
- Enhance accessibility and connectivity to the open space areas (Rescue Squad Park, Frank Schmitt Park)
- Promote a comfortable/attractive pedestrian environment
- Create an ADA accessible downtown environment



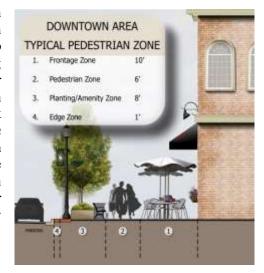
By implementing the sidewalk improvements, the core of downtown Johnsburg will become a much more walkable area.

### ADA Accessibility

Any sidewalk improvements should be designed and constructed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All street crossings and curb ramps should also meet ADA Accessibility Guidelines. Important considerations include the width, cross slope and longitudinal grade of the sidewalks. Excessive cross slopes can cause difficulty for people on crutches, using walkers, and in wheelchairs requiring them to work against the force of gravity and making lateral balance more difficult. Sidewalks must also be wide enough to allow for operating space for these users, as well as allowing for walking pedestrians to pass each other comfortably.

### Pedestrian Zones

Appropriate pedestrian zones in the downtown core area are an important focus, when trying to achieve a better pedestrian environment. The pedestrian zones are located between the curb and the front property line or building façade of adjoining parcels. These zones provide areas along the street corridor for street furnishings, and pedestrian through landscaping, Currently the downtown street corridors lack movements. defined or appropriately designed zones. This Downtown Master Plan recommends incorporating these design recommendations as property re-develops, and as future streetscape improvements occur. The following section discusses the specific functions and minimum dimensions for each sub-zone within the pedestrian zone. There are typically four sub-zones (See descriptions and exhibits below)



- 1. Frontage Zone
- 2. Pedestrian Zone
- 3. Planting/Amenity Zone
- 4. Edge Zone

### 1) Frontage Zone

The frontage zone is the area adjacent to the property line. It may be defined by a building facade, landscaping area, fence, or screened parking area. A minimum width of three (3') feet should be provided for the frontage zone. The width of the frontage zone may be increased, to accommodate a variety of activities associated with adjacent uses, such as outdoor seating or merchant displays. If space does not permit, this zone can be eliminated.

### 2) Pedestrian Zone

The pedestrian zone is intended for pedestrian travel only, and should be entirely clear of obstacles and provide a smooth walking surface. The throughway zone should be, at a minimum, six (6') feet wide, which is the minimum comfortable passing width for two wheelchairs on a sidewalk.

### 3) Planting/Amenity Zone

The planting/amenity zone is the key buffer component between the active pedestrian walking area and the vehicle traveled area. Street trees, planting strips, street furniture, bollards, signal poles, signals, electrical, telephone and traffic signal cabinets, signs, fire hydrants and bicycle racks should be consolidated in this zone, to keep them from becoming obstacles to pedestrians. The



planting/amenity zone should have a minimum width of three (3') feet in narrow road sections. A more comfortable and, therefore, desirable dimension is eight (8') feet for the planting/amenity zone.

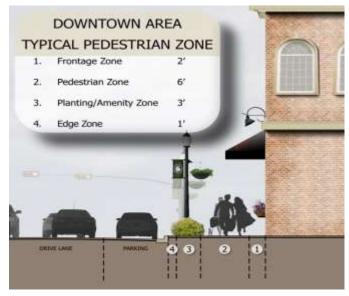
### 4) Edge Zone

The edge zone (sometimes called obstruction free zone) provides an interface between parked vehicles and street furniture. This zone should, generally, be kept clear of any objects. Parking meters or other small vertical features may be placed here with consideration to door swings. The edge zone should have a minimum width of 1' (preferable 2').

Often existing conditions do not allow the appropriate amount of space for all of the pedestrian zones. Therefore, options are provided below for reference; however, each street should be studied in detail and planned on a case-by-case basis, depending on available space.

The two options below show the "typical" treatments that could possibly occur along Main Avenue.

Based upon the understood pedestrian zones described above, the *Downtown Master Plan* specifically suggests future improvements to streets in downtown Johnsburg. The overall characteristic of street cross-sections should create an environment that is appropriate to the design speed of the street. When modifying a street cross section, the typical design elements need to be considered, along with the traffic volume. Design elements relevant to the vehicle include lane widths, pavement markings, materials and colors; curb design, and on-street parking.



