

Lee County Comprehensive Plan



**County Board Adopted :
May 18, 2010**



**VANDEWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.**

PLAN SUMMARY

Why do we need a Comprehensive Plan?

The *Comprehensive Plan* serves as a blueprint for growth and development in the County. It is designed to aid government officials, developers, landowners, and the general public when making decisions regarding growth in the County.

How was the Comprehensive Plan Updated?

The County hired a planning consulting firm, Vandewalle & Associates, to assist the County in updating its *Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 2000.

The planning process began in April 2009 with a kick off meeting with County officials to discuss the project timeline and potential new directions and priorities. Early in the process data about the existing conditions in the County was collected and compiled into a Background Information report that was incorporated into the *Plan* as Volume I. This first phase also included mapping of the County's existing land use, transportation system, and natural features, as well as collecting natural, social, and economic data for the County.

Focus group meetings were held in June to gather input on the future development of the Detailed Planning Areas (Highway 2 and the I-39 interchanges) and challenges and opportunities related to agriculture. During the summer the consultant prepared the first draft of the updated *Plan*. The County hosted intergovernmental meetings in September to share the draft *Plan* with local officials and learn about their planning efforts. An Open House was held in January to present the draft *Plan* to the public and get comments and feedback. Based on community input, the draft *Plan* was revised and a Public Hearing Draft of the *Plan* was prepared for the formal public hearing and adoption process. A Public Hearing was held at the County Planning Commission meeting on April 5, 2010. The Planning Commission recommended adoption of the *Plan* and on May 18, 2010 the Lee County Board adopted the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Comprehensive Plan Goals

- Maintain the agricultural economy in the County by limiting non-agricultural development on prime farmland
- Preserve the “rural character” and farming lifestyle of the County
- Preserve and enhance the aesthetic quality of the County
- Provide adequate park and recreational facilities for County residents
- Support safe and affordable housing for all Lee County residents
- Encourage redevelopment in the downtowns of the County's cities and villages
- Promote new high quality commercial and industrial development in the County
- Maintain and enhance the quality of life in the County to help draw commercial and industrial development
- Promote tourism in the County
- Preserve the natural, cultural, and historical features of the County that draw tourists
- Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of the pedestrian, bike, car, bus, truck, and train
- Provide a cost effective system of utilities and public services
- Take full advantage of economic development programs offered by the State and Federal Governments and private sources
- Encourage public participation in the planning and decision-making processes
- Ensure fair and consistent decision making based on the County Goals, Objectives, and Policies
- Establish mutually beneficial intergovernmental relationships

What are the Key Plan Recommendations?

- Preserve prime farmland and the rural character of the County by steering development into existing cities and villages.
- Continue using the point-based Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system as the primary method for determining the location of rural development. Make minor changes to the LESA system to better implement the goals of the *Plan*.
- Continue to limit rural residential development in the AG-1 zoning district to no more than 4 *new* homes per quarter-section.
- Use the Detailed Planning Area (DPA) maps and other recommendations in the *Plan* as a guide for future development in these areas:
 - Southern Palmyra Township DPA—plan for business/office development near existing development mainly on the south side of Hwy 2 and preserve the majority of lands on the north side of Hwy 2 for continued agricultural use.
 - Steward/Rochelle Economic Development Corridor DPA—plan for business/office development in the northern interchange quadrants, allow a mix of uses in the southeast quadrant and north of Steward, and plan for residential uses south and west of Steward.
 - US 30/I-39 Interchange Area DPA—plan for business/office development in the southeast and northwest interchange quadrants and industrial development in the northeast and southwest quadrants.
 - Paw Paw/Compton I-39 Interchange Area DPA—plan for business/office development in the southeast and northwest interchange quadrants, industrial development in the northeast and southwest quadrants, and allow a mix of uses on the northwest side of the interstate south of Beemerville Road.



How is the Plan Implemented?

Preparation of the *Comprehensive Plan* is the first step. Following adoption of the *Plan*, the County will continue to use existing regulatory tools and will consider creating or updating various County regulations based on the recommendations in the *Plan*.

- Prepare and adopt an Official Map to preserve land for future public facilities such as expanded road rights-of-way and trails.
- Work with the Dixon Park District and other partners to implement the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan.
- Hold annual meetings to discuss planning issues of County-wide importance.
- Develop and implement a Driveway Access Permit system to limit new access points along county roads to reduce “strip” development and to ensure the safety and long-term function of these roads as collectors and arterials.
- Consider revising this *Plan* when necessary to respond to changing conditions and development proposals, as determined by the Planning Commission or County Board.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAN SUMMARY	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
VOLUME I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION	I-1
CHAPTER 1.1: INTRODUCTION	I-3
<i>Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries.....</i>	<i>I-5</i>
CHAPTER 1.2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES.....	I-7
<i>Map 2: Regional Position</i>	<i>I-19</i>
<i>Map 3: Local Economic Opportunities</i>	<i>I-21</i>
CHAPTER 1.3: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	I-23
<i>Map 4: Natural Features.....</i>	<i>I-29</i>
CHAPTER 1.4: LAND USE	I-33
<i>Map 5: Existing Land Use.....</i>	<i>I-35</i>
CHAPTER 1.5: TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.....	I-37
CHAPTER 1.6: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES.....	I-39
CHAPTER 1.7: HOUSING.....	I-41
CHAPTER 1.8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	I-43
CHAPTER 1.9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION	I-49
VOLUME II: PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	II-1
CHAPTER 2.1: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	II-3
CHAPTER 2.2: POLICIES.....	II-9
CHAPTER 2.3: LAND USE PLAN.....	II-15
<i>Map 6: Future Land Use Map.....</i>	<i>II-19</i>
<i>Map 7: Southern Palmyra Township DPA.....</i>	<i>II-27</i>
<i>Map 8: Steward/Rochelle Economic Development Corridor DPA</i>	<i>II-29</i>
<i>Map 9: US 30/I-39 Interchange Area DPA.....</i>	<i>II-31</i>
<i>Map 10: Paw Paw/Compton I-39 Interchange Area DPA</i>	<i>II-33</i>
CHAPTER 2.4: COMMUNITY CHARACTER	II-35
CHAPTER 2.5: DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES	II-37
CHAPTER 2.6: TRANSPORTATION PLAN.....	II-45
<i>Map 11: Transportation Facilities.....</i>	<i>II-47</i>
CHAPTER 2.7: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	II-49
APPENDIX A: CITY/VILLAGE FUTURE LAND USE MAPS	A-1
APPENDIX B: LEE COUNTY GREENWAYS & TRAILS PLAN	B-1

Volume I: Background Information

Volume I: Background Information is intended to provide an overview of demographic trends and background information necessary to develop an understanding of the changes taking place in Lee County. The information in Volume I will inform the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations outlined in Volume II.



CHAPTER 1.1: INTRODUCTION

Located in northwestern Illinois, Lee County is characterized by its rural atmosphere and punctuated by unique cultural and historical attractions. Development is focused in the City of Dixon, also the County seat, and within small cities, villages, and unincorporated hamlets scattered throughout the County. While rural, the County has increasingly easy access to local and regional urban areas via Interstates 88 and 39 and the multimodal transportation hub in Rochelle, Illinois. While Lee County has not experienced rapid growth over the past decade, it is important for the County to consider the forces that might shape it over the next 20 years. In this context, planning for development in an orderly and predictable manner is essential to preserve the County's farmland and farmers, protect its natural features, avoid land use conflicts, provide housing and employment opportunities, and protect and enhance its rural heritage.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

This *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to:

- ◆ Provide a vision for future growth and development in the County;
- ◆ Recommend appropriate future land use for specific areas in the County;
- ◆ Preserve agricultural and natural resources;
- ◆ Guide the “character” of future development and redevelopment;
- ◆ Foster economic development and redevelopment opportunities based on the County's unique assets;
- ◆ Offer a framework for intergovernmental cooperation to help achieve *Plan* directions;
- ◆ Provide detailed strategies to implement *Plan* recommendations; and
- ◆ Cover a planning period running through the year 2030.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

This *Plan* is organized into two volumes. The first volume of the *Plan*, Volume I: Background Information, includes demographic information and a general overview of existing conditions throughout the County. The background information in Volume I will form the basis for the goals, objectives, policies, and programs outlined in Volume II.

Volume II is the County's Planning Policy Framework which presents general goals, objectives, policies, programs, and recommendations related to each of the *Plan* elements introduced in Volume I. The final chapter in Volume II, Plan Implementation, includes proposed strategies and timelines to ensure that the recommendations presented in this *Plan* become a reality.

GENERAL REGIONAL CONTEXT

Map 1 shows the relationship of the County to neighboring communities in the region. Lee County is located in northern Illinois approximately 100 miles west of Chicago, 40 miles southwest of Rockford, and 65 miles northeast of the Quad Cities. Map 2 graphically depicts the County's regional context.














SELECTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

Lee County encompasses approximately 725 square miles and includes two cities (Dixon and Amboy) and ten Villages (Ashton, Compton, Franklin Grove, Harmon, Lee, Nelson, Paw Paw, Steward, Sublette, and West Brooklyn). About 44 percent of the County's population resides in Dixon and 7 percent lives in Amboy; another 21 percent live in one of the ten Villages; and approximately 35 percent live in one of the County's twenty-two Townships. The general planning area for this *Plan* has been selected to include all lands within the County that are outside the jurisdictional boundaries of an incorporated municipality.

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Map
#1

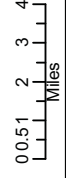
Jurisdictional Boundaries

-  Lee County
-  Township Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Other County Boundary
-  Sections w/Section Number
-  City/Village Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  School District Boundary
-  Hamlets
-  Fire District
-  Interstate
-  U.S. or State Highway
-  Railroad
-  Surface Water

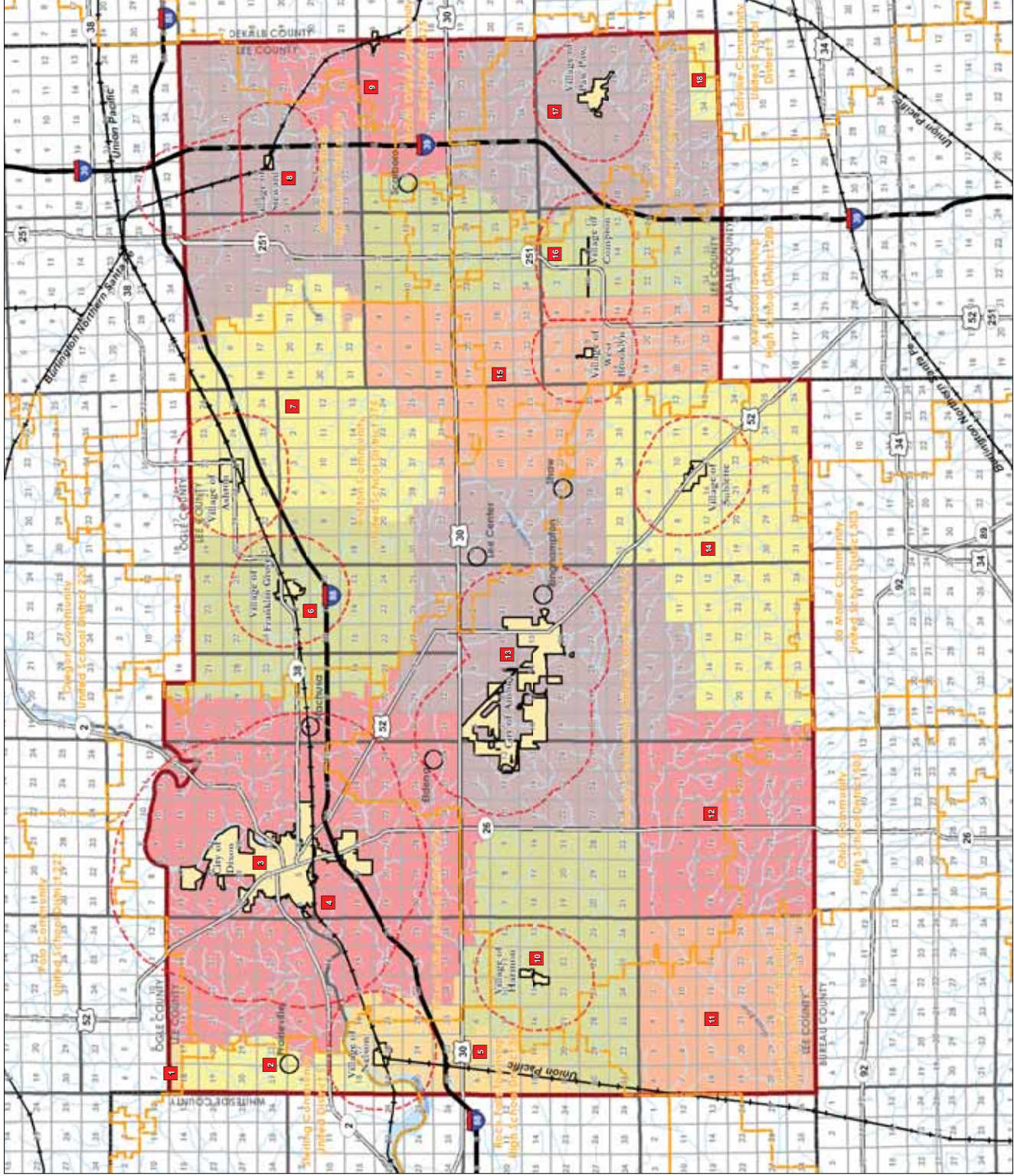
Fire Districts

1. Polo Fire
2. Sterling Fire
3. Dixon City Fire
4. Dixon Rural Fire
5. Rock Falls Fire
6. Franklin Grove Fire
7. Ashton Fire
8. Rochelle/Ogle-Lee Fire
9. Dekalb County-Lee Fire
10. Harmon Fire
11. Bureau County/Walnut Fire
12. Bureau County/Ohio Fire
13. Amboy Fire
14. Sublette Fire
15. West Brooklyn Fire
16. Compton Fire
17. Paw Paw Fire
18. Earlville Fire

Palmyra	Dixon	South Dixon	Nelson	Harmon	Hamilton
Ashton	Reynolds	Alto	Franklin Grove	Bradford	Viola
Lee Center	Amboy	May	Sublette	Brooklyn	Wyoming



May 18, 2010
Source: Lee County LIO,
ESRI (2008), USGS
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Shaping places. Inspiring change.



CHAPTER 1.2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter of the *Plan* provides the baseline data and information necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of the changes and opportunities facing Lee County. This chapter includes population, household and employment trends and forecasts, education levels, and employment and income characteristics. These general trends provide an important starting point for understanding the County's key issues and priorities for the plan. This chapter also includes an overview of past planning efforts and a summary of the planning process. Finally, this chapter includes an overview of the County's economic assets and future opportunities.

POPULATION TRENDS

Figure 1.2-1a compares historic population trends for Lee County, neighboring counties, and the state. As shown below, Lee County has historically had a lower population than the surrounding counties. The County continued to experience modest population decline between 2000 and 2008. Overall, Lee County's population trends closely echo those of adjacent counties to the west and south.

DeKalb County saw a substantial population increase during this same time period, as a result of the increasing influence of commuter-residential development oriented to employment in the Chicago metropolitan area. Development in Ogle County is associated with commuting to Rockford and with the employment and with the employment growth focused on the intermodal transportation facility in Rochelle.

FIGURE 1.2-1A: HISTORIC POPULATION FOR SURROUNDING COUNTIES, 1970 – 2008

County	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008*	Population Change 1990-2000	Population Change 2000-2008
Lee	37,947	36,328	34,392	36,062	35,129	4.9%	-2.6%
Bureau	38,541	39,114	35,688	35,503	34,933	-0.5%	-1.6%
DeKalb	71,654	74,754	77,932	88,969	106,321	14.2%	19.5%
La Salle	111,409	112,033	106,913	111,509	112,474	4.3%	0.9%
Ogle	42,867	46,338	45,957	51,032	55,167	11.0%	8.1%
Whiteside	62,877	65,970	60,186	60,653	59,153	0.8%	-2.5%
Illinois (state)	11,110,285	11,426,518	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,901,563	8.6%	3.9%

*Source: United States Census, *2008 population estimates*

Figure 1.2-1b lists historic population trends for incorporated municipalities within Lee County. Like the County as a whole, population is generally stable. During the decade between 1990 and 2000, the Village of Sublette saw the greatest rate increase in population of Lee County's incorporated communities followed by the Village of Ashton and the Village of Franklin Grove. In terms of numerical population growth, the City of Dixon and the City of Amboy each added close to 200 residents during this period. Alternatively, the Villages of Harmon and Nelson lost nearly 20 percent of their populations during this same time period. Other communities with moderate population gains include the City of Amboy, the Village of Paw Paw, the Village of West Brooklyn, the City of Dixon, and the Village of Compton.

FIGURE 1.2-1 B: HISTORIC POPULATION FOR LEE COUNTY COMMUNITIES, 1970 – 2000

	1970	1980	1990	2000	Population Change 1980-2000	Population Change 1990-2000
City of Dixon	18,147	15,682	15,144	15,941	1.7%	5.3%
City of Amboy	2,184	2,377	2,377	2,561	7.7%	7.7%
Village of Ashton	1,112	1,140	1,042	1,142	0.2%	9.6%
Village of Compton	399	376	343	347	-7.7%	1.2%
Village of Franklin Grove	968	965	968	1,052	9.0%	8.7%
Village of Harmon	205	193	186	149	-22.8%	-19.9%
Village of Lee	131	159	319	313	96.9%	-1.9%
Village of Nelson	215	263	200	163	-38.0%	-18.5%
Village of Paw Paw	846	839	791	852	1.5%	7.7%
Village of Steward	308	298	282	271	-9.1%	-3.9%
Village of Sublette	361	442	394	456	3.2%	15.7%
Village of West Brooklyn	225	210	164	174	-17.1%	6.1%

Note: 2008 American Community Survey data is not available at the Village level

Source: U.S. Census 1970-2000

Figure 1.2-1c lists historic population trends for townships within Lee County. In general, the townships nearest urban areas or transportation corridors experienced modest growth between 1990 and 2000. The Harmon Township, located at the far western side of the County saw the greatest decline in population during this time period. Alternatively, Willow Creek Township, located at the far eastern side of the County saw a 27 percent increase in population.

**FIGURE 1.2 -1C: HISTORIC POPULATION FOR LEE COUNTY TOWNSHIPS
(POPULATION OUTSIDE OF INCORPORATED AREAS), 1970 – 2000**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Population Change 1980-2000	% Population Change 1990-2000
Alto Township	363	301	286	306	1.7%	7.0%
Amboy Township	733	703	670	669	-4.8%	-0.1%
Ashton Township	209	235	218	175	-25.5%	-19.7%
Bradford Township	430	387	332	362	-6.5%	9.0%
Brooklyn Township	516	438	379	355	-18.9%	-6.3%
Franklin Grove Township	436	501	421	420	-16.2%	-0.2%
Dixon Township	1,747	2,221	2,022	1,984	-10.7%	-1.9%
East Grove Township	380	330	292	267	-19.1%	-8.6%
Hamilton Township	362	269	224	236	-12.3%	5.4%
Harmon Township	416	395	324	251	-36.5%	-22.5%
Lee Center Township	700	561	537	593	5.7%	10.4%
Marion Township	382	396	301	268	-32.3%	-11.0%
May Township	353	350	344	395	12.9%	14.8%
Nachusa Township	560	619	584	497	-19.7%	-14.9%
Nelson Township	548	581	681	691	18.9%	1.5%
Palmyra Township	1,587	2,275	2,188	2,610	14.7%	19.3%
Reynolds Township	375	359	345	333	-7.2%	-3.5%
South Dixon Township	1,109	970	820	828	-14.6%	1.0%
Sublette Township	436	397	351	351	-11.6%	0.0%
Viola Township	325	304	300	279	-8.2%	-7.0%
Willow Creek Township	443	395	231	387	-2.0%	67.5%
Wyoming Township	436	357	332	384	7.6%	15.7%
TOTAL	12,846	13,344	12,182	12,641		

Source: U.S. Census 1970-2000

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Figure 1.2-2 compares the County's age and sex distribution in 2000 with surrounding counties and the state. In 2000, the County's median age of 37.9 was higher than the state's, but comparable to the majority of the surrounding counties, with the exception of DeKalb, likely due to the presence of Northern Illinois University. With prolonged life expectancy and a trend toward declining birth rates, the County's median age will likely continue to increase. Gender statistics for Lee County may be somewhat skewed compared to others counties since the Census Bureau counts prison inmates as residents of the facility in which they are housed rather than their hometown. The Dixon Correctional Facility has an average daily population of 2,108 male inmates.

FIGURE 1.2-2: AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION, 2005-2007

	Median Age	Percentage Under Age 18	Percentage 65 and over	Percent Female
Lee County	40.1	22.2%	15.5%	49.5%
Bureau County	40.6	22.7%	17.7%	50.9%
DeKalb County	28.1	22.0%	9.3%	50.0%
La Salle County	39.1	23.9%	15.9%	50.8%
Ogle County	38.1	24.7%	13.8%	50.6%
Whiteside County	40.2	23.3%	16.8%	50.9%
Illinois	35.7	25.1%	12.0%	50.8%

Source: U.S. Census, 2005-2007 American Community Survey

Figure 1.2-3 compares Lee County's racial distribution and ethnicity trends with surrounding counties and the state. The vast majority of Lee County residents reported "White" as their race, a trend that is also seen in surrounding counties. Similarly, the majority of Lee County residents indicated "white" as their ethnic background.

FIGURE 1.2-3: RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2005-2007

	Racial Distribution				Ethnicity		
	% White	% Black	% Asian	% Other Race	% Hispanic or Latino	% Not Hispanic or Latino	% White Alone
Lee County	92.2	4.2	0.4	3.2	4.1	6.4	89.5
Bureau County	95.3	0.6	0.7	3.4	6.2	2.1	91.7
DeKalb County	85.6	5.6	2.7	6.1	9.0	9.7	81.3
La Salle County	94.2	0.9	0.7	4.2	6.7	3.4	89.9
Ogle County	94.1	0.5	0.7	4.7	8.2	2.5	89.3
Whiteside County	91.6	1.3	0.4	6.7	9.6	2.7	87.7
Illinois	71.1	14.7	4.2	10.0	14.6	20.1	65.3

Source: U.S. Census, 2005-2007 American Community Survey

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are important for helping communities estimate, and plan for, the future needs of residents. When considering population projections, it is important to remember that it is difficult to accurately project populations for small areas (less than 50,000). Therefore, any projections should be considered an educated guess of future growth based on past trends in the community. Unforeseen changes in the local or regional economy, or significant changes in birth, death, or migration rates can dramatically alter population growth in the County.

Figure 1.2-4 presents three different population projection scenarios for Lee County. The Official State Projection is calculated by the State using the Cohort-Survival method through 2030; growth was projected at the same rate through 2050. The Historic Trends projection represents a growth scenario with a population increase at the same rate that the County experience from 1990 through 2008. The Metro Influences projection uses the same rate as the Trend projection through 2020 with an increased growth rate after 2020 (assuming that metropolitan growth will begin affecting the County beyond 2020).

FIGURE 1.2-4: LEE COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTION

	Official State Projection	Historic Trends Projection	Metro Influences Projection
2000 (<i>base year</i>)	36,118	36,062	36,062
2010	36,554	36,490	36,490
2020	37,939	36,923	36,923
2030	38,923	37,361	40,384
2040	39,907	37,804	44,169
2050	40,915	38,252	48,309

Source: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; Vandewalle & Associates, 2009

EXISTING PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This section briefly describes the existing plans, studies, and ordinances that serve to help guide development in and near the County. Also included is a list of groups or agencies involved in planning-related activities in Lee County.

Lee County Comprehensive Plan (2000)

The County's most recent Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2000. The County's original Plan was adopted in September 1974. This current planning effort is intended to update the 2000 Plan to continue to serve as a useful policy document for the County.

Lee County Zoning Ordinance (2005)

The County adopted its first Zoning Ordinance in 1961. The ordinance has been revised over the years, most recently in June 2005. This document serves as the primary mechanism for regulating land use and development in the County.

Lee County Subdivision Regulations (2005)

Lee County subdivision regulations were initially adopted on March 19, 1991. The most current version of this document was updated and amended in June 2005. These regulations have been amended a few times since adoption. These regulations govern the division of land in the unincorporated portions of the County.

Village of Franklin Grove Plan (2007)

The Village of Franklin Grove adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2007. The general development plan of the Village's Comprehensive Plan promotes single-family residential development in areas to the west of the existing municipal limits and traditional neighborhood development to the southeast and northeast of the community. Conservation and greenspace areas have been mapped alongside Franklin Creek and extending north along the western side of the Village. The Plan also recommends a large industrial development area to the east of the Village between Interstate 88 and the railroad in the Village's 1.5 mile extraterritorial area. This planned industrial area also extends to the north along Illinois Route 38.

Village of Steward (2005)

The Village of Steward developed its Comprehensive Plan in 2005. The Village's planned land use map designates most land in the Village's extraterritorial area as single-family residential. Land immediately to the west of Interstate 39 and south of Highway 2 has been designated as planned business. A large industrial area has been mapped to the north of the existing Village limits. Existing areas of passive recreation along I-39, and land adjacent to the creek and east of I-39/south of Highway 2 have been designated as passive recreation land uses.

