



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number One Decorative Street Lamps

Background

Decorative street poles and lamps have been installed throughout the Downtown and in public parks only. One style of lamp fixture has been used to identify these public spaces. Lighting levels provided are moderate. The fixtures are mounted on relatively short poles and, as a result, direct light horizontally. Residential areas are served by standard ComEd fixtures (cobrahead) on wooden poles. The level of lighting in these areas is lower, the wooden poles are taller and the lamps direct light downward. One light is located at each intersection and one light is provided midblock where possible. The installation of a well-designed new decorative street lamp system throughout the Village with many new poles and lamp fixtures in new locations would improve ambient light levels and safety for residents, pedestrians and drivers. It also provides the opportunity for the Village to enhance local aesthetics, emphasize local character and distinguish itself from other municipalities located nearby.

Not everyone enjoys living next to a street light and the installation of new lamps in residential areas is often opposed. Until lighting goals/standards are developed and explored and a lighting plan is adopted, it is impossible to determine where and how many new fixtures will be required. Key elements of such a plan will determine electrical needs, appropriate lighting levels, whether a single lamp fixture will be used throughout the Village or a “family” of several lamp designs is selected to provide a unique identity to different areas of the Village such as residential, historic residential, commercial, the Downtown, parks and municipal facilities, thoroughfares, etc.) Implementation options should also be identified such as the possibility of providing lighting only along major roadways, at major entryways to the Village and/or within some or all residential neighborhoods. Many ComEd lines run through the rear yards of private properties, so the availability of necessary electrical power at the street is also unknown.

Key Findings

Eighty five percent (85%) of respondents support the expansion of the Village’s existing decorative street light program, but differ as to where such expansion should occur. The largest single percentage of respondents (34%) expressed a preference for expanding the decorative street lamps throughout the Village, including locating them in residential areas. This was followed closely by some twenty nine percent (29%) of respondents who preferred expanding decorative street lamps only into other commercial areas similar to the Downtown. Twenty two percent (22%) of

respondents expressed a preference for expanding the Village’s present decorative street lamps by installing them in other commercial areas and along major residential thoroughfares. Only fifteen percent (15%) of respondents opposed any expansion of the Village’s decorative street lamps.

In assigning priorities to various potential capital improvements respondents ranked beautification opportunities (including trees, landscaping, streetscaping and **decorative lamps**) with the highest priority from a list of seven potential improvements. From all respondents, the average selected importance (6.95) falls at the low end of the “high importance” category. The next highest priority (6.39) was assigned to the Village-wide sidewalk improvement program.

Recommendation

6-1 Develop a lighting plan that: replaces existing “non-decorative” lights with decorative fixtures; determines appropriate locations for installing new decorative lights throughout the Village (such as along major thoroughfares and entryways); establishes appropriate lighting levels and establishes an implementation schedule that phases installation over time, is tied to fund availability and is coordinated with related projects (such as road reconstruction).

Definition: Prepare an RFP to hire a lighting consultant to develop a plan for the installation of a system of decorative street lamps throughout the Village. The plan will establish goals/standards, guidelines and cost estimates for such a system. This information can be used to determine appropriate funding and implementation strategies.

Critical Success Factors: Developing a successful street lighting plan is the key to successful implementation. The adoption of objective system goals and policies can be used to establish locations for the installation of lamps in new locations.

Funding and Cost Considerations: Installing and maintaining a street lighting system is an extremely expensive improvement that varies greatly with the scope/scale of the program. A conceptual lighting plan must be prepared so that detailed cost estimates can be obtained and various program alternatives can be considered further.

Implementation Considerations: As a result of its high potential costs, it is recommended that a program for street lamp installation occur whenever street reconstruction is undertaken in designated locations so that some of the costs of lamp installation may be partially absorbed by whatever state and federal funding is being utilized for street construction. The type of lighting source and level has a profound impact on the character of the areas in which they are installed. A comprehensive decorative lamp system must be based on a comprehensive lighting plan that establishes standards for appropriate design, spacing, electrical system needs, maintenance considerations and appropriate lighting levels for each area in which they are to be installed. Careful control on the intensity of each lamp and minimizing the amount of light spillover must also be addressed. The installation of a street lamp system may also be related to the issue of providing WiFi service as many communities have installed WiFi antennas in on street light poles.