### **Option #2.**

- This is utilized when the available space is more limited (12' total)
- -Amenity planting zone is reduced to 3'
- -Edge Zone and Planting Amenity Zone contain light poles, small landscape areas and hanging baskets
- -This situation is fairly typical in most downtown areas, due to limited space.

Design elements more relevant for pedestrian areas include: building setbacks, street trees, sidewalks and furnishings. The greater the level of pedestrian activity, the lower the design and posted speed should be, to improve the pedestrian environment in downtown Johnsburg. The streets listed below should be modified in the future to be more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.

- Johnsburg Road
- Chapel Hill Road
- Fairview Avenue
- Church Street



### **Traffic Calming Techniques**

Modifying or improving street cross-sections is an important step in making downtown Johnsburg a more pedestrian-friendly place. In relationship to the street sections there are various other traffic calming and safety techniques to be considered and, therefore, recommended as part of this *Downtown Master Plan*.

Traffic calming is a combination of techniques used to: reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic calming objectives are: enhance the street environment and aesthetics, reduce cut-through vehicle traffic, slow vehicles down, reduce accidents, and increase safety perceptions. The *Downtown Master Plan* recommends consideration of traffic calming techniques such as;

- Refuge islands (bump outs) with barriers (where needed) to protect the pedestrian
- Intersection improvements
- Alternative trail and sidewalk surfaces and colors at crossings
- Raised pavement areas
- Safe sight and stopping distances
- Clearly visible traffic and directional signing and pavement markings
- Use of landscaping to identify differing zones of activity

### Crosswalk Treatments

Crosswalk treatments can occur at intersections and midblock crossings. Improved crossings should be established at intersections (as mentioned above), to better unify the downtown areas and provide safe connections between existing and future locations such as:

- Existing downtown core area
- Surrounding residential areas
- Riverfront (Fox River)
- Future public plazas, shopping areas, civic uses

When designing crosswalk treatments, appropriate signage and striping measures should be applied per the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices). The hierarchy and appropriate locations include the following applications:



Additional marked cross walks should be installed throughout the downtown specifically along Johnsburg Road (east), Chapel Hill, Church Street and Fairview.

- Standard Markings All crossings should be identified with parallel lines.
- Enhanced Markings Ladder striping, if colored/textured pavement is not utilized (i.e. stamped concrete).
- Colored pavers A distinctly patterned paver may be applied to distinguish intersection crosswalks and mid-block crossings in the core or transition zone, consistent with the proposed theme and as shown on the **Exhibit XX**



# Recommendation # 8 – Update the B-5 Downtown Zoning District to Implement the Master Plan Vision and Concepts

The Village of Johnsburg will need to update the zoning ordinance, specifically the B-5 Downtown Zoning District to allow for the various concepts and strategies presented in this report.

Design features such as zero front yard or side yard setbacks and parking lots located in the rear of the properties, help create a very walkable environment that engages individuals and attracts them to the area. However, many zoning districts do not allow these concepts or design standards. In order to have a zoning ordinance that allows neighborhood-scale commercial development (e.g. specialty retail shops, restaurants, and entertainment options) the ordinance will need updated. The *Downtown Master Plan* recommends the modification of the zoning district to ensure the movement towards a more unified and vibrant downtown district.

An overlay district addresses specific issues or concerns not addressed in the current zoning ordinance and only apply to a specific area. Essentially, an overlay district places additional zoning requirements (beyond those in the underlying base zone) on properties within a defined area in order to achieve a specific purpose. The overlay district should have a stated purpose of "Ensuring new construction within the corridor complements existing development in both its design and use."

The Overlay District should include design standards such as:

- Required use of permanent building materials (i.e., brick, stone, manmade stone, etc.) in the architectural features and facades of all new structures
- All off-street parking areas must be located in the rear yard of the property
- All buildings must have a zero front yard setback
- Buildings cannot exceed three stories in total height
- Signage must be consistent with the architectural and historical context of the building (i.e. no pole signs, neon signs, roof-top mounted signs, electronic message board signs, etc.)