Village of Sublette (2005)

Adopted in October 2005, the Sublette Comprehensive Plan and associated future land use map was designed to guide decisions related to development over a ten-year period. The Village's future land use map designates the majority of land within the Village's 1.5 mile extraterritorial, but outside of its municipal boundaries, as residential. Land to the south of Maytown Road and to the north of Tower Road is primarily designated as agricultural. Strip commercial development is planned to occur along the USH 52 corridor with commercial nodes planned to the north of the west side of the and immediately south of USH 52 and west of Green Wing Road. Industrial development is planned to occur north of USH 52 and west of Inlet Road.

State Highway 2 Corridor Land Use Study (2003)

This land use study, prepared by Vandewalle & Associates, makes recommendations for development policies and future land use along State Highway 2 within Palmyra Township. The Planned Land Use Map depicts new Planned Business/Office uses on the south side of State Highway 2, particularly on the eastern side of the corridor. The northern part of the corridor is planned to remain largely in agricultural uses. This Study will be revisited as part of the State Highway 2 Detailed Planning Area.

Village of Lee Plan (2003)

The Village of Lee adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2003. Lee's future land use plan map designates the majority of land within and to the east and west beyond existing Village limits as "mixed residential." This land use classification is intended to emulate the community's established neighborhoods, which may be comprised of any combination of the following: primarily detached single-family housing units, two-family units (not more than twelve percent), attached single-family (not more than ten percent) multi-family (not more than eight percent), and senior housing units (not more than three percent). The majority of land to the southeast and within one mile of the Village is designated as planned industrial development, with the exception of environmental corridors. Land to the north of the Village and south of Lee Road and west of County Line Road is designated to remain in agricultural uses.

City of Dixon (2001)

The City of Dixon most recently updated its comprehensive plan in 2001. The City's Future Land Use Plan map generally depicts future business and manufacturing development on the east side of the City extending to Sink Hollow Road and near the I-88 Interchange. Future "estate" residential areas are identified for the north and west sides of the City, at densities of 2 dwelling units per buildable acre.

City of Rochelle (2003)

The City of Rochelle adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1973, which was later updated in 1995, and most recently in 2003. The City's current Comprehensive Plan framework plan map designates land south of I-88 and east of Highway 251 as future employment centers. Other areas of future employment and commercial areas are planned to occur along Illinois Route 38, which traverses through the City east to west. New residential development has been planned for areas northeast and northwest of current City municipal boundaries.

The City is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan. The draft Future Land Use Map dated June 2009 depicts additional future industrial/warehousing land uses in Lee County. The map also identifies a "Rochelle/Steward Boundary Agreement" line along Elva Road.

Greenways and Trails Plan (2010)

Updated in 2010, the Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan provides a framework for the development of a coordinated greenway and trail network linking the communities and natural and cultural resource sites of Lee County. The Greenways and Trails Plan and associated map contains recommendations to improve existing and new greenway systems; develop bicycle and pedestrian linkages connections to the Grand Illinois Trail; and establish a network of snowmobile routes, equestrian routes, canoe trails, and interpretive trails.

The Greenways and Trails Plan is included as Appendix B in this Plan.

Illinois Lincoln Highway Interpretive Master Plan (2004)

The Interpretive Master Plan was completed by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and was provided to the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition, in July 2004. The document details the history of the highway, outlines themes and messages of the highway, demarcates interpretive resources along the highway in Illinois, and provides recommendations to enhance tourist experience and interpretive media.

The Interpretive Master Plan singles out the Dillon Home in the City of Sterling (discussed in the Historical Section of this document), a monument dedicated in 1903 outlining the place where Abraham Lincoln spoke on July 18, 1856, and a "Lincoln in Sterling" historic marker on the site where Lincoln once spent the night. The Interpretive Master Plan recommends that a kiosk be located outside of the iron fence at the Dillon Home.

Illinois DNR Conservation 2000

Conservation 2000 is a comprehensive long-term approach to protecting and managing the natural resources of Illinois. Through Conservation 2000, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources initiated the Ecosystems Program which integrates the interests and participation of local communities and private, public, and corporate landowners to enhance and protect watersheds through ecosystem-based management. The

Ecosystems Program is made up of Ecosystem Partnerships, which are coalitions of local stakeholders including private landowners, businesses, scientists, environmental organizations, recreational enthusiasts, and policy makers. Through the Ecosystems Program and Partnerships, more than 62,000 acres in Illinois have been restored and 5,580 acres have been protected through conservation easements or simple acquisition.

The land within Lee County falls primarily within the Lower Rock River Ecosystem Partnership area. Current projects of this partnership include establishment of warm season grasses using no-till planning; development of a learning center at the historic Franklin Creek Grist Mill; and a habitat improvement project using controlled burns to restore native habitat. Small areas of the southeastern portion of Lee County fall into the Fox River and Illinois River Bluffs Ecosystem Partnership areas.

Lower Rock River Area Assessment (1998)

This is a four-volume set of documents containing an inventory and analysis on the natural resources of the Lower Rock River Basin. These documents are part of the Critical Trends Assessment Program (CTAP) and the Ecosystems Program of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. These documents provide a wealth of information on the geology, water resources, living resources, archaeological resources, and environmental quality of the Lower Rock River Basin, which encompasses most of Lee County.

Soil Survey of Lee County Illinois (2005)

The Soil Survey contains useful information for land use planning in the County. It contains predictions of soil behavior for selected land uses and highlights limitations and hazards inherent in the soil, improvements needed to overcome the limitations, and the impact of selected land uses on the environment. Soil surveys are intended to be used by planners, community officials, and developers to plan land use and select the most appropriate sites for building construction.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The County's planning process was guided by several participation events and tools, in addition to regular meetings of the Planning Commission. The following is a summary of public participation activities conducted during the early information gathering, issues assessment, and priority identification components of this planning process.

2000 Planning Process

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan was developed through a one-year planning process. The Lee County Planning Commission provided guidance throughout the planning process. Input was gathered from the County Board at critical stages in the process. A number of meetings were held with representatives from County agencies, cities, villages, and other interested groups. Most importantly, this Plan was based on deliberate public participation through a Community Planning Forum held in March 1999, and a Community Workshop held in November 1999. The Community Planning Forum helped develop a list of key issues and challenges facing the County, as well as a future vision for the County. The Community Workshop was used to present the detailed plan recommendations to the public and solicit feedback.

Kick Off Meeting

The Comprehensive Plan Kick Off meeting was held on April 30, 2009, and attended by the Planning Commission. The consultants introduced the planning process and timeline, and presented initial information on Lee County's regional position and local economic opportunities (discussed later in this chapter).

Focus Groups

With County staff assistance, the consultants conducted three focus group meetings early in the visioning process, each attended by six to seventeen County residents. The consultants presented an explanation of the *Comprehensive Plan*, the purpose of Detailed Planning Areas, and discussed issues related to each focus group subject. The results of each meeting are outlined as follows.

♦ **Highway 2 Detailed Planning Area Focus Group:**

The group discussed future visions for the Highway 2 Detailed Planning Area as well as unique features, limitations and opportunities for development. The following is a summary of key points identified by attendees:

- Opportunities to expand single-family and senior housing in the County, particularly along the Highway 2 corridor.
- Developing trend of Chicago residents relocating to less urban areas, including Lee County.
- Recreational opportunities associated with the river should be explored, including a potential canoe/kayak launch.
- Continued efforts by the County to expand bicycle facilities and provide connections.

♦ **I-39 Detailed Planning Area Focus Group:**

The group discussed future issues and opportunities associated with Interstate 39. Key ideas from this meeting and via follow-up contact by participants included:

- Community planning efforts have been most prominent in the Village of Steward and the City of Rochelle in Ogle County. Notably, the City of Rochelle's comprehensive plan identifies a new interchange on Thorpe Road.
- Considerable traffic is generated in the southeast side of Rochelle, which increases traffic congestion near Steward. Options to mitigate heavy traffic could include a new interchange on Interstate 39.

♦ **Agricultural and Food Focus Group:**

This focus group discussed trends, challenges, and opportunities for agriculture in Lee County. The following is a summary of key points identified by attendees:

- Lee County has one of the most diverse varieties of crops in the state; however, there has been limited growth in organic and alternative crops.
- A downturn in the County's livestock population has negatively affected livestock operations—they are no longer able to compete with cash crops.
- New residential development conflicts with agriculture. New residents need to be aware that Lee County is characteristically "agricultural," which creates negative impacts for residential areas such as dust, noise, and smells.
- Industrial and commercial uses do not belong in agricultural areas.
- Careful consideration should be given to the appropriate quantity and location of potential for wind farms.
- Lee County is set up for large scale production and commercial agriculture, which is unlikely to change due to the character of farmland (large fields).
- Maintenance of infrastructure will continue to be a challenge in the future without new development (increase in tax base) to finance it.
- A unique opportunity exists in Lee County to develop or recruit a container manufacturer to be used in conjunction with the Rochelle intermodal transportation facility.

Planning Commission Meetings

Lee County's standing Regional Planning Commission served two major functions throughout the process. The first was to serve as a "steering committee" to advise the consultant and County staff as to the specific strategies that should be employed throughout the process. The second role was the statutory role of the Planning Commission—to review the comprehensive planning policies and programs and make recommendations to the County Board for formal adoption. The Planning Commission met six times during the visioning process. These meetings are summarized below.

- ♦ July 7, 2009: The consultants presented the draft Volume I: Background Information. The Planning Commission discussed the document and provided minor corrections. The Planning Commission also discussed the 2000 Comprehensive Plan including completed recommendations, components that should be carried over to the updated Plan, and new recommendations.

- ♦ September 17, 2009 and October 5, 2009: The consultants presented Comprehensive Plan Draft #1. The Planning Commission suggested revisions to several policy areas including wind energy systems, sustainable agricultural practices, and implementation timeframes.
- ♦ February 1, 2010: The consultants presented the results of the Draft Plan Open House. The Planning Commission suggested minor revisions and directed the consultants to prepare Draft #3 of the Plan.

Intergovernmental Meetings

The consultants facilitated a meeting with local units of government an intergovernmental meeting on September 17, 2009. The consultant presented information on preliminary Plan directions, particularly the draft Future Land Use Map, the Draft Transportation Facilities Map, and the Detailed Planning Area maps. Participants shared feedback on these draft documents, on key intergovernmental opportunities and challenges, and on the status of their own planning efforts.

Draft Plan Open House and Public Hearing

On January 4, 2010, the County held an open house event to gauge the public's opinions on the draft of the Comprehensive Plan. In general, participants were supportive of the recommendations for agricultural preservation, future land use in the Detailed Planning Areas, and greenways and trails. There were some concerns regarding the Plan's policies toward new wind farms.

On April 5, 2010, the County Planning Commission held a public hearing to receive any comments on the Plan.

LEE COUNTY ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lee County's future vision should be bold, yet realistic, and based on a clear understanding of the County's unique, place-based assets. This future vision should recognize local, regional, national, and global trends so that the County is positioned to take advantage of future opportunities as they arise. This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* aims to identify existing assets and trends, and evaluate the future opportunities in Lee County.

Regional Position

As illustrated on Map 2, Lee County is centrally located in northern Illinois, which has historically been anchored by Chicago. This connection to the Chicagoland area, in addition to the broader regional trends in the Upper Midwest, will continue to influence the County in the future. It is important to understand this broader regional context before focusing in to the County level.

The economy of the Upper Midwest has historically been linked to its natural assets, particularly the unique landscapes of the Driftless Area and its position at the edge of America's breadbasket and within the nation's Grain Belt. Within the Upper Midwest, Chicago is the predominant economic center and the region's primary portal to the global economy. As the Chicago metropolis continues to grow, its commuter shed will also continue to expand. This expansion will have consequences for Lee County, given its location at the western edge of the commuter shed and existing transportation connections provided by the highway network and the development of the future high speed rail



Agricultural land near the I-39 and Chicago Rd

system, which is proposed to have a station minutes from the County. This Midwest Regional Rail System will be comprised of a 3,000-mile rail network and will serve nearly 60 million people.

Local Economic Opportunities

A view closer to home suggests additional opportunities for the County's future. These local opportunities are illustrated in Map 3 and described below.

Sustainable Agriculture

Lee County's rich agricultural land is its most abundant and important economic and natural resource, covering approximately 92 percent of the County's land area. According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Lee County is one of the State's top producers of corn. In addition, a significant number of soy bean and hay crops are grown in the County. Lee County ranks 11th out of the 102 counties in Illinois, in cash crop receipts, representing a significant component of the local economy.

Agriculture faces many challenges in the future—primary is the loss of agricultural land resulting from development. Between 1992 and 1997, 148,000 acres of prime farmland was developed and converted out of farming. In 2005, the United States imported more farm products by value than it exported. These trends are amplified by the continued growth in demand for food to support the world's growing population, while at the same time, productive agricultural lands are diminishing everyday.

In the face of these global and national trends, it will be important for Lee County to continue to support agriculture as a critical component of its economy and culture. Further, to continue to sustain and augment the local agricultural economy, the County should endeavor to support new approaches for agriculture—more specifically, by introducing “sustainable” agriculture into the County's farm-based economy. Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In an agricultural context, sustainability integrates three main goals—environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. These concepts and recommendations for County-wide opportunities to initiate sustainable agricultural practices are described in Chapter 2.3.

In addition, education and research about this topic will be critical as technologies and approaches evolve. Locally, Sauk Valley Community College has partnered with the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) on an innovative collaborative initiative called ACES ACCESS. This initiative offers, through Sauk Valley Community College, a state-wide Associate of Science degree in the areas of Agriculture or Agribusiness. Regionally, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program has helped advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities through a nationwide research and education grants program.

Local Food

According to the USDA, Illinois consumers spend \$48 billion annually on food and very few of these dollars stay in the state. Recently, the State has recognized this issue and has established a 32-member Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force to develop a plan for expanding and supporting a statewide local farm and food system. The Task Force determined that in order to retain a larger share of Illinois food dollars, public, private, and civic sectors must work together to build a farm and food system that meets consumer demand for “local” food. The popularity of farmer's markets is a measure of consumer demand and has expanded into large-volume wholesale markets.

As an agricultural community in close proximity to raw products and growing local and regional populations, Lee County is well positioned to take advantage of the local food movement as an economic, farmland preservation, and community health initiative. This effort could build on existing local food markets such as



Wind farm in Lee County

the farmer's markets in downtown Dixon and Sublette; local producers such as Crooked Row Farm, Little Farm at American Prairie, Rocky Hill Farm, and Tracksides Poultry; and local processors such as County Village Meats, Wyant Meats, and Bay Valley Foods.

Alternative Energy

There are currently three large wind farms in Lee County—the Mendota Hills Wind Farm, GSG Wind Farm, and Big Sky Wind Farm. Mendota Hills was the first utility scale wind farm in the state of Illinois, consisting of 63 214-foot wind turbines. The County recently approved a fourth wind farm, which spans Lee and DeKalb Counties, with 133 turbines in DeKalb County and 19 in Lee County.

In the past, the County has experienced some benefits of wind farming including farmland preservation, additional income for farmers, potential creation of “green-collar” jobs, and millions of dollars in property tax revenue. However, County leaders will need to consider the extent to which wind turbines will be allowed in the County as well as impacts that were not known at the time of the initial projects. This decision will be based in part on location—there are limited areas that meet both sustained wind speed and setback requirements—and in part on policy. The County also encourages the use of other “green” energies including solar and geothermal.

In addition to wind energy, other alternative energy operations are located in and near Lee County. For example, several nuclear power plants have been developed near Lee County. Illinois also happens to be home to more nuclear plants than any other state in the nation. A hydroelectric dam has been constructed on the Rock River in Dixon. Several power plants operate in the area including Duke Energy.

Intergovernmental Cooperation and Communication

The County's towns, villages, and cities not only share common boundaries, but also school attendance areas, existing and future recreational trails, emergency services, roads, and natural resources. Decisions made in surrounding counties may impact Lee County now and in the future. Recognizing this interconnectedness, the County intends to engage communities, agencies, and organizations in an effort to take a more purposeful approach to intergovernmental cooperation, resource sharing, and communication. Volume II includes recommended strategies for expanding intergovernmental cooperation and communication.

Future Economic Development Areas

Map 3 identifies four future economic development areas or Detailed Planning Areas (DPA): three at the I-39 interchanges and one along Highway 2 east of Dixon. As recommended in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, this planning effort will explore the unique context and opportunities associated with each DPA. See Chapter 2.3 for conceptual development plans and policies for these areas.

Prime Agriculture Resources

✈ Major Airports

Universities & Colleges

- Strong agricultural identity
- Excellent transportation network
- Access & commuting patterns
- Expanding influence of surrounding metro areas

Map #3

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Local Economic Opportunities

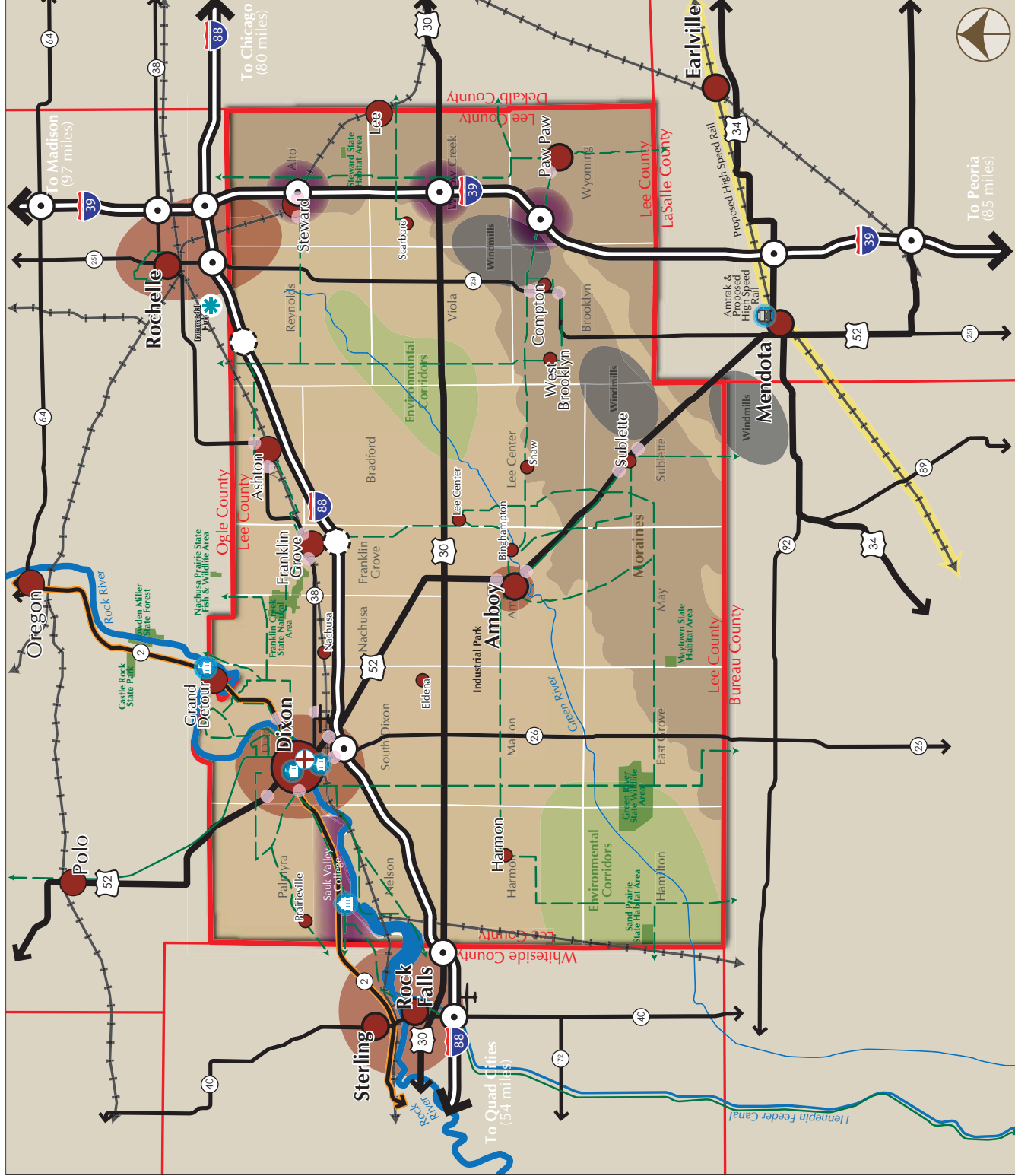
- Natural Features**
- Rivers
 - State Parks
 - Moraines
 - Environmental Corridors

- Transportation Systems**
- Interstates
 - Interchanges
 - Potential Future Interchange
 - State Highways
 - County Highways
 - Active Railroads
 - Intermodal Hub/Transshipment
 - Amtrak Station
 - Existing Trails
 - Potential Recreational Trails
 - Community Gateways

- Economic Resources**
- Education Facilities
 - Historic Sites
 - Hospitals
 - Future Economic Development Areas
 - Windmill Farms

Preliminary Assessment of Opportunities

- Explore sustainable agriculture
- Promote local foods
- Plan for future economic development areas
- Support and expand alternative energy
- Expand intergovernmental cooperation
- Consider developing a trail network



CHAPTER 1.3: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter of Volume I of the *Plan* contains background information related to agricultural resources, natural resource conservation, and historical and cultural resource preservation.

Agriculture is a prominent land use in Lee County. Farmland covers approximately 92 percent of the County's total land area, according to the 2009 existing land use inventory. Farming is also an important component of Lee County's local economy, heritage, and character. The character, location, and viability of farming in the County are described below.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Character of Farming

Local farmers produce a variety of agricultural commodities including grains, floriculture, hogs, and cattle. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Lee County ranks in the top ten counties in the State for sale of harvested vegetables, corn for grain, and chicken.

According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in Lee County has been declining from 1,330 in 1978; to 1,006 in 1992; and to 842 in 2002. However, the 2007 Census of Agriculture counted 898 farms in Lee County, an increase of nearly seven percent from 2002. This increase was similar to national trends with 2,204,792 farms in the United States, a four percent increase from 2002. The number of farms nationwide had been on a declining trend since World War II. The latest figure indicates a leveling of this trend, with a net increase of 75,810 farms.

Land in farming also decreased between 1978 and 2000, from 421,412 acres (91 percent of the county's land) in 1978; to 393,043 acres (85 percent) in 1997; and to 389,037 acres (84 percent) in 2002. However in 2007 land in farming increased slightly to 395,624 acres (85 percent). This could be the result of lands being removed from government programs and placed back into productive agricultural uses.

Average farm size has continued to increase from 317 acres in 1978, to 412 in 1992, to 435 in 1997, to 462 in 2002, and to 441 in 2007.



Agriculture building near Steward

Assessment of Farmland Viability

Agriculture is an important component of the economy and culture of Lee County. This is due to Lee County's large share of the state's prime farmland. Prime farmland is composed of soils that are best-suited for agricultural production—soils that will sustain a wide variety of crops without deteriorating over a long period of time. According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, about 86 percent of the total acreage in Lee County is made up of prime soils.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service groups soils based on their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. These capability classifications are based on numerous criteria that include, but are not limited to, the soil's salinity; capacity to hold moisture; potential for erosion; depth, texture, and structure; as well as local climatic limitations (e.g., temperature and rainfall). Under this system of classification, soils are separated into eight classes.

Generally, Class I and Class II soils are the best suited for the cultivation of crops. Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use for cropland. These soils can sustain a wide variety of plants and are well

suited for cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands. Class II soils have moderate limitations that restrict the types of plants that can be grown or that require simple conservation practices or soil management techniques to prevent deterioration over time. However, these practices are generally easy to apply, and, therefore, these soils are still able to sustain cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands.

Soils in Class III have limitations that, under natural circumstances, restrict the types of plants that can be grown, and/or that alter the timing of planting, tillage, and harvesting. However, with the application and careful management of special conservation practices, these soils may still be used for cultivated crops, pasture plants, woodlands, and range lands. Soils in capability classes IV through VIII present increasingly severe limitations to the cultivation of crops. Soils in Class VIII have limitations that entirely preclude their use for commercial plant production.

Map 4 depicts the locations of Class I agricultural soils, which cover nearly 16 percent of the County.

The loss of highly productive farmland is a significant concern in many areas across the country, including Lee County. A primary reason for this loss is due to the income generated by selling farmland for non-agricultural development, such as rural home sites. As agricultural land is converted to non-agricultural uses, the viability of agriculture in the County (and across the country) continues to decline.

An alternative trend that is also occurring is the development of wind farms in agricultural areas. The placement of turbines on agricultural land provides a steady source of additional income for farmers. Rental income from wind turbine placement competes with land sales for development and discourages additional residential intrusions into agricultural areas. In addition, the low density spacing of wind turbines provides a use that is compatible with agriculture and allows for the continuation of agriculture. Further, the clean renewable energy provided by wind farms serves not only the general welfare and economic viability of the County, but also creates “green-collar” jobs and contributes significantly to property tax revenue in the County.

Farmland Preservation Efforts

The County currently participates in a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system, a numeric rating system that scores sites to help formulate policy or make land-use decisions regarding farmland protection and conversion. In addition, Lee County farmers can participate in several federal, State, and Countywide programs and initiatives that are intended to preserve long-term farming activities. The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorized several federal programs, including:

- ♦ The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.
- ♦ The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, which focuses on providing technical assistance to help new grazers begin using rotational grazing methods. Trained grazing specialists work one-on-one with farmers to develop grazing plans including seeding recommendations, fencing, and watering plans.
- ♦ The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

A survey of Lee County’s natural resources provides an important framework for guiding several elements of the comprehensive planning process. The natural features of the County provide a basic framework for analysis and suggest possible locational advantages for particular land uses. The natural resource base, especially environmentally sensitive areas with respect to soils, environmental corridors, wetlands, and floodplains are critical factors in local planning decision-making. Maintenance of these, and other environmentally sensitive natural features, is important for both the visual attractiveness of the community, as

well as for the prevention of severe developmental or environmental problems that may be difficult and costly to correct in the future.

