



MEMORANDUM

TO: Trustee Brian LaVaque, Chairperson
Trustee Jessie Hammersmith, Co-Chairperson
Economic and Community Development Committee

FROM: Trevor Dick, FAICP, LEED AP
Director of Economic Development and Planning

DATE: September 25, 2025

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Purchasing Placer.ai for Economic Development

PURPOSE

This memo recommends purchasing a subscription for Placer.ai, a location analytics platform, to support and enhance Lombard's economic development strategies. Placer.ai provides real-time mobility and foot traffic data that will help the Village make more informed, data-driven decisions to attract and retain businesses, support downtown activities, and evaluate development opportunities.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Founded in 2016, Placer.ai has become a leading tool in economic development, commercial real estate, retail strategy, and urban planning. The platform is widely used by:

- Municipal governments for downtown planning and business recruitment,
- Retailers and developers for site selection and competitor analysis,
- Real estate firms to assess market demand and property value.

Cities and suburbs across the U.S., including nearby Illinois communities, have adopted Placer.ai to support data-driven decision-making in planning and economic development.

Placer.ai collects anonymized, aggregated mobile location data from smartphones and mobile apps that users have opted into for location services. This data is:

- Privacy-compliant (GDPR & CCPA),
- Collected from millions of devices across the U.S.,
- Supplemented with third-party data sources (e.g., demographic databases, census data, property data).

Placer.ai does not track individuals or collect personally identifiable information (PII) and it does not sell consumer data. (*see attachment for more information*)

In an increasingly competitive economic development environment, access to reliable and recent data is critical. Placer.ai offers an opportunity to modernize our approach, strengthen our business support tools, and make smarter strategic investments.

Village Benefits

The following is a summary of the key benefits that a subscription can offer the Village:

Business Attraction & Site Selection Support

Placer.ai enables staff to analyze foot traffic trends, visitor demographics, dwell times, and trade areas for any commercial location in the Village. This data allows us to:

- Present potential retailers and developers with compelling, location-specific analytics.
- Validate the viability of underutilized properties for redevelopment.
- Benchmark Lombard's performance against comparable communities.

Support for Existing Businesses

We can use Placer.ai to provide existing Lombard businesses with insights on:

- Customer patterns (peak times, visit frequency, origin points).
- Changing demographics and market reach.
- Impacts of special events, street closures, or marketing campaigns.

Strategic Planning & Policy Evaluation

Foot traffic and mobility data can inform:

- Parking and transportation infrastructure needs.
- The impact of zoning or land-use changes.

Tourism and Overnight Stays

Placer.ai can be used by the Village to also track visitor patterns in connection with special events and attractions.

- The Village can track where visitors come from for events and attractions, where they go before or after visiting our attractions.
- This information can help with future event planning, tourism promotion, and funding analysis
- Tracking Downtown development efforts, including event performance and placemaking initiatives.

Return on Investment

Many municipalities, including neighboring suburbs, are already using Placer.ai to advance their development goals.

For Lombard, the tool can:

- Reduce reliance on costly third-party studies.
- Accelerate decision-making by staff and boards.
- Enhance transparency when engaging with developers and stakeholders.

Lombard Example

If the Village wanted to focus on a particular event such as Cruise Nights. The Village could perform an analysis using Placer.ai to understand a variety of metrics. For example, Placer.ai could show:

- How many people visited Downtown during the event,
- Total foot traffic by day and hour,
- Where visitors came from,
- Whether those visitors also went to nearby businesses (like restaurants or shops),
- Year-over-year, and/or month to month, comparisons to measure growth or decline.

COMMITTEE ACTION REQUESTED

This item is being placed on the October 13, 2025, ECDC agenda for consideration. Staff recommends that the ECDC recommend approval of the Placer.ai contract in the amount of **\$21,000** partially funded with hotel/motel tax funds.

Attachments:

- Staff Presentation for Recommending Placer AI
- Civic Economic Development Solutions
- Supporting Communities and Preserving Privacy
- Order Form
- Civic Travel and Tourism Solutions