



# Executive Summary

**HINSDALE 2025**  
"Clear Vision...Sound Execution"

### OUR VISION:

*Hinsdale—a vibrant community where the future embraces the past!*

### OUR MISSION:

The Village of Hinsdale exists to preserve and promote our quality of life, uniqueness and vitality. We are committed to managing our resources to provide outstanding services and to guide change by collaborating with those vested in our community.

### OUR VALUES:

The Village of Hinsdale values our sense of community as exemplified by:

- ❖ Its history, tradition and unique character
- ❖ Its superior array of services
- ❖ Its social and economic vitality
- ❖ Its collaboration between public, private and social entities.

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*Hinsdale Village Executive Summary*  
is published by the Village of Hinsdale.

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[www.villageofhinsdale.org](http://www.villageofhinsdale.org)  
and watch Cable Channel 6.

## Introduction

The Hinsdale Village Board, working with staff, consultants and over 200 resident volunteers, has created the *Hinsdale 2025* Strategic Plan. The seeds of this process were planted over 3 years ago when Trustee Laura Johnson began investigating the plans of numerous other communities in the Chicago area. A small working group met in early 2005 to formulate a new Statement of Objectives and Policies. In May 2006, wanting to address ongoing redevelopment in the Village as well as infrastructure needs, a comprehensive planning process was initiated by new Village President Michael Woerner.

Hinsdale is a village of tree-lined streets set amidst the gently rolling topography of one of the Chicago area's glacial moraines. Fine homes, excellent schools, a charming historic town center, numerous neighborhood parks, adjacent forest preserves and a pedestrian-scale make the village both attractive and desirable. Like most Chicagoland communities, Hinsdale's location is defined by regional transportation routes. Three major routes run east-west through the village: Ogden Avenue on the north, the Burlington Northern Sante Fe tracks in the center and 55th Street on the south. The village is also bounded by Interstate 294 on the east and Route 83 on the west. Within these physical barriers, the village's core was developed prior to 1930 at a scale that enabled residents to walk to town, trains, schools, parks, Village Hall and the library. Development outside of this core occurred primarily after World War II and includes most of the village's multi-family housing as well as many streets that—because of their curving paths or the use of cul-de-sacs—are not connected to the grid of the central village. Although Hinsdale has many distinct neighborhoods, the single central business district, the physical barriers on its edges and the neighborhood school system have fostered a sense of community cohesiveness.

Since the mid-1980s Hinsdale has been a part of the shifting economic, cultural, social and physical conditions in west suburban Chicago. Its population grew nearly 20% from 1990 to 2000 while over 30% of the village's vacant lots and older homes were replaced with new construction. With these tangible and intangible changes and the very real physical and structural limits to growth, there is a need for a plan that will help the Village to manage its future. The village is built-out and its infrastructure is taxed to its limit. The purpose of the *Hinsdale 2025* Plan is to help Hinsdale effectively manage its future redevelopment in ways that will protect and enhance its unique qualities for the next generation. ♦

**Hinsdale 2025** was formally adopted by the Hinsdale Village Board on February 6, 2007.

## Historical Background

When surveyors for the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad began laying out the railroad in 1862, wealthy businessman William Robbins purchased 700 acres along either side of the right-of-way at the center of what was to become Hinsdale. Robbins built himself a summer house in 1864 and filed his first plat for an area of 14 blocks that lay primarily south of the tracks in 1866. This first plat included the location for the train depot that was then known as Brush Hill. By the time the Village was incorporated in 1873 most of the land on the north and south side of the railroad was platted for housing development and many residences had already been constructed. There were also stores, a post office, a hotel, a large stone school and two churches.

As the town grew, additional subdivisions were created. Robbins created his last and most elegant subdivision, Robbins Park, in 1871. With the help of noted engineer Horace W. S. Cleveland, he modeled its curving streets, deep setbacks and large lots on the picturesque layout of the nearby suburb of Riverside. Even within this scenic context, however, Robbins made sure to tie the new streets to the existing street grid.

