

Introduction

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document outlining the community's vision regarding the physical development of the Village. It is neither a legislative nor a regulatory document. It offers guidelines and concepts to assist the community and elected officials in the process of their day-to-day development decision making. The form and substance of comprehensive plans have evolved significantly over the years.

The Northbrook Comprehensive Plan uses a variety of techniques to help make the document relevant not just for the Plan Commission and Board of Trustees, but for all Village Departments, local residents, the business community, and other governmental agencies. It has several key features:

1. It is **comprehensive**; it addresses the **critical physical, social and economic components** of our Village;
2. It is **general**; it establishes **guidelines, not specific policy mandates**, for future land development and public infrastructure and service decisions;
3. It is **long-term**; it normally focuses on long-term land use and infrastructure needs;
4. It is **dynamic** and **must change over time** to respond to evolving conditions.
5. It is **coordinated** and **internally consistent**; the policies in the plan relate to one another.
6. It includes a series of **goals and general strategies** related to each element.
 - a. **Goals** represent the desired outcome by the community. The goals in this Plan are **recognized as not necessarily being achievable**. They represent the ideals of the Village and are to be used as a guide in decision-making and not as a mandate that limits policy options in the future.
 - b. **Strategies** represent a **general approach** related to achieving an established goal or vision.
7. It is designed to be part of an **ongoing planning program** based upon the issues of the day and time and resources available.

The Comprehensive Plan should change over time to remain relevant and effective. Nothing in this document is set in stone. It should be an open-ended document, allowing for different plan components to be amended, added to or removed at any time through the plan amendment procedures.

The procedure to formulate a Comprehensive Plan is a process where public agencies, elected officials, special interest groups, community leaders and citizens come together to lay out a long-term comprehensive vision for the future of the community. This vision in turn lays the foundation for public policies and community development guidelines that serve as an overall policy framework for public and private decision-making.

Since comprehensive planning is an ongoing process, different planning processes may be used at different times. The diagram on the next page depicts the process used for the formulation of the Northbrook Comprehensive Plan. It also depicts the ongoing process of reviewing and monitoring the plan and making necessary amendments in the future.

Northbrook Comprehensive Plan

Elements of the Northbrook Comprehensive Plan

The Northbrook Comprehensive plan contains ten “Elements” or chapters that address existing and anticipated issues in the Village. The ten Elements include the following:

1. Overall Community Goals
2. Community Involvement & Governance
3. Environmental Quality & Natural Resource Protection
4. Neighborhoods, Housing & Community Diversity
5. Community Character, Culture & Design
6. Transportation Choices
7. Public Services, Facilities & Infrastructure
8. Economic Vitality
9. Land Use & Annexation
10. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan

The Overall Community Goals Element outlines those “over arching” goals that form the basic foundation for the Plan. The next eight Elements of the Comprehensive Plan focus on a variety of general topics that the Village expects to address in the next ten to twenty years. The last Element of the Plan outlines how the Village should establish priorities for implementing the many policies, goals, and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan. On an annual basis the Board of Trustees will establish a work program identifying the items in the Comprehensive Plan that should be addressed given the types of issues that have arisen and the resources available.

Prior Comprehensive Plan

The last complete “planning effort” took place in 1982. The 1982 Land Use Plan was successful in guiding the community’s growth and development during a period of heightened development pressure. The 1982 Plan was amended many times over the years; however, virtually all of those amendments have involved changes only to the Future Land Use Map.

The new Comprehensive Plan examines a community that is now nearly “built out”, with large vacant tracts of land remaining and limited opportunity for annexation. As the map on the following page illustrates, we expect most new development in the future to be of an “infill” nature. Northbrook is now a “mature” community. Likewise, the “slowing” pattern of community growth can also be seen in the population graph below.

