

CHAPTER 4 - PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT, INPUT AND PARTICIPATION

4.1 THE PROCESS AND IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The key to the success of the ITP is frequent and meaningful communication with the general public and key stakeholders. Without the involvement of the local citizens of Yorkville and the surrounding region, the ITP plan would not realize its full implementation potential. If residents have a vested interest in a project or idea, realization of the vision and goals can be achieved more quickly, and with more benefit to the residents than if they had not been involved. The exchange of knowledge and ideas between residents and the City can greatly enhance the outcome of this plan and its final products. For these reasons, the ITP sought the early and active participation of residents during the planning process. The project team utilized the following methods to involve the public in its planning efforts: ITP Task Force, resident survey, downtown business and property owner survey, comment cards, information sharing, and public workshops.

The following groups were involved in the formulation of the ITP;

- Yorkville Area Residents
- Task Force Committee
- Community Leaders and Elected Officials
- Downtown Business and Local Property Owners
- Yorkville Economic Development Corporation
- Yorkville Chamber of Commerce
- Yorkville School District
- Illinois Department of Transportation
- Kendall County Planning Department, Highway Department, and Forest Preserve District
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Local Developers and Homebuilders
- Fox River Eco System Partnership

Yorkville leaders involved the stakeholders, in order to establish the guiding principles of this study, which will ultimately improve safety and mobility for everyone, while also preserving and enhancing the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of Yorkville's setting.



Task Force and Public Workshop Meetings were held periodically throughout the process.

In addition to the partnership with the stakeholders, the study team coordinated and partnered with other local agencies that may have a vested interest in the Plan. For example, the Fox River and the Fox River Watershed are important environmental assets to the region, and are to be protected. The Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) has established a plan to ensure the long-term health of the Fox River Watershed which is a major goal of the ITP, therefore participation of a FREP representative was solicited.

ITP Task Force Committee

The ITP Task Force Committee was established to represent a cross-section of stakeholders and experts who volunteered their time in providing direction and input on the project. Task Force members have diverse backgrounds, interests, perspectives, and technical expertise.

The ITP Task Force is comprised of the following organizations and representatives:

1. School District #115 – Brian DeBolt
2. Kendall County Forest Preserve District – Jason Pettit
3. Local and Active Developers/Builders – Gary Neyer
4. Downtown Businesses/Property Owners – Jeff Farren, Dan Nicholson
5. Chamber of Commerce – Don Duffy
6. Yorkville Economic Development Corporation (YEDC) – Lynn Dubajic
7. Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) – Jason Pettit
8. Kendall County – Representatives
9. Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) District 3 office – Rick Powell
10. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) – Dave Longo
11. Yorkville Bike Club – Ben Niles
12. Chicago Area Mountain Bikers – Russell Rogers

Task Force participation and input throughout the process was vital to the success and overall usefulness of the final document. Primary responsibilities of the ITP Task Force were as follows:

- Offer overall general guidance for the ITP project development.
- Provide input to develop prioritization as to the shared use trail system projects and implementation. Provide input as to theme, way-finding, gateways and signage.
- Offer guidance as to bicycle use and type of trail for design guidelines.
- Provide overall recommendations to increase

pedestrian and vehicular access to the downtown area for economic development enhancement.

- Offer input for improvements to the downtown aesthetic quality.
- Provide general input on the framework for downtown development/re-development design standards/guidelines for land uses, sign standards, lighting, parking, landscaping, furnishings, sidewalk improvements, hardscapes, etc.
- Provide a forum for consensus-building on key issues and decisions.



The ITP Task Force meetings provided a forum to directly communicate progress on the project, and to receive input from the members on key issues and components of the plan. Additionally, public comments or concerns were communicated to the members for input and consensus-building. The ITP Task Force helped to create the Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives. The ITP Task Force met 4 times throughout the project time frame on the following dates:

Meeting Dates:

- Meeting # 1 - October 16, 2008
- Meeting # 2 - January 15, 2009
- Meeting # 3 - March 5, 2009
- Meeting # 4 - April 30, 2009

Public Workshop Meetings

Two public workshop/information meetings were held for the ITP.

