



Beecher Community Workshop Summary

July 26th, 2018



After a sunny and pleasant day in Beecher, the Beecher 2040 team held the first community workshop on the evening of July 26th. The event was the first of two community-wide workshops. There were around 40 residents and community members that came out to learn about the Plan and share initial ideas relating to Community Character, Economic Development, Transportation, and Social Vibrancy.

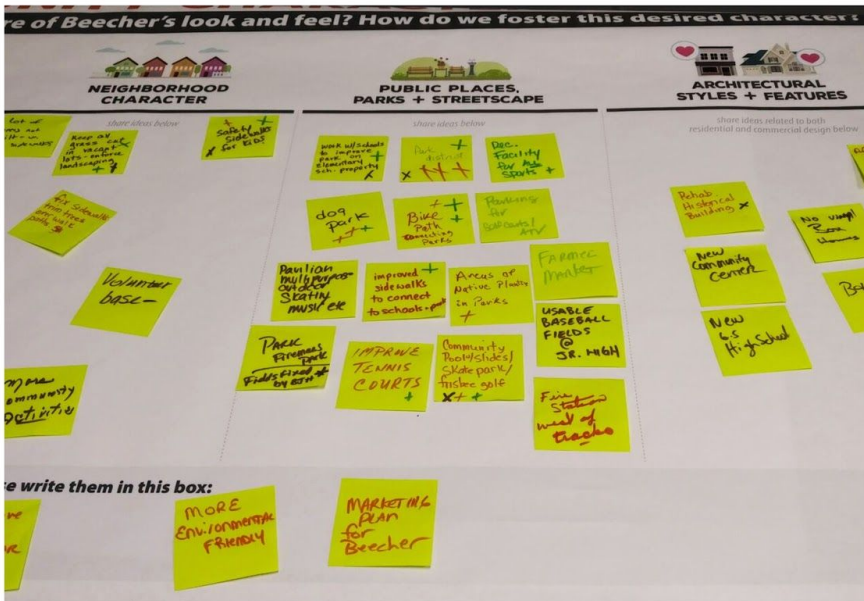
As residents entered, they stopped by the “Big Ideas Mural” to jot down general thoughts and comments about the future of Beecher. After sharing big ideas and fueling up on cookies and brownies, folks settled in for a brief presentation by Mike Hoffman (Project Manager) and Pete Iosue (Senior Planner) of Teska Associates. Pete described the purpose of a comprehensive plan and why it’s time for an update. Mike shared some of the preliminary findings of research on the current conditions in Beecher, including:

- **Between 2000 and 2010, the Village saw a significant population increase, including a sharp increase in Hispanic residents. Growth has since tapered off and many of the planned residential developments have a number of vacant lots.**
- **The Village also has seen increases in the proportion of residents with higher educational attainment such as associate’s and bachelor’s degrees.**

While data and research explain part of the story, hearing from stakeholders and residents is crucial to creating a plan that addresses community concerns. Mike spoke about the ways in which the Beecher 2040 team will be engaging the community to gather ideas and input, both in person at a number of events and through the project website and its different idea sharing tools. A number of community members have shared their ideas through the [website’s survey](#).

Activity Stations

Following the project overview, participants brainstormed and shared ideas and priorities via four “Think Stations”. Topics included: Community Character, Economic Development, Transportation, and Social Vibrancy. Participants flagged their favorite ideas by adding comments of agreement and stars.



Major themes from each station are as follows:

Big Ideas Mural

- No train whistles
- Senior housing
- Sidewalk + safety to schools
- Start a farmers’ market
- Make improvements at Fireman’s Park
- Space for outdoor fests, area with splash pad, skating, party space, rental areas surrounded by options for buying food, snacks

Community Character Station

- Expand the variety of shops and eating places in downtown, make it more aesthetically historic looking downtown, and reduce train noise.
- Want to make sure neighborhoods are kept up, with sidewalks and safe routes for kids
- Ensure paths for bicyclists, pedestrians and golf carts are safe / connect to public places, parks
- Want to see more recreation infrastructure for activities like frisbee golf, skating, pool
- Rehabilitation of historical buildings and structures
- Be a greener community—use solar innovatively and be more environmentally friendly

Economic Development Station

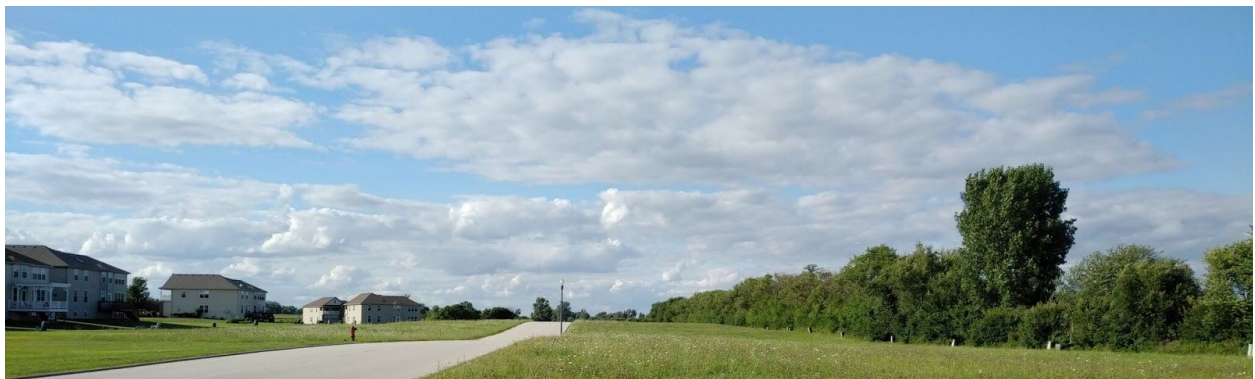
- Encourage new restaurants like farm-to-table, family-style, coffee shop/bakery
- No more video gaming
- Find ways to expand small and local stores such as a bakery, music lessons, pet & office supplies
- Increase tax base with businesses—perhaps industrial growth or a medical center
- Expand options for 55+ housing, assisted living
- Attract a bed & breakfast or small boutique hotel

Transportation Station

- Improve pedestrian infrastructure—more and better sidewalks, storefront sidewalks in downtown, safer crossings at train tracks
- find ways to better manage traffic on Route 1 and improve intersections
- Split 50/50 on expanding Metra service to Beecher
- Implement Bypass road for trucks

Social Vibrancy Station

- Create before & after school care programs
- Expand recreational opportunities for youth and work towards improving recreational facilities, perhaps adding a recreation center
- Start a Parks & Recreation Department or a separate Park District
- Expand bike trails and connections to regional trails and forest preserve
- Expand the variety of shopping and restaurants in town



Next Steps

While the project team continues to evaluate existing conditions, we want to hear from you! If you haven't already, please visit the website to:

1. Enter your email via the follow button
2. [Share ideas](#), and
3. [Take the survey](#)

Stay Tuned! Survey #2: Economic Development Coming Soon...