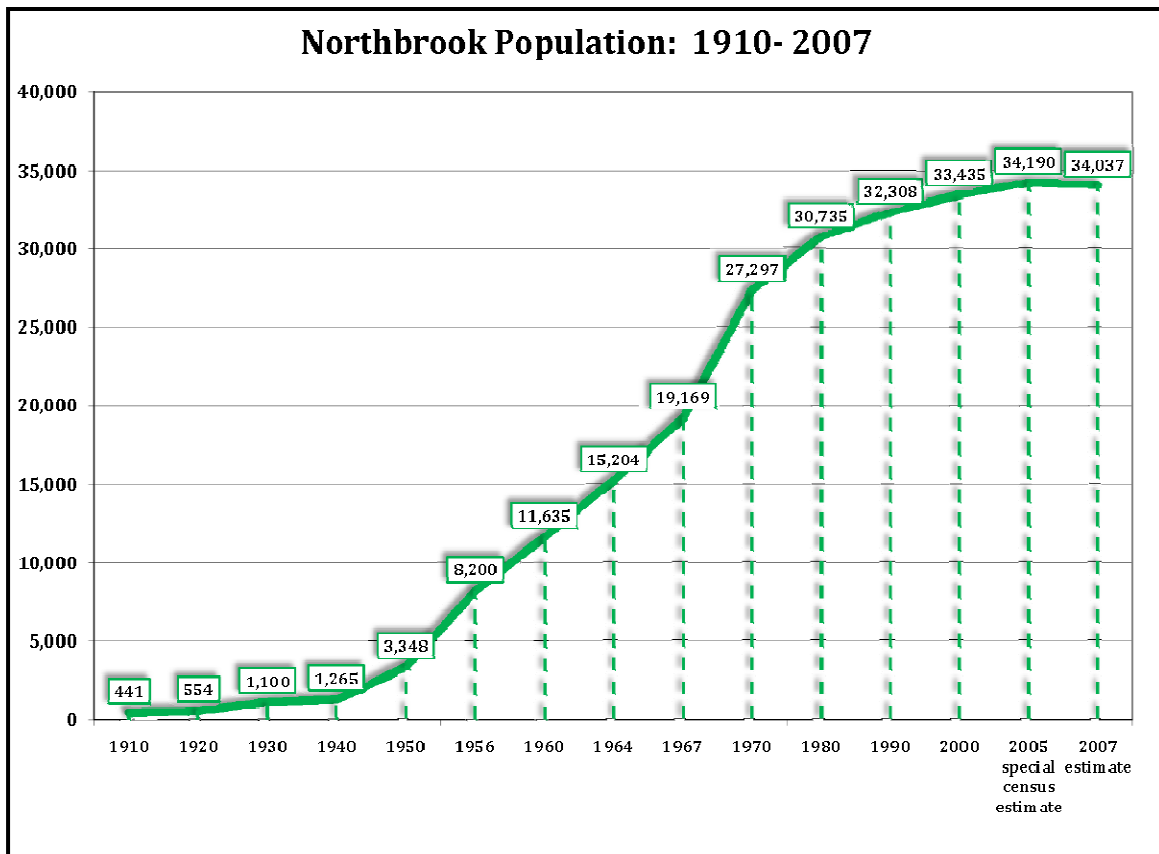


Figure I-A: Historical Population Growth

As the Village prepared the new Comprehensive Plan, several points were central to the formulation of our planning principles:

1. Northbrook has a balanced mix of land uses that includes major employment centers, significant expanses of permanent open space, vibrant commercial areas, and high quality residential neighborhoods.
2. Our schools and parks are among the finest in the nation.
3. The community has a well maintained infrastructure system.
4. Crime is relatively low in the Village, and Northbrook is widely regarded as a very safe community in which to live, work and shop.
5. Northbrook is served by an excellent transportation system that provides residents, businesses and visitors with easy access to the regional road network, interstate highway system, and mass transit system Likewise Northbrook is only a few minutes away from O'Hare International Airport and the smaller Chicago Executive Airport.
6. Property values in Northbrook remain strong despite the national economic downturn in the housing market while property taxes are relatively low in comparison to similar communities in the area.
7. There are a variety of well preserved environmental features in the community including forests, rivers, wetlands and natural prairies.