Residents played an important leadership role from the village's earliest days. It was thanks to their vision that the Village undertook numerous civic improvements during the 1890s. A waterworks (1890), sewage system (1891), and electrical lines (1896) brought modern conveniences, while the street paving that began in 1892 made it possible for the automobile to become an important means of transportation (with automobile sales providing an important economic engine for the central business district up until the Great Depression). The first sidewalks were also laid at this time. By the late 1890s Hinsdale was considered to be one of the most desirable middle class suburbs in Chicago as evidenced by a feature article in *Campbell's Illustrated Journal* in November 1897 entitled "Hinsdale the Beautiful" that pictured nearly 50 homes. An elegant new train station that still serves the village was opened the following year.

In addition to middle class businessmen and their families, German immigrants arrived during these early years, settling in tight enclaves west of the village center on both sides of the railroad tracks where they built their own churches and operated several small neighborhood businesses.

After 1900 Hinsdale experienced tremendous development, with new brick and terra cotta buildings lining the downtown streets and hundreds of new homes built throughout the village. Citizens such as Village President Philip Clarke and architect Harold Zook led the drive to create an identifiable village center. Clarke oversaw fundraising for and construction of The Memorial Building in 1927 while Zook headed up the first Plan Commission (1923) and selected Colonial Revival as the style of choice for all civic and commercial buildings. In terms of its overall character, layout, and land-use patterns, Hinsdale today strongly reflects the vision of these early leaders. ♦

## Statement of Purpose

*Hinsdale 2025* is intended to identify issues, suggest solutions and serve as the basis for resource management decisions by Village officials. During the annual budget development process it is assumed that Village government department heads will incorporate projects recommended by the Plan in a consistent and timely manner. In addition, there are numerous projects identified by *Hinsdale 2025* that will need further study to arrive at funding and implementation solutions.

*Hinsdale 2025* is the first comprehensive strategic plan ever created for and by the Village of Hinsdale. It is meant to be advisory in nature and to provide a context for ongoing changes to Village codes. It is not a regulatory document designed to control land uses on individual parcels or in specific zoning areas. These functions are performed by the Hinsdale Municipal Code and the Hinsdale Zoning Code.

The Plan has issues and recommended solutions organized around the following eight topics:

- ❖ Beautification
- ❖ Downtown
- ❖ Northtown
- ❖ Health & Welfare
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Infrastructure
- ❖ Ogden Avenue
- ❖ Parking

As a mature, built-out community, Hinsdale needs a plan that identifies community assets and areas that need improvement. The public process leading to the

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formulation of *Hinsdale 2025* clearly indicated that village residents desire little change in existing land uses, maintenance of the historic scale and character of the central business district, continued high quality Village services, improvements to Village infrastructure (particularly streets), and—if possible—the addition of more open space. The Plan is meant to serve as a guide for managing redevelopment, making infrastructure investments and encouraging reinvestment in the Village in the years to come. ♦

## The Process

Beginning in July 2005 consultant Thompson Dyke & Associates in concert with Trustee Vic Orler provided guidance to over 200 resident volunteers over the course of an 18-month planning process. Individual interviews, focus groups and town hall meetings enabled numerous residents, local merchants and businesses to participate. The local access television station was utilized as were the Village's website and newsletter. Two major surveys were undertaken, with over 30% of residents responding each time. The results of the first survey were used to formulate the issues considered in Phase II of the process.

Both surveys resulted in a statistically valid sampling of Village residents, with respondents crossing all geographic and demographic lines. On the advice of the expert statistician who assisted with the Phase II Survey, 55% of residents responding “Strongly Favor” or “Favor” to individual issues presented in the survey was considered to indicate solid community support.

During Phase II over 100 residents and local business owners volunteered for the eight Solutions Exploration Groups. The SEGs suggested questions and topics for the second survey. The results of this survey were then incorporated into SEG discussions and final recommendations. These recommendations were discussed at a final Town Hall meeting in September 2006 and were made available on the Village's website.

It should be noted that many more issues were discussed by the SEGs than were reported in the final recommendations. A list of these additional issues is contained in the Thompson Dyke & Associates final report. ♦

## Moving Forward

In the Fall of 2006 a number of the SEGs created immediate “to do” lists of small, low- and no-budget

projects, prior to formulating their final recommendations. Many of these suggestions are either underway or complete.

