

Ogden Ave Enhancement Initiative Open House

Comments and Questions

October 10, 2017

Resident:

Salt spray will kill planting's too close to street – need hardy plants to withstand winter abuse- more trees -great! Protect lower bark from lawnmowers once planted. Get somebody to help old Kmart Ogden Shopping area to improve like ability. Make crosswalks at the corner of Washington and Ogden more walkable. It feels very unsafe to cross. Light pollution is a factor. Lights at jewel are great. All the lighting down Ogden needs to be environmentally Friendly-not too bright and pointed downward. I like the gooseneck.

Resident:

I am happy to see “window dressing” plans for the corridor, but still question how will these empty storefronts get filled because ugly vacancies won't be hidden by the pretty street signs.

Business:

The improvements look nice, but they do nothing to address the problems and ugliness on Ogden Ave from Naperville to Washington. Both malls need to be a destination. Look at the Wheaton Town Square. Build a fountain, make it a destination for the families of Indian Hill, Saybrook to walk to. The residents of the manor need a place to buy products/food. Make it look more like a place inviting for people driving by to stop. Hold the owner of Ogden mall accountable to take care of his property. As residents we have to care for our homes & yards, He should have to at least pave the parking lot. Bulldoze Stardust! It is becoming unsafe!

Business owner and Resident

All for the improvements, Its time the city step up and pay for this corridor. This is a terrible environment for retailers DO NOT ADD TO MY BURDEN! Pay out of the City Coffers!

Resident:

Please NO taxing current businesses or residents! We are all paying enough! Keep bringing new restaurants and stores – we will go there if you bring them! This improvement plan is a good start, but lots of follow up and constant marketing will be needed for this to succeed. No more Condos or townhomes in this area -schools are overcrowded as it is.

Resident:

I would love to see more restaurants, stores, kid activity centers, etc. We looked into old Hallmark space for rental of dance studio and rent was outrageous for an old-falling apart building. What about a pool in Kmart? Tennis Courts in Kmart? Whole Foods? No additional taxes on north Naperville residents or existing businesses that have tried to keep Ogden going..... Love the street signs!

Business

I like the thought of making Ogden Ace look great. But we need business to be in all the vacant building: In order to pay the taxes! And keep business open: So we can make Ogden look great but with no new business. I will help but only to a point!

Business

Definitely like the old fashion lighting would like to suggest a bridge walk-way in between Naper Blvd & Columbia area. Also. On corner of Columbia St car wash put a smaller sign with whole word Naperville and not just the "N"

Business

Tiff Money for façade or building? What is the ETA on finishing

Resident:

Love the buried electric & Gateway signage.

The blue light identifier-like the idea, not the color, it lends itself to "blue light" security lights. Perhaps a different color/ or changing color. Like the banners are they interchangeable to advertise events (marathon)? Vacant Kmart ... look into working w/park district to add an aquatic center or tennis courts. Naperville has an enormous swim community and we are going to other towns to fulfill the need for year-round swimming.

Resident:

Love the overall concept! The light up blue reminds me of a police emergency light....would love to see a softer color. Would also love to see the Kmart site be an indoor pool or tennis courts and work with the Park district. Naperville is home to the largest swim conference in the country with no indoor facility. Many other areas nearby have public indoor pools. Tennis is also very popular with no public indoor facility. Thank you for doing this – we appreciate it!

Resident

Naper & Ogden = High accident area what could happen there?

Resident

I like the new designs & ideas. Naperville is a great city that has completely neglected it's gateway entrance.

Resident

Appreciate the improved curb appeal from improved lighting & landscaping. What would help make North Naperville unique is more emphasis on "bike friendly" ways to visit these areas. Surrounding neighborhoods would use this!!

Resident:

Chik fil a: the Wheaton one is so crowded

Trader Joe's (Could draw from Wheaton, Lisle, Downers grove, etc)

Redevelop large shopping centers with water features: splash park in the summer and skating rink in the winter.

This area has so much parking; so convenient for young families, target them
Bring local residents when you pitch business.

Resident:

Who is going to pay for this?

Instead of spending millions to make things look pretty why not spend the time and money (tax credits) to get new businesses to occupy the vacant buildings. Occupying all the vacant buildings will make Ogden the most beautiful street in Naperville. Thank you for the open house.