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number Two Sidewalk Policy

Background

Sidewalks connect residences to other places in the Village. They provide access. Children play on sidewalks and sidewalks provide a location for social interaction. The Village Board has adopted policies concerning the installation of new public sidewalks in street rights-of-way in Hinsdale. These policies accommodate the construction of new sidewalks by the Village in two ways:

1. Filling “Critical Gaps” – Several gaps in the network of existing public sidewalks of overwhelming public benefit have been identified in Hinsdale. Installing new public sidewalks to fill these critical gaps will complete the Village’s plan to provide a limited system of sidewalks/ for pedestrians wishing to walk to schools, stores, churches and parks. The goal of the present policy is to fill these critical gaps over time and entirely at Village expense. Over two miles of new walk have been installed under this policy. About 3.6 miles remain on the identified list.
2. At Neighborhood Request – In other locations not designated in the master sidewalk plan, block residents can request the installation of a public sidewalk by the Village by petitioning the Board. If a majority of block residents request the new sidewalk, the Village will share the cost of the new sidewalk with block residents.

In some neighborhoods, proposals to install public sidewalk within public right-of-way have been opposed by residents who prefer to maintain a more unimproved appearance for their neighborhood. Privacy and liability issues have also been raised. In some instances the location of the walk will conflict with improvements installed by residents located within the public right-of-way.

Key Findings

Sidewalk Policy

Fifty eight percent (42%) of respondents expressed a preference for filling critical gaps in the sidewalk network before providing sidewalks at other locations requested by residents. Alternatively, forty two percent (58%) of respondents expressed a preference for providing a mix of new sidewalks each year to both fill critical gaps and honor requests for sidewalks at other locations from a majority of block residents.

Sidewalk Budget

A total of sixty three percent (63%) of respondents support increasing the sidewalk budget. This total includes twenty five percent (25%) who indicated strong support and thirty eight percent (38%) who indicated moderate support.

Capital Spending Priorities

In assigning priorities to various potential capital improvements respondents' sidewalk construction with the fourth highest priority from a list of seven potential improvements. From all respondents, the average selected importance (5.56) for Village-wide sidewalk improvements falls at the high end of the “moderate importance” category of choices.

Recommendation

6-2 The Village should undertake a sidewalk construction program each year that: first, fills critical gaps in the sidewalk network, second, honors requests from residents and third, completes construction of the designated system of connected sidewalks within five (5) years.

Definition: Public sidewalks, like public streets are located in the publicly owned, controlled and maintained public right-of-way. Public sidewalks presently exist in only some Hinsdale neighborhoods. The Village has adopted a sidewalk network plan that identifies certain “critical gaps” in key sidewalk routes that lead to schools, stores, churches and parks. The Village has a policy of both filling the critical gaps and honoring neighborhood requests each year.

Critical Success Factors: The current policy seeks resident input. Meetings are held to discuss preliminary layouts. Nevertheless sidewalks remain a divisive issue, tearing the social fabric of some blocks. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, the Village should solicit input from those residents that have had such sidewalks installed in front of their homes within the last 10 years. These residents can help articulate the benefits of sidewalks based on actual experience when opposition to key sidewalks is encountered. The experience of these neighbors may also influence opinions when neighborhoods request sidewalk installation. These residents should also be solicited regarding their experience with the present process for requesting sidewalk installation and indicate how that process might be improved to make it simpler, more fair and straightforward. Ultimately residents should be informed of the public benefit of public sidewalks located on public property.

Funding and Cost Considerations: If the Village adopts the above policy, it is estimated that the cost of completing the designated sidewalk network could cost \$600,000 over the next 5 years. The Village should reconsider the process to initiate petition requests. Today a bare majority of residents starts discussion of a request. If the threshold were raised to seventy five percent (75%), it would ensure solid support for the proposed walk before discussions on its location begin. Today the Village does not get involved in the distribution of costs amongst residents of the neighborhood for its share of construction. Alternate means of financing sidewalks requested by neighborhoods should be considered including the use of special service area financing for large area installations.

Implementation Considerations: As with street reconstruction, some costs of sidewalk installation may be reduced slightly if they are installed with other related right-of-way improvements.