Landscape and Topography

The northwestern part of Lee County is a rolling glacial till plain that is drained by the Rock River. The central part of the County is a relatively level landscape characterized by prominent sand ridges and dunes, drained by the Green River. The southeastern part of the County is a till plain characterized by broad low ridges.

Hilltops and Ridges

Important natural features that are often overlooked in comprehensive planning efforts are hilltops and ridgelines. Hilltops and ridgelines serve to define the horizon—and perhaps provide a “natural edge” for a community. Large structures constructed on top of them (including homes) tend to be visually prominent—especially if they do not blend with the area’s rural-agricultural character in terms of color, material, or style. Significant hilltops and ridgelines are present in various areas throughout the County, particularly along the moraine ridgelines in the southeast portion of the County.

Soils

The soils in Lee County vary widely in texture, natural drainage, and other characteristics. Those in the northwestern and southeastern parts of the county are dominantly well drained or moderately well drained, gently sloping, and silty. Erosion is a severe hazard in these areas. Conservation measures help to control erosion and thus help to prevent sedimentation. If properly managed, the soils are well suited to field crops, pasture, hay, and trees. They are suited to building site development. The soils in the central part of the County dominantly are poorly drained or somewhat poorly drained, nearly level, and loamy. Wetness is a major limitation affecting the use of these soils. Because of an extensive tile drainage system, these soils are well suited to field crops. Because of wetness, however, they generally are poorly suited to most other uses. Please refer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service’s Soil Survey of Lee County Illinois for more detailed soil information.

Steep Slopes

Generally, the County is predominated by gently rolling or flat areas. Steep slopes (exceeding 12 percent) occur infrequently. These areas are scattered throughout the County and are generally associated with either directly adjacent waterways or ridgetop systems.

Woodlands

Significant areas of woodlands are located throughout the County. These woodlands are generally located in areas of steep topography or along water features. Existing woodlands that have not been broken up by residential development are valuable contributors to the area’s character and beauty. As such, these remaining woodland areas should be preserved, and any development in and around them should take special care not to destroy these resources.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Minerals

According to the Illinois State Geological Survey, there are no operational coal mines in Lee County. Further, only a small portion in the southwest portion of the County, primarily the East Grove Township, contains coal bearing Pennsylvanian rocks. There are, however, several mineral extraction sites in operation in Lee County, primarily in the northern portion of the County. As of 2009, there were operating site in Franklin Grove Township, Dixon Township, and Palmyra Township.

Surface Waters and Watersheds

The Rock River and the Green River drain most of Lee County. The width of the Rock River varies from 500 to 1,000 feet with a depth generally ranging from 6 to 15 feet. The Rock River maintains a fairly consistent gradient of about one foot per mile. The Green River was a meandering stream until it was dredged and channelized beginning in the 1880s.

In July 2008 the Bureau County Soil and Water Conservation District completed the Big Bureau Creek Watershed Base Plan. The northern portion of the Big Bureau Creek watershed extends into Lee County including May, Sublette, and Brooklyn Townships. Plan goals include:

- ◆ Reducing fecal coliform
- ◆ Reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, & sediment
- ◆ Decreasing sheet & rill erosion in order to reduce suspended sediments
- ◆ Developing partnership with Princeton to decrease stormwater runoff in order to reduce iron loading

The Plan includes specific implementation strategies and potential funding sources to address these goals as well as an annual update process to measure progress and success.

Floodplains

Flood hazard areas are located along the Rock and Green Rivers and their tributaries. These have been identified and mapped FEMA for risk management purposes. The 100-year flood area—where the flooding probability is greater than one percent in any given year—is generally restricted to no development. These areas are depicted on Map 4, with particularly large floodplain areas of the Green River in the far southwest (Hamilton and Harmon Townships) and the northeast (Lee Center, Bradford, Viola, and Reynolds Townships).

Wetlands

Wetland areas are located along streams and drainageways and in isolated low spots. These have been identified and mapped by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality improvement, and wildlife habitat. Significant wetland areas are located throughout the planning area. Generally, these areas are restricted to no development by federal and state regulations.

Groundwater

Lee County has an abundant supply of water. Most of the groundwater in the northern part of Lee County is obtained from sandstone, limestone, and dolomite of Ordovician and Cambrian ages. The buried Paw Paw Valley in the eastern part of the County is an excellent source of groundwater. Shallow aquifers suitable for driven points are along the valley of the Rock River. Other shallow aquifers are in a low-lying area near the western margin of the County and along the Green River. In areas of granular soils, these shallow aquifers are susceptible to contamination from both surface and subterranean sources. Deep aquifers in the County are generally of higher quality and considered substantially less susceptible to contamination.

Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors are, in effect, a composite of the most important individual elements of the natural resource base occurring in a linear pattern on the landscape and have immeasurable environmental, ecological, and recreational value. These corridor areas normally include elements that are essential to the maintenance of an ecological balance and diversity, and the preservation of natural beauty in the County.

Protection of environmental corridors from additional intrusion by incompatible land uses, and thereby from degradation and destruction, should be an essential planning objective for the preservation of open natural spaces. These corridors should be preserved and protected in essentially natural open uses. Environmental corridor features include:

- ◆ Surface waters and their undeveloped shorelands and floodplains
- ◆ Wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitats
- ◆ Rugged terrain and high relief topography
- ◆ Elements, closely related to the natural resource base, having recreational, scenic, and historical value:
 - Existing outdoor recreation sites
 - Potential outdoor recreation sites

- Historic, archaeological, and other cultural sites
- Scenic areas and vistas
- Natural and scientific areas

Detailed analysis of landscapes throughout both Illinois and Wisconsin, pioneered by Professor Phil Lewis, have demonstrated that approximately 90 percent of the key environmental and cultural resources of a region are located within or adjacent to environmental corridor features. With this in mind, this *Plan* emphasizes the protection of environmental corridors and their constituent parts.

Natural Areas

The **Franklin Creek State Natural Area** is located in the Nachusa and Franklin Grove Townships, about one mile northwest of the village of Franklin Grove. This 960-acre natural area features several large natural springs, hardwood forests, bedrock outcroppings, and a large variety of flora and fauna comprise a pristine ecosystem. Franklin Creek flows throughout the park. The park also features the reconstructed Franklin Creek Grist Mill, an original early American corn meal and wheat flower producer. The mill was originally built in 1847, and was the largest and most complete grist mill in Lee County.



Franklin Creek State Natural Area (Source: IL DNR)

The 160-acre **Maytown Pheasant Habitat Area** is located in East Grove Township about 18 miles south of Dixon. The park is comprised of a mixture of cool season grasses and legumes, warm season grasses, shrub plantings, old field, creek bottoms, food plots, and some wooded areas.

The **Sand Prairie State Habitat Area** contains 316 acres of native prairie, small wildlife ponds, and wetlands scattered across the site. The park is located on the County border in the Hamilton Township.

The **Steward Habitat Area** is located on the northeastern corner of McGirr and Locust Roads, approximately five miles southeast of the Village of Steward. This 80-acre habitat area was established in 1994. The habitat includes mixture of legumes such as clover and alfalfa, warm season grasses, shrub windbreaks, and food plots. In addition, a wetland area was constructed in 1997.

The **Green River State Wildlife Area**, located about 12 miles southwest of Amboy, is a 2,565-acre wildlife restoration area consisting of mainly wetland areas, but includes prairie restoration areas, open fields, cultivated areas, and timberlands. Many of these areas have been specially planted and managed to provide more food and cover for a variety of wildlife species. Native prairie plants are found in many portions of the Green River Area.



Nachusa Grasslands (Source: www.encounterleecounty.com)

Located near Franklin Grove, **Nachusa Grasslands** is one of the largest native prairies in the state with 2,826 acres, 725 of which are protected through easements.















Nachusa Grasslands is home to more than 600 plant species, 180 native birds, as well as many rare species including Blanding's turtles, grasshopper sparrows, dickcissels, and Henslow's sparrow.

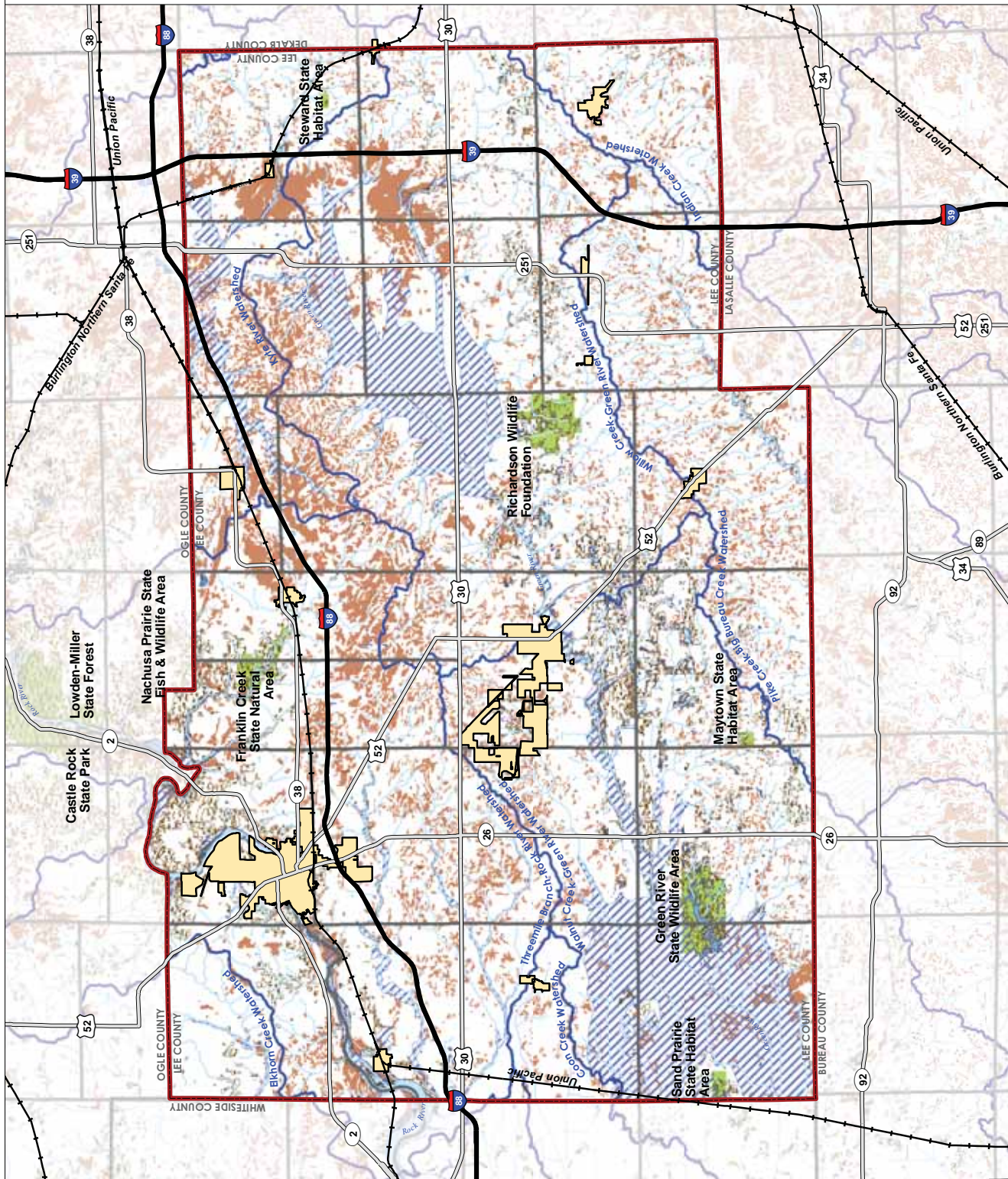
Located in Lee Center Township, the **Richardson Wildlife Foundation** is an 1,800-acre natural area focused on habitat restoration, conservation education, and research. Established in 1989 by Edward J. Richardson with an initial land donation of 250 acres, the foundation has restored a total of 690 acres of prairie, 300 acres of woodland and savanna, and 100 acres of wetland as of summer 2009. The site also serves as an outdoor classroom for environmental education groups since education is an important component of the foundation's mission.

The **Ryan Wetland** is located in May Township. This 44-acre natural area is owned by the Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District and Managed by the Lee County Natural Area Guardians, a natural resource protection and restoration volunteer group.

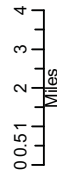
Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Natural Features

-  Lee County
-  Township Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Interstate
-  U.S. or State Highway
-  Railroad
-  Surface Water
-  Conservancy
-  Woodland
-  Major Watershed Boundary
-  Wetland
-  Floodplain
-  Surface Water
-  Class I Agricultural Soil



Palmyra	Dixon	Nachusa	Franklin Grove	Ashton	Reynolds	Alto
Nelson	South Dixon	May	Amboy	Bradford	Viola	Willow Creek
Harmon	Marion	East Grove	Lee Center	Sublette	Brooklyn	Wyoming



May 18, 2010
Source: Lee County LIO,
ESRI (2008), USFWS,
USGS, FEMA
VANDEWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.
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Historic and Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the invaluable cultural and historical assets that offer a tangible connection to the history and cultural heritage of a place. Cultural resources include historic buildings and structures, archeological sites, landscapes, and the cultural components of a place such as public art and festivals. Cultural resources are often overlooked in planning efforts, but are critical components of not only how a community views itself, but also the perception of the County to the outside world.

History of Lee County

Lee County's earliest settlement occurred in 1828, where the City of Dixon now stands. In February 1839, the General Assembly approved the creation of Lee County, which was named in honor of Richard "Lighthouse" Henry Lee, an orator and popular statesman of the Revolutionary Period. Shortly thereafter, on May 31st, Dixon was selected as the County seat. The development of the railroad spurred population growth in the County. In 1840, the population of the County had reached 2,035, which rapidly increased to 5,289 by 1850; and 27,252 in 1870.

Archaeological and Historic Resources

The Illinois Historical Preservation Agency administers the Historic Architectural and Archaeological Resources Geographic Information System (HAARGIS) which contains data on a wide range of historic structures throughout the state including markers, buildings, sites, objects, and districts. The HAARGIS documents 257 historic structures in Lee County. While there are several unique properties like Ronald Reagan's boyhood home, this list is mainly comprised of farm buildings and residences.

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmarks programs. There are nine properties in Lee County listed on the National Historic Register including the Amboy Illinois Central Depot, Christopher Brookner house, Illinois Central stone arch railroad bridges, Lowell Park, Nachusa house, Ronald Reagan's boyhood home, William Van Epps house, Colonel Nathan Whitney house, and the Stephen Wright house. National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places that have been designated by the Secretary of the Interior for their exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.

In addition, the national headquarters for the Lincoln Highway Association is located in the Village of Franklin Grove. The Lincoln Highway was the first transcontinental highway in the United States, passing through Franklin Grove. The Highway spanned more than 3,000 miles from Times Square in New York City to Lincoln Park in San Francisco, through 14 states. Later called "The Main Street Across America," the Lincoln Highway brought great prosperity to hundreds of cities, towns, and villages along the route. The Lincoln Highway Association, organically established to plan, promote, and sign the Highway, is now dedicated to promoting and preserving it.



Lincoln Highway National Headquarters – Franklin Grove

County's Present Day Cultural Resources

Each generation of residents has added to the cultural, religious, and architectural flavor of the County. Preservation of these historic and cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important feeling of social and cultural continuity between the past, present, and future. The County's culture is much more than its history; it is the people, places, and events that define what the County is today.

Lee County's culture is also observed in the array of festivals and events held throughout the year—examples include farmer's markets, local summer festivals, Dixon Petunia Festival, Reagan Trail Days, Scarecrow Festival, Autumn on the Prairie, and many more. These events and celebrations provide an opportunity for residents to come together as a community and for visitors to see what makes the County unique and special. Arts, culture, and history venues are also a part of the County's cultural assets—for example the Lee County Historical Society, Historic Dixon Theater, and the Next Picture Show in Dixon.

CHAPTER 1.4: LAND USE

This chapter is intended to provide information on existing land use and land use trends in Lee County. It contains a compilation of background information that will be used to form policies and programs to guide the future preservation and development of public and private lands in Lee County. The policies and programs will be included in Volume II.

EXISTING LAND USE

Map 5, Existing Land Use, divides existing land uses in the County (outside of cities and villages) into several categories. These categories are representative of existing (2009) land use categories and do not necessarily reflect the current zoning district designation, or the desired future land use pattern.

Existing Land Use Categories and Pattern

The land use pattern as of June 2009 is shown in Map 5. The categories below were used to prepare the existing land use map for the County.

- ♦ Agricultural: agricultural uses, farmsteads, other open lands, single-family residential at or below one dwelling per 40 acres, cemeteries;
- ♦ Rural Residential: single-family residential development in rural subdivisions not served by public sewer and water;
- ♦ Single-Family Residential: sewerer single-family residential development at densities up to five dwelling units per acre;
- ♦ Mixed Residential: mobile home and two-family residential development at densities up to eight dwelling units per acre;
- ♦ Multi-Family Residential: multiple-family residential units at densities above eight dwelling unit per acre;
- ♦ General Office/Business: indoor commercial, office, retail, and controlled outdoor display land uses, with moderate landscaping and signage;
- ♦ General Industrial: indoor industrial land uses and controlled outdoor storage areas, with moderate landscaping and signage;
- ♦ Heavy Industrial: heavy manufacture, storage, and disposal land uses, with moderate landscaping and signage;
- ♦ Extraction: quarries, gravel pits, clay extraction, peat extraction, and related land uses.
- ♦ Institutional: large-scale public buildings, hospitals, and special-care facilities. Small institutional uses may be permitted in other land use categories;
- ♦ Active and Passive Recreation: open space facilities generally devoted to playgrounds, play fields, play courts, trails, picnic areas, natural areas and related recreation activities;
- ♦ Special Recreation: carefully controlled mixed-use recreational developments such as campgrounds, private recreation/hunting grounds, or other tourism-related development;
- ♦ Surface Water: lakes, rivers, and perennial streams.



Agricultural land in Lee County

Lee County's existing land use pattern is primarily rural, with large areas of contiguous farmland defining the County's landscape. Recreational land uses, including the Green River State Wildlife Area and Woodhaven Lakes Private Recreational Camping Resort, are concentrated in the southern portion of the County. Large

extraction operations are located in Dixon, South Dixon, Palmyra, and Amboy Townships, with smaller sites scattered throughout the County. Population is focused in city, villages, historic rural settlements, and waterfront areas. There are pockets of single-family residential development located in most townships, usually along roads or in unincorporated hamlets.

FIGURE 1.4-1: EXISTING LAND USE TOTALS, 2009

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	429,650	92.1%
Rural Residential	6,865	1.5%
Single-Family Residential	654	0.1%
Mixed Residential	73	> 0.1%
Multi-Family Residential	45	> 0.1%
General Office/Business	693	0.1%
General Industrial	1849	0.4%
Heavy Industrial	298	0.1%
Extraction	2341	0.5%
Institutional	292	0.1%
Active and Passive Recreation	3,442	0.7%
Special Recreation	2395	0.5%
Surface Water	2520	0.5%
Right of Way	3446	0.7%
Land in Cities and Villages	11,774	2.5%
Total	466,338	100.0%

Source: GIS Inventory, 2009

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan Map #5

Existing Land Use

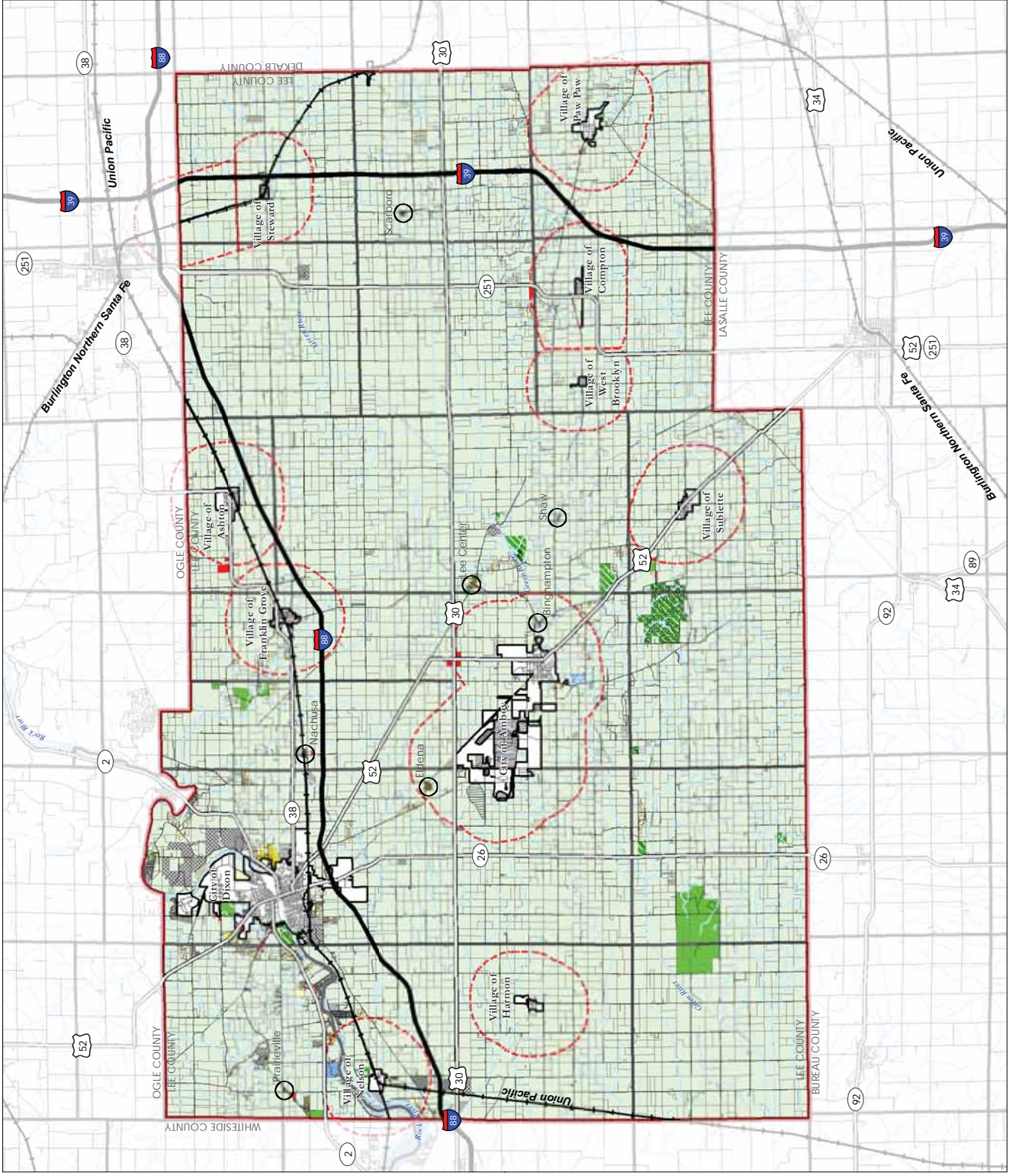
- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Hamlets
- Parcel Line
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Railroad
- Surface Water

Land Use Categories

- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- General Office/Business
- General Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Extraction
- Institutional
- Active & Passive Recreation
- Special Recreation

Palmyra	Dixon	Nachusa	Franklin Grove	Ashton	Reynolds	Alto
Nelson	South Dixon	Amboy	Lee Center	Bradford	Viola	Willow Creek
Harmon	Marion	May	Sublette			Brooklyn Wyoming
Hamilton	East Grove					

May 18, 2010
Source: Lee County, IL, ESRI (2008), USGS
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CHAPTER 1.5: TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

This chapter includes background information to guide policies toward the future development and maintenance of various modes of transportation in Lee County over the 20-year planning period that will be included in Volume II. The chapter also compares County transportation policies and programs to State and regional transportation plans.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The County is very well connected to the region by existing roads and highways. This section describes the County's existing transportation facilities.

Roadways

Lee County is connected to Chicago and the Quad Cities via Interstate Highway 88—a toll road, and connected to Rockford and Bloomington via Interstate Highway 39. Lee County is also served by United States Highways 30 and 52, as well as several State Trunk Highways (STHs), all of which link the County with the region's major cities. These links channel commuter flows and provide excellent access for residents.



Chicago Road and I-39

Airports

Lee County residents are served by several primary passenger airports located in Rockford, Moline, Peoria, and the Chicagoland area. The Chicago Rockford International Airport is about 32 miles from Dixon and offers low fares and free parking and is the air package hub of the United Parcel Service. The Chicago O'Hare airport offers 56 passenger carriers that operate out of 178 gates. In 2006, more than 76.5 million passengers flew out of O'Hare. Walgreen Memorial Airport in Dixon is the only general aviation airport in the County. There are numerous privately owned airfields throughout Lee County.

Truck Transportation

Freight trucks travel via designated truck routes in Illinois. Interstates 88 and 39 serve as Class I truck routes through Lee County. State Highways 52 and 30, and County Highways 26, 2, 38, and 251 serve as Class II truck routes.

Rail

Three rail lines traverse Lee County. Within Lee County, Union Pacific operates a line running west from Rochelle to Sterling and beyond with a second running from the Village of Nelson south through Bureau County and beyond. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad operates a line that runs through the northeast corner of Lee County originating in Rochelle and running to the Chicago metropolitan area.

Located just outside Lee County in the City of Rochelle, the Rochelle Global III Intermodal Terminal is an intermodal transportation facility that serves as a critical interchange hub and loading/unloading terminal for rail shipments, capable of handling over 3,000 containers/trailers per day. The facility is serviced by three railroads including Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and the City's own railroad. The facility covers 1,200 acres and includes a 720,000-pound lift capability, a ten-lane gate entrance and a 7,200-unit container/trailer yard.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Illinois Department of Transportation designates and maps roadways that are most suitable for bicycling, many of which are located in the southern half of the County and provide convenient access to the Green River State Wildlife Area.

Existing bicycle/pedestrian trails in the County include the Lowell Parkway and Joe Stengel trails, both which originate in Dixon. These trails are planned to eventually connect to the Grand Illinois Trail System, which consists of 500 miles of existing and proposed state and local trails.

REVIEW OF STATE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The following are State and regional transportation plans and studies relevant to this *Plan*.

Illinois State Transportation Plan

The Illinois State Transportation Plan addresses how the state's transportation system will continue to meet the mobility needs of residents, support the state economy, preserve the environment, and enhance the quality of life for Illinois residents in a safe, secure, and cost-effective manner. This plan is composed of a number of special reports to address varying modal choices in the state as well as safety, economic, and social issues related to transportation.

Fiscal Year 2010-2015 Proposed Highway Improvement Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year 2010-2015 Proposed Highway Improvement Program prioritizes state roadway system improvements, bridge maintenance projects, and other transportation facilities projects. This six-year program is funded primarily by federal, state, and local funds. Thirty-three improvement projects are scheduled in Lee County including roadway resurfacing, land acquisition, construction engineering, and bridge replacement projects.

Fiscal Year 2009-2012 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The FY 2009-2012 STIP is a four-year program of highway and transit projects developed to fulfill the requirements set forth in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and its successors the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and in the Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

For the Record 2007: Fiscal Year 2007 Highway Improvements Accomplishments

Illinois DOT's FTR report is an annual report of the awards made by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the Illinois highway improvement program. The FTR includes improvements made to both the state and local highway systems. The majority of Lee County projects listed in the FTR report have been "accomplished," with only three projects "not accomplished" or delayed. These include: (1) improvements at Willow Creek rest area, three miles south of US 30; (2) intersection improvements and resurfacing of an eight-mile segment of Eldena Road to US 30; and (3) reconstruction of 0.2 miles of Hennepin Avenue from River Street to Third Street in Dixon.

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative

The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) is a cooperative effort between Amtrak; the Federal Railroad Administration; and the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin to develop an improved and expanded passenger rail system in the Midwest.

In February of 2000, MWRRI released a report prepared by Transportation Economics, & Management Systems, Inc. that outlines a new vision for passenger rail travel across the Midwest. This Midwest Regional Rail System would be comprised of a 3,000-mile rail network, and would serve nearly 60 million people.

As part of this initiative, a rail system is proposed to provide a high-speed connection between Chicago and the Quad Cities on the existing BNSF line running south of Lee County. In the interest of maintaining efficient service between major cities, it is unlikely that rail stops will be planned for smaller communities along the proposed corridor. Mendota in La Salle County is the closest proposed station to Lee County.

CHAPTER 1.6: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This chapter describes the existing utilities and community facilities that serve the County including municipal buildings, schools, police and fire services, health care, and solid waste. This information will help shape policies and recommendations regarding future utilities and community facilities.

EXISTING UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

County Facilities

The Lee County Old Courthouse is located on East Second Street in Dixon, the County seat. This facility houses the Animal Control, County Clerk and Recorder, Coroner, Solid Waste, Supervisor of Assessment, Health Department, County Treasurer, and County Zoning offices. The Lee County Courts building, which houses the Circuit Clerk, Probation, Public Defender, State's Attorney, and all Judge's offices, is located at 309 S. Galena Avenue in Dixon. The Lee County Highway Department is located in Amboy.

Public Safety

The Lee County Sheriff's Department, 316 S Hennepin Avenue in Dixon, serves as the primary law enforcement in the County. The department currently has a total of 27 corrections and patrol officers. Local police departments are located in Dixon, Amboy, Franklin Grove, and Ashton. Lee County is served by ten fire department districts. Fire department district headquarters are located in Amboy, Ashton, Compton, Dixon, Franklin Grove, Harmon, Paw Paw, Sublette, and West Brooklyn. Lee County is served by District One of the Illinois State Police, which also serves Ogle, Carroll, and Whiteside Counties.

Education Facilities

Lee County school-aged children are served by the Lee/Ogle Regional Office of Education and six public school districts. Generally, school district enrollment throughout the County has been declining—most markedly the Nelson School District, which has lost 34 percent of its enrollment since 2004. These trends parallel the County's population trends as discussed in Chapter 1. The Steward Elementary School District is the only district serving the County that has seen positive increases in enrollment since 2004; however, with only a slight increase of six percent.

FIGURE 1.6-1: LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT

School District	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Percentage Change 2004-2009
Nelson	32	41	32	30	21	-34%
Dixon	3,000	2,939	2,894	2,939	2,891	-4%
Steward	80	93	82	79	85	6%
Paw Paw	324	324	318	320	325	0%
Amboy	1,067	1,044	1,027	976	961	-10%
Ashton-Franklin Center	669	635	636	611	631	-6%
Total	5,172	5,076	4,989	4,995	4,914	

Source: Illinois State Board of Education, 2009

In addition to the County's public schools, the Sauk Valley Community College serves the County by providing a comprehensive education in the following academic departments: Business, Health Careers, Humanities, Natural Science, Social Science, and Wind Energy. Sauk Valley Community College campus is located in northwest Lee County, just west of Dixon on Highway 2.

Finally, there are two kindergarten through 8th grade parochial schools in the County: St. Anne Catholic Elementary School and St. Mary School, both located in the City of Dixon. Newman Central Catholic High School, located in the City of Sterling, also serves Lee County residents.

Health Care Facilities

The Lee County Health Department, located in Dixon, was established to promote health and wellness of Lee County residents through programs designed to protect individual health and safety. Program areas include environmental health, maternal and child health, health and wellness, infectious disease, mental health, and developmental disabilities.

Katherine Shaw Bethea Hospital is located at 403 E. First Street in the City of Dixon and provides a full range of medical services to area residents.

Cemeteries

There are two cemeteries in the County operated by local jurisdictions. These include the Oakwood Cemetery in Dixon and the Prairie Repose Cemetery in Amboy. Chapel Hill Cemetery in Dixon is privately owned. The Lee County Genealogical and Historical Societies have documented a total of 95 cemeteries.

Solid Waste Disposal

Located in the Highway Department offices in Amboy, the Lee County Office of Solid Waste Management strives to divert as much material as possible from final disposal and to oversee the environmentally safe disposal of the remainder of the County's municipal solid waste. In 1993, the Department adopted a Solid Waste Management Plan in order to comply with the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act (SWPRA), which requires counties every five years to adopt and update solid waste management plans. This plan has since undergone three updates—in 1998, 2003, and again in 2009.

The County implemented its drop-off recycling program in 1998. Drop off sites are now located in Dixon, Ashton, Franklin Grove, Sublette, Paw Paw, and Steward. Curbside recycling is offered in Amboy, Lee, Sublette, and Paw Paw. Lee County has also collaborated with Ogle County on events to collect household hazardous waste and electronic waste materials.

CHAPTER 1.7: HOUSING

This chapter describes housing trends and existing conditions in the County that will shape the County's policies and recommendations regarding housing.

EXISTING HOUSING AND FRAMEWORK

According to 2007 American Community Survey data, there were an estimated 14,718 housing units in Lee County. As shown in Figure 1.7-1, the majority of the County's housing stock is single-family homes. Lee County also has a fairly significant share of multi-family housing for a rural county, with nine percent of all multi-family unit types. The pace of housing development in the County has remained steady since 2000. A total of 408 units have been constructed during this seven-year period, at about 58 units per year. This growth is primarily in and around the City of Dixon.

FIGURE 1.7-1: LEE COUNTY HOUSING TYPES, 2000 AND 2007

Units per Structure	Number		Percent	
	2000	2007	2000	2007
Single-Family Detached	11,124	11,786	77.7	80.1
Single-Family Attached ¹	113	162	0.8	1.1
Two-Family (duplex)	648	759	4.5	5.2
Multi-Family: 3-4 units	555	490	3.9	3.3
Multi-Family: 5-9 units	461	510	3.2	3.5
Multi-Family: 10-19 units	99	60	0.7	0.4
Multi-Family: 20 or more units	437	310	3.1	2.1
Mobile Home or Other	873	641	6.1	4.4
Total	14,310	14,718	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census, Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2007

¹ Includes townhouses and zero lot line duplexes.

Figure 1.7-2 compares the County's other 2007 housing stock characteristics with surrounding counties, the region, and the state. In 2007, the County had an average homeowner vacancy rate of about 1.3 percent, and about 75 percent of the County's housing units were owner-occupied. The 2007 estimated median housing value in Lee County was \$110,700, an increase of \$27,300 from 2000 (33 percent). About 60 percent of the County's 2000 housing stock was valued in the \$50,000 to \$99,000 price range.

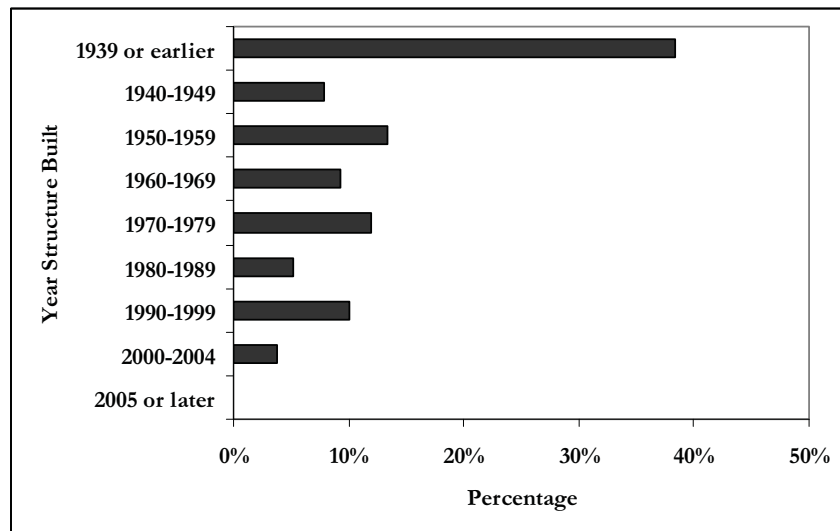
FIGURE 1.7-2: HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTIC COMPARISONS, 2007

	Total Housing Units	Total Households	Average Household Size	Median Home Value	Percent Owner Occupied
Lee County	14,718	13,490	2.45	\$110,700	74.9
Bureau County	15,530	14,750	2.34	\$101,600	75.4
DeKalb County	37,637	35,451	2.63	\$189,700	64.6
La Salle County	48,885	45,375	2.41	\$118,800	73.3
Ogle County	21,784	20,282	2.67	\$137,000	76.6
Whiteside County	25,526	23,855	2.44	\$90,500	75.5
Illinois	5,196,936	4,724,462	2.64	\$198,100	70.1
United States	126,237,884	111,609,629	2.60	\$181,800	67.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007

Figure 1.7-3 illustrates the age of Lee County's housing stock based on the 2007 American Community Survey data. The age of a community's housing stock is sometimes used as a measure of the general condition of the community's housing supply. Lee County has a relatively old housing stock, with periods of increased construction interspersed with periods of less housing construction. Nearly 40 percent of the County's homes were built before 1940. The past decade has shown a very slow rate of construction, with only about four percent of housing added since 2000. Over the planning period, owners of older homes in the County may be interested in rehabilitation efforts.

FIGURE 1.7-3: AGE OF HOUSING AS A PERCENT OF THE TOTAL 2007 HOUSING STOCK



CHAPTER 1.8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter contains a compilation of background information that will inform goals, policies, and programs to strengthen the economic base in the County.

EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

This section details labor force trends, educational attainment, employment forecasts, income data, and other economic development characteristics of the County.

Workforce Flow

Approximately one third of Lee County's workforce travels outside the County for employment according to the 2000 Census. Of the 5,873 workers that commute to places outside the County, 28 percent (1,594 workers) commuted to Ogle County to the north. Whiteside County was the second most common workplace destination, drawing 26 percent (1,520 workers). DeKalb and LaSalle Counties were third and fourth most common workplace destinations, drawing 10 and 8 percent of the commuting workforce respectively (557 and 456 workers). Only 2 percent of commuters traveled out of Lee County to Bureau County. Of the surrounding counties, Whiteside and Ogle Counties have the highest percentage of workers commuting to Lee County, 31 percent and 13 percent respectively.

The average time a County resident traveled to work increased only slightly from 21.8 minutes in 2000 to 22.2 minutes in 2007. That being said, gas prices have been increasing since 2000, which may affect the overall tolerance for commutes in the future.

Labor Force Trends

The County's labor force is the portion of the population that is employed or available for work. The labor force includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. According to 2008 Illinois Department of Workforce Development data, 17,585 County residents age 16 or older are in the labor force. Of those in the labor force, 15,940 are employed. As of April 2009, the County's civilian unemployment rate stood at 9.4 percent. For comparison, in April 2009 the unemployment rate for the State was around 9.3 percent. The high unemployment rate for both the County and the State is attributable to the current national economic recession.



Ethanol plant on Steward Rd just north of Lee County

Figure 1.8-1 shows Lee County's employment industries for 2000 and 2007. The Wholesale Trade industry experiences the most growth during this seven-year period. The Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance industry sector also saw a considerable increase of 25 percent. Information industries declined in Lee County during this period by 29 percent. Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental Leasing also declined by 27 percent. The Public Administration sector remained the same.

FIGURE 1.8-1: LEE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES, 2000 AND 2007

Industry	2000	2007	Percent Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	569	701	23%
Construction	1,059	1,130	7%
Manufacturing	3,566	3,281	-8%
Wholesale trade	475	780	64%
Retail trade	1,918	1,875	-2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,129	989	-12%
Information	263	188	-29%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	667	485	-27%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	840	1,038	24%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	3,059	3,809	25%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation, and food services	1,069	1,106	3%
Other services, except public administration	757	934	23%
Public administration	960	960	0%

Sources: U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey, 2005-07

Lee County employment projections are shown in Figure 1.8-2. Note that the employment categories used below are based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics classification system and vary from the previous figure so direct cross comparisons are not possible. These data predict the County's total employment to grow approximately three percent, at a rate of about 0.3 percent per year by 2016. Over this time period, the most significant increase in jobs is projected to be in the Education Services and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sectors. The overall percentages of employees working in the Accommodation and Food Services and Health and Social Assistance sectors are also projected to increase, while employment in the overall Manufacturing, Agricultural Production, and State Government sectors are projected to decline over this period.

FIGURE 1.8-2: LEE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS, 2006-2016

Industry Title	2006 Estimated Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Total Employment Change	Percent Change 2006-2016
Accommodation and Food Services	624	708	85	14%
Administrative and Waste Management Services	350	375	25	7%
Agricultural Production	865	802	-63	-7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	173	204	30	17%
Construction	461	501	40	9%
Educational Services	1,172	1,380	208	18%
Finance and Insurance	266	291	25	9%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	2,311	2,616	305	13%
Information	84	86	2	2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	21	22	1	5%
Manufacturing	756	683	-74	-10%
Natural Resources and Mining	22	22	0	0%
Personal and Other Services	725	798	73	10%
Professional, Scientific, Technology Services	268	279	11	4%
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	74	76	2	3%
Retail Trade	1,269	1,301	31	2%
State Government	1,336	1,262	-74	-6%
Wholesale Trade	1,442	1,470	28	2%
Total—All Industries	15,840	16,291	451	3%

Source: IL Dept. of Employment Security, Projections Unit

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is an important component of a community's labor force. According to 2007 American Community Survey data, more than 86 percent of the County's population age 25 and older had attained a high school level education or higher. Approximately 16 percent of the County's population had attained a bachelor's degree or higher. Overall, Lee County's educational attainment status is comparable to surrounding counties, lagging only behind DeKalb County, where more than a quarter of the population has attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

FIGURE 1.8-3: EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS, 2007

	High School Graduates or higher (%)	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%)
Lee County	86.1%	16.2%
Bureau County	87.6%	16.5%
DeKalb County	89.8%	28.4%
La Salle County	87.3%	14.7%
Ogle County	86.3%	18.3%
Whiteside County	84.6%	14.2%
Illinois	85.2%	29.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-07

Income Data

Figure 1.8-4 shows income characteristics for Lee County and surrounding counties and the state. According to 2007 American Community Survey data, the median household income in Lee County was \$49,518, an increase of \$8,551 from 2000.

FIGURE 1.8-4: INCOME CHARACTERISTICS, 2007

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Lee County	\$49,518	\$23,031
Bureau County	\$44,204	\$22,828
DeKalb County	\$53,758	\$23,647
La Salle County	\$46,741	\$23,201
Ogle County	\$52,309	\$23,478
Whiteside County	\$53,745	\$21,100
Illinois	\$53,745	\$27,511

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-07

Primary Employers

Figure 1.8-5 below lists the top employers in Lee County. Collectively, the largest employers roughly reflect the County's overall pattern of employment by sector as shown in Figure 1.8-1 above.

FIGURE 1.8-5: LEE COUNTY MAJOR EMPLOYERS, 2009

Employer	Location	Industry Sector	Number of Jobs
Katherine Shaw Bethea Hospital	Dixon	Healthcare	1000-4999
Raynor Garage Doors	Dixon	Manufacturing	500-999
Crest Foods, Inc.	Ashton	Grocery	500-999
Dixon Correctional Center	Dixon	Corrections	500-999
Allied Lock Industries	Dixon	Manufacturing	250-499
Kreider Services, Inc.	Dixon	Personal Services	250-499
Sauk Valley Community College	Dixon	Education	250-499
Wal-Mart Supercenter	Dixon	Retail sales	100-249
Dixon Direct	Dixon	Marketing products	100-249
Tompkins PLC/Plews Edelman	Dixon	Manufacturing	100-249
KSB Medical Group	Dixon	Healthcare	100-249
Donaldson Company	Dixon	Retail Sales	100-249
Do It Best Corp	Dixon	Retail Sales	100-249
Jack Mabley Developmental Center	Dixon	Healthcare	100-249
Ken Nelson Auto Group	Dixon	Vehicle Sales	100-249
Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.	Dixon	Healthcare	100-249
Woodhaven Lakes Realty, Inc.	Sublette	Real Estate	100-249
Anchor Coupling	Dixon	Manufacturing	100-249
Sensient Flavors	Amboy	Technology	100-249
Bay Valley Foods	Dixon	Food distribution	100-249
Lutheran Social Services	Nachusa	Social service	100-249
Shopko	Dixon	Retail sales	100-249

Source: Illinois Workforce Information Center, 2009

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES

The following list provides information on programs and agencies designed to stimulate economic development in developed areas in the County.

Dixon Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Dixon Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established in 1887, to promote the economic vitality of the City of Dixon and surrounding area via business retention and recruitment programs. The Chamber works in partnership with the Lee County Industrial Development Association (LCIDA) and manages the marketing and business and economic development functions of the LCIDA.

Lee County Industrial Development Association (LCIDA)

Established in 1960, LCIDA (formerly Dixon Industrial Development Association) facilitates economic development activities in Lee County. LCIDA maintains an inventory of demographic and statistical information including population, marketplace, traffic counts, and laborshed information at city, township, market, and regional levels of detail. LCIDA also works with the Dixon Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry to assist with business relocations, recruitment of new businesses, and retention of existing businesses and industries.

The Lee County Industrial Development Association administers development in the County's business parks and development sites. The Lee County Business Park is located at the intersection of Highway 26 and Interstate 88 in Dixon, approximately 23 miles from Union Pacific Global III Intermodal Facility in Rochelle. The Green River Industrial Park is located along Highway 30, approximately 9 miles south of Interstate 88 and 20 miles east of Interstate 39. Other business and industrial development sites ranging from 2 to 1,200 acres which are located throughout the County.

Lee County Tourism Council

The Lee County Tourism Council promotes tourism in the County via visitor information on the Encounter Lee County website. The Council provides visitors with Lee County cultural, historical, lodging, event, and recreational information as well as a calendar of events for communities in the County. The Council also promotes eco-tourism within the County including Lee County wind farms and the Nachusa Grasslands.

Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development Center

Established in 1974, the Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development Area (BHRCD) is a 3,778-square mile region consisting of the six Illinois counties (Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside). The mission of the BHRCD is to assist the people of Northwest Illinois with rural economic development by improving and preserving local resources. The BHRCD also serves this region as an Economic Development District, whose mission is to develop and implement a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that will enhance job opportunities and improve the quality of life for local communities.

CHAPTER 1.9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

In a state with overlapping units of government and in an era of diminishing local government resources, it is increasingly important to coordinate decisions that affect neighboring communities. This chapter of the *Plan* contains a compilation of background information on neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions relevant to the County's planning effort. Volume II will outline strategies for cooperation, collaboration, and minimizing potential and existing conflicts.

EXISTING REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

Map 1, presented earlier in Volume I, shows the boundaries of Lee County's neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions. All play an important part in the area's future. Relationships among those jurisdictions are analyzed to identify future opportunities and potential planning conflicts below, and in Volume II. The following is a summary of existing relationships and planning context:

City of Dixon

The City of Dixon, the county seat, is located in northwest Lee County. Dixon's 2000 population was reported to be 15,941. Dixon's comprehensive plan, adopted in 2001, makes growth and development recommendations for the City and its extraterritorial area. The recommendations related to Dixon in the Lee County 2010 Comprehensive Plan were formed based on Dixon's comprehensive plan.

City of Rochelle

The City of Rochelle is located to the north of Lee County in Ogle County, but its sphere of influence extends into Lee County—particularly with regard to transportation facilities. Rochelle's 2000 population was reported to be 9,424. Rochelle's most recent comprehensive plan was adopted in 2003. The framework plan map designates land south of I-88 and east of Highway 251 as future employment centers. Other areas of future employment and commercial areas are planned to occur along Illinois Route 38, which traverses the City east to west. New residential development has been planned for areas northeast and northwest of current City municipal boundaries.

Bureau County

Bureau County is located to the south of Lee County. Bureau's county seat is Princeton. According to the Census estimates, Bureau County's 2008 population is estimated to be 34,933.

DeKalb County

DeKalb County is located directly east of Lee County. DeKalb County's 2008 population was estimated to be 106,321. The City of DeKalb is the focal point for much of the County's population, commerce, and industry; Sycamore is the County seat. The DeKalb County Unified Future Land Use Plan was adopted in December 2003. This plan proposes substantial urban development surrounding the City of DeKalb as well as the county's other urban areas. The majority of land outside of urban areas, particularly on the west side of the County, is designated to remain as agricultural, open space, or conservancy.

LaSalle County

LaSalle County, located to the southeast of Lee County, is the most populous of all of Lee's adjacent counties. According to 2008 Census estimates, the County had an approximate population of 112,474. LaSalle County prepared a comprehensive plan in June 2008. LaSalle County's proposed land use map plans potential residential expansion to occur around existing urban areas including those nearest Lee County—Mendota, Earlville, and Leland. Commercial expansion is proposed to occur in the Mendota and Earlville areas.

Ogle County

Ogle County is located to the north of Lee County. Ogle County's 2008 population was estimated to be 55,167. Rochelle is the primary urbanized area of Ogle County, and the regional transportation hub. The County adopted its comprehensive plan in 1996 and most recently amended it in June 2008. The County's General Development Plan map designates development to occur within the extraterritorial area of existing

municipalities. Primarily development is anticipated to occur in and around the City of Rochelle, with industrial development designated at the Lee County/Ogle County border.

Whiteside County

Located to the west of Lee County, Whiteside County is home to Sterling and Rock Falls. Whiteside County's estimated 2008 population was 59,153.

Important State Agency Jurisdictions

The Illinois Department of Transportation's Region 2 office, located in Dixon, and a second office in Ottawa, serves all of Lee County. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Region 1 provides service to Lee County residents through its office in Sterling.

Volume II: Planning Policy Framework and Recommendations

Volume II: Planning Policy Framework is intended to guide development and accommodate future growth in a manner that forwards the long-term objectives of the County. When used in combination with development regulations, public investments, and coordinated cross-jurisdictional planning efforts, comprehensive plans are very effective in achieving a future which best fulfills the desires of the County.

The development of a comprehensive policy framework is necessary to ensure that the small steps taken by the County and the various municipalities within the County are complementary,

rather than contradictory. This consistency of purpose and the actions to back it up are the key to effectively and efficiently achieving long-term community desires.

The following chapters include a series of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations intended to guide future land development, stimulate the County's agricultural and tourism economy, and foster preservation of the County's farmland. The final chapter, Implementation, is intended to provide a framework with which the County may achieve these goals and implement the recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan*.



CHAPTER 2.1: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The development of goals, objectives, and policies is an important step in the comprehensive planning process—these statements represent the basic values and needs of the community and serve as a strategic guide for *Plan* realization. The goals and objectives included in this chapter were formed based on existing plans and ordinances, community forum outcomes, meetings with community representatives, and basic planning principles. Together, goals, objectives, and policies (Chapter 2.2) provide the guidance to effectively direct future growth and development in Lee County. They will be used by the County Planning Commission, cities, and villages as a decision making tool and as a measure to implement the overall recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

- ♦ **Goals** are broad statements that express general public preferences for the long-term development of the County over the next 20 years or more. Goals specifically address key issues affecting the County and its communities.
- ♦ **Objectives** are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through strategic planning and implementation activities.
- ♦ **Policies** are specific activities or regulations used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan.

The planning goals and objectives on the following pages are designed to establish the comprehensive policy framework to effectively respond to key issues facing the County. These goals and objectives are organized by *Plan* elements (e.g. Land Use, Transportation, Community Character). Because policies often address more than one goal or objective, and because some policies are specific to certain land uses, policies are included separately in Chapter 2.2 immediately following the Goals and Objectives chapter.

LAND USE, AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

A. Goal: Preserve agriculture as a viable land use, economy, and way of life in Lee County.

Objectives:

1. Discourage non-agricultural development in areas of prime farmland through continued use of the LESA system, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations.
2. Preserve large tracts of contiguous, productive agricultural land through County and local community cooperation, and by minimizing zoning map amendments in the “Rural/Agricultural” areas on the Future Land Use Map.
3. Encourage value-added agricultural opportunities to boost the County’s agricultural economy.

B. Goal: Limit new development to appropriate locations.

Objectives:

1. Encourage development to occur in areas contiguous to existing development in cities and villages where it can be efficiently served with a full range of municipal services.
2. Promote redevelopment and infill development to occur in areas already served by public services and facilities.
3. Discourage development in areas that cannot be easily or efficiently served with municipal utilities such as sanitary sewer; water and storm sewers; and public services such as police, fire, libraries, schools, etc.
4. Guide rural development to established named hamlets shown for additional development on the Future Land Use Map.

C. Goal: Protect natural resources in the County.**Objectives:**

1. Preserve environmental corridor features including waterways, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, wildlife habitats, and scenic vistas through the adoption and implementation of environmental protection zoning and subdivision ordinance standards.
2. Protect the groundwater and surface waters of the County.
3. Preserve the air quality of the County.
4. Encourage the cleanup of contaminated sites that threaten the public health, safety, and welfare in the County.
5. Support the clustering of new rural development on areas of non-prime farmland and away from sensitive environmental areas.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

A. Goal: Preserve the "rural character" and farming lifestyle of the County.**Objectives:**

1. Encourage development to occur in an orderly and efficient pattern that preserves agricultural resources and minimizes the conflicts between urban and rural uses, such as residential development in areas planned for agricultural preservation.
2. Preserve the aesthetic character of the rural countryside.
3. Locate urban development that requires urban services within the County's cities and villages.
4. Develop a document that identifies the essential qualities defining the rural character of Lee County.

B. Goal: Maintain and enhance the aesthetic quality of the County.**Objectives:**

1. Preserve the historic and architecturally significant structures in the County.
2. Upgrade signage, landscaping, screening, site design, and related development standards for existing and planned commercial, industrial, and office development areas.

C. Goal: Maintain and enhance the neighborhoods in the County.**Objectives:**

1. Design neighborhoods that are oriented to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. Discourage high traffic volumes in residential neighborhoods.

D. Goal: Provide adequate park and recreational facilities for County residents.**Objectives:**

1. Provide a diverse range of public recreational facilities at acceptable service standards.
2. Ensure that all residents of the County, of all ages and abilities, have adequate access to a diverse range of park and recreational facilities.
3. Work jointly with the school districts to provide adequate recreational facilities and to avoid duplication.

E. Goal: Support safe and affordable housing for all Lee County residents.**Objectives:**

1. Support adequate housing for all income groups in the County, including sufficient affordable housing to serve the needs of the labor force employed in business and industry focused in established cities and villages.
2. Encourage mixed-housing neighborhoods focused in established cities and villages that provide a range of housing types, densities, and costs while maintaining a predominantly single-family character.
3. Promote attractive and safe neighborhoods focused in established cities and villages that are well served by police, fire, and emergency medical services.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. Goal: Maintain the agricultural economy in the County.**Objectives:**

1. Develop policies that preserve and protect the natural resources of the County while allowing for continued growth and economic development in the most suitable areas.
2. Direct non-agricultural development to the County's cities and villages to avoid creating conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.
3. Promote agribusiness and farm-related services that will help support agriculture in the County.
4. See Land Use, Agricultural Preservation, and Natural Resource Protection, Goals A and B.

B. Goal: Encourage redevelopment in the downtowns of the County's cities and villages.**Objectives:**

1. Support the maintenance and revitalization of traditional downtown business districts in the County.
2. Encourage joint public/private investment in business district improvements.
3. Enhance the aesthetic quality of city and village business districts.
4. Promote infill development on underutilized or blighted central business district properties.
5. See Land Use objectives A.1 and A.2.

C. Goal: Promote new commercial and industrial development in the County.**Objectives:**

1. Follow the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan* for the Detailed Planning Areas.
2. Provide an appropriate supply of developable or re-developable land for commercial, industrial, and office uses.
3. Identify and reserve strategic locations for high quality industrial and office developments.
4. Discourage unplanned, incremental strip commercial development along community entryways by coordinating access and site planning, such as shared parking lots.
5. Adopt stronger standards for new commercial and industrial development, in terms of site design, aesthetics, and conditions of operations, such as those elaborated in Part II, Section C. Development Guidelines.
6. Promote a variety of industrial and business uses in the County.

D. Goal: Maintain and enhance the quality of life in the County to help draw commercial and industrial development.**Objectives:**

1. Encourage the creation of well-planned, mixed-use centers that include employment, shopping, housing, and recreation opportunities in a compact, pedestrian-oriented setting.

TOURISM

A. Goal: Promote tourism in the County.**Objectives:**

1. Support the activities of the Lee County Tourism Council.
2. Promote recreational and cultural opportunities in the County.
3. Link the dispersed tourism features of the County to lodging establishments with rural bicycle trail facilities.

B. Goal: Preserve the natural, cultural, and historical features of the County that draw tourists.**Objectives:**

1. See Land Use, Agricultural Preservation, and Natural Resource Protection, Goal C.
2. See Community Character, Goals A and B.

TRANSPORTATION

A. Goal: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of the pedestrian, bike, car, bus, truck, and train.**Objectives:**

1. Coordinate land development with transportation system improvements.
2. Maintain County roads to provide adequate capacity and road quality.
3. Coordinate multi-jurisdiction transportation system improvements.
4. Provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and autos between neighborhoods, park, recreational facilities, schools, service centers, and employment centers.
5. Encourage pedestrian-oriented neighborhood designs as new developments are platted and existing neighborhoods are revitalized.
6. Foster a land development pattern that minimizes absolute reliance on the automobile.
7. Position the County to take full advantage of potential future high-speed regional passenger rail currently proposed as part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, with a route through Bureau County.
8. Encourage the development of multi-use trails within the County to connect to regional trails.

FISCAL PERFORMANCE

A. Goal: Provide a cost effective and efficient system of utilities and public services.**Objectives:**

1. Consider partnerships between the County and developers to pay for infrastructure and service improvements necessitated by new development.
2. Maximize the use of existing utility systems and plan for an orderly and cost-efficient extension of municipal utilities.

3. Ensure that city and village utility systems have adequate capacity to accommodate planned future growth.
4. Avoid urban development in areas that cannot be easily or economically served with municipal utilities and public services.

B. Goal: Take full advantage of economic development programs offered by State and Federal government and private sources.

Objectives:

1. Consider the full range of brownfield-oriented economic development grants and related programs to address clean-up and redevelopment of contaminated sites.
2. Consider the full range of greenfield-oriented economic development grants and related programs for undeveloped sites.
3. Consider the full range of livability and “smart growth” economic development grants and related programs.
4. Consider the full range of tourism-related grants and related programs.

ADMINISTRATIVE

A. Goal: Encourage public participation in the planning and decision-making processes.

Objectives:

1. Encourage greater public awareness of planning-related issues.
2. Promote and enable increased public participation in the planning process and in decision-making processes.

B. Goal: Assure fair and consistent decision-making based on the County's Goals, Objectives, and Policies.

Objectives:

1. Adhere to *Comprehensive Plan* Future Land Use Map and Transportation Facilities Map when making decisions.
2. Insist upon *Comprehensive Plan* Recommendations and Goals, Objectives, and Policies when making decisions.
3. Promote administrative flexibility by allowing for a process to periodically review and revise the *Comprehensive Plan*. A five-year review cycle is typical.
4. Encourage cities and villages to respond to and process planning and development-related applications in a timely manner.
5. Adopt policies and regulations consistent with the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

C. Goal: Ensure high-quality development design.

Objectives:

1. Adopt a cost-recovery system to fund the professional review of development proposals.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

A. Goal: Establish mutually beneficial intergovernmental relationships among the County, cities and villages, and other jurisdictions.**Objectives:**

1. Encourage collaboration among the County, cities and villages, townships, school districts, and other jurisdictions with regard to planning initiatives and development policies.
2. Support intergovernmental cooperation and the shared provision of services between the County and the cities and villages.
3. Promote intergovernmental discussions and agreements within the Detailed Planning Areas identified in this *Plan*.

CHAPTER 2.2: POLICIES

The following policies follow from the Goals and Objectives in the previous chapter.

LAND USE, AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

1. Except where otherwise identified in this *Plan*, all non-agricultural development on lands located within the Detailed Planning Areas (DPA) should be served with the full array of available municipal services where available. Unsewered development is strongly discouraged within this area because large unsewered lots and subdivisions and dispersed non-residential development cannot be efficiently served with public services, including sanitary sewer and water, storm sewer, sidewalks, high levels of police and fire service, street maintenance, parks, and schools/bus routes.
2. Cluster non-farm development in predominantly agricultural areas in a manner that will minimize the conversion of prime agricultural land and minimize the impact on the operations of adjoining farms. This should be accomplished through LESA and site plan review.
3. Continue to limit rural residential development in the AG-1 Rural/Agricultural zoning district to no more than four new homes per quarter section.
4. Encourage mixed-use developments that include a combination of densities and an integration of residential and commercial uses.
5. Protect sensitive natural areas such as wetlands and floodplains that provide for natural stormwater storage and flood control.
6. Plan for the Rock River as a continuous scenic, natural, and recreational corridor with any development along the shore controlled to maintain the aesthetic, recreational, and natural resource qualities of the corridor.
7. Adopt uniform setbacks from all navigable streams, intermittent streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands and require a vegetative buffer within these setbacks to trap silts and nutrients, slow the movement of stormwater, increase water infiltration, and provide wildlife habitat.
8. Discourage development on hilltops, ridgetops, and on hillsides where the roofline of a proposed structure will exceed the crest of the hill. Encourage reforestation of hilltops and ridgetops above areas of steep slopes and other erodable soil areas.
9. Continue to implement countywide construction site erosion control and stormwater management standards to help protect water quality, reduce the risk of flooding, and avoid other associated problems.
10. Require site plan review for all multi-family, commercial, office, industrial, recreational, and institutional land uses in order to ensure the compatibility of adjacent land uses.
11. Buffer incompatible land uses from each other through strategic use of plant materials, decorative fences, walls, or berms.
12. Require that all new development and redevelopment projects include high quality building design, landscaping, and signage. Consider amending existing ordinances to ensure that this policy is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
13. Continue to consider wind energy conversion systems as a special use that is generally compatible with the County's agricultural preservation objectives in areas for rural and agricultural uses in this *Plan*. Track this issue as it evolves so as to keep current with emerging best practices for planning and regulation with particular attention to impacts on existing area residences. Evaluate each wind energy conversion system proposal on a site-specific, case-by-case basis.
14. Do not consider proximity to "hamlets" in the County's LESA evaluation for determining the location of rural development, but rather proximity to the following communities (at the time of Plan adoption): City

of Amboy, City of Dixon, Village of Ashton, Village of Franklin Grove, Village of Lee, Village of Paw Paw, Village of Steward, and the Village of Sublette.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

1. Approve a County Park and Open Space Plan to evaluate countywide recreation needs.
2. Encourage all urban neighborhoods to be located within a ten-minute walk of a neighborhood park facility.
3. Design new and adapt existing park facilities to meet the needs of all residents of the County including special groups such as the elderly, the disabled, and pre-school age children.
4. Adopt a property maintenance code to ensure that existing residential and non-residential development maintains a minimum level of quality to ensure the health and safety of residents and to maintain neighborhood property values.
5. Adopt stricter and more clearly defined regulations regarding “junk” in residential areas.
6. Adopt more detailed regulations regarding site design, landscaping, and signage (see Development Guidelines in the following section).
7. Encourage commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural developments to fit within the character of the area in terms of site design and building character (see Development Guidelines in the following section).
8. Advance Planned Neighborhood design where new residential areas are platted and developed (see Planned Neighborhood Design Standards in Chapter 2.3: Development Guidelines).
9. Avoid speculative commercial rezonings on the fringes of communities in order to prevent the creation of unplanned, uneconomical, and unattractive strip commercial areas.
10. Provide a range of housing types and densities to provide housing for all Lee County residents.
11. Encourage large developments to include a variety of housing types and price ranges.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Recognize the importance of agriculture and agribusiness and take care not to adopt land use and other regulations that undermine agricultural viability.
2. Direct new development into DPAs to support tax base and local job growth per the recommendations of this Plan in Chapter 2.3.
3. Continue to evaluate wind energy conversion systems and wind farms as an economic development initiative considering all benefits and impacts.
4. Provide a sufficient inventory of sites in planned business and industrial parks to accommodate expansion of existing businesses and provide sites for new businesses and industry.
5. Maintain transportation infrastructure, including highways, railroads, and air fields to support industrial and business development.
6. Promote adequate infrastructure improvements in and around industrial parks including sufficient sewer and water capacity, and streets of sufficient width with curb and gutter.
7. Strengthen the retail power of established commercial areas by discouraging excessive “replacement-oriented” development on the fringes of cities and villages.
8. Consider incentives for industrial development in desired locations where development may not otherwise occur through use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts and other means.
9. Work with the Lee County Industrial Development Association to attract and retain industrial users to the County.
10. Avoid locating or expanding industrial uses in areas close to residential areas, or other incompatible development, and near sensitive environmental resources.

TOURISM

1. Promote and adequately fund the Lee County Tourism Council.
2. Buffer environmental resources and natural areas from development that would detract from the natural character of the area and undermine tourism opportunities

TRANSPORTATION

1. Adopt and enforce an “Official Map” showing locations of future or expanded roads and public facilities.
2. Establish a countywide system of wayfinding signage to direct travelers to key destinations in the County, particularly at the interchanges where visitors are likely to access the country.
3. Implement the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan to link communities with one another and with natural and cultural resource sites, and to provide tourism and recreational opportunities. See Appendix B.
4. Promote the conversion of unused railroad rights-of-way to multi-use trail facilities.
5. Review proposed highway and county road projects for opportunities to provide extra right-of-way for bicycle lanes or paths.
6. Consider the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the physically challenged in all new developments.
7. Investigate ways to provide alternative modes of travel (buses, shared-rides, taxis, etc.) for County residents, particularly for people with limited access to the automobile system such as the elderly and disabled.
8. Limit the number of driveway access points along arterial streets and County roads in order to maintain traffic flow and improve safety.
9. Require new subdivisions to provide more than one vehicular access point whenever feasible.
10. Avoid cul-de-sacs except in very limited situations (e.g. topography or existing development pattern necessitates their use). When used, cul-de-sacs should not exceed 800 feet in length.
11. Ensure that subdivision streets can connect to future streets on abutting properties wherever feasible.
12. Require that developer-provided roads meet minimum County standards.
13. Limit new rail crossings, and eliminate existing crossings whenever feasible, to improve safety.

FISCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Consider the privatization of service provision and intergovernmental initiatives where feasible.
2. Consider shared provision of governmental services between the County and the cities and villages where appropriate.
3. Apply for state, federal, and/or private grants to implement recommendations of this *Plan*.
4. Consider the concept of new residential development paying sufficient impact fees or other assessments to cover all, or part of, the cost of providing new infrastructure and services.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

1. Encourage cooperative planning among the County, cities, villages, and townships to ensure that the goals and objectives of this *Plan* are achieved.
2. Coordinate planning with State and Federal plans and agencies.
3. Hold an annual meeting of County, city, village, and township officials and staff to discuss planning issues of countywide importance.
4. Actively participate and help to institutionalize cooperative, mutually beneficial planning efforts with communities along the I-39 corridor, including the City of Rochelle.
5. Establish consistent standards for major development projects in and around the County including “big box” commercial, “strip” commercial, and larger scale industrial/transshipment uses among zoning jurisdictions including the cities of Dixon, Amboy, Rock Falls, Rochelle, and Sterling.

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Adopt policies and regulations that are clear and readily understood by the general public.

2. Ensure that land use regulations are fair and treat all owners of land with comparable resource and location characteristics equitably.
3. Hold periodic Planning Commission meetings for the specific purpose of reviewing the *Comprehensive Plan* and assessing implementation progress.
4. Implement the recommendations of this *Plan* through the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Official Map, and Capital Improvements Program of the County and each municipality, amending or creating as necessary.
5. Require that all site plans, preliminary plats, and certified survey maps accurately depict all natural resource/environmental corridor features (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, steep slopes, drainageways, etc.) that are located on the site.
6. Ensure that this *Plan* is consulted by the County Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, other governmental bodies or agencies, County staff, and the private sector before any decisions related to community development or redevelopment are made.
7. Update this *Plan* regularly (at least once every five to ten years or as changing conditions warrant) to ensure it remains a useful planning tool.

CHAPTER 2.3: LAND USE PLAN

This chapter of the *Plan* is intended to guide land use and development in the County through the year 2030. Map 6, the Future Land Use Map, is the centerpiece of this chapter and the *Plan's* land use direction. Map 6 was prepared based on an analysis of a variety of factors including overall development trends, location of areas logical for future development based on existing development, environmental constraints, public and property owner input, and this *Plan's* overall vision and goals.

The Future Land Use Map and related policies described below should be used as a basis to update the County's regulatory land use tools, such as the zoning ordinance and map. They should also be used as a basis for all public and private sector development decisions. These decisions include annexations, rezonings, conditional use permits, subdivisions, extension of municipal utilities, and other public or private investments. Changes in land use to implement the recommendations of this *Plan* will generally be initiated by property owners and private developers. In other words, this *Plan* does not automatically compel property owners to change the use of their land.

Not all land shown for development on Map 6 will be immediately appropriate for rezoning and other land use approvals following adoption of this *Plan*. The County advocates the phased development of land that focuses growth in areas and types of land uses that advance the vision of the community and can be efficiently served with transportation, utilities, public services, and other community facilities.

The land use plans for those communities in the County with adopted comprehensive plans, including the Cities of Amboy and Dixon and the Villages of Ashton, Compton, Franklin Grove, Harmon, Lee, Nelson, Paw Paw, Steward, Sublette, and West Brooklyn, are generally reflected on Map 6. Since future land use categories varied among communities, there was not always a direct translation from the local plan to this County *Plan*.

PLANNED LAND USE CATEGORIES

Rural/Agricultural

This future land use category is established and mapped to preserve productive agricultural lands in the long-term, protect existing large and small farm operations from encroachment by incompatible uses, promote further investments in farming, and maintain farmer eligibility for incentive programs.

This category focuses on lands actively used for farming, with productive agricultural soils and with long-term suitability for farming. This category also includes scattered open lands and woodlots; farmsteads; small-acreage farms/hobby farms; cemeteries; agricultural-related uses, such as associated home occupations and small family businesses which do not interfere with the interests of nearby property owners; and limited single-family residential development with a maximum density of one new home per 40 acres.



Agricultural land in Lee County

Rural Residential

This future land use category is mapped over existing areas of mainly single-family detached residential development, generally at densities of one new dwelling unit per two acres, and served by individual on-site waste treatment (septic) systems. This category is

not intended to permit large areas of new low density residential development outside of existing hamlets, cities, and villages.

Single-Family Residential

This category includes single-family residential development served by a public sanitary sewer system or a group on-site waste disposal system. This future land use category also allows the continuation of pre-existing farm and forestry operations.

Mixed Residential

The Mixed Residential future land use category is intended to allow a variety of residential units including single-family detached homes; single-family attached dwellings (e.g., town homes); duplexes; and multiple-family housing (three or more unit buildings) including condominiums, apartments, and senior housing developments; and manufactured home parks or mobile home parks, generally served by a municipal sanitary sewer system.



Example of Mixed Residential development

Planned Neighborhood

This future land use category is intended for a carefully planned mix of primarily single-family residential development combined with mixed residential; active recreation; and small scale business, office, and community facilities consistent with the residential character of the area and generally retaining the area's existing balance of residential types. This category also includes unique neighborhood design using the principles of conservation neighborhood design. See the detailed design standards presented earlier in this Volume.

Neighborhood Office/Business

This future land use category is designed to accommodate smaller-scale neighborhood supporting retail, service, and office uses that preserve residential character. As depicted on Map 6, Neighborhood Office/Business uses are generally planned for small areas adjacent to existing and future residential neighborhoods.



Example of Neighborhood Office/Business development

Planned Office/Business

This future land use category is intended for a range of high-quality office, institutional, research, commercial, retail, service, community facility land uses.

New development should include high-quality building design, generous landscaping, screened storage areas, and modest lighting and signage. In general, these uses are recommended along major roadways and interchange areas. They are also recommended in areas where communities are interested in higher standards of development than may have been the norm or prior expectation.



Example of Planned Business development

General Business

This category includes a range of commercial, office, institutional, warehousing, distribution, telecommunication, and outdoor display land uses.

New development should include modest levels of landscaping and lighting, screened storage areas, and limited and attractive signage. The General Business land use category is mapped along major roadways and over areas of existing commercial and/or light industrial development that is expected to remain in a mix of uses for the long-term.

New non-residential development should be reviewed to ensure that it is consistent with the area's character, population, needs, and public service capabilities. The types of uses envisioned at interchange locations and along major roadways may include those services related to traveling—including service stations, hotels, restaurants, etc.

Planned Mixed Use

This future land use category is intended to facilitate a carefully controlled mix of commercial and residential uses on public sewer, public water, and other urban services and infrastructure. "Planned Mixed Use" areas are intended as vibrant places that should function as community gathering spots. This category advises a carefully designed blend of business, mixed residential, office, light industrial, and institutional land uses. This category is generally mapped in the Detailed Planning Areas described later in this section.

Planned Industrial

This future land use category is intended for high-quality indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office uses with generous landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting and signage, and compliance with design standards. Light Industrial land uses are generally found in cities and villages, or other areas served by public utilities.



Example of Planned Industrial development

General Industrial

This future land use category is intended for indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office uses, often with outdoor storage areas.

Heavy Industrial

This future land use category is intended for carefully controlled heavy industrial; storage; and disposal land uses, with limited landscaping and signage.

Extraction

This future land use category is intended for quarries, gravel pits, clay extraction, waste disposal sites, and related land uses. Lands within this future land use category may be converted to recreational and open space uses in the long-term or other land uses if detailed reclamation or other plans have been approved by the County and local community.

Community Facilities

This future land use category is designed to facilitate public buildings, hospitals, airports, power substations, and special-care facilities. Smaller community facilities may be accommodated in other future land use categories.



Community Facilities development in Franklin Grove

Active & Passive Recreation

This future land use category generally includes all publicly-owned land designated as state parks, picnic areas, natural areas, and other recreational facilities owned by public, private, or non-profit agencies.

Special Recreation

This future land use category generally includes carefully controlled mixed-use recreational developments such as campgrounds, private recreation/hunting grounds, or other tourism-related development.

Environmental Corridor Overlay

This overlay category includes generally continuous open space systems based on lands including sensitive natural resources characteristics that severely limit development potential. This category includes wetlands, FEMA designated floodplains, shoreland setback areas, woodlands, and slopes of 12 percent or greater, which if disturbed can result in erosion and unstable building sites. Environmental Corridors are shown on Map 6 throughout the County as an overlay over the top of one of the “base” future land use categories described above.



Special Recreation development in Amboy Township

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

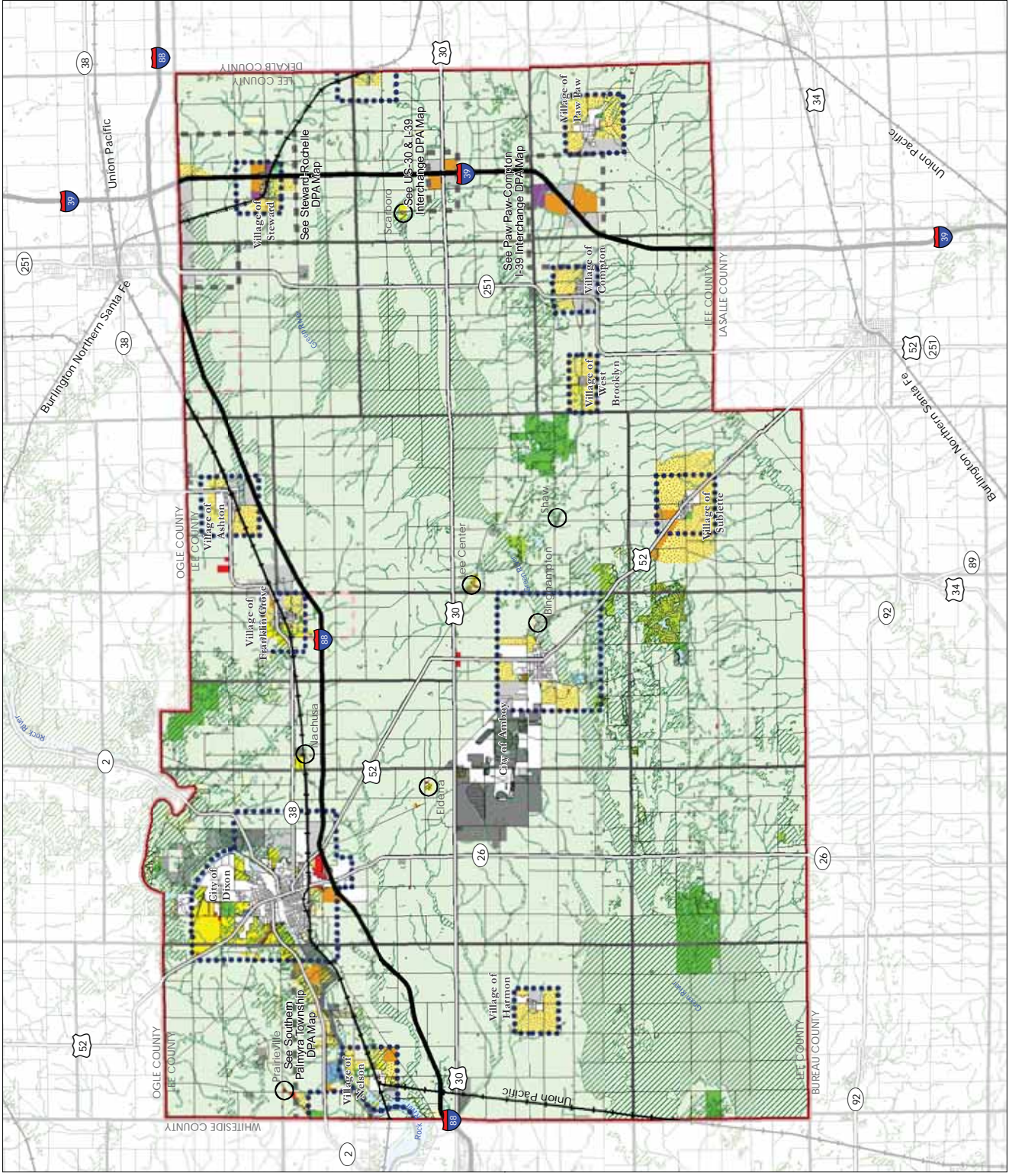
Map #6

- Future Land Use**
- Lee County
 - Township Boundary
 - Incorporated Municipal Area
 - Facility Planning Area
 - Existing Detailed Planning Area
 - Potential Future Detailed Planning Area
 - Hamlets
 - Interstate
 - State/U.S. Highway
 - Railroad
 - Right of Way
 - Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories**
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office/Business
 - General Business
 - Planned Mixed Use
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active & Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor

Palmyra	Dixon	Nachusa	Ashton	Reynolds	Alto
Nelson	South Dixon	Franklin Grove	Bradford	Viola	Willow Creek
Harmon	Marion	Amboy	Lee Center	Brooklyn	Wyoming
Hamilton	East Grove	May	Sublette		

May 18, 2010
Source: Lee County LIO, USGS
ESRI (2008), FEMA
VANDERWALL &
ASSOCIATES INC.
Shaping futures. Inspiring change.



AGRICULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Preservation of the agricultural economy and family farm operation way-of-life is one of the most important goals of the residents of Lee County and of this *Comprehensive Plan*. The following tools and approaches will be utilized to achieve the goal of preserving prime agricultural land and the rural character of the County.

LESA-Based Approach

The County currently uses the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA)-based point system to evaluate new development in the County and direct development to non-prime areas. This approach does not limit the amount of development in the rural areas, but prevents most development on prime land.

Agricultural Preservation Zoning

The County's updated zoning ordinance includes an AG-1 Rural/Agricultural district which allows four new home sites per quarter section (if the site passes the LESA evaluation described above). This approach disperses limited additional development throughout the rural areas of the County.



Agriculture operation in Lee County

Community Focused Development

The County continues to direct the majority of new development to incorporated cities and villages where a full range of urban services are available, while supporting infill of existing subdivisions and hamlets. This policy preserves the County's agricultural economy and rural character and at the same time supports healthy vibrant cities and villages.

Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Agriculture is an important component of the economy and character of Lee County. As such, the County intends to encourage sustainable agricultural practices that integrate environmental stewardship while maintaining farming as a profitable enterprise.

Sustainable agriculture has been defined as a way to raise food that is healthy for humans, does not impose hazards to the natural environment, and provides economic support for the farmer and the rural community. The following are examples of sustainable agriculture practices:

- ◆ Conserving and preserving resources by ensuring that water, soil, and air are protected and farm waste stays within the farm's ecosystem. No-till farming can reduce agricultural land degradation.
- ◆ Fostering biodiversity through crop rotation, preventing disease and pest outbreaks, and minimizing the excessive use of chemical pesticides.
- ◆ Supporting the continuation of farming by mentoring the next generation of farmers. "Farm matchmaking" programs, which pairs aspiring farmers with those leaving agriculture, have been successful in Iowa, Oregon, Virginia, Nebraska, and Washington.
- ◆ Producing and using bio-based fuels such as bio-diesel and ethanol using agricultural by-products; food and feed wastes; and native, low-input fuel stock crops grown on marginal soils.

Sustainable agriculture is often locally-based to minimize transportation costs and fossil fuel use. Funding opportunities are available for farmers and communities seeking to enhance sustainability in local farming practices. For example, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program awards grants to advance sustainable innovations in agriculture. SARE also maintains a grants list for each state describing available grants and funding level.

VILLAGE/CITY PLANNING AREAS

The previous section dealt with planning and development in the rural areas of the County. One of the goals of this *Plan* is to encourage development to occur in the cities and villages in the County. This section provides details on planning and development within the County's incorporated municipalities. Planning areas for cities and villages within the County were generally based on the existing Facility Planning Area (FPA) boundary as defined by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. The FPA is the area in which each municipality is authorized to provide services, particularly water and sanitary sewer. Given the modest growth rate in the County, planning for the FPAs, rather than the larger 1.5-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) areas, is more logical.

The timing of development within the planning area (i.e., the FPA) should be based on the ability of the municipality to adequately provide services, particularly utilities. Growth should occur more or less contiguous to existing development, avoiding "leap-frog" development. Therefore, an area shown for development on the Future Land Use Map should not be construed to confer a right to immediately develop. All new development within a municipal FPA is planned to be developed with all available urban services, including public sewer and water where available. Therefore, these areas should remain in agriculture, or other open space uses, until the time is appropriate for development within the city or village with the full range of available public services.

Amboy Land Use Plan

Over the 20-year planning horizon, it is anticipated that the City of Amboy will annex lands within exiting municipal boundaries and to the east of Highway 26. Industrial development is planned for these areas. Future Planned Neighborhoods are planned for land located primarily to the east and west of Highway 52 and to the southwest of the City. Little or no urban growth is planned south and east of the Green River due to the difficulty in extending urban services across the Green River floodplain.

Ashton Land Use Plan

The Village of Ashton is planned to expand to the southwest, north, and east of exiting municipal boundaries. The County's Future Land Use Map designates the majority of new growth to occur in Planned Neighborhoods. An area of Planned Industrial development is designated for land to the southeast of Highway 38 and existing Village limits. Because the toll highway acts as a barrier to development, no development is planned south of I-88. This area is planned to remain in Agriculture.

Compton Land Use Plan

The County's Future Land Use Map designates land to the north of Compton as Planned Neighborhood. Significant areas to the south of existing Village limits are reserved for Planned Industrial uses.

Dixon Land Use Plan

Future growth in and around the City of Dixon will be planned and guided by the City of Dixon Comprehensive Plan. This County *Plan* acknowledges the City's role in planning for future growth and development within the City and its environs. The recommendations of this *Plan* are based on the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan and discussions with City elected officials and staff.

Franklin Grove Land Use Plan

Future growth in and around the Village of Franklin Grove will be planned and guided by the Village of Franklin Grove Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations of this *Plan* are based on the Village's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Most of the future development in the Village of Franklin Grove is planned for residential in the Planned Neighborhood category. Planned Industrial development is planned east of the Village along the north and south of the railroad tracks. Planned Business is designated north of Highway 38 at the northeast entrance of the Village.

Harmon Land Use Plan

Most of the development in the Village of Harmon is planned for residential in the Planned Neighborhood category. An area of Planned Industrial is designated east of existing Village limits and south of Sterling Road.

Lee Land Use Plan

The Village of Lee lies on the boundary of Lee County and DeKalb County. This *Plan* only makes recommendations for the portion of the Village within Lee County. Future development in the Village of Lee is planned to be mostly single-family residential with a mixture of other neighborhood-compatible uses in the Planned Neighborhood land use category.

Nelson Land Use Plan

Most of the development in and around the Village of Nelson is planned for residential development in the Planned Neighborhood category. General Business is designated north of the Rock River and west of Sauk Valley Community College. Areas of Planned Industrial development are planned for the southwest of the Village, with access to the railroad. An area of Planned Business is planned for the east side of Nelson Road across from the mobile home park.

Paw Paw Land Use Plan

Most of the development in and around the Village of Paw Paw is planned for residential development in the Planned Neighborhood category. Planned Industrial development is planned for the west side of the Village, which provides access to the interstate while avoiding heavy traffic, particularly truck traffic, through town.

Steward Land Use Plan

Most of the development in and around the Village of Steward is planned for residential development in the Planned Neighborhood category. A significant portion of land surrounding the I-39 corridor has been designated as Planned Business. This area should be reserved for high-quality uses. The area south of Perry Road and north of the railroad tracks is planned for Planned Industrial uses. See Map 8 for more detailed land use recommendations.

Sublette Land Use Plan

Future growth in and around the Village of Sublette will be planned and guided by the Sublette Comprehensive Plan. The majority of the land use recommendations of this *Plan* are based on the Village's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Sublette is expected to grow considerably over the 20-year planning period. Most of the development in and around the Village of Sublette is planned for residential development in the Planned Neighborhood category. A node of Planned Business is planned along the north side of US Highway 52 from the edge of existing development to Inlet Road and north to Tower Road. Another larger node of Planned Business is planned along US Highway 52 in the area within the triangle formed by the highway, Inlet Road, and Tower Road. An area for future Planned Industrial uses is planned for the area south of US Highway 52, west of Inlet Road.

West Brooklyn Land Use Plan

All new development in the Village of West Brooklyn is planned for Planned Neighborhood development. It is expected that most of this development will be single-family residential, with the possibility for limited amounts of neighborhood-compatible commercial, office, institutional, and small multi-family.

DETAILED PLANNING AREAS (DPA)

There are particular areas of the County that present unique opportunities for economic development. These areas are referred to as "Detailed Planning Areas." Detailed plans for land use, community character, utility provision, stormwater quantity and quality management, and economic development are needed before substantial development is approved in these areas. Allowing these areas to develop prematurely and inefficiently in the short-term will harm the long-term economic potential of these areas. These areas should be reserved for high-quality, high-tax base uses. Other moderate quality uses should be guided to more appropriate locations that do not have the same potential for high-value uses as these DPAs. Other DPAs should be established in the future as necessary (for example, if a new interchange is added on I-88).

Southern Palmyra Township DPA

The Southern Palmyra Township DPA focuses on the lands along State Highway 2 between Dixon to the east and Sterling to the west. The planned land uses reflect the State Highway 2 Corridor Land Use Study

completed by the Township of Palmyra in 2003. The plan capitalizes on the exposure to HWY 2 by allowing planned business/office adjacent to the highway. Existing and future residential neighborhood opportunities are planned between HWY 2 and the Rock River. A majority of the area north of HWY 2 is planned to remain agriculture or residential.

Past efforts have addressed road alignments, intersections, and frontage roads along HWY 2 to better access the surrounding areas and provide a safer transportation network. Trails are shown according to the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan. It should be a priority to link the Sauk Valley College and future business/office to the regional trails. Parks and stormwater management systems will depend on the land use and intensity of development. Parks should be emphasized in residential areas and be located within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walking distance of all residents. Additional public access, canoe sites, and parks along the river should be explored as nearby development occurs. Stormwater management systems should both infiltrate and detain stormwater with special efforts to protect the water quality of the Rock River.

Steward/Rochelle Economic Development Corridor DPA

The Steward/Rochelle Economic Development Corridor DPA centers on the interchange at I-39 and Perry Road, just east of Steward. Planned business/office is shown in the northern interchange quadrants responding to the visibility and access of the interstate. The southern interchange quadrants are limited by environmental corridors and the bisecting rail line; and therefore, the southeast area shows an area of planned mixed use. This category will allow flexibility to take advantage of visibility and access while providing opportunity to also utilize the adjacent rail line. Planned residential neighborhood growth is shown around Steward, away from the interstate area. An area of planned mixed-use is shown north of Steward to transition from the business/office and neighborhood land uses to the planned industrial areas to the north.

Trails are shown according to the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan. Paw Paw Road is a planned north-south county bike route and also a possible location for upgrades to facilitate a future regional truck route around the City of Rochelle. Parks and stormwater management systems will depend on the land use and intensity of development. Parks should be emphasized in residential areas and be located within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walking distance of all residents.

Stormwater management systems will depend on the specific development. Stormwater systems should both infiltrate and detain stormwater. Detention basins will be located in low areas; often near environmental corridors in the south and west portions of this DPA. In the northeast quadrant a regional basin should be located in the low area near Paw Paw Road. In the northwest quadrant a regional basin should be located in the lower lands of the northern portion. Special efforts should be made to protect environmental corridors and farmland from runoff.

US 30/I-39 Interchange Area DPA

The US 30/I-39 Interchange Area DPA centers on the interchange at I-39 and HWY 30. This, the smallest of the detailed planning areas, shows areas of economic development at the quadrants surrounding the interchange and agriculture preservation for the balance of the study area. The northwest and southwest quadrants capitalize on the best visibility and right-off, right-in access by showing planned business/office. The southwest and northeast quadrants show planned industrial.

Stormwater management systems will depend on the specific development. Stormwater systems should both infiltrate and detain stormwater. Detention basins will be located in low areas; often near environmental corridors in the southern quadrants of this DPA. The northern quadrants are relatively flat; detention basins should be located to facilitate the natural hydrology of the area. Special efforts should be made to protect environmental corridors and farmland from runoff.

Paw Paw/Compton I-39 Interchange Area DPA

The Paw Paw/Compton I-39 Interchange Area DPA centers on the interchange of Chicago Road with I-39. Located directly between Paw Paw and Compton, this interchange is about three miles from each city. Similar to the HWY 30 interchange, this DPA shows planned business/office in the northwest and southeast quadrants, and planned industrial in the southwest and northeast quadrants. Planned mixed-use is also shown

on the northwest side of the interstate. Environmental corridors frame the outer areas and preserve the rural/agriculture land use.

Stormwater management systems will depend on the specific development. Stormwater systems should both infiltrate and detain stormwater. Detention basins will mostly be located near the environmental corridor network that rings virtually the entire DPA. In some cases, detention basins will be necessary in low areas along I-39 or Chicago Road. Special efforts should be made to protect environmental corridors and farmland from runoff.

Future DPAs

Map 6 identifies Potential Future Detailed Planning Areas at the locations of the two Potential Future Interchanges on I-88—near the Village of Franklin Grove and at Thorpe Road near the City of Rochelle (depicted on Map 7 and described in Chapter 2.6). If a new interchange is designed and funded on either I-88 or I-39, the County should update this Comprehensive Plan and work with local municipalities, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Tollway Authority to prepare a detailed land use plan for the area.

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

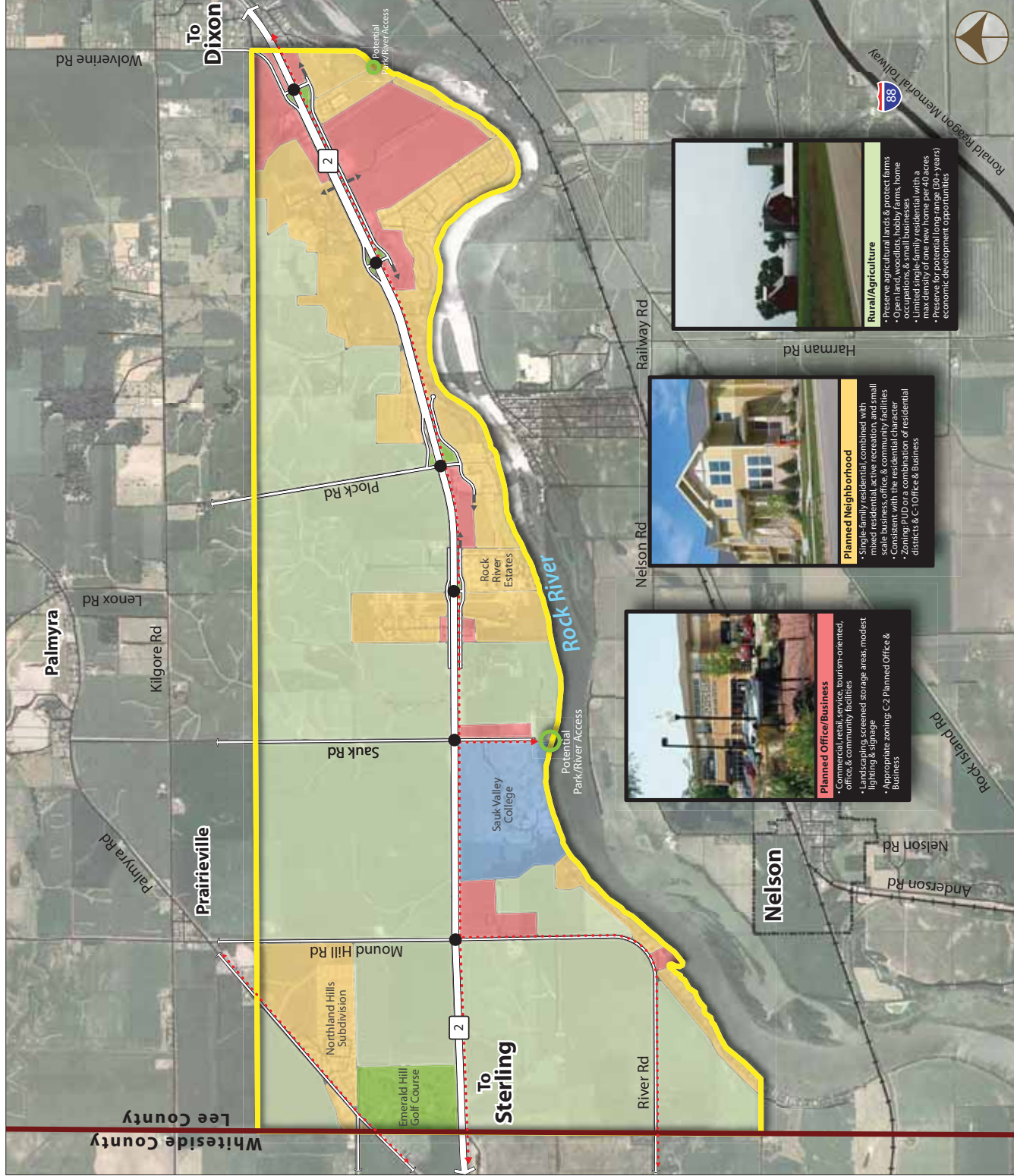
Detailed Planning Area

Southern Palmyra Township

Future Land Use Concept Plan

- Detailed Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Planned Office/Business
- Community Facilities
- Planned Neighborhood
- Rural/Agriculture
- Recreation/Open Space
- Railroad
- Right-of-Way
- Future Right-of-Way/Access Point
- Bike Trail or Route
- HWY 2 Full Access Intersections

Palmyra	Dixon	Adrian	Kennels	Alto
Nelson	South Dixon	Northal	Franklin Center	Bradford
Hammon	Nelson	Anchor	Lee Center	Brooklyn
Hamblin	East Grove	Nap	Sublette	Winning



-











Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Detailed Planning Area

US 30/I-39 Interchange Area

Future Land Use Concept Plan

-  Detailed Planning Area
-  Planned Office/Business
-  Planned Industrial
-  Rural/Agriculture
-  Environmental Corridor
-  Right-of-Way
-  Future Right-of-Way/Access Point
-  Bike Trail or Route



Planned Office/Business

- Commercial/real service, tourism-oriented, office & community facilities
- Office buildings, screened storage areas, modest lighting & signage
- Appropriate zoning: C2 Planned Office & Business




Planned Industrial

- Manufacturing, warehousing, distribution & office uses, screened storage areas, modest lighting & signage
- Appropriate zoning: I-1 Planned Industrial



Rural/Agriculture

- Preserve agricultural lands & protect farms and family farms, home occupations, & small businesses
- Limited single-family residential with a max density of one new home per 40 acres
- Preserve for potential long range (50+ years) economic development opportunities



Environmental Corridor

- Open space systems including sensitive natural resources
- Wetlands, FEMA floodplains, shoreline
- Appropriate zoning will vary based on the situation, however, the WS Water and Steep Slope Overlay District should be considered

Palmyra	Down	Adrian	Kennels	Alto
Nelson	South Elmore	Natural Gasline Center	Bradford	Volia
Hammon	Nelson	Anchor	Lee Center	Brooklyn
Hamblin	East Grove	Nay	Sublette	Wynning

0' 1,250' 2,500' 5,000'

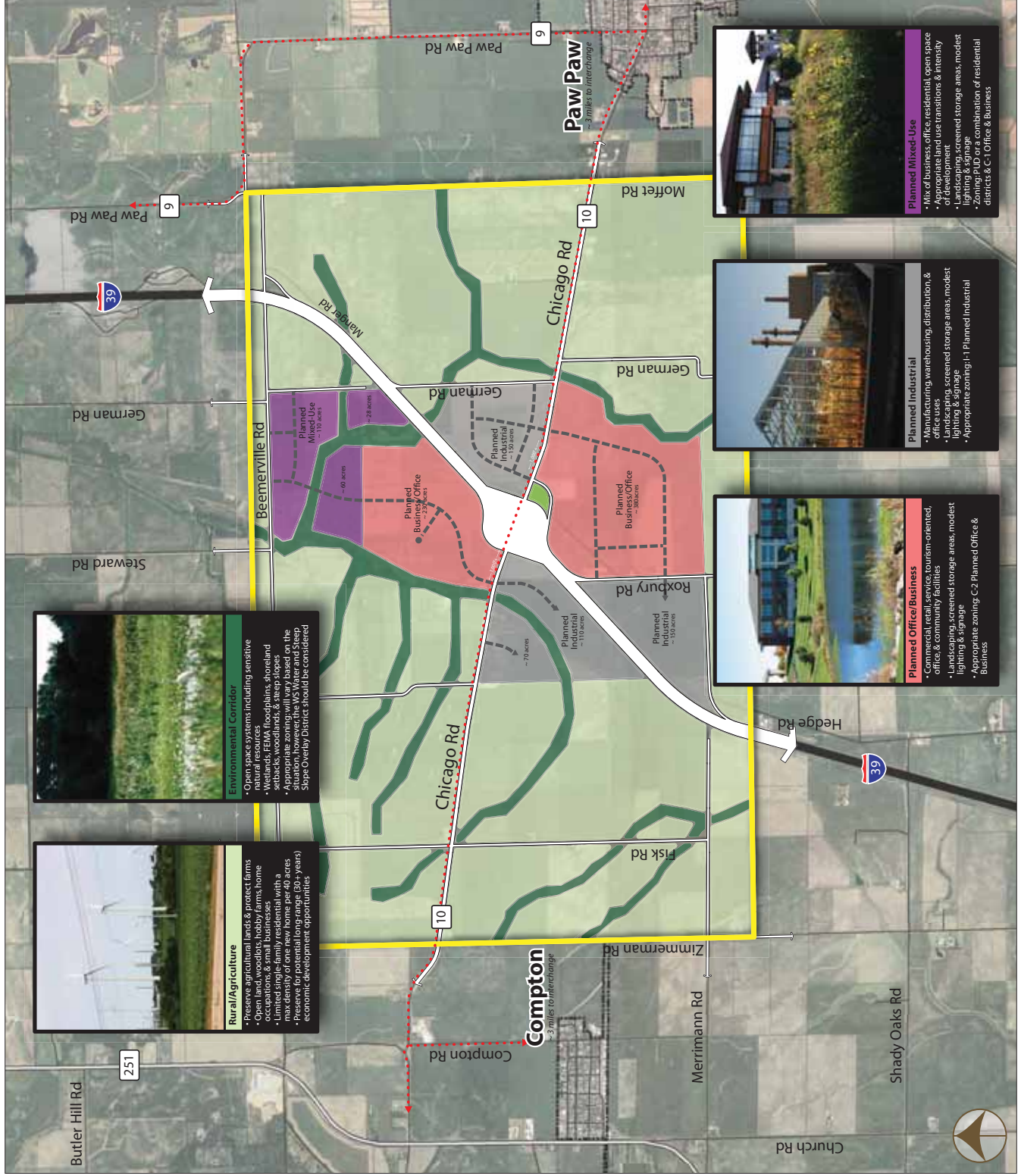
Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Detailed Planning Area

Paw Paw/Compton I-39 Interchange Area

Future Land Use Concept Plan

- Detailed Planning Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Planned Office/Business
- Planned Industrial
- Planned Mixed-Use
- Rural/Agriculture
- Recreation/Open Space
- Environmental Corridor
- Right-of-Way
- Future Right-of-Way/Access Point
- Bike Trail or Route



Rural/Agriculture

- Preserve agricultural lands & protect farms
- Open land, woodlots, hobby farms, home
- Limited single-family residential with a max density of one new home per 40 acres
- Preserve for potential long-range (30+ years) economic development opportunities

Environmental Corridor

- Open space systems including sensitive natural resources, floodplains, shoreline, wetlands, woodlands, & steep slopes
- Appropriate zoning will vary based on the situation, however the WS Water and Steep Slope Overlay District should be considered

Planned Office/Business

- Commercial, retail, service, tourism-oriented office & community facilities
- Landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting & signage
- Appropriate zoning: C2 Planned Office & Business

Planned Industrial

- Manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, & office uses
- Landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting & signage
- Appropriate zoning: I-1 Planned Industrial

Planned Mixed-Use

- Mix of business, office, residential, open space
- Appropriate land use transitions & intensity
- Landscaping, screened storage areas, modest lighting & signage
- Zoning: PUD or a combination of residential districts & C-1 Office & Business

Palmyra	Down	Adrian	Kennels	Willow Creek
Nelson	South Dixon	Nathaniel	Bradford	Viola
Hammon	Adrian	Anchor	Lee Center	Brooklyn
Hambro	East Grove	Nap	Sublime	Brooklyn

CHAPTER 2.4: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

This *Plan* reflects the community's support for Lee County to retain its rural and agricultural character, with new growth occurring primarily within and adjacent to the existing municipalities in the County. These communities should retain their "village" character by preserving historic downtowns, creating and maintaining attractive community entryways and corridors through the community, and maintaining their "traditional neighborhood" character. Only limited amounts of rural residential development should occur and should be allowed only on non-prime farmland, per the Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) determination.

Historically, Lee County has enjoyed only modest increases in population, development, and traffic, which have been accommodated with a blend of both elegant and disruptive results on the quality of life of the community as a whole. The County's recently updated zoning ordinance and carefully controlled zoning map amendment and special use decisions are the most effective tool to ensure a land use pattern that is consistent with the County's character and future vision by reducing undesirable uses and land use conflicts. This and other sections of this Volume include recommendations for enhancing the zoning ordinance to address critical aesthetic components of development such as architecture, landscaping, and signage.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER COMPONENTS

A wide variety of elements contribute to the creation of community character. These include:

Geographic Context

A key element of the character of Lee County is its rural location. Large areas of the County are covered by farmland, mixed with natural areas of hills and trees. Residents of Lee County strongly identify with this rural character and desire to maintain that character to the greatest extent possible. The County is committed to continuing preservation of rural character through regulatory tools such as the zoning and subdivision ordinance and by directing development to cities and villages.

Urban Form

Historically, growth in Lee County has occurred within the incorporated cities and villages, with very little non-farm rural development. The dominance of these central places, both for residential and non-residential development, should be maintained.

Community Gateways

Community gateways serve as the entryway into a community. These gateways provide visitors with their first impression of the community and are the most visible portions of the community for residents. Careful attention should be paid to these areas to make sure that these key community entryways present a high-quality character, particularly in regards to the aesthetic concerns of signage, landscaping, and building materials. Key community gateways are indicated on Map 3.



Downtown Amboy

Key Corridors and Interchanges

Beyond the symbolic aesthetic treatment of community gateways, this *Plan* also recommends the careful treatment of key community corridors and interchanges. Key corridors represent the most heavily traveled

routes through the County and set the tone for the overall community character of the County in the minds of both residents and visitors. The following key corridors are indicated on Map 3: Rock River corridor, I-88, I-39, USH 52, USH 30, and STH 2. Each of the existing and planned Interstate Highway interchanges represent opportunities for both economic development and presentation of a high-quality community character for the County.

Aesthetics

The following are the most prominent aesthetic elements in the County over which the County has some element of control through zoning, subdivision, and building regulations.

- ◆ **Signage:** Low-quality signs and excessive signage can have a detrimental impact on community aesthetics and property values. Off-site advertising signage (i.e., billboards), particularly along the interstate and U.S. highways in the County, can significantly impact the character and appearance of the County. The County should develop sign regulations that limit on-site commercial signage and strongly limit or eliminate off-site signage to help preserve the rural and natural character of the County.
- ◆ **Landscaping:** Landscaping can significantly improve the visual character of development. Adequate landscaping should be required for all forms of development, except single-family residential uses (which virtually always provide adequate landscaping without need for public regulation) and family farm structures. For all other uses, landscaping should be required around building foundations, in and around paved areas, within yard areas, and along streets. Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness.
- ◆ **Building Architecture and Materials:** Architectural styles and building materials should enhance the property and surrounding properties. Minimum requirements and review procedures for building styles and building materials should be in place to prevent new developments from detracting from the overall community character and aesthetics of the community.

CHAPTER 2.5: DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines should be considered when reviewing development proposals.

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

1. Housing in rural areas of the County should be designed and located in a manner and at densities that minimize adverse impacts on agricultural resources and the rural character of the countryside.
2. “Strip-development” along county roads should be discouraged to minimize adverse impacts to the transportation system and the rural character of the countryside.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Consider the following design guidelines for all new or expanded multiple-family residential development through additions to the County’s Zoning Ordinance, and enforce them during site plan review, special use, and planned unit development processes:

- ◆ Balconies, porches, stoops, garden walls, varied building and facade setbacks, varied roof designs, bay windows, and similar design features are strongly encouraged. Large, monotonous building facades and boring, box-like buildings that detract from the visual quality of the community should be avoided. In general, multi-family dwelling units should be designed to appear as a grouping of smaller residences.
- ◆ The architectural design should be compatible with and fit the context of the surrounding neighborhood, and with the community’s historic character. This includes proper selection of building and facade materials, building height, building bulk, setbacks, window and door styles and placements, roof designs, and colors. Use of brick and other natural and historical building materials is strongly encouraged.
- ◆ Parking lots and garages should abide by the following design guidelines: (a) garage doors and parking lots should be located so that they are not the dominant visual element; (b) all outdoor parking areas should be partially screened from public view by peripheral hedges and ornamental trees; (c) large parking lots should be broken up with landscaped islands and similar features; (d) parking lots should be directly linked to building entrances by pedestrian walkways that are physically separated from vehicular movement areas; and (e) large, unarticulated parking garages are undesirable and should be avoided wherever possible. When such structures are necessary to meet parking requirements, the facades of the structures should be broken up with foundation landscaping, varied facade setbacks or projections, and recessed garage doors.
- ◆ Landscaping should be provided (a) along all public and private street frontages; (b) along the perimeter of all paved areas (parking lots, driveways); (c) along all building foundations; (d) along yards separating land uses which differ in intensity, density, or character; (e) around all outdoor storage areas such as trash receptacles and recycling bins; (f) around all utility structures or mechanical structures that are visible from public right of ways or less intensive land uses; and (g) within open areas of the site.
- ◆ On-site open space areas and age-appropriate recreational equipment should be provided to serve the needs of the project’s residents.
- ◆ Facilities for bicyclists (bike storage racks, bike paths, etc.) should be included.

PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS

Planned Neighborhoods are indicated by the yellow and brown polka dots on the Future Land Use Map and Detailed Planning Area Maps. The concept of Planned Neighborhoods includes a compatible mix of residential and non-residential uses, while maintaining the predominance of single-family residential uses. It is recommended that new housing development in Planned Neighborhoods mirror the historic mix of residential uses within the applicable community. This planning strategy will help to disperse different land use and housing types throughout the community and will limit the concentration of any one type of development in any one area.

The following guidelines should be applied to new Planned Neighborhood developments:

1. Include a mixture of land uses, including:
 - ♦ Single-family residential.
 - ♦ Two-family residential.
 - ♦ Mixed residential.
 - ♦ Community facility.
 - ♦ Parks and open space.
 - ♦ Neighborhood office and businesses.
2. Connect to other neighborhoods by a network of streets that discourage high travel speeds but still allow access to emergency and maintenance vehicles and bicycle and pedestrian facilities (e.g. sidewalks, paths, bike routes).
3. Preserve and enhance scenic vistas, neighborhood gathering places, and visual focal points.
4. Include design elements commonly found in planned neighborhoods:
 - ♦ Reduced building setbacks that create a distinct sense of place and charming human scale by bringing buildings close to the sidewalk and street.
 - ♦ Use of picket fences, wrought iron fences, masonry walls, or hedgerows to define the outdoor space between the home and the street and to create human scale spaces.
 - ♦ Use of front porches and stoops to encourage social interaction between neighborhood residents and to create visual interest in building facades.
 - ♦ Garages located behind the front façade of the home as much as possible or placing the garage in the rear yard of the home with access from an alley, lane, or parking court.
 - ♦ Use of public plazas, greens, and squares to provide focal points for the neighborhood, create visual interest, and generate highly prominent building sites.
5. Continue to implement this concept through the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zoning District.

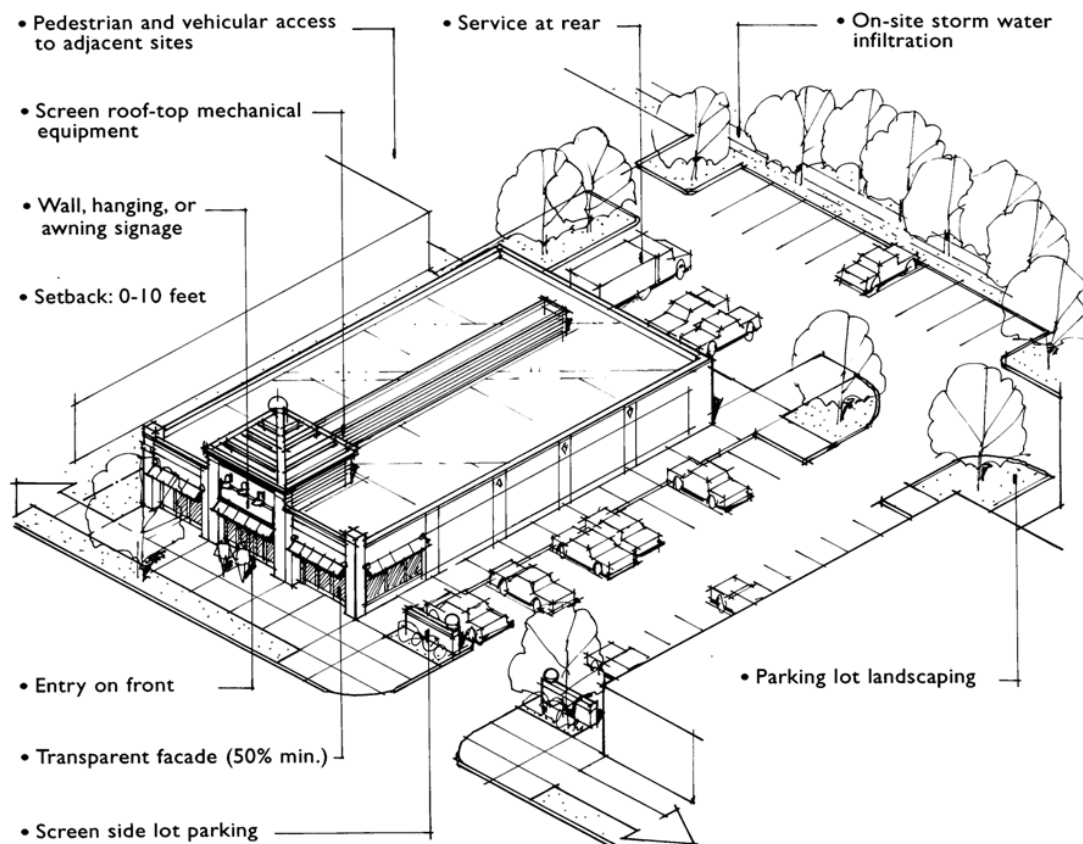
As a result of the complex mix of land uses within Planned Neighborhoods, thoughtful planning is essential. Therefore, the development of Detailed Neighborhood Plans is highly recommended to implement the Planned Neighborhood concept. The result of this detailed planning and design process will be new neighborhoods that capture much of the charm and unique character of the best historic neighborhoods in the community—with the added benefit of more completely coordinated land use, open space, and transportation patterns. Areas planned in this manner will be more marketable to a greater diversity of ages, incomes, and lifestyles, and will typically appreciate in value faster than single-use neighborhoods that employ “cookie-cutter” street patterns, lot sizes, and structures. The combination of a fine-grained land use pattern with careful aesthetic planning is one of the critical factors in maintaining a distinct community character and a high quality of life.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

1. Continue to require that all new or expanded commercial uses adhere to the following design standards through the County’s zoning ordinance and site plan review process:
 - ♦ New driveways with adequate throat depths to allow for proper vehicle stacking.
 - ♦ Limited number of access drives along arterial and collector streets.
 - ♦ Common driveways serving more than one commercial use wherever possible.
 - ♦ High quality landscaping treatment of bufferyards, street frontages, paved areas and building foundations.
 - ♦ Street trees along all public street frontages.
 - ♦ Parking lots heavily landscaped with perimeter landscaping and/or landscaped islands.

- ♦ Screening (hedges, berms, trees, and decorative walls) to block the view of parking lots from public streets and adjacent residential uses.
 - ♦ Signage that is high quality and not excessive in height or total square footage.
 - ♦ Location of loading docks, dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas behind buildings.
 - ♦ Complete screening of loading docks, dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas through use of landscaping, walls, and architectural features.
 - ♦ Provisions for safe, convenient, and separated pedestrian and bicycle access to the site, and from the parking areas to the buildings.
 - ♦ Site design features that allow pedestrians to walk parallel to moving cars.
 - ♦ Illumination from lighting confined on-site, preferably through use of cut-off luminaries.
2. Continue to encourage that all new or expanded commercial developments adhere to the following design features through site plan review:
- ♦ High quality building materials such as brick, wood, stone, and tinted masonry.
 - ♦ Low reflectant, solid earth-tone and neutral building colors.
 - ♦ Canopies, awnings, trellises, bays, and windows to add visual interest to facades.
 - ♦ Variations in building height and roof lines including parapets, multi-planed, and pitched roofs.
 - ♦ Staggered building facades (variations in wall depth and/or direction).
 - ♦ Prominent entryways.
 - ♦ All building façades of similar quality as the front building façade.
 - ♦ Animating features on the building façade.
 - ♦ Repeated elements of architectural detail and color on the building.
 - ♦ Use of landscaping and architectural detailing along building foundations to soften the visual impact of large buildings.
 - ♦ Appropriate pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods.
 - ♦ Central features which contribute to community character such as patios, benches, and pedestrian areas.
 - ♦ Parking to the sides and rear of buildings, rather than having all parking in the front.
3. Continue to discourage the following design features in new commercial developments through site plan review:
- ♦ Large, blank, unarticulated walls on visible building facades.
 - ♦ Unpainted concrete block walls.
 - ♦ Metal siding.
 - ♦ Large, bulky, monotonous “box like” structures.
 - ♦ Inappropriate mixtures of unrelated styles and materials.
 - ♦ Extra deep building setbacks.
 - ♦ Excessive signage (e.g. height, square footage, color).
 - ♦ Unscreened outdoor storage, loading and equipment areas.
 - ♦ Poorly designed, unscreened parking lots.
 - ♦ Excessive number of driveway access points along arterial and collector streets.
 - ♦ Creation of inadequately designed driveways and entryways.

FIGURE 2.5-2: DESIRED NEW COMMERCIAL PROJECT LAYOUT



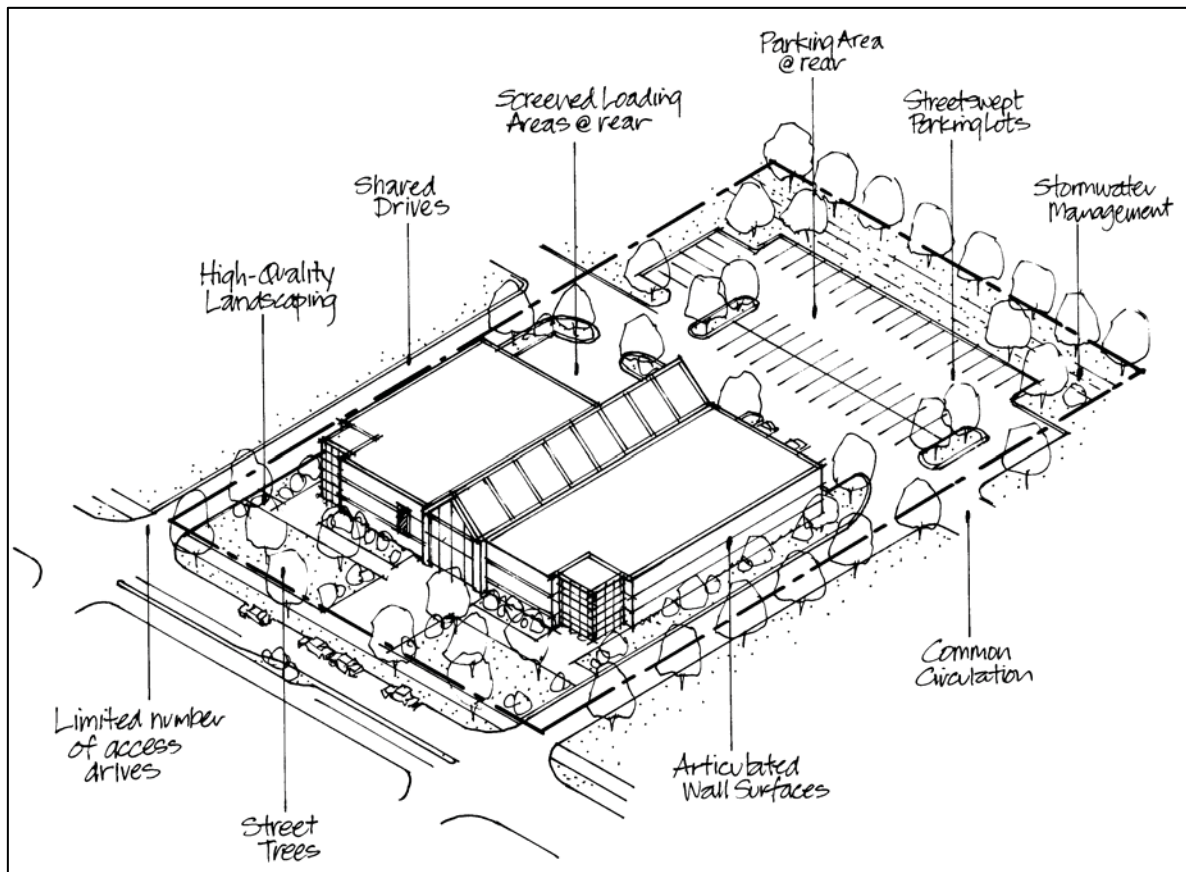
4. In multi-building commercial developments and adjacent commercial developments, link all buildings with safe pedestrian walkways that are separated from vehicular traffic areas.
5. Adopt by ordinance high quality signage regulations that base the area of signs on building frontage, street frontage, and facade area.
6. Strongly encourage shared driveway access, service drives, shared parking spaces, and coordinated site plan designs in order to avoid the creation of new commercial strips.
7. Allow outdoor storage of materials or products only as a special use.
8. Orient intensive activity areas such as building entrances, service and loading areas, parking lots, and trash receptacle storage areas away from less intensive land uses.
9. Use the zoning process as conditions warrant to limit hours of operation for certain types of land use (e.g. night clubs) that have the potential to have significant negative impact on less intensive neighboring land uses.
10. Carefully consider the impact of proposed commercial rezonings on the economic viability of existing commercial areas in the community before making a decision on the request.
11. Preserve and enhance the historic business districts within the County's cities and villages by:
 - ♦ Promoting the expansion, retention, and upgrading of specialty retail, restaurants, financial services and offices, neighborhood retail and services, and community uses.
 - ♦ Encouraging strong public-private investment and incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing, to enhance the viability of these districts.
 - ♦ Supporting new residential development and redevelopment nearby to provide "built-in" markets for goods and services and to increase foot traffic.
 - ♦ Adopting a central business zoning district that includes a unique set of mixed permitted uses, customized building setbacks, sign requirements, and architectural standards.
 - ♦ Continuing to provide adequate and safe public parking within the business districts.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

1. Continue to require that all new or expanded industrial uses adhere to the following design standards through the County's zoning ordinance and site plan review process:
 - ♦ New driveways with adequate throat depths to allow for proper vehicle stacking.
 - ♦ Limited number of access drives along arterial and collector streets.
 - ♦ High quality landscaping treatment of bufferyards, street frontages, paved areas, and building foundations.
 - ♦ Screening where industrial uses abut non-industrial uses, in the form of hedges, evergreen trees, berms, decorative fences, or a combination.
 - ♦ Screening of parking lots from public rights-of-way and non-industrial uses.
 - ♦ Complete screening of all loading areas, outdoor storage areas, mechanical equipment, and dumpsters using berms, hedges, or decorative walls or fences.
 - ♦ Street trees along all public road frontages.
 - ♦ Location of loading areas at the rear of buildings.
 - ♦ Separation of pedestrian walkways from vehicular traffic and loading areas.
 - ♦ Design of parking and circulation areas so that vehicles servicing the site are able to move from one area of the site to another without re-entering a public street.
 - ♦ Variable building setbacks and vegetation in strategic locations along foundations to break up building facades.

2. Continue to discourage the following design features in new industrial developments through site plan review:
- ♦ Long, monotonous industrial building facades.
 - ♦ Large, blank unarticulated wall surfaces.
 - ♦ Non-architectural facade materials such as untreated exterior cement block walls and metal siding with exposed fasteners.
 - ♦ “Pole barn” type metal or wood buildings.
 - ♦ Large parking lots between the building and the public rights-of-way. Smaller parking lots (i.e. visitor parking lots) may be located in front of the building if well screened.
 - ♦ Use of public streets for truck parking, loading, or staging activities.
 - ♦ Unscreened chain link fences and barbed wire.

FIGURE 2.5-3: DESIRED NEW INDUSTRIAL PROJECT LAYOUT



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

1. Allow institutional uses such as schools, churches, and civic buildings as special uses in all zoning districts.
2. Locate institutional uses in areas that serve as focal points for communities and neighborhoods and, where appropriate, support downtown activity levels and redevelopment.
3. Require site plan review and high-quality site design, building design, landscaping, lighting and signage for all institutional uses.
4. Use the following standards when considering proposed institutional development projects:
 - ♦ The use should not have a negative effect on existing traffic flows and volumes in the surrounding neighborhood.
 - ♦ The existing street system must be adequate to meet increased traffic demands.
 - ♦ Nearby residential uses should be adequately buffered from the institutional use via the use of decorative fencing, vegetative screening, berms or similar features.
 - ♦ Institutional uses should not generate on-street parking in residential neighborhoods. All parking needs for institutional uses should be met on-site.
 - ♦ Institutional uses should be designed to be easily served by transit vehicles.

CHAPTER 2.6: TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Expanding on the planning policies listed previously, this chapter of the *Plan* provides specific recommendations for providing a safe, functional and flexible transportation system for the County.

Highways and County Roads

It is expected that no new roads will be needed in the rural areas of the County within the next 10 to 20 years. As the need arises, many roads will need to be resurfaced and existing dirt or gravel roads may be improved (this should be done based on planning and needs analysis performed by the County Highway Department). Anyone proposing development that does not have access to a paved road should be aware that paving of dirt or gravel roads serving limited development is not a high priority of the County. In addition, the County should consider pursuing traffic calming measures (reduced speed limits, stop signs, etc.) on county roads that experience significant “through-traffic” (for example, Kilgore Road in Palmyra Township) to help address traffic safety concerns on these more heavily traveled roads.

The City of Rochelle’s 2007 Transportation Plan also includes roadway upgrades to the following truck route roads that “ring” the City: Thorpe Road, Elva Road, Paw Paw Road/Mulford Road, Bethel Road, and Center Road.

State and US Highways should have reserved rights-of-way of 120 feet to accommodate future expansion of these roadways. Other “section line” roads exceeding one mile in length should have 80 feet reserved rights-of-way. New development should not be permitted within these reserved rights-of-way. Dedication of these rights-of-way to the public should be required as a condition of approval for new subdivisions along these roadways.

There are two potential future interchanges on Interstate 88: one near the Village of Franklin Grove, which was identified in the previous version of this *Comprehensive Plan*; and one at Thorpe Road, which was included in the City of Rochelle’s 2007 Transportation Plan. While a new interchange at Franklin Grove would be more beneficial to Lee County, the Thorpe Road interchange is more likely to be built given proximity to the Intermodal Terminal. The County will work with Illinois Department of Transportation, Tollway Authority, and local officials on the siting and design of a new interchange. In addition, these areas should be considered for designation as Detailed Planning Areas (see Chapter 2.3).

Railroad ROW Preservation

Map 11 depicts inactive rail lines in Lee County. Unused rail right-of-way should be preserved whenever possible for recreational trail use and future potential rail use. This can be accomplished through “railbanking,” or the preservation of railroad corridors through interim conversion to recreational trail use. Recreational trails created on unused railroad rights-of-way have proven very popular across the country. In addition to providing recreation and transportation opportunities and preserving open space, these recreational trails have been shown to positively impact the local economies of small communities along these corridors. These trails could become an important part of destination tourism activity in Lee County, as they have in other counties in Illinois.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The County should support the implementation of the Lee County Trails and Greenways Plan, as part of the statewide master plan for trails and greenways. This future network will provide access to the Grand Illinois Trail and other existing or planned regional trails and greenways.

In addition to the abandoned rail-based recreational trails mentioned in the previous section, the County should encourage the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian needs into transportation planning in the County. New residential and non-residential development in cities and villages should provide an interconnected network of sidewalks within the community, particularly connecting neighborhoods with schools, parks, and shopping. Safe bike routes should be identified throughout the County, both within the cities and villages and

along County Highways. The addition of bike lanes or paths should be considered along County, State, and Federal Highways, particularly when these highways are due for reconstruction.

Freight Rail

The Rochelle Global III Intermodal Terminal will continue to have an impact on land use and transportation within Lee County. In fact, improved access from the proposed new I-88 interchange on Thorpe Road could result in increased traffic volumes and transshipment-related land uses in Lee County. The County should support the growth of this facility and coordinate with the City of Rochelle and other stakeholders on any initiatives that would affect Lee County.

Future High Speed Rail

A future high speed rail system is planned as part of the Midwest Rail Initiative which will be comprised of a 3,000-mile rail network and will serve nearly 60 million people. The development of this system will have consequences for Lee County, given its location at the western edge of the Chicago metro area commuter shed and a potential future station in Mendota, just minutes from Lee County. The County should support this high speed rail system as a transportation, economic development, and tourism initiative.

Public Transportation

Because people are living longer, the number of elderly people in the County will continue to rise in the future. As the population of the County ages, it will be important to provide alternative means of transportation for those elderly people with physical limitations (disabilities, poor eyesight, etc.) that prevent them from driving. It is also important to provide transportation options for non-elderly people who are not able to drive due to physical disability. Federal transportation funds are available for rural public transit systems and transportation alternatives for the elderly. The County should consider new programs, or expand existing programs, to help serve these transportation needs.

New Streets within Cities and Villages

Recommendations for new collector and arterial streets within the planning areas of each city or village are included on each city/village Future Land Use Map located in Appendix A. Future development in and around each city or village should be laid out in a way that will preserve these identified arterial and collector street corridors. Exact street location should be determined by detailed engineering performed in advance of development in the area of these proposed roadways, generally through the planning and land division processes.

Official Mapping

An Official Map is a plan implementation tool authorized under Illinois Statutes (Ch. 24, Sec. 11-12-6) for adoption by a corporate authority. An Official Map is not the same as a chamber of commerce-type road map. It is an ordinance that may be used to show alignments of future roads, expanded rights-of-way for existing roads, and other planned public facilities like trails and parks. When land development is proposed in an area within which a public facility is shown on the Official Map, the corporate authority may obtain or reserve land for that future facility through public dedication, public purchase, or reservation for future purchase.

The County should consider preparing an official map which could identify many of the facilities on Map 11 including future major collector streets, minimum rights-of-way, and trails.

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

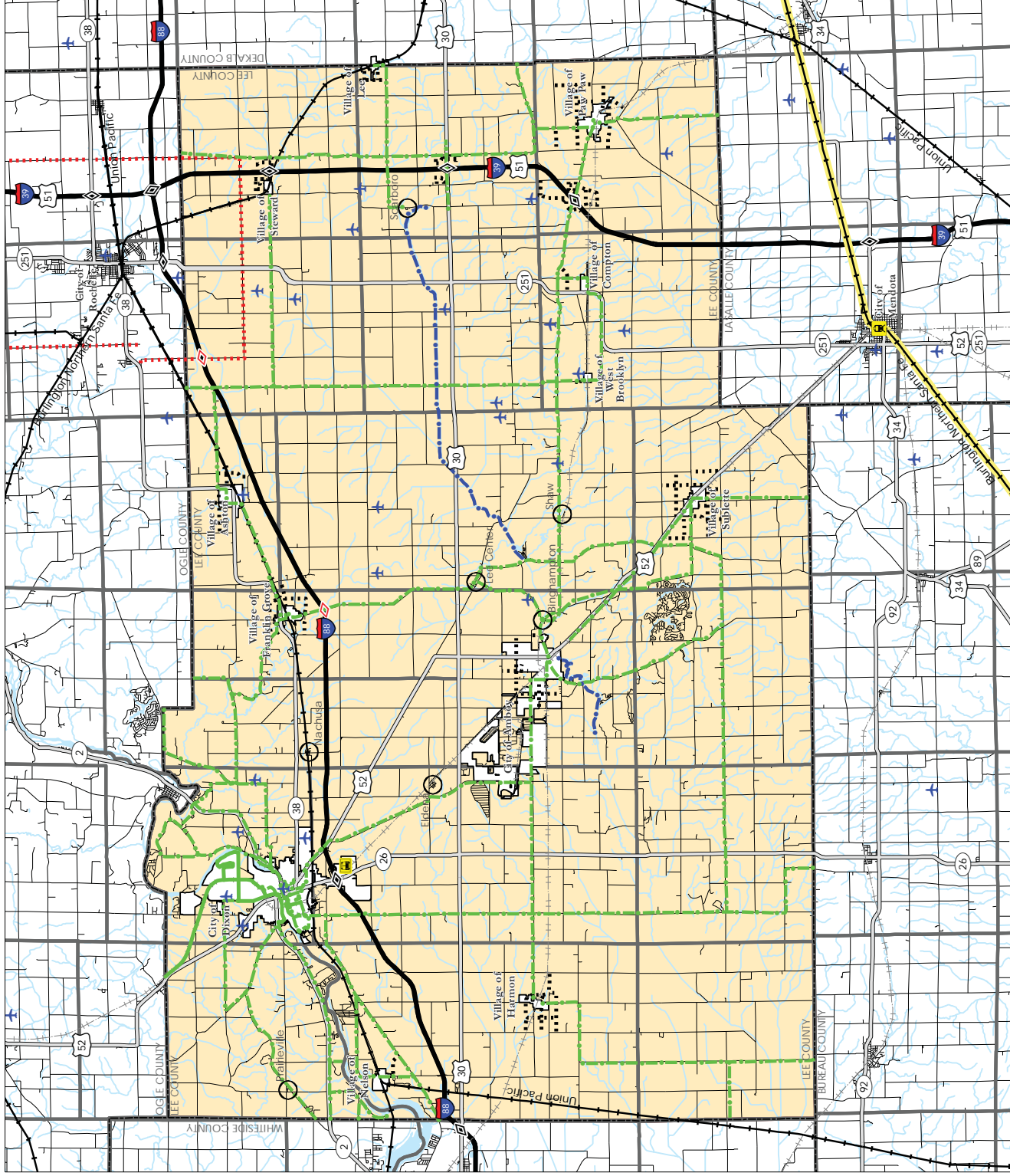
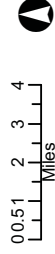
Map
#11

Transportation Facilities

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Area
- Other County Boundary
- Hamlets
- Surface Water
- Planned Right-of-Way Width
- Roads
 - Interstate (120')
 - U.S. or State Highway (120')
 - Other Minor Roads (66'-88')
 - Proposed Roads
 - Proposed Road Upgrade
 - Existing Interchange
 - Potential Future Interchange
- Other Transportation Facilities
 - Existing Railroad
 - Inactive Railroad
 - Potential Future High Speed Rail Line
 - Potential Future High Speed Rail Station
 - Potential Future Transfer Station
 - Airport/Landing Strip
- Bike/Pedestrian Facilities
 - Existing Bike/Pedestrian Route
 - Potential Future Bike/Pedestrian Route
 - Potential Canoe Trail

Palmyra	Dixon	Nelson	South Dixon	Harmon	Hamilton	Nechusa	Franklin Grove	Ashton	Reynolds	Alto
								Bradford	Viola	Willow Creek
								Lee Center		Brooklyn Wyoming
								May		
								Sublette		

May 18, 2010
Source: Lee County LIO, ESRI (2008), USGS
VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.
Shaping places. Shaping change.



CHAPTER 2.7: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Few of the recommendations in this *Plan* will be automatically implemented. Specific follow-up action will be required for the *Plan* to become reality. This final chapter is intended to provide the County with a roadmap for these implementation actions.

PLAN ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

To become effective, this *Plan* must be adopted by Lee County under the process outlined by State Statutes. Each municipality in the County may also adopt this *Plan*. Amendments to the *Plan* are a key part of keeping it vital. Generally, the location of development, and the implementation of both community character and quality of development standards, should be considered as more specific and important than recommendations for a particular land use. However, the avoidance of scattered rural and exurban development, strip commercial or industrial development patterns along arterial routes, and the avoidance of over-concentrations of heavy industrial or multi-family development, are important planning strategies that pertain to land use. In general, all proposed development should be made to conform to the adopted *Plan*. Where logical amendments to the *Plan* are proposed, the *Plan* should be amended prior to development approval. Although more time consuming, this rigorous approach will ensure that the *Plan* remains both vital and coordinated throughout the County.

The County Planning Commission should hold an annual or semi-annual “Planning Forum” to gauge progress on the *Plan* and to review *Plan* recommendations for logical amendments based on changes in conditions within the County. A more detailed review and update of the *Plan* should be performed every five to ten years.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING

By necessity, a *Comprehensive Plan* (particularly one for a County) is a general document. Planning experience over the last 100 years has conclusively demonstrated that the most effective implementation of comprehensive plans occurs where detailed planning efforts are directed at both growth and redevelopment areas. Such Neighborhood Plans or Small Area Plans are substantially more detailed in relation to specific areas, land uses, community character, and specific public facilities and services. A second type of more detailed planning essential to strong comprehensive plan implementation involves system plans for utilities and public facilities, and detailed plans for specific public projects.

Neighborhood and Small Area Plans

Neighborhood Plans and other Small Area Plans provide the key link between the general land use, community character, and facility network recommendations of a comprehensive plan, and the combination of private and public real estate development and/or redevelopment projects. Many more aspects of planning, that directly address the cost of living and quality of life balance that is the general focus of all planning, can be examined at this scale. This is particularly true of the efforts needed to coordinate multiple jurisdictions and agencies at this level. Here, the full implications of land use and community character transitions can be fleshed out, as can opportunities for the sharing and complementing of various public facilities and services. Detailed plans will be critical in the enhancement of the neighborhoods and downtowns of the cities and villages in the County.

An excellent time for more detailed planning is before or in conjunction with the planning of major infrastructure projects and/or facility planning area creation and expansion.

Facility Plans

A wide range of detailed facility plans will be necessary to support the implementation of this *Comprehensive Plan*. These range from school facility plans, to park and open space plans, to utility plans, to public service delivery plans. These also include the very detailed plans for site-specific public facilities and services. As such, this *Comprehensive Plan* should provide an excellent general basis for long-range facility planning of all

sorts. In this light, amendments to the *Comprehensive Plan* – particularly those that involve changes in development areas, land use, and development character or intensity, must be judged in light of their impact on other service providers – particularly roads, schools, and utilities.

REGULATION

Development regulation is the most cost-effective method of implementing a comprehensive or neighborhood plan. It must be remembered that a community generally develops one real estate project at a time – whether it is a subdivision, shopping center, office building, or fast food restaurant. Where development regulations are carefully designed to directly implement the objectives of a comprehensive plan – particularly in relation to land use, community character, site design, and public impact issues – plan implementation is mostly automatic. In a sense, every development project brings the *Plan* closer to full implementation. Where development regulations are generic, and/or poorly enforced, plan implementation is impossible. Every development project can bring the County closer to or further from the desired future.

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA)

The County's LESA system is an advisory tool that helps define appropriate locations for development through a point system based on a variety of natural resource and locational factors. This provides a very effective way to fairly assess land suitability. The LESA system in the County has worked well to accomplish the County's goals and the County intends to continue using the LESA system as the primary method of determining the location of rural development by:

- ◆ Continuing to apply the LESA system to all building permits, subdivisions, and rezonings from the AG-1 Rural/Agriculture zoning district in the unincorporated parts of the County in order to provide consistency for all growth-related decision making.
- ◆ Continuing to carefully regulate properties zoned AG-2 or AG-3 in order to reduce potential conflicts between concentrated livestock facilities and non-farm land uses.
- ◆ Continuing to establish the LESA score only once. For example, if an applicant applied for a rezoning and passed the LESA score, another LESA would not be calculated at the time of building permit or subdivision.

However, a number of minor changes could be made to improve its overall effectiveness, particularly to implement many of the recommendations of this *Plan*. These suggested modifications are listed below:

- ◆ Explicitly define a Special Use process to allow a variance from the LESA (for example, to allow an additional farm-family dwelling on prime farmland).
- ◆ Add a new criterion to address distance from an Interstate interchange in order to allow growth near these interchanges.
- ◆ Change the question regarding availability of water/sewer to discourage rural residential development (in order to preserve these areas for future development of public facilities) within a City or Village Facility Planning Area (FPA) for cities and villages that provide water and sewer.
- ◆ Remove the question regarding distance to city/village/town so as not to favor rural development near cities, villages, and towns.

Zoning

Zoning regulations control the location, type, character, and design of development on individual properties. They are the basic mechanism of cost effective plan implementation. As such, proper Zoning Ordinances use a system of zoning districts that are directly related to community character objectives and development intensity, bulk, and aesthetic regulations that forward such objectives in a detailed manner.

Lee County's existing zoning regulations were updated in 2006 and serves as an excellent tool to forward the objectives of this *Plan*. Where zoning standards are used that are not intentionally designed to forward *Plan* objectives, each new development project will tend to take the County and its communities away from *Comprehensive Plan* recommendations. Particularly in a county like Lee, which currently enjoys an excellent

balance between the quality of life and the cost of living, failure to employ this most cost-effective approach to comprehensive plan implementation will result in missing a golden opportunity, which cannot be overcome or cost-effectively corrected by public expenditure.

It should be noted that not all municipalities in Lee County are served by the new County Zoning Ordinance, or other modern zoning regulations. For these municipalities, the County Zoning Ordinance may serve as a good model for a zoning code update.

Land Division

Land division regulations control the design of public facilities, and the layout of lots, blocks, and local streets and utilities. Although not nearly as important as zoning to ensure the implementation of this *Plan*, they are nevertheless essential for keeping public costs as low as possible. That is because most development exactions and the provisions of Official Mapping are most commonly applied in the land division process, and because most detailed utility planning occurs during the land division process as well. Critical environmental protection objectives are also often addressed in this process – particularly as related to keeping development out of environmental corridors and other sensitive areas, and in terms of detailed planning for grading and erosion control. Lee County’s existing subdivision regulations were updated in 2005 and serve as an excellent tool to implement this *Plan*. The County should consider enhancing requirements for natural resources identification and protection as part of future updates.

Stormwater and Erosion Control

Stormwater management, both in terms of water quantity and quality, helps minimize damage to public and private property, prevents inconvenience to residents caused by flooding, protects water quality of surface and groundwater, maintains and enhances fish and wildlife habitat, protects public open space, and helps maintain the quality of life in the community. The County should continue to implement its stormwater management plan and ordinances designed to manage stormwater quality and quantity.

Official Mapping

Official mapping remains a critical tool for cost effective plan implementation, because of its ability to reserve sites and corridors for essential public facilities. An “Official Map” shows the locations of planned public facilities, including new roads and expanded road rights-of-way, in order to notify the community and to prevent development within these reserved lands. As detailed public facility planning is done in response to this *Comprehensive Plan*, Official Mapping throughout the County should be considered. This may be particularly true to secure appropriate utility corridors, road extension rights-of-way, and community facilities.

Driveway Access Permitting

The County should continue to utilize the driveway access permit system to limit “strip” residential and non-residential development along county roads and to ensure the long-term function of these roads as collectors and arterials rather than as residential streets. Specific standards for driveway spacing and access should be periodically reviewed by the Planning Commission in conjunction with the County Highway Department to ensure that they continue to meet these objectives.

FINANCING

Financial factors continue to increase in their importance to planning. In communities with few planning and regulatory implementation programs, public investment remains the most common method of plan implementation. Unfortunately, such approaches are generally limited to correcting basic planning and regulatory mistakes, and then, often, only to a very limited degree and at a high public expense. These kinds of public investments are often critically needed, but are frequently highly resented, because it is often clear that public expenditures are merely being used to correct a problem that the unit of governments somehow allowed to happen. In contrast, in communities with strong planning and regulatory implementation programs, public investment becomes a strong supplemental plan implementation device – typically limited to enhancing the quality of life with uniquely public facilities and services. For this reason, jurisdictions with the strongest planning and regulatory implementation programs are most frequently involved in public

investment projects that substantively improve the local quality of life, rather than expending similar financial resources on correcting evolving public problems.

Grants

Numerous sources of state and federal grants are available to cover transportation, economic development, and alternative energy projects. Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity administers and connects counties and communities to numerous grant and incentive programs, for example: Community Development Assistance Program (CDA) and the Renewable Energy Business Development Grant Program. In addition, the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the Illinois Department of Transportation provide grant funding and incentives to eligible projects and programs. County officials should continue to be apprised of applicable grant opportunities and pursue them as appropriate.

Exactions/Impact Fees

Development exactions can be imposed during either the land division or zoning process, and can also occur in relation to special assessment approaches. Generally, communities in Lee County are not requiring development exactions or impact fees. To reduce the burden on existing taxpayers and to promote partnerships between the County and developers, the County, and individual municipalities in the County, should consider adopting a system of full or partial impact fees or development exactions for roads, schools, parks, and other public services and facilities.

Development Review Cost Recovery

Development review services are often provided through a combination of County staff and outside consultants (planners, attorneys, engineers, architects, etc.). The County has the ability to adopt regulations to ensure that the costs incurred by the County to hire such experts are reimbursed or pre-paid by the applicant whose project is initiating the cost.

ADMINISTRATION

The digital era is clearly upon us, and the pace of change is accelerating. As such, the County should continually revisit the ways government communicates with itself and with taxpayers and residents. The focus could be on enhancing digital communications and transactions, through consideration of the following strategies:

- ◆ Explore how the County's web site could be enhanced visually, organizationally, and as a two-way communications tool to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ◆ Expand use of the County's web site and digital communications in general to enhance customer service, such as to pay bills, and to reduce costs, such as posting digital meeting packets.
- ◆ Provide or support an Internet-based community bulletin board or calendar, and enable posting of community events.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND PLANNING

Strong intergovernmental coordination is essential to the implementation of this *Plan*. The goals of this *Plan* related to agricultural preservation, community character, and economic development are, in many ways, dependent upon effective intergovernmental coordination.

Strong efforts should be made to ensure that neighboring municipalities with overlapping areas of interest (such as Dixon/Sterling/Palmyra Township, Steward/Rochelle, or Paw Paw/Compton) coordinate with each other and the County regarding future planning. Where appropriate, these jurisdictions should develop intergovernmental agreements establishing long-term boundaries, community separation areas, responsibilities for service provision, minimum standards for quality of development, etc. This will help to avoid future conflict over these areas of mutual interest. Potential intergovernmental agreements include:

- ◆ Dixon, Sterling and Palmyra should consider entering into an intergovernmental agreement about land use, quality of development, transportation, boundaries, and urban services along the Highway 2 corridor. Ideally, this agreement would be completed soon, while development pressures are low. This

corridor can be promoted for high quality residential and commercial development. Without such an agreement intergovernmental conflicts are likely since developers will be able to negotiate for lower development quality and more public subsidies resulting in isolated and poorly designed strip commercial and residential developments. Instead, this area may be the best location in both counties for well-designed mixed use development and high-quality residential projects. The West Hills Neighborhood Plan and the Boone County Highway 173 Corridor Plan are potential models for developing corridor design standards that would be adopted by all communities.

- ◆ Northeastern Lee County villages and towns should seek intergovernmental agreements with Rochelle. Given substantial differences in municipal staffing and experience, these Lee County communities should be represented in these negotiations by an experienced team with municipal law, intergovernmental planning, and civil engineering expertise. By pooling financial resources, these costs could be shared between the involved towns and villages.
- ◆ An intergovernmental agreement should also be considered for each of the I-39 interchanges to help refine and implement the land use and transportation recommendations for these critical economic development areas, and to reduce the potential for intergovernmental conflict over boundaries, and the resulting public subsidies for development.

In addition, the County can work with federal agencies on federally funded projects through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process.

PROCEDURES

The final key to successful plan implementation entails the processes by which development proposals and County actions are evaluated. The most effective results are produced by proposal review systems that integrate plan recommendations, regulatory controls, consultant recommendations, appointed body consideration, elected official actions, and public input.

Role of Plans

Plans should be detailed enough to provide effective guidance on typical development and public investment actions. In instances where the *Plan* is becoming irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policy or common sense, the *Plan* should be carefully re-evaluated and revised if necessary. Any future changes or amendments to the *Plan* should be made through the formal public hearing process. As with the original adoption of the *Plan*, amendments must be approved by the County Board. Relevant portions of this *Plan* may also be adopted by municipalities in the County as their guide for growth and development within their community.

Role of Regulations

Ideally, planning-related regulations should provide a bridge between the recommendations of adopted plans and day-to-day proposed development or public investment actions. Good regulations should help staff and officials focus on the critical technical and policy issues.

Role of County Staff

County staff must assist applicants in following procedures and provide officials with all information necessary to make an informed decision. In this light, staff should help applicants refine their proposals to bring them into full consistency with established policies and standards.

Role of the Planning Commission and Other Advisory Boards and Committees

Advisory boards and committees must evaluate proposals from a substantive, rather than a political, point of view. As individuals, and as a group, they are less constrained by political expediency, and therefore should feel comfortable challenging applicants and staff to make the best possible case for their proposal and recommendations.

Role of Elected Officials

Elected officials must make their decisions from the standpoint of overall community impact – tempered by site-specific factors. In this task, they must balance the recommendations made by plans and policies, the

objectives of the applicant, the technical advice of staff, and the politically-neutral recommendations of advisory boards, with their own judgment on the matter at hand.

Citizen Participation

Finally, a critical element in the ongoing planning and review process is the active involvement of the public. The effort to involve citizens should be directed at general planning issues to ensure that the *Comprehensive Plan* for the County reflects both short-term and long-term public objectives and at project-specific plans to ensure that the ultimately selected design best meets the public's needs. Effective public participation is an essential method for keeping a project or plan on target, and for building public support for the planning program as a whole.

IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

Figure 2.7-1 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the County will consider to implement this *Plan*, subject to County Board decisions and other priorities that may emerge. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including surrounding local governments and local property owners. Figure 2.7-1 has three different columns of information, described as follows:

- ◆ **Recommendation.** The first column lists the actual steps, strategies, and actions recommended to implement key aspects of the *Plan*. This list does not generally include ongoing activities advised elsewhere in this *Plan*, but rather focuses on specific major actions that may need to be separately budgeted or placed in a work program. The recommendations are for County actions, recognizing that many of these actions may not occur without cooperation from others.
- ◆ **Implementation Team.** The fourth column lists the parties or groups that may be primarily responsible for leading or carrying out the particular action, and other groups that may be partners in implementation, based on invitations from the County.
- ◆ **Prioritization Level.** The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Suggested implementation timeframes span the next ten years. “High Priority” projects should ideally be initiated within two years of *Plan* adoption; “Medium Priority” within five years or so; and “Long-Term Priority” within ten years or so.

FIGURE 2.7-1: IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Recommendation	Implementation Team	Prioritization Level
Land Use, Agricultural Preservation, Natural Resource Protection		
Adopt uniform setbacks to protect waterways.	County, Cities, Villages, Townships	Long-Term Priority
Adopt countywide construction site erosion control standards and a stormwater management program.	County	Long-Term Priority
Community Character		
Adopt a County Park and Open Space Plan.	County	Medium Priority
Adopt more detailed regulations regarding site design, landscaping, and signage.	County	Long-Term Priority

Recommendation	Implementation Team	Prioritization Level
Economic Development		
Work to attract and retain industrial users to the County, considering incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts.	County, Cities, Villages, Lee County Industrial Development Association	High Priority
Tourism		
Promote the Lee County Tourism Council.	County, Cities, Villages, Lee County Tourism Council	Medium Priority
Transportation		
Adopt and enforce an “Official Map.”	County, Cities, Villages, Townships, IL DOT	High Priority
Implement the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan.	County, IL DNR IL DOT,	Medium Priority
Establish a countywide system of wayfinding signage.	County, Cities, Villages, Townships	Long-Term Priority
Fiscal Performance		
Apply for state, federal, and/or private grants to implement recommendations of this <i>Plan</i> .	County, Cities, Villages, Townships	Medium Priority
Intergovernmental Cooperation		
Hold annual meetings to discuss planning issues of countywide importance.	County, Cities, Villages, and Townships	High Priority
Actively participate in cooperative planning efforts with communities along the I-39 corridor, including the City of Rochelle.	County, Cities, Villages, Townships	High Priority
Establish consistent development standards among zoning jurisdictions including the cities of Dixon, Amboy, Rock Falls, Rochelle, and Sterling.	County and Cities	Medium Priority
Administrative		
Adopt policies and regulations that are clear and readily understood by the general public.	County, Cities, Villages, Townships	High Priority
Hold periodic Planning Commission meetings for the specific purpose of reviewing the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> and assessing implementation progress.	County	Medium Priority
Explore ways to modernize and enhance digital communications internally and with residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors.	County	Medium Priority
Update this <i>Plan</i> at least once every five to ten years or as changing conditions warrant.	County	Long-Term Priority

APPENDIX A: CITY/VILLAGE FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

Map A