

## VILLAGE OF BROWN DEER VISION SETTING WORKSHOP

The Village of Brown Deer held a 3-hour Vision Setting Workshop on March 1, 2003. The workshop was organized by the Brown Deer Visioning Committee – a 13- member team of citizens plus Village and consultant staff. At the workshop, approximately 80 community stakeholders developed ideas and found common interests in strengthening the future of Brown Deer. The Workshop was broken into three main participatory exercises as described below:

- ❑ **SWOTs:** The purpose of the first interactive session was to allow participants to identify and share perceived community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT's) - in other words, to develop a shared understanding of their community's present profile. This was accomplished through small-group discussions, with participants identifying and prioritizing the community's most significant SWOT's.
- ❑ **SHARED VISION:** The goal of the second interactive session was to develop a shared community vision of an ideal future. This was accomplished through small-group brainstorming and discussions to develop key goals or "vision elements" for development in the future. The main group then worked together to prepare and prioritize a list of vision elements for the community's future.
- ❑ **STRATEGY PLAN:** The purpose of the third interactive session was to develop a list of items that might be placed in an implementation plan for developing the community's shared vision and achieving the highest priority vision elements. Participants were grouped in teams according to their interests, with each team identifying possible strategies for addressing a particular high-priority vision element.

The following is a summary of the results of these exercises. Detailed results of the Community Vision Workshop are available at Village Hall.

### SWOTs EXERCISES

The first two exercises focused on identifying community Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Participants were first asked to work alone to identify their personal SWOTs for the Village. Participants then discussed and compiled their individual SWOTs by group. The following are responses that each group frequently agreed upon in each of these categories:

- ❑ **Strengths:** Diversity, good schools and library, community involvement, small town atmosphere, proximity to the city/downtown, community services, and a safe community were common responses.
- ❑ **Weaknesses:** Association with Northridge, lack of community identity/distinction from surrounding communities, no central business district/village center, outside perception of the Village, community split by Brown Deer Road, lack of communication between government and residents, and reactive planning were common responses.
- ❑ **Opportunities:** Redevelopment of Bradley Village, redevelopment of Old Brown Deer to create village center, fine arts/community center, increase in public participation and

communication, attract younger families, mix of housing opportunities, work with neighborhood communities on shared services, long-range planning and this visioning process were common responses.

- ❑ **Threats:** Crime, Northridge, budget cuts and increased taxes, deterioration of older housing, affordability of housing for aging population, outside perception of the community, and lack of redevelopment of older business areas were common responses.

### SHARED VISION EXERCISES

Reflecting on the results of the previous exercises, each group was asked to identify key vision elements of their vision for Brown Deer for the future. Forty-one vision elements were identified by workshop attendees. Participants were then asked to vote for three vision elements that they felt were most important. The top vision elements were:

- ❑ Promote redevelopment
- ❑ Celebrate diversity.
- ❑ Improve the image of community
- ❑ Consider sharing community services.
- ❑ Develop a community center
- ❑ Market the Village – Get the word out
- ❑ Create an attractive school campus.
- ❑ Promote community involvement
- ❑ Develop a village center.

### STRATEGY PLANNING EXERCISE

In the final exercise, participants worked in small groups to develop specific strategies to achieve the vision elements. Some elements were consolidated to reduce the number of small groups required to complete this exercise. The following is a summary of this exercise:

- ❑ **Promote redevelopment:** Strategies included developing a vision and plan for redevelopment for the Bradley Road and Schroeder Road areas and for the historic “old” Village area along Brown Deer Road.
- ❑ **Improve the image of community:** Strategies included establishing gateway entrances to the community; creating architectural guidelines for businesses; adding landscaping to road medians and in business areas; and promoting the traditional quaint atmosphere of the community.
- ❑ **Develop a community center:** Strategies included developing a center for all residents including teens and seniors; limiting access to the center to Brown Deer residents and students only; opening the center for school functions and awards banquets; and ensuring the registration fee is affordable. Possible sites included Bradley Village, the Pond area, or the building at Brown Deer Road and 60<sup>th</sup> Street.

- ❑ **Create an attractive school campus.** Strategies included developing a campus layout on a foursquare block area for all the schools and the library connected by a path system; opening the auditorium and the pool to all residents; and adding new landscaping, playground equipment, and signage to improve the aesthetic quality of the campus.
- ❑ **Develop a village center:** Strategies included redeveloping Old Village and adjacent properties to create a visible and central location; ensuring that the Village Center is easily accessible by foot and car; and targeting destination shops, such as smaller specialty shops, instead of the typical impulse-buying type stores.
- ❑ **Celebrate diversity:** Strategies included developing a Village motto and/or logo that celebrates the community's diversity; displaying the motto/logo on entry signs, street light flags, and at local businesses; and continuing to promote inclusive activities, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.
- ❑ **Consider sharing community services:** Strategies included reallocating costs between schools and the community to properly use resources; utilizing private resources for funding and programs; and seeking cooperation among adjacent communities for the provision of services.
- ❑ **Market the Village – Get the word out:** Strategies included utilizing the Chamber of Commerce brochure; preparing a marketing map of key sites in the Village; educating realtors on amenities within the Village; and promoting the quality of the school system.
- ❑ **Promote community involvement:** Strategies included updating the community newsletter; actively contacting new residents; and promoting walking trails (walkable neighborhoods).
- ❑ **Develop a village/school auditorium:** Strategies included developing a committee to study this issue; undertaking a study to determine project feasibility and potential locations; allowing all schools to share the auditorium; and renting out the facility to generate revenue.