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number Three Cell Telephone Service

Background

In the initial Hinsdale 2025 survey, many residents indicated that cellular telephone service in Hinsdale is spotty at best. In order to provide better coverage throughout the Village, more cell telephone system antennas will be needed. Generally, cell phone service improves with taller cell antennas but service would also improve if more antennas were provided in more locations throughout the Village.

It is present Village policy to consider the approval of any new antennas in Hinsdale only when cellular telephone service providers have proposed them at specific locations and Village codes and ordinances allow them at these locations. Some of these proposals have been controversial. The Phase II Survey indicates that some residents feel the Village should exercise more control over the placement of antennas.

Some municipalities have adopted zoning restrictions that limit the location of cell phone towers to publicly owned property, often on the same towers used for police and fire communications. Municipal water towers are also frequently used for cellular telephone antennas. The use of municipally owned towers provides substantial control over the appearance and location of such towers and also generates revenue through lease fees. However, past efforts to use the Village standpipe have been blocked by the Hinsdale Central High School who controls access to the site.

Key Findings

The recent survey indicated that seventy two percent (72%) of respondents expressed strong (45% of respondents) or moderate (27% of respondents) support proactively improving cell phone service.

Recommendation

6-3 The Village of Hinsdale should proactively identify sites for new antennas that will improve service, adopt a policy that encourages the use of these sites for such towers and approach cellular companies to install towers on them.

Definition: The Village Board should consider endorsing the above recommendations and refer them to the appropriate subcommittee (perhaps the Technology Subcommittee) to develop recommended implementation measures.

Critical Success Factors: The location of antennas on existing buildings or separate structures has been controversial because of visibility and health concerns. By federal law, possible health issues cannot be considered locally. Therefore, the Village can primarily concern itself with influencing the appearance of antennas. Antennas work best when they are located as high as possible, which makes minimizing their appearance difficult. Paying particular attention to minimizing the visibility of the antenna and tower and seeking the support of a broad cross section of those residents benefiting from improved service will help keep balance in the approval process.

Funding and Cost Considerations: Potential lease revenues can be generated to the Village. Potential lease negotiations/agreements can also be used to leverage municipal improvements such as support construction/renovation.

Implementation Considerations: The installation of new cellular telephone antennas has been very controversial in other communities. Appropriate location criteria should be developed to minimize the height and appearance of towers and maximize the distance such towers are located from adjacent properties. The placement of antennas in residential areas should be discussed. Mounting cellular equipment on existing tall structures or whenever possible on structures on high land may represent a less visible means of improving service.



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number Four Further Research on Potential Solutions to Local Stormwater Problems

Background

Stormwater does not respect property lines. Water flows from one lot to another and sometimes one block to another. Water sometimes ponds in unacceptable places and may flow for a long time in other locations. There are not facilities available to collect and store all of the rainwater that falls in Hinsdale during a storm, especially in those areas that do not drain easily to public streets and sewers. Although construction on one lot may affect drainage elsewhere, a single project may not provide the means to improve existing problems. Although drainage is best addressed regionally, every local opportunity to improve small drainage areas should be pursued.

In its consideration of potential questions for the recent Village-wide survey, substantial discussion took place on many aspects of stormwater drainage. SEG 6 membership is aware of many local drainage problems and was apprised of the current code requirements concerning drainage and current facilities. However, our members believe that many local problems continue to exist and should be addressed.

After considering several potential stormwater questions for the recently completed survey, SEG 6 ultimately decided not to recommend a question in the survey requesting opinions on this issue because of limited questionnaire space, the difficulty of explaining complex and technical stormwater management issues/choices to Village residents and our concern over ongoing stormwater management litigation.

Key Findings

During discussions on potential questions, a majority of our members believe that existing local drainage problems are not being addressed and **may** in fact be exacerbated by the additional runoff generated when new impervious area is added. We believe that it is time to begin an initiative to solve these local problems. We also believe that the necessary solutions to these problems should at least be partially funded by the parties responsible for contributing to them. With an appropriate funding mechanism in place, collected revenue can be earmarked for future projects on private or public land can alleviate new or longstanding drainage difficulties. We are aware that many complicated technical issues are involved. In addition, other important issues must be considered including equity, fairness and legality. There are also procedural questions as to how funds can be collected and determining which individual drainage improvement projects

will qualify for fund distribution. As a result, we are not proposing anything further than recommending that research take place on the possibility of implementing this broad and general idea. It is also possible that this issue is related to recommendations from another SEG concerning the issue of Home Rule power.

