

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

"A Comprehensive Plan has been completed for the village of Skokie and the following text comprises a report thereon. The program extended over a period of one and one-half years and involved the submission of five preliminary reports on different phases of the plan. Each of the preliminary reports was studied by the Plan Commission and local officials. This report on the Comprehensive Plan includes changes and amendments that have been agreed upon and, thus, the plan is a cooperative effort of officials citizens and consultants ..."

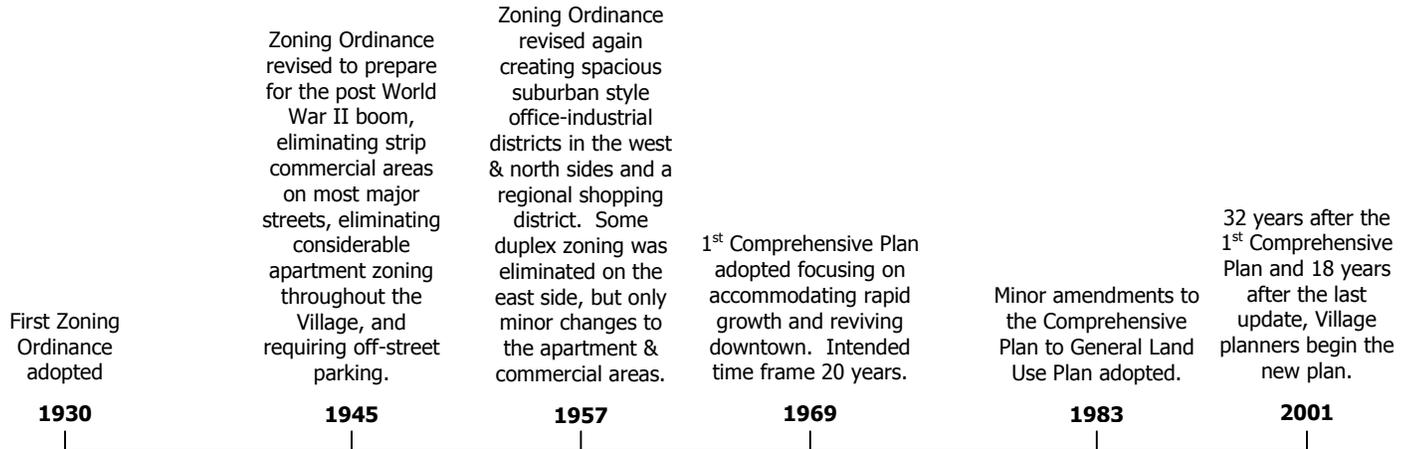
That was the introduction to the last full comprehensive plan for Skokie from August 1969. Although we respect the hard work and ideas of those who compiled the last plan, this time around, things are going to be a little different – in the style, in format, and in content. But before we get into all that, let's start with a bit of history.

SKOKIE'S PLANNING HISTORY

We've been conducting studies and plans for individual improvements for a long time. Earlier planning activities had to do with zoning (the underlying classification system that regulates how a piece of land can be used). We adopted our first Zoning Ordinance in 1930 based on development patterns of urban railroad suburbs – small lots, higher density, walkable and transit-oriented development patterns. Major revisions in 1945 and 1957 attempted to transform the Village into more of a typical post-war suburb – lower density, auto-oriented development. Since then the Zoning Ordinance text and districts regulation have been revised as needed. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1969, focusing on physical facilities needed to accommodate rapid growth, focusing on streets, schools, parks, public buildings of various types, water and sewer mains, the location and types of land uses, and major changes to downtown that were not implemented. It was supposed to cover 20 years.

Skokie's first professional planners were hired in the 1960s. They oversaw the development and adoption of the first Comprehensive Plan and the minor amendments to the land use map in 1983. Because the 1969 plan was so heavily focused on infrastructure, there wasn't much emphasis placed on updating the text of the plan. Skokie was already built with only slight changes in the land use patterns established by previous zoning maps and the 1969 plan.

