

Element Two: Community Involvement & Governance

Public participation is an important component of successful planning, community building and governing. Members of the Northbrook community (residents, business people, and property owners) should be provided with ongoing communication regarding projects and issues that affect their community. While we recognize that a Village as complex and diverse as Northbrook will rarely be able to reach complete consensus on critical issues, we are committed to a participatory public review and comment process. Public participation and dialogue helps bring about a more complete understanding of complex issues and results in an improved decision making process. Because of the Village's rich history of civic participation, citizens expect to be informed of public issues and to have an opportunity to be heard.

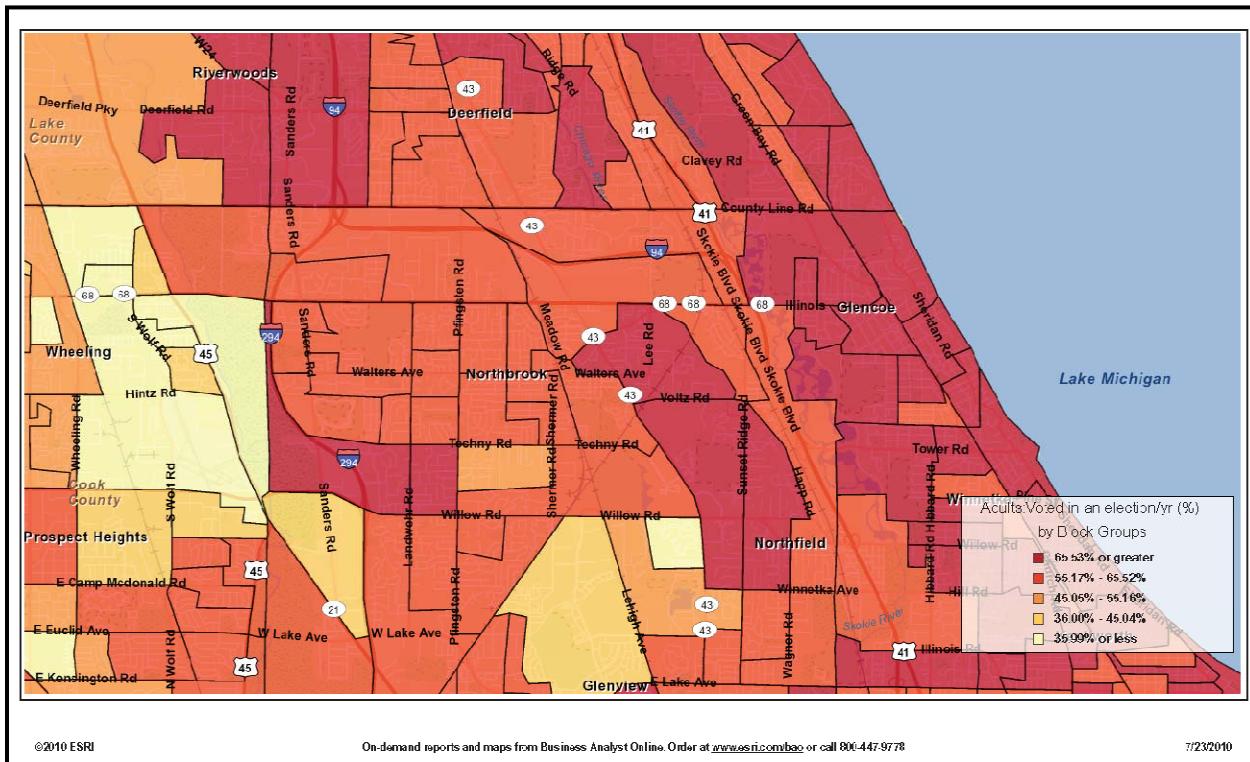


Figure 2-A: Participation in Elections by Citizens (Shown by Census Block Group)

Northbrook will continue to promote open government processes that are accessible, responsive, and fair to all of its citizen participants. Village processes, as they have always been, will be characterized by deliberation, respectful dialogue, and thoughtful collaboration to facilitate informed decisions and creative solutions. Northbrook will be a community where constructive dialogue involving individuals, the business community, organizations, institutions, and government is the cornerstone of successful planning, decision making, and community building.

The goals and strategies included in this Element are meant to serve as guidelines for ways to effectively inform and involve the community in Village-related discussions and decision making processes. However, it is important to understand that effective and meaningful communication techniques and technologies change and evolve over time. Techniques that may be appropriate today may not be as effective and meaningful in the future.

Community Involvement & Governance Goals and Strategies

CI 1. *Actively involve the citizens of Northbrook in actions that will affect their quality of life.*

- a. Provide opportunities for public review of plans, regulations, and development proposals at the appropriate stage of plan preparation and implementation.
- b. Consider citizen input as an important component of the planning and implementation process.
- c. Understand the diversity of the Northbrook community and provide opportunities for members of the community and other interested citizens to participate.

CI 2. *Maintain an open and inclusive public decision-making process.*

- a. Monitor the utility of new methods of communicating and interacting with the public.
- b. Use a wide variety of communication tools, resources, and techniques to reach a broad cross-section of residents, businesses and visitors to the community.
- c. Review the effectiveness of public involvement methods and take action as needed to improve them.
- d. Recognize that citizen involvement is an integral component of any major planning effort in the Village.

CI 3. *Maintain the Village's public information mechanisms so they are easily available to our constituents.*

- a. Make facts and information about development proposals accessible by mechanisms such as the Internet to increase understanding and insight into the complexity of challenges that affect the community.
- b. Continue to provide public access to data that reflects important community and regional trends, analysis, etc.
- c. Write regulations and information about the Village that are easy to understand.
- d. Develop programs to improve the Village's capability to communicate with residents who speak languages other than English.

CI 4. *Maintain effective opportunities for public participation in local government.*

- a. Continue the Village's practice of using commissions, advisory bodies and ad hoc committees to assist Village staff and the Village Board of Trustees in addressing critical policy issues. Periodically review the purposes and roles of these boards and commissions to provide adequate direction so that they continue to benefit the Village and effectively use residents' time and energies.
- b. Maximize opportunities for early notification of proposed projects or issues under consideration using signs, information display boards, web site postings, written correspondence, and other methods, as they become available.

CI 5. *Support active participation of the Village Board of Trustees, other Village leaders, and Village staff in the resolution of regional issues that are relevant to Northbrook.*

- a. Participate in intergovernmental and regional organizations to encourage planned growth and development, to enhance the quality of life, to protect the environment, and to promote the economic vitality of communities within the Chicago Metropolitan Region.
- b. Recognize that major transportation problems require regional solutions and multi-jurisdictional cooperation.

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- c. Review opportunities for establishing new regional stormwater management and flood protection programs.
- d. Seek multi-jurisdictional solutions to various regional issues identified by Northbrook officials and citizens.
- e. Continue the practice of using inter-governmental and boundary agreements to coordinate the delivery of public service and land use patterns that are to the benefit of the greater Northbrook area.