Recommendation

6-4 Undertake additional research and investigation on identifying potential solutions to longstanding local drainage problems including the identification of funding mechanisms to pay for such solutions. Consider implementing this recommendation only after sufficient research, investigation and dissemination of that information occurs and substantial public input is obtained

Definition: Undertake further research on how longstanding local drainage problems might be solved and funded.

Critical Success Factors: Encouraging substantial public input once facts and specific information are gathered.

Funding and Cost Considerations: Unknown at this time. The Village may choose to supplement collected private funds or not.

Implementation Considerations: Unknown at this time.



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number Five WiFi Service

Background

Short for “wireless fidelity”, WiFi refers to a network that can provide computers and other similar devices access to the Internet at high (“broadband”) speeds. This technology receives and transmits information through antennas, not wires. It can supplement or replace commercially available wired service, perhaps at a lower cost. Some municipalities believe it is a way of providing computer access to those who cannot or do not receive wired service. In the initial Hinsdale 2025 survey, eighty one percent (81%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Hinsdale should do more to promote WiFi service/coverage. If such service were to be offered, the Village would have various options to provide WiFi service. One option is to create a limited number of new WiFi “hotspots” that would allow access in heavily trafficked areas such as the Downtown or around train stations. Another option would be to provide a network that would enable WiFi access throughout Hinsdale. The Village could construct the network and provide the service directly or contracting with a private provider for such services. As WiFi technology advances and faster access speeds offered, we are concerned about building a network now that provides service at available access speeds, and the Village’s ability to provide faster service when it becomes available.

Key Findings

Only twenty six percent (26%) of respondents indicated they were opposed to Village provision of WiFi connectivity. Forty three percent (43%) of respondents indicated support for WiFi service on a Village-wide basis while fewer (31%) preferred provision of WiFi service on only a limited geographical basis.

Recommendation

6-5 The Village should refer this matter to the Technology Task Force to investigate and research all of the issues regarding the implementation of WiFi service and recommend where such coverage should be provided.

Definition: Many municipalities are considering the possibility of offering WiFi service and in Mountainview, California, Google (with corporate headquarters located in that city) is providing service to all City residents. WiFi service is also being provided by certain business establishments

such as motel/hotels, Borders and Starbucks. Service is now also available at limited highly trafficked public and quasi-public areas such as Tollway Oasis's and Interstate rest stops. Some colleges and high schools are also providing WiFi service on a campus wide basis. Some Village residents have proposed that the Village should make WiFi service available. Further study is required to determine whether such service is financially and operationally feasible.

Critical Success Factors: Not known at this time.

Funding and Cost Considerations: Not known at this time. There may be opportunities to reduce costs with agreements with a provider.

Implementation Considerations: As part of its investigations on providing WiFi service the Village should consider whether it should initially provide service on only a limited basis (in a limited number of "hotspots" at popular gathering spaces) to minimize expense and gauge its popularity. If it proves successful, the network can be expanded so that service is provided in more locations as considered appropriate. The Village must also determine whether it should provide the service directly or via a contract provider and whether access will be available to Hinsdale residents only or to everyone in the Village's service area. The ability of the Village to upgrade access speeds as they become available also needs to be considered.

This technology requires many smaller antennas. Many municipalities consider placing these antennas on public street lights. There are people who object to antennas for aesthetic and for perceived health issues.



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number Six Street Pavement Repair Policy

Background

Street Policy

In 2005, the Village’s pavement evaluation consultant inspected all public street pavements and assigned a rating to them. Taken together the network of pavements in Hinsdale is fair to good. However there are some very good blocks and some poor blocks. Consultants have advised the Village that the most cost efficient strategy of pavement maintenance is to concentrate road repair efforts on those street pavements found to be in “fair but deteriorating condition.” A lower repair priority has been assigned to the other roads with pavements that remain relatively stable (i.e. those not deteriorating rapidly) *regardless of their present pavement condition rating* (i.e. poor condition, fair condition or good condition). The consultants say it is less expensive to repair streets than to entirely replace pavements.