Resident

I think the streetscape improvements are lovely and very much needed. However, my true hope is that it will spur more business development on east Ogden. The empty buildings and lack of viable restaurants and stores is the most troublesome part of Ogden for those of us who live within walking distance of Ogden. If new stores and restaurants cannot be lured into developing on Ogden (or existing owners cannot be swayed to improve their properties) then maybe we need to think outside the box beyond retail. A park district facility with a pool perhaps? Or indoor tennis facility? Right now there is no reason for people to come to E Ogden enlists they live here. If we give people a reason to come here from other areas of Naperville then any restaurants/businesses will reap the rewards. Planters and signs are great, but without other improvements, its really just lipstick on a pig.

Resident:

Who can residents contact with development ideas and ideas or suggestions for businesses in the Iroquois/Ogden area?

Resident and Business owners

We feel it is time the city funded the East Ogden Ave project, we have been paying hotel taxes etc., for the last 25 years. This project has been talked about for so many years without any results, each campaign season. After the campaign ends so is the action. As a business we put money into our hotel on an annual basis, however no money is spent on the corridor, leading it to a decline with more crime, homeless people and bringing in bad people into the area in general. If the city spent money in this corridor, it would lift the feel and change how much city resources are being spent in defense of crime, meaning savings on the long run to the city. It is so much worth while for the city in spending the money for the gateway into Naperville. The major entryway into a world known city is

Business

We are thrilled to see the upcoming improvements to this area. We have seen a steady decline in the area, which is now attracting homeless people outside our business. Each campaign season this area is talked about- but the talks ends as soon as the election is over. We feel this project should be City funded as we have been paying property taxes without Any

improvements. Our investment needs to be in our business, which we have recently completed. Let's work together to see action from City elected officials to keep this area from a continued decline. It will cost so much more to the City in the long run if it continues to decline. It can save the City so much money to make improvements now.

Resident and Business

Would love to see the entrance to Naperville brought up to the look and feel of downtown and freedom center. The lights and banners are AWESOME!! Would welcome the clean-up!

Resident and Business

I think this project is a great idea and would dramatically change the vibe of the area.

Business

Project looks like a great improvement to Ogden Ave.

Resident

Light identifiers should be a neutral and inviting color such as green or yellow (or LED and capable of changing colors for events). But NOT BLUE. As a Mother of two college girls and a realtor with ReMax of Naperville, seeing a blue light indicates a police call box for emergencies. Not something Naperville should be misidentifies as having on streets. Also, taxpayers, both residential and commercial should share this cost. Any additional taxes added to already vacant properties along Ogden might push some to south Naperville or elsewhere. We need our commercial vacancies filled and maintained.

Resident:

I'd like to plant trees on Loomis between Ogden and 11th. (My parkway is full; I would like to plant in the neighbor's parkways where there is room). How do I make his happen? Also want can I do to make the larger plan happen? Thanks!

Resident & Business Owners

Looks great! Please keep me informed.

Resident

Underground poles, Street signs, street lights, landscaped corners without steel signs/letters on corner would be great addition and improvement.

Resident:

Uptown Naperville needs to be a priority.

Resident:

Impressed with the effort. Great illustrations of what is planned. Would make a wonderful change to the area. Even signage looks good. Branding also a good idea. I wish you all good success and hope the city council goes along with SSA.

Business Owner

Obviously, this is good idea, but who pays for all these. The business is already struggling and you add even 5% real estate tax is too much of a burden. This special tax how long the property owners has to pay and I would oppose this unless City of Naperville pays for first 5 years. I am willing to pay 25 to 50% of expense spread over the period of five years. Or City should pay for this upgrade.

Resident

Reach out to the property owners of the old Kmart and offer an incentive to that owner to sell that property to a viable business. Encourage family oriented business to come into the area. Encourage young people who have moved out of Naperville to move back to Naperville. (Instead of Hinsdale, Chicago, and Oak Brook, Oswego, etc.)

Resident

This project must be made a priority in the village!!

Resident

Can we add some green space/park area into the plans?
I really like the improvement ideas!! THANK YOU!

Resident

Would like you to explore “green” space opportunities. Traffic calming measures-pedestrian flashing leds. I know it’s IDOT’s Issue but consolidating access would help flow of traffic and rear-end accidents would be cut down.

Resident:

Thanks for all your hard work!! To address these issues, I do appreciate it. I would also like to make improvements for the pedestrians, especially Ogden & Naperville-Wheaton Rd. By Fed-Ex. (No businesses shovel sidewalks for snow between Washington & Naper.)

Business

No to the project There is no visible long term benefit with this much investment and expense.

Email Comments

Resident

Good evening,

I was not able to attend the open house tonight. Just wanted to provide some inputs if not already discussed.