- Public Workshop # 1 - December 4, 2008
- Public Workshop # 2 - May 14, 2009

The purpose of these meetings was to gain an understanding of underlying issues and concerns regarding the plan, as well as solicit input and comments, thereby building consensus and ownership for the project (see *Appendix B – ITP Survey Results*). Valuable input was received at both public meetings, through feedback from the survey and from opinions expressed verbally at the meetings.

Park and Recreation Survey and ITP Survey/Questionnaire Results

The City's website was utilized as an informational tool for the public. The newsletter (*described below*), ITP survey, and other project information were placed on the website, so as to be easily accessible and available to the public and interested parties. The online survey was conducted to gain input on current and potential trail usage. As mentioned previously in this report, the survey recently completed by the Parks and Recreation Department (see *Appendix B - ITP Survey Results*) also ascertained the wishes of Yorkville residents, by demonstrating that 83% of residents desire trails.

By collecting this feedback from the various surveys, the ITP was able to address respondents' attitudes and opinions on various subjects and issues. Input gathered through these surveys impacted the direction and decisions made throughout the process of the ITP.

ITP Newsletters

Four project newsletters and fact sheets were developed and distributed throughout the course of the project. The newsletters served as a written source of easily understood, up-to-date information regarding the ITP project. The newsletters were available at Task Force meetings and public workshops, and were available at several locations throughout Yorkville. The newsletters informed people of the status of the project, important milestones, and next steps of the project.

Publication Dates:

- Publication # 1 - August, 2008
- Publication # 2 - March, 2009
- Publication # 3 - May, 2009
- Publication # 4 - Following Plan Approval

Downtown Business Owners/Stakeholders

Downtown Business Owners Stakeholders Meetings

It was critical to gain input and participation from business owners in downtown Yorkville. Early in the process, the project team held an open meeting for downtown business owners (*held on September 30, 2008*) to introduce the project and ask for participation on the task force committee. This was followed by the May 14, 2009 public workshop, which was held in the downtown, where special invitations were sent to downtown business owners.

Visual Preference Survey

A Visual Preference Study was completed by the downtown business and property owners (see Appendix C - Visual Preference Study - Downtown Theme and Streetscape Elements). The technique is based on the development of one or more visual concepts to determine which is most pleasing to the viewers. This process gave downtown stakeholders the opportunity to review, study, and comment on their preferences regarding features that may be implemented in Yorkville's downtown. The group was able to define their preferences for architectural style, theme, signage, landscaping, and other design elements.

A summary of the results or preferences for the Downtown Theme and Streetscape Elements are:

- Theme – A general theme relating to historical features of Yorkville was desired
- Streetscape elements such as benches, trash cans, lights, etc. – generally a black color selection was preferred
- Windows with awnings
- Curved features (benches, trash cans, signs)
- Streetscape lighting with a decorative feature (i.e. banner or flower basket)
- Landscaping – mixture of annuals and natives – bright colors preferred
- Planter boxes
- Brick pavement with a border - most pavement designs were unique, not a simple running bond

4.2 COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Individual stakeholders were met with or contacted, to discuss project issues, concerns, potential solutions and options. The project team met with the following organizations throughout the ITP process:

- Yorkville Economic Development Corporation
08-13-08
- Chamber of Commerce
08-21-08
- Kendall County
09-03-08
- Kendall County Forest Preserve
09-03-08
- Downtown Business owners
09-30-08
- Meeting with IDOT and the City
12-08-08

4.3 CITY STAFF AND CITY COUNCIL

City Staff

City staff had significant involvement throughout the ITP process, at public and stakeholder meetings and in the creation of this report. Through internal coordination and ongoing communication with SEC Group, Inc. the combined effort resulted in a document with significant input and support from City staff.

Meeting Dates:

February 18, 2009

April 7, 2009

Coordination and communication occurred throughout the ITP Process

City Council

The Economic Development Committee (EDC), a City Council Committee made up of 4 of the 8 alderman and the Mayor, received reports regarding the progress and status of the ITP. The EDC was continuously updated and informed throughout the ITP process. Upon review of the plan by the EDC, it was reviewed by the entire City Council.

Meeting Date:

EDC: July 7, 2009

City Council: September 8, 2009

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