However, some residents have suggested that the Village’s present maintenance approach is unfair to those living on streets with pavements that have remained in poor but stable condition for an extended period. These poor but stable streets have been assigned a low priority for repair while other streets, which appear to be in equal or better condition, are repaired because they are deteriorating rapidly. These residents have suggested that the rate of deterioration be de-emphasized in assigning repair priority and that streets in the worst condition should be fixed first even if this approach results in higher repair costs over the long term.

Street Surface

Most street pavements built in Hinsdale after World War II were constructed with asphalt materials. Generally, asphalt streets can be constructed quickly and at relatively low cost, but the average service life of an asphalt surface is about 20 years. Concrete streets, popular before WWII, cost considerably more than asphalt but can last much longer than asphalt (40-80 years). Brick streets, popular in the 1890’s, cost considerably more than asphalt or concrete streets and last far longer (often as long as 100 years) but provide a rough surface for bicyclists and pedestrians. Generally, the Village replaces streets with the same material previously used for that street. However, in instances where a deteriorating concrete street does not require full reconstruction, Village may simply resurface the street with an asphalt surface overlay.

Key Findings

Street Repair

Some sixty six percent (66%) of respondents expressed strong (27%) or moderate (39%) support for repairing the worst streets as a priority even if the Village's overall pavement rating declines. An even higher percentage of respondents (75%) expressed either strong (38%) or moderate (37%) support for increasing the Village's budget to bring all streets up to at least a "good condition" rating in 5-10 years.

Street Pavement Options

Of the four street pavement options provided in the survey, forty three percent (43%) of respondents favored the conversion of major thoroughfares to concrete pavements but replacing other streets in the Village with the same materials used previously. The next most popular option, replacing streets with the same material used previously, was supported by twenty eight percent (28%) of respondents. The other two street surface options provided were only supported by fifteen percent (15%) of respondents (replace all streets with concrete) and thirteen percent (13%) of respondents (replace all streets with asphalt).

Capital Spending Priorities

In assigning priorities to various potential capital improvements, respondents ranked the Village's street improvement program with the second highest priority from a list of seven potential improvements. The average selected importance assigned for the street improvement program (6.39) falls between the low end of the "high importance" category and the high end of the "moderate importance" category.

Recommendation

6-6a Street Repair: The Village should revise its present pavement repair policy to stress the replacement of poorly rated pavements and develop a phasing plan and necessary budget to accomplish a "good" rating for all Village streets within a 10-year period

6-6b Street Surface: The Village should revise its present pavement repair policy so that major thoroughfares are replaced with concrete pavements when such replacement is undertaken but other streets in the Village are replaced with the same materials used previously

Definition: Consider revising present Village policy, which emphasizes the rate of street pavement deterioration over its relative condition. Also, consider revising present Village policy regarding the type of street pavement used when various street pavements are replaced.

Critical Success Factors: Public understanding and acceptance of expected higher costs in return for more a more equitable repair program.

Funding and Cost Considerations: Specific costs are not known at this time until further research is undertaken and costs compiled, however, increased costs over those now experienced in the pavement repair program.

Implementation Considerations: While this proposed policy revision will provide more equity in the repair of streets, the consultant predicts it to be more expensive than a repair policy which focuses on the rate of street deterioration over existing condition (the present repair policy). All pavements age, so while some pavements are being improved, the condition of other pavements that are deteriorating rapidly will slip. Therefore, road maintenance projects will be continuous and must be scheduled and budgeted each year. Road maintenance should be coordinated with other projects to minimize repair expense. Ideally, road repairs should also be scheduled to minimize disturbance and inconvenience for individual neighborhoods.



SEG 6 – Recommendation Number Seven Underground Utility Lines

Background

In Hinsdale many utilities are distributed from overhead lines (wires) mounted on poles. Many of these overhead wires run across the rear yards of residences. There are also many overhead wires in alleys, particularly downtown. Many municipalities have relocated pole-mounted public utility lines to locations underground, most often for aesthetic reasons. This relocation can dramatically improve the appearance of a community particularly in locations lacking mature landscaping to screen unsightly utility poles, overhead lines and related pole mounted equipment. Claims that reduced maintenance costs and less frequent service interruptions are based on the assumption that utilities located underground are better protected from weather and physical damage. However, 50 years ago these buried utilities used unreliable materials and actually resulted in higher costs and more frequent service interruptions.