1. More pedestrian friendly (especially at Naper/Wheaton intersection)
2. Any thoughts on relocating the YMCA to the Ogden mall? The Kroehler YMCA is in need of a serious update and would be nice to have a YMCA facility that is updated and modern close by.

Resident (Lisle)

What both Naperville and Lisle could use on Ogden Ave., are more safe crossings for pedestrians!

The stoplights are too far apart for walkers on many stretches of the road, so they take chances with their safety to save time.

A Simple and proven effective solution would be to add some pedestrian safety islands between where stoplights are spaced far apart. This would be especially easy to do on Ogden because of the already existing center double left turn lanes. Just build them in some spaces where those lanes are still some distance from streets where actual left turns are made. Car traffic would not be hindered, and walkers could cross as each half of the road clear of traffic, standing safely on a raised island in the middle when needed.

This works great where trails cross busy high-speed Kirk Rd. Near Geneva and busy Diehl Rd. East of Eola Rd. In Naperville. Trail users can cross safely, and drivers are not delayed. A no-brainer.

In my opinion these islands are safer than crossing at corners with walk lights, because of the rampant abuse of "right turn on red" privileges by drivers who approach and turn without stopping while looking to their left for traffic but not looking to the right for pedestrians crossing. I see it often.

Resident:

I am so glad that you had a public event today to discuss Ogden Ave. I am sorry that I didn't know about it until it was too late.

I would love it if another park district building like Ft. Hill was developed there. I am amazed at how many people seem to constantly enjoy Ft. Hill. I'd love a facility with a pool to allow for winter training for our area swim teams. I'd also love it if the Children's museum could move there and be given a much larger space with funding for more exhibits.

Resident:

It was good speaking to you yesterday. Thank you for working on and presenting at the open house regarding Ogden Avenue.

The Ogden Avenue corridor has been neglected for far too long. It seems every election cycle we hear at least one candidate for City Council talk about the need to revitalize the area, yet nothing seems to ever get done. The Ogden Avenue Corridor Enhancement initiative was done in 2008 due to the recognition by various City leaders that that the area had been neglected, yet here we are almost 10 years later, with the area arguably worse than it was when that study was conducted.

The enhancements presented yesterday would be a welcome first step in a redesign/re-purpose of the area. The proposal isn't perfect, and other enhancements could perhaps be considered, but appears it would be a significant step forward from what is there today. The area will not move forward in any meaningful way without leadership and direction from the City. The issue of funding is inevitable in any project with an estimated cost of \$4.7 million. One concern is that the business owners along Ogden Avenue will reject the proposed SSA and the related tax increase, and City leadership will in essence say 'we tried,' and walk away, blaming a lack of funding. That would be very disappointing.

Is Ogden Avenue a priority for the Mayor and City Council? If so, a thought to consider would be to scrap the proposed SSA and fund the project over two years out of the Capital Improvement budget. It seems difficult to me to argue that the benefits to affected businesses would be greater than the increased tax burden from the SSA. Many existing businesses along Ogden are struggling. If one of the goals of the proposal is to help improve the climate for businesses, increased taxes is arguably not the best way to achieve that. Approximately \$2.4 million a year for two years seems like an amount that would not be unreasonable to find room for in a 2017 Capital Improvement Program budget of over \$58 million and projected to increase in future years. As was mentioned at the meeting, very little has been done to improve this area in decades, and it shows. This proposal could very well be viewed as long overdue deferred maintenance.

I support the proposal, and would further recommend that the funding be accomplished as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program budget. If there is one area of the City needing improvement, it's the Ogden corridor. Please let me know if I can help in any way.

Resident:

Thank you for your involvement in helping revitalize our neighborhood.

My suggestion to help draw people and businesses to the area would be for the city to move the Children's Museum to the Iroquois Mall. The city could buy/lease the Kmart building. The location would draw people from Wheaton, Glen Ellyn and Lisle, but with easy access to I-88 from other suburbs.

Private businesses are reluctant to invest on this side of Naperville and who can blame them, but a Children's museum might be an anchor that would encourage business to come.