The Overlay District should also restrict the types of uses allowed within the area. Permitted uses should be limited to the following:

- Mixed use developments with retail/office space located on lower floors with residential units located on upper stories
- Entertainment venues such as art galleries, museums, movie theaters, and auditoriums
- Parks
- Hotel/motel
- Restaurants and taverns
- Professional offices
- Retail shops including the sale of items such as antiques, appliances, art supplies, automobile supplies, bakeries, candy, clothing, convenience stores, computers, delicatessens, electronics, fabric, furniture, garden supplies, groceries, hardware, home improvements, jewelry, office supply, pharmacy, plants, flowers, shoes, sporting goods, stationary, toys and videos.
- Municipal facilities (i.e., fire stations, police stations, etc.)



# Recommendation #9 - Plan for Appropriate and Compatible Future Land Uses

The *Downtown Master Plan* recommends appropriate and compatible land uses be planned for throughout the study area. Furthermore, the plan recommends the Village amend its official Zoning Map to reflect the future land uses outlined in the Master Plan. The current Comprehensive Plan does not provide sufficient detail, therefore, this master plan can serve as the official sub-area master plan for downtown Johnsburg (see Exhibit 9).

It will be important for the community to identify uses and development densities which will complement the existing environment as the area redevelops. This practice will be especially critical when considering adjacent single-family homes and neighborhoods. The Village must pay special attention to ensure compatibility. Negative externalities associated with certain uses (i.e., noise, traffic, dust, lighting, etc.) or out-of-scale development (i.e., a building much larger than its surroundings) can potentially have an undesirable effect on adjoining properties. This may come in the form of lower property values, increased vacancy rates, etc.

The Concept Land Use Master Plan provides insight as to how the area could redevelop. The recommendation minimizes potential negatives by more intense land uses by utilizing transitional uses and incorporating greenspace such as parks, trails, landscape treatments, etc. as a buffer between incompatible uses. The future land uses in this Master Plan generally respect the existing land uses of the study area; however, some instances advocate the relocation of more intense land uses in order to protect nearby existing residential development. The Future Land Use map achieves multiple goals including but not limited to:

- Adding commercial uses in the core downtown area and along Chapel Hill Road and Johnsburg Road
- Increases the amount of greenspace along the Fox River to maximize public access to the riverfront (southwest region of the study area)
- Expanding Sunnyside Park to the west of the current park land
- Relocates Village Hall near Johnsburg Road and Church Street
- Adds mixed uses near Spring Grove Road and Johnsburg Road
- Increases high density residential in key locations
- Provides open space buffers or transitional land uses next to existing residential homes where feasible

#### Live Work and Play environment

Planning appropriate land uses for downtown Johnsburg is critical in order to create a sense of place that allows residents to "Live, Work and Play" in this key area of the village. The Route 31 corridor in Johnsburg provides significant regional commercial development to serve Johnsburg and the surrounding region. The downtown environment should be focused on specialty commercial and retail establishments that attract diverse market groups. For example, shopping, food, entertainment and a strong workplace environment can be the catalyst for redevelopment and investment in a downtown area. A downtown with a large number of restaurants and entertainment options will typically do very well. Johnsburg currently has several establishments that bring people to the area but could use much more to increase the vitality of the area. As the Village grows the downtown area will need to improve on the diversity and amount of food and entertainment options. As importantly, other entertainment venues held in the downtown area (special events) will bring more people to the area. Visitors are likely to stay longer, shop and eat if venues are held in the vicinity.



Attracting businesses and offices is a key component to having a vibrant downtown during the day. People who work downtown represent a significant market for restaurants (breakfast, lunch, and coffee break). Also, after work hours, bars and restaurants are prime destinations, and shops can offer convenience shopping, as well. As mentioned above, it is important to have a downtown that is appealing to these groups, to truly make it a vibrant area. While some streetscape improvements can attract people to an area, it is often the synergy of the above items that brings people to a downtown.

Downtown residents and population. A fair number of people already live within walking distance of downtown Johnsburg and this plan proposes efforts to increase the number of residents in the immediate area. Higher densities that are typically appropriate in an urban core bring additional consumers within walking distance to a marketplace. Also, having a significant population in the downtown draws visitors from out of town. Having a significant population and spending base is typically a critical component of a successful downtown. Therefore, the Master Plan displays increased high density residential uses in multiple locations.