Burying wires is expensive and complex. Many utilities including electricity, telephone and cable providers share these overhead routes. Burying each of these lines coupled with the relocation of other pole mounted equipment to locations on grade, inadequate utility easement widths already crowded with other underground utilities and the need to restore/replace existing landscaping and other improvements located in the easement make this improvement very costly. ComEd, the largest overhead utility, will not assume the cost of burial, so communities have undertaken this relocation on a piecemeal basis when new development projects are proposed, major roadway improved or requiring private owners to bury individual services when redevelopment is proposed.

Key Findings

A substantial majority of respondents (85%) support at least some burial of overhead utility lines. Of that group, the largest single percentage (40%) favors burial of utility lines along **all** Village streets. Smaller percentages of respondents support burial in only limited areas where they are visually prominent such as along the railroad tracks (25%) and a slightly smaller percentage supports burial along the tracks, within commercial areas and along major residential thoroughfares (21%). Only a small percentage of respondents (15%) did not support any of the above burial options for utility lines.

In assigning priorities to various potential capital improvements respondents ranked utility line burial with the fifth highest priority from a list of seven potential capital improvements. The average selected importance for utility line burial (5.56) falls at the middle of the “moderate importance” category.

Recommendation

6-7a SEG 6 expresses a preference for burying utility lines provided additional study demonstrates that it leads to improved reliability and cost savings. If such reliability improvements and cost savings can be expected, the Village should prepare a strategy for financing the burial of utilities throughout the Village.

6-7 b The Village should also prepare a long-term phasing plan and budget for burial of overhead utilities at public expense provided the substantial funds required for such burial can be made available and with a near term priority assigned to burying overhead utilities in areas of high visibility, at gateways and along major thoroughfares.

6-7c The Village should consider requiring the burial of overhead utilities at private expense in connection with: new development, major redevelopment projects and roadway reconstruction projects.

Definition: Public utilities such as electrical, telephone and cable television service is generally distributed in Hinsdale over wires mounted on utility poles. These poles may also contain other distribution equipment and can be unsightly in areas where there is not adjacent landscaping to screen them from view such as in the Downtown along the railroad. Utility burial may also reduce maintenance costs for the utilities, provide more reliable service but may conflict with other underground utilities (such as water, sewer and gas lines) and private improvements (such as fences, alleys and landscaping).

Critical Success Factors: Compilation of necessary statistics on the benefits of overhead utility burial and dissemination of this information to the public is crucial. Also important is data collection on the prevalence of utility easement obstructions, which inhibit utility maintenance and raise potential costs of burial of overhead lines. Substantial and highly visible aesthetic improvements can be publicized.

Funding and Cost Considerations: The cost of burying each overhead utility in Hinsdale has been estimated at \$130 per foot based on a recent estimate from ComEd. Due to this substantial cost, it is likely that only small amounts of burial can occur each year and resulting large scale benefit will only be realized over the long term. Burial of overhead utilities in conjunction with roadway reconstruction or the replacement of other underground utilities may provide partial cost reductions and should be encouraged. Whenever possible, burial should also be required in association with private development or redevelopment. However, ComEd has a rate structure that allows the cost of burying electrical lines to be spread among all electric customers in the Village.

Implementation Considerations: Develop simple “before and after” photos that quickly demonstrate the benefits of overhead utility burial when such burial is proposed. Consider a strategy that focuses first on particularly unsightly overhead lines in prominent locations. Establish requirements for burial that avoids conflict with other underground utilities, minimize maintenance costs, minimize service interruptions and minimize the costs of replacing landscaping and other improvements, which violate utility easement requirements. Discourage the installation of private improvements in public utility easements and publicize the potential increased costs of utility easement obstruction to residents. Establish specific guidelines that clearly communicate which development/redevelopment activities require overhead utility burial. Consider requiring the burying of adjacent overhead utilities in connection with development/redevelopment proposals. Consider requiring owners to provide underground service in connection with substantial building permits. Consider including burial in connection with major roadway reconstruction.