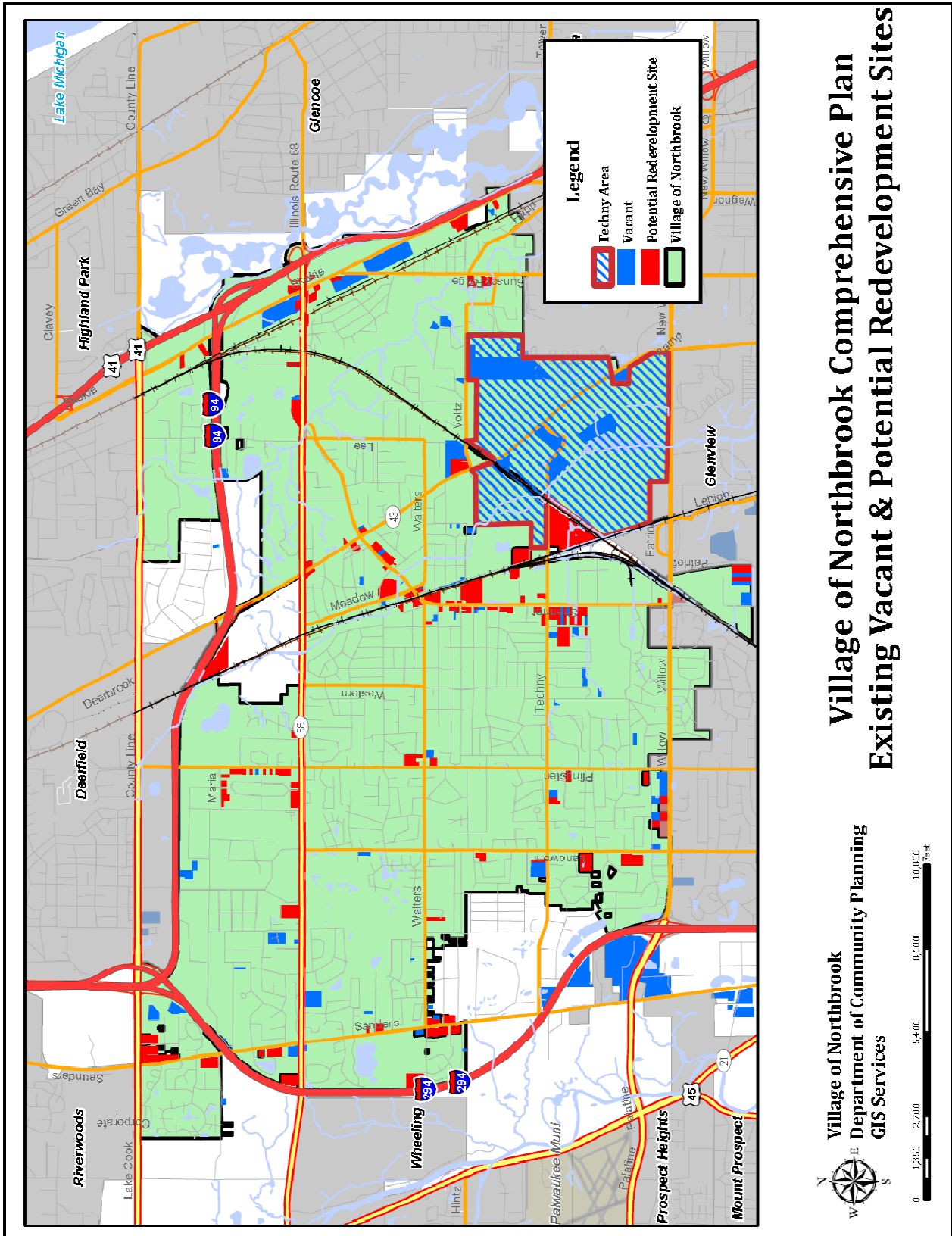


Figure I-B: Vacant and Likely Redevelopment Sites

Identifying Emerging Trends

The Northbrook Comprehensive Plan recognizes that conditions can and will change following the adoption of the Plan. To remain relevant, the Plan will be reviewed and amended as needed from time to time. Related plans such as the Stormwater Master Plan and Community Pedestrian and Bikeways Plan as amended from time to time are corollary to the Comprehensive Plan.