Age-targeted residents. The inclusion of a wide array of housing options within the Village of Johnsburg can contribute to more sustainable neighborhood – offering diversity of age groups, retail and service needs among residents, etc. While much of the study area is dedicated to residential neighborhoods, it may be advisable to seek assisted living or related age-targeted residential options for this area

### **Recommendation #10 – Pursue Funding Opportunities**

While the concept of preparing funding applications may seem obvious, it is important for the Village to engage a process to review and cull each funding opportunity. The outline below highlights this process and suggested next steps.

Identify funding options that meet the needs of the community and the project. The Village should evaluate the suitability of each funding source for the project. For example, determining the reporting requirements and other administrative responsibilities can help the Village assess if the anticipated use of funds meets a project need and the administrative responsibilities associated with securing funding are not burdensome for administrative officers.

- Determine if the funding source(s) are consistent with the project needs and the community's capabilities. The less desirable sources should be pulled, and the preferred list of sources should advance for further pursuit.
- Prepare a funding strategy that focuses on implementation. Based on the short list of funding options a tailored funding strategy should be developed. This strategy includes a proposed schedule of activities and listing of milestone events.
- Preparation of successful funding proposals. Evaluating funding opportunities should not simply consist of grant preparation. Rather, engaging prospective grant makers to examine past funding commitments can provide great insight as the application is prepared.
- On-going contact with fund program managers. On-going contact with the funding source is
  encouraged once the proposal is submitted. Often, contacting grant makers can emphasize your
  interest in securing funding, provides a means of addressing questions that may have come up
  during the review, and determine how the proposal is advancing.



### Summary of Targeted Funding Sources

The initial step involved with developing a funding strategy is to carefully define various improvements and then identify alternative funding sources based on the specific characteristics of each project element. For example, sidewalk/trail improvements could be associated with Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) funding. It is also important to distinguish different funding sources (e.g., local, state, federal, etc.) because each fund is administered by a separate agency, solicits proposals on during various times of the year, and mandates varying funding match requirements, etc.

Municipalities have a number of different funding options and financial inducements that can help facilitate private investment – often times spurring additional tax revenues that can be directed to local capital improvements and ultimately help revitalize areas within the community. Some of these sources include *revenue-based funding* that can be invested in certain types of capital improvements. Additionally, a discussion of *avoided cost opportunities* is also summarized in this section to illustrate how these mechanisms can help create an environment more conducive to attracting private sector investment. The distinction between "revenue-based" funding and "avoided-cost" incentives is that the former provides a source of capital that can be reinvested in allowable improvements. Alternatively, "avoided-cost" incentives do not generate general fund or tax increment financing revenues initially. Rather, these sources provide an inducement for the private sector to invest based on avoiding the payment of applicable taxes for a specified period of time

Other mechanisms for the Village of Johnsburg to consider focus on local funding or grant programs through the state or federal government.

**Village General Fund:** Implementing large-scale projects can be funded through the issuance of general obligation debt. Both the Village of Johnsburg and McHenry County can issue bonds to help finance project improvements, subject to what the Illinois Code allows. In general, municipalities are given some discretion in determining how the debt service obligations on the bonds are addressed. The State statutes allow cities to issue general obligation debt up to five percent of their gross valuation.

### Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) & Enhancement (ITEP) Funding:

The Village has the option of applying for Statewide Enhancement funding through the Illinois Department of Transportation. Programmed funds target projects that address scenic and natural resources projects (i.e. acquisition of scenic easements, scenic highways programs), landscaping and other scenic beautification, historical and archaeological projects (i.e. acquisition of historic sites, historic preservation) and pedestrian, trails and bikeways projects (e.g., facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, preservation of abandoned railway corridors, etc.), control and removal of outdoor advertising.

Utilizing transportation enhancement (TE) money is one of the most effective ways to fund surface transportation projects. In the past, these monies have financed pedestrian and bicycle trails, landscaping treatments and scenic beautification projects; mitigated environmental pollution; and maintained habitat connectivity. TE is part of the Surface Transportation Program administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Under the program, funds are passed to state departments of transportation and/or regional/metropolitan planning organizations for infrastructure projects that have regional or statewide significance. Trails are among the most common projects, but communities have also used the money to restore buildings, fund landscape, public art, street furniture and lighting associated with a streetscape project, and acquire scenic land easements and buildings.



TE funds are subject to several federal procurement policies, environmental statutes and potential prevailing wage standards. The following is an overview of some of the more significant requirements:

- The project must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to the extent that the state historic preservation office is consulted to assess architectural and archeological impacts of the project.
- Design and construction projects must be coordinated with the state department of transportation.
- Plans and specifications must be completed by a licensed professional engineer, architect or landscape architect.
- Federal aid funding requires that the Federal-Aid Consultant Selection Process must be used.

TE funding is available to public agencies and non-profit organizations and is highly competitive. Private applications are allowed but must be accompanied by a public agency co-sponsor. Solicitations for proposals generally occur once a year in late fall or early winter and require a funding match that may range from 20 percent to 30 percent from a local sponsor. The percentage of the minimum local match may vary based on whether the state or metropolitan planning organization administers the program.

**Special Assessments:** The purpose is to offset public improvements through the assessment of costs. Special assessments are levied against property taxes and retired within 10 to 15 years. Assessments are limited to 25% of the assessed value of the property.

**Business Improvement District (BID):** This funding opportunity is a public-private partnership where businesses in a defined area pay an additional tax or fee to fund improvements within the boundaries of the district. BIDs provide services, such as making capital improvements, providing security, and marketing the district. The services provided by BIDs are meant to be a supplement to those already provided by the municipality.

**Community Development Block Grant:** This program allocates dollars locally or at county level. The CDBG program focuses on providing quality housing and methods to expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

**Safe Routes to School:** This program provides funding for projects that improve the ability of school aged children to walk and bike to school. These are federal funds administered through IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation).

### CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

**Improvement Program:** This funding mechanism focuses on air quality (i.e., pedestrian and bicycle facilities) or projects promoting transit ridership, including commuter parking. These federal funds administered locally by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), and applications are submitted to CMAP yearly, with competition for funds within the 6-county Chicago region.

**Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program:** This grant program by IDNR provides funding for bike trail construction and renovation.

**Brownfields Assessment Grants:** An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program for brownfield sites provides funding to inventory, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement. Brownfields Cleanup Grants provide funding for cleanup activities at brownfield sites. And the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan provides a revolving low-interest loan program that funds the municipality and the private sector for the environmental cleanup. Limited to brownfields determined to have hazardous materials or pose threat to public health.



# Recommendation # 11 – Implement the Master Plan through Administrative Actions and Further Updates

### **Implementation**

This section highlights a series of implementation tools available to the Village in fulfilling the recommendations and priority action items cited in the Downtown Plan. Community leaders, residents, developers, governmental institutions, and community-based organizations will need to work together to accomplish the overall vision and goals. Successful implementation will require a conscientious effort over many years.

### **Administrative Actions**

The Village of Johnsburg should implement the following components that require administrative action and/or public policy to implement. These actions do not require a significant allocation of funds and can be completed in a fairly short time frame.

### Adoption of the Johnsburg Downtown Plan

The Johnsburg Downtown Plan should be adopted as a subarea plan, as part of the Village of Johnsburg Comprehensive Plan. It is essential that this document be adopted for use by Village staff, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the study area.

#### Continued communication with all stakeholders

The Village should continue to meet with residents, business owners, and other interested parties to transition into implementing the recommendations cited in the Downtown Plan. The Village should make the plan available and immediately accessible to all stakeholders and residents of the Village on the website and by hard copy.

### Role of Village leaders

The Village leaders and elected officials should assume the leadership role in implementing the Downtown Plan. When development plans are submitted to the Village should analyze the submittal utilizing this Downtown Plan for compliance. Additionally, the Village Board should serve as an Architectural Review Committee. The purpose is to review and approve facade improvements and new construction. The Downtown Plan should also be used in communicating the overall vision of the Village to business owners and investors. In addition to carrying out the administrative actions and many of the public improvement projects recommended in the Plan, the Village may choose to administer a variety of programs available to local residents, businesses and property owners. To ensure success of this Downtown Plan, there will need to be strong partnerships between the Village, business owners, and residents.

### **Review and Update Actions**

In order for the Downtown Plan to remain as up to date as possible, the document needs to be used and reviewed on a periodic basis. The Plan is not a static document and as changes in the community occur, especially new or different opinions or ideas, they should be part of the review and update process. These changes can be brought forth to the Village at any time and should be part of the review process.

### Periodic Monitoring and Administration

The Village should initiate a full review every 3-5 years or simply incorporate into the overall Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Village should monitor accomplishments, successes, outstanding steps, and new issues or opportunities. Preparation of the annual review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget.