Business

It was great to see you yesterday. Thank you for holding the open house. It will be great to see something positive happen with this stretch. My thoughts below:

1. The "Uptown Naperville" name is brilliant! It suggests vibrancy.
2. My initial reaction to the blue secondary gateway concepts was based on the public's negative reaction to the Park District signs that were (briefly) installed using those bold colors. The community's reaction was immediately negative and then the Park District repainted them in hues more compatible with nature. Those were primarily in residential neighborhoods in parks so that is understandable. Since this is a business district, I think the bolder signage is appropriate and the blue does coordinate with the City's color.
3. Landscaping is always welcome and always serves as an upgrade to a location in my opinion.
4. Love the Welcome sign and wayfinding signs.
5. I was really delighted to see the nicer blue street signs. I don't see a cost assigned to those; listed as DPW. Does that suggest that since they're making street signs anyway, the cost is minimal? As I mentioned yesterday, I would love to see them the entire Ogden stretch. I admit to being a tad envious of the nice Downer's Grove signs along Ogden. I immediately know that I am in Downer's Grove when I see them and know when I have exited. This is probably the least expensive part of the project so maybe they could be extended further past Washington..

Business

Thanks Christine!

Is there anything being done at Ogden / Loomis on the South Side (where we are located)? I saw a pic for the Naperville Vacuum across the street but nothing on our side.

Resident/Business Owner

It was great to see you at the Open house and hear more about the initiative.

Taking into account your responses to my concerns about -"is it enough"? I appreciate the level of challenge and I support the Initiative-

Business

I have taken a look at the enhancements and improvements for the Ogden Avenue initiative. I am very excited to see what the finished project will look like. I would like to know what the estimated time for the completion of the Ogden and Columbia area will be. Thank you!

Business

Thanks for all the hard work and good ideas to get things moving forward. I think the north Ogden corridor is quite a bit below Naperville standards and can use some sprucing up. I like the idea of an "Uptown Naperville" identity and think it would create a much nicer entry into the city for people coming in from the north and east.

I generally liked most of the ideas at the open house regarding signage and getting rid of the power lines. I am not sure about the extra money for ornamental street lights – would depend on the cost – if that \$2.8MM is just for the lights, I would suggest staying with the current lights and putting signage on those poles as in the "banner identifier" picture.

Landscaped corners look nice, but a continual upkeep cost on a yearly basis and winter not looking good should be considered. See if there is a way to have year round rock garden type landscaping as opposed to flowers? If we remove the landscaping and the street lights, then the cost drops from \$4.71MM to \$710k plus the cost of signs on the street lights. Much more manageable and easier to fit in city budget.

I am not a big fan of trees unless they are smaller/ornamental trees. They eventually grow larger and block out signs for businesses, etc.

A bigger issue than just the look has to do with vacancies and whether the proposed changes would help decrease those. They might. But as shown by the whole old Menards debacle, there are some owners who are just not interested in selling the property or operating it productively. The building at 1004 E. Ogden has been vacant for over 20 years! It is an eyesore. I think the city should impose some sort of "unproductive property" type tax. So once a building has been vacant for a certain period of time, and deprived the city of taxes or the residents of an appealing home/business, then there should be some sort of assessment. Perhaps have it increase after 5, 10, 15 years etc. And don't let people just change ownership to another straw man. Rather, have the property become productive. Consider shorter time frames for homes than commercial properties. Once costs start to go up, the owners will start to make the property productive or sell to someone who will. Alternatively, the city should look more actively into condemnation type proceedings. If we are to be a community, then all the community members, including the unproductive property owners need to chip in.

Once vacancies decrease, rents will start to increase in the area. Then the landlords will likely begin renting to some higher end tenants and we will see less of the pawn shops, vape shops, etc. that can currently afford the lower rents.

As to where the money comes from for the improvements, I understand downtown merchants have paid a portion of the cost for some improvements. I am not sure if the Ogden Corridor merchants are in the same financial condition as the downtown merchants. Perhaps the city should pay more for the improvements on Ogden? Otherwise, some merchants may go out of business and that could lead to further blight. As mentioned above, if we eliminate the “landscape corners” and “street lights with decorative planters”, we save \$4MM and the city could easily afford that.

On the gateway concepts signs – not sure we need the word “Ogden” on those. As businesses come and go and signs need to be updated, I would be careful about putting big business names on the signs. They will have their own business signs in any event. Perhaps go with smaller business names on signs if those are desired by the owners and if the owners are paying?

P.S. – avoid that big silver “N” sign at Columbia and Ogden. Very tacky and a rounded smaller sign would be better.

Resident

It was great to see such a steady turnout at Tuesday’s meeting. I really like the proposed sign changes. Calling the area “Uptown” seems like a classier way to describe the area rather than just saying “the north side.” Might I remind everyone of how critical this project to rehab the Ogden corridor is to keeping people from traveling to nearby towns for shopping and services. Let me know how I could help move this project along. Please keep me informed of the progress. Thanks again to all of you for reaching out to the residents on the north side and getting our feedback.