The future work program for the Comprehensive Plan will involve regularly assembling critical local and regional data to gauge whether or not certain priorities need to be adjusted or programs abandoned in their entirety. The work program is designed to annually present maps and statistics to the Plan Commission and Board of Trustees on a wide variety of topics such as:

1. Traffic counts and accident data;
2. Population and demographic information;
3. Retail sales and market data;
4. Demolition and building permit data;
5. Home price and rent statistics;
6. Utility and infrastructure information;
7. Commercial, office and industrial vacancy rates;
8. Employment information;

For instance if vacancy rates in our shopping centers begin to increase sharply, the Village would likely modify some of its economic development goals and strategies to address this problem early-on. Likewise if a major employment use was to announce it is leaving the community, it may be appropriate to look at alternative land uses for a property that had not previously been considered a redevelopment site. During the course of drafting the Comprehensive Plan, the nation as a whole witnessed a rapid increase in energy prices, and a significant downturn in the economy. The unanticipated will continue to occur and the Plan is designed to help the community to identify these changes and take responsible actions. Those actions may necessitate amendments to the Plan itself.

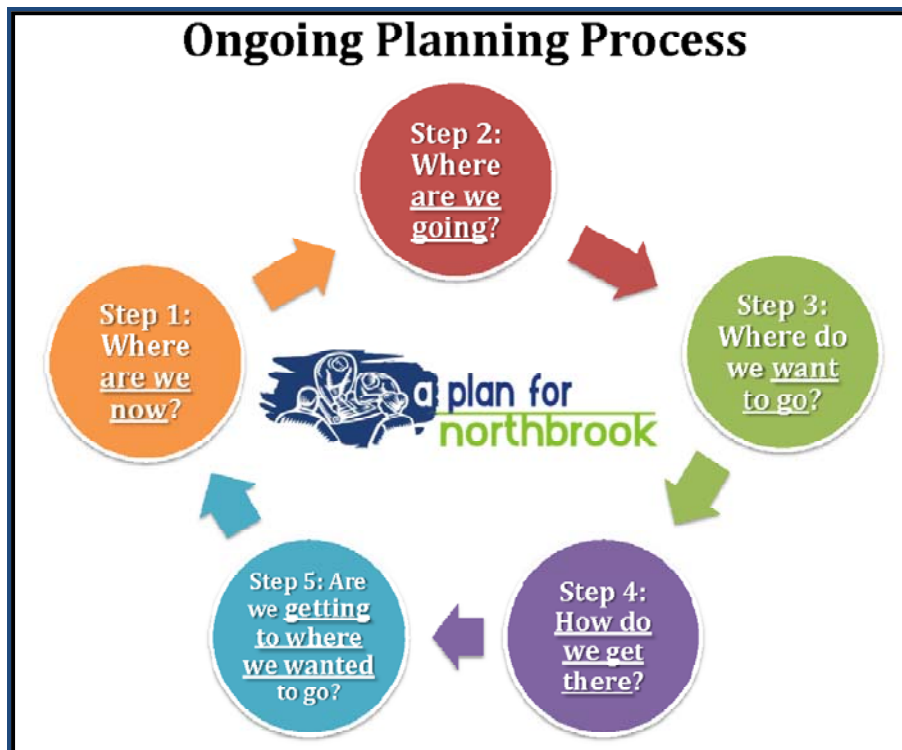


Figure I-C: Ongoing Planning Process Diagram