Figure 1.1 Comprehensive Planning Timeline

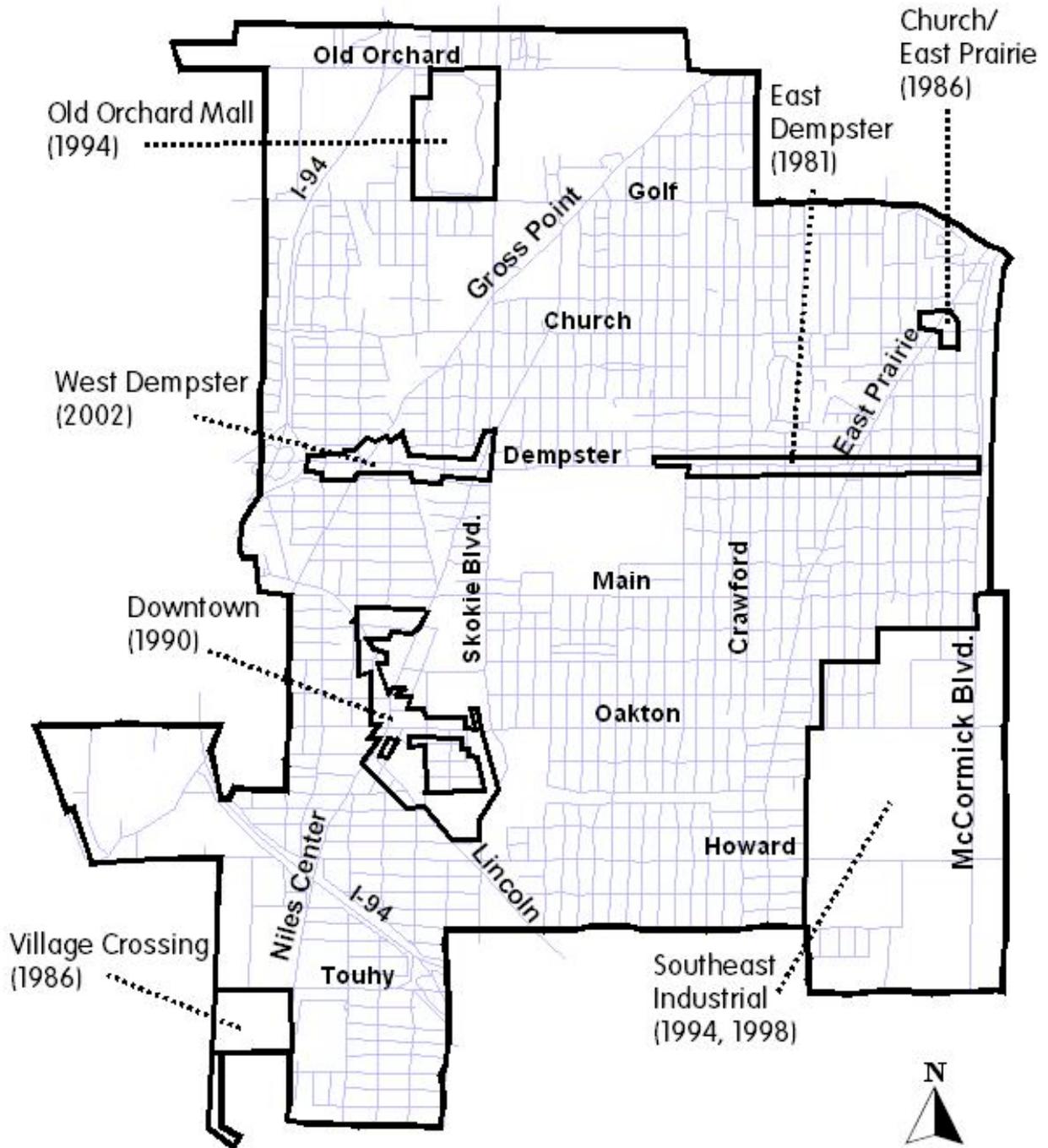


That didn't stop the planners, Plan Commission, and Board of Trustees from planning though. Skokie's buildings were aging and times were changing. Skokie planners and engineers shifted their focus to smaller area studies and plans intended to spur redevelopment.

But by the 1990s, things were changing again. We became a major employment center. People in Chicagoland, tired of long commutes to work, were rediscovering Chicago and the inner suburbs. Our population again began to increase after two decades of losses. The numbers of children and senior citizens increased. We became more ethnically diverse. *Chicago Metropolis 2020* was adopted by the Commercial Club of Chicago (they were the group that passed Daniel Burnham's now world famous 1909 *Plan of Chicago*), that encourages us to think regionally, limit urban sprawl, and encourage sensible transportation systems, diverse housing stock, and good access to jobs.

The time has come to develop some guidelines about what we want Skokie to be in the future ... and to do that we may need to reconsider some pretty traditional ideas about neighborhood, community, place, and city.

Figure 1.2 Prior Area Plans



THAT WAS THEN ... THIS IS NOW

So, what is it that you are about to read?

The 1969 plan was written during rapid growth on **undeveloped land**.

This plan is being written to sustain growth on **redeveloped land**.

The 1969 plan was concerned about the movement of **cars**.

This plan is concerned about the movement of **people**.

The 1969 plan addressed **schools, parks, and public buildings**.

This plan addresses **housing, services, and jobs**.

The 1969 plan made **broad, general** plans.

This plan makes **specific, area** plans.

The 1969 plan used **technical language**.

This plan uses **conversational language** (and maybe even gives you a chuckle).

The 1969 plan was written by **outside consultants** with the help of Staff.

This plan is written by **Staff** with the help of a few outside consultants.

The 1969 plan was **static** and didn't change.

This plan is **dynamic** and is expected to change.

The 1969 plan was **about you** and spoke **about you**.

This plan is **for you** and speaks **to you**.

Now for the specifics...

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS DOCUMENT

The Style and Format

Although this document contains lots of information, we did our best to break it down in a way that gets the point across while being easier to understand, as succinct as possible, and hopefully a little fun to read. We will hit the main points and provide the details for those who want to read them. We will use pictures, maps, graphs, and charts when we can. We will try to use examples that make sense.

By now you've probably realized that what you are reading is not a typical technical document. Why? Technical documents are boring. Boring documents don't get read. Documents that don't get read sit on shelves and don't get implemented.

And you know what? If we didn't want this plan implemented we wouldn't have taken the time to write it in the first place <the authors grin widely>.

We don't know of anyone else who has tried it this way, so, what the heck, we're giving it a try.

The Content

First, we will look at who we are. We can't make good decisions unless we know a little about our people. The 2000 census provides us with much of this basic information, but it's not enough. More input is needed, so we need to come up with a plan to get more information by reminding ourselves that if we need information, we might want to ask someone ... like you. Well, not all of you, but hopefully some of you.

Then we will look at how we get around. We used to just think about cars, but energy costs are not what they were in 1969. There are other ways, you know, by train, by bus, by bike, and on foot.

Housing was completely left out of the 1969 plan when much of the housing stock was shiny and new. It's now 30 years later, the wants and needs of households have changed, and our homes are changing, too.

Public facilities will still be evaluated. Rather than just looking at the stone and steel, we will also be considering the services being provided.

Finally, we'll put it all together in deciding how we should use our land, area by area, neighborhood by neighborhood. This plan will be fitting smaller pieces into the bigger picture.

So let's GET ON WITH IT!

OK, turn the page.