CPSC Kick-Off Meeting Summary

Countryside 2040 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting
February 22, 2022

The City of Countryside hosted a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) Kick-Off Meeting on February 22, 2022, at the Countryside City Hall to kick off the public outreach for the creation of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. With 10 members in attendance, the CPSC was formed to function as a sounding board throughout the Comprehensive Plan process. The Panel will meet at key points to discuss issues, overall policy direction, and provide feedback for City Staff and City Council consideration. The CPSC represents a mix of community members including business owners, residents, and elected officials.

The CPSC Kick-Off Meeting started with an introduction to what a Comprehensive Plan is and an overview of the CPSC's roles and responsibilities. The CPSC members were then asked to participate in a group exercise designed to gather input regarding issues and concerns, potential projects and actions, and strengths and assets of Countryside. Input from this and future workshops conducted with members of the CPSC, City Staff, the business community, and Countryside residents will help guide the planning process. This input will be reflected in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan's goals, recommendations, and policies.

Note on Summary Context
The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions received during the CPSC Kick-Off Meeting. Some comments were shared with the entire group, while others were recorded privately on worksheets. It is important to note that the items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the planning consultant. They reflect feedback and comments received from the participants.

Top Issues and Concerns

At the start of the exercise, participants were asked to identify five issues or concerns they believe the City is facing. They were then asked to share their top issue or concern to the group. As a group they created a cumulative list. The participants were then asked to individually rank their top three issues identified by the group, be it their own or those raised by others. Below are the highest-ranked collective issues as determined by this method, as well as all other issues identified throughout the workshop. For the issues most often identified as a top issue by group participants, the number of votes the issue received during the exercise is included in parenthesis. Issues written on participant worksheets are also grouped by category.

Highest Group-Ranked Issues
- The key four corners of the community are undeveloped (8)
- Maintaining and enhancing the environment for auto dealerships (4)
- Traffic congestion on LaGrange Road, 55th Street, and Joliet Road (4)
- Need for a greater variety of businesses, including retail and restaurants (3)

Other Issues and Concerns by Category

Quality of Life

- Amenities are lacking for the City's elderly population
- There is a need for more community events/activities
- There is a need for a walkable destination/activity center

Transportation and Mobility

- Lack of safe access across Joliet Road to the forest preserve
- Need for convenient transit access to the Metra station
- Issues regarding adequate parking capacity in Salem's Square
- Impact on existing businesses and parking by Illinois Department of Transportation's plans, including the 55th Street Widening project.
- The City is not pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- General issues related to flooding and drainage
- Issues regarding perception towards the community and the grammar school
- Ensuring the City's parks and playgrounds are well-maintained and safe

Economic Development

- Property values of Countryside's residential properties are lower than that in peer communities
- Ensure the City's auto sales/inventory are well-situated for continued success

Community Engagement

- Need for greater outreach to new members of the community
- Importance of engaging with the City's minority population