The Village Board, key staff members, chairs of the Plan Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission and Finance Commission and several dozen interested residents met in an all-day meeting on November 18, 2006 to consider the final recommendations of the eight SEGs. Each recommendation was considered and assigned to a commission or task force for execution or further consideration. The resulting matrix of responsibility will provide tasks as well as guidance for many years to come.

As a result of the November 2006 meeting four new Village bodies will be created:

- ❖ Beautification Task Force
- ❖ Design Review Commission
- ❖ Northtown Task Force and
- ❖ a task force to manage review and rewriting of the Village Zoning Code.

As these groups begin to engage in the process, consider the issues and take on their responsibilities it is possible that the Village Board will need to reconsider its existing Committee and Commission structure in order to ensure the efficient operations and effective use of tax dollars that have been the hallmark of the Village for the past 150 years.

*Hinsdale 2025* recognizes that the public will need to continue to be involved in the process of deliberation and approval for the many projects recommended by the Plan. Some of these projects are costly and will require substantial additional revenue. It is anticipated that the Village will need to seek approval from residents for bonds. In addition, the Village will need to pursue grant opportunities more aggressively than it has in the past. Additional sales tax revenue may also help to underwrite new projects.

The *Hinsdale 2025* Plan is intended to be a living document. There is no doubt that it will be consulted, considered and even argued about in the years to come. This is just as it should be. It is the expectation and desire of all who participated in its creation that *Hinsdale 2025* be used for the betterment of the Village of Hinsdale until it is replaced by the *Hinsdale 2045* plan. ♦

## Hinsdale 2025 Strategic Recommendations

### ***Invest in the Preservation and Beautification of Hinsdale's Appearance***

- ❖ Protect trees throughout the village
- ❖ Update and enhance landscape plans for public areas
- ❖ Undertake streetscape improvements for business districts and Village thoroughfares

### ***Create an Infrastructure Master Plan***

- ❖ Accelerate street & sewer replacement to bring all streets up to a “good” rating
- ❖ Address growing storm water management problems
- ❖ Coordinate other infrastructure enhancements such as sidewalk network completion, replacing utility pole street lamps with decorative street lamps and utility line burial

### ***Proactively Guide Housing Development***

- ❖ Create a Design Review Board to develop guidelines and review single and multi-family housing plans
- ❖ Provide guidelines and direction for increasing interest in multi-family homes including type, style and location

### ***Update the Village Zoning Code***

- ❖ Review zoning for the downtown to ensure preservation of “signature” historic buildings
- ❖ Review zoning code to encourage appropriately-scaled redevelopment in business districts
- ❖ Review single-family zoning code to address concerns about size, setbacks, lot coverage and drainage

### ***Address Ongoing Concerns about Parking Problems***

- ❖ Plan to better utilize existing parking spaces
- ❖ Explore multi-use facility on the Burlington Parking Lot in conjunction with a plan to better integrate shopping districts north and south of the railroad tracks

### ***Develop a “Northtown” Plan***

- ❖ Create a more cohesive shopping, working and living district north of the railroad tracks that has a look and feel consistent with historic Hinsdale
- ❖ Explore appropriate and desired uses for areas where Northtown abuts residential neighborhoods

### ***Develop a Comprehensive Ogden Avenue Plan***

- ❖ Guide expected future redevelopment, improve traffic flow and create a look and feel more consistent with historic Hinsdale
- ❖ Develop a traffic management plan with IDOT, ISHTA and DuPage DOT
- ❖ Explore possible streetscape improvements

### ***Improve Public Safety and Recreation***

- ❖ Upgrade and enhance the safety and use of pedestrian street and railroad crossings
- ❖ Create a bicycle plan for the Village
- ❖ Move to a single point of coordination and communication for recreational, arts and service programming
- ❖ Pursue open space opportunities by acquiring private land in targeted areas of the Village and securing agreements that will allow Village improvement and use of Forest Preserve land