THE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DESIGN PROCESS

A PUBLIC DRIVEN PROCESS ■
STEERING COMMITTEE ■
THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ■
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS ■
A Public Driven Process

Beginning with the Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board supported a community-based process to develop future plans and a community vision based on the expressed sentiment of the Tofte public and continued to support a community driven design process for the Tofte Town Center Designs. This process was structured to empower the Tofte public in decision making regarding the design proposals, provide information, and explore opportunities through the Steering Committee. The process built on the work produced from the Comprehensive Planning Process, held several community-wide open house meetings for information gathering and design programming, conducted multiple design presentations for the purposes of feedback and review from the community, used Web postings of the design work and e-mail for additional feedback, and distributed a survey to all Tofte property owners.

The Community-based process was structured as follows:

- The Steering Committee was formed with the idea that a smaller committee represent all interests of the community and is formed to “steer” the process,
- This Steering Committee periodically checked in with the community at large,
- There was an ongoing process to involve and check in with the larger community through the use of the media, open houses, surveys, newsletters, and the internet updates posted on a Web site.
The Town Board solicited Steering Committee members at the first community-wide open house as well as notifying people who participated on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. See Appendix A for its members. The Steering Committee was formed to be a working committee that represented all interests of the community.

Decisions made by the Steering Committee were made through consensus; that is, every one on the Steering Committee could live with the decision.

Steering Committee work was structured as follows:

- The Steering Committee steered the design process,
- The Steering Committee periodically checked in with the community at large, and
- The Steering Committee deliberated on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the options developed by the design team and made recommendations to the Town Board after checking in with the community at large.

Event: **Booth at Parade With Survey**  
Date: July 4, 2005  
Work at Event: Sought ideas regarding the Tofte Town Center as well as Steering Committee members. (See Appendix B: July 4th Survey)

Event: **Community-Wide Open House**  
Date: October 25, 2005  
Work at Event: Visioning Process for the Town Center

**Steering Committee Meeting**  
Date: December 6, 2005  
Work at Meeting: Establish the Committee, analyze town site, review Comprehensive Plan, and review comments from 10.25.05 Open House. (See Appendix C for a Summary of Comments)

**Steering Committee Meeting**  
Date: January 24, 2006  
Work at Meeting: Reviewed 3 options; Directed consultants to explore Option 1 where HWY 61 shifts north of the North Shore Market and Option 3 where HWY 61 bypasses Town Center on power line ROW. Option 2, slight shift in alignment of Hwy 61, remains on the table, but not explored at this time.

**Steering Committee Meeting**  
Date: May 23, 2006  
Work at Meeting: Reviewed Options 1 and 2; Reviewed the correctness of data; Sought improvements and concerns with design options.

Event: **Community-Wide Open House**  
Date: June 26, 2006  
Work at Event: Reviewed and sought comments on designs, Option 3 - By-Pass was removed from further consideration, continued to explore Option 1- Hwy 61 north of Market, and further explored slight realignment of HWY 61.

Event: **Community-Wide Open House**  
Date: August 21, 2006  
Work at Event: Reviewed the two Options: Hwy 61 north of North Shore Market and slight realignment of HWY 61; Reviewed existing conditions in Tofte and MNDOT’s last design for re-building Hwy 61.

Event: **Survey**  
Date: September 5, 2006  
Work at Event: Sent survey to all property owners in Tofte regarding the two design options. (See Appendix D for a summary of the results)

**Steering Committee Meeting**  
Date: October 10, 2006  
Work at Meeting: Reviewed survey results and formulated recommendations to the Town Board.
TOWN CENTER EAST
The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is very clear on the vision, goals, and policies in directing the Town Center Design. (For a more complete list of goals and policies, please see Appendix E) These goals and policies helped form the basis for developing the Town Center Design Options. The following summarizes the vision for the Town Center:

“The village is a preeminent North Shore destination with a unique and remarkably vibrant village center. The village continues to be a core commercial center in the west end of Cook County with a strong commercial and public service hub and a mix of housing. This commercial center has a village core that extends inland providing basic services for local residents as well as services that compliment the seasonal residents and visitors to the area. New community facilities such as an outdoor concert space and amphitheater provide a space for local residents and visitors to gather and enjoy many community activities.

The village has innovative, shared sewer systems and water supply systems that protect its natural resources.

There is an interconnected sense of place from the gateway to the village, following the Shore to Tofte Park, winding through the main commercial center to the western edge of the village. This village way passes through the village weaving along, providing glimpses of the Lake as well as places to connect with the water.

Visitors and residents alike, share the history of Tofte, by walking along a marked historical tour through the village passing by the Tofte Park, the restored dock and the expanded fishing museum. At its heart stands the Tofte Commercial Fishing Museum interpreting Tofte’s heritage and exploring the evolution of the village of Tofte. The village of Tofte finds its inspiration from its fishing and logging heritage creating a concentrated village core which anchors Tofte’s sense of place.

The Town of Tofte along with MNDOT received a National Design award for their Creative Village Main Street design incorporating a village core while providing an efficient, safe route through the village. The roadway has been designed to enhance safety, is consistent with the scale of the village, and preserves the natural beauty along the Scenic By-Way.”
Opportunities and Constraints

After a comprehensive plan review, several programming meetings, and design review meetings, the following opportunities and constraints were identified:

Infrastructure Issues:
- Safety for pedestrians along and crossing Highway 61
- Ability for Highway 61 to function as a regional transportation road
- Interconnections within the community including pedestrian paths
- Location of Gitchi Gami Trail to maximize benefits to the community and all users
- Review zoning code to concentrate development and limit strip development along the new highway alignments
- Impact of the Highway 61 realignment on property owners.
- Impact on current highway-oriented businesses
- Impact of realignment of Highway 61 on County and Town roads and the responsibility for ongoing maintenance
- Adequate parking
- Storm water and sanitary sewer capacities
- Costs of infrastructure improvements and sources of funding

Commercial Opportunities:
- Amount of new commercial space
- Effect of Town Center designs on property owners
- Concentration of new business development
- A new business center that attracts a variety of business types, not only tourism based

Community Character
- Potential for civic spaces
- Connection of Town centers with the waterfront
- The redesign of some of the existing businesses to support the town center
- Maintaining and enhancing Tofte’s village character and cultural heritage
- Maintain and enhance natural character in town core areas
- New signs based on existing character of Tofte

Natural Resources
- Brownfield potential in the salvage yard
- Impacts on wetlands
- Impacts on water quality
- Maintaining and enhancing the character of the town’s natural heritage
- Promotion of storm water infiltration
- Use of ditches where possible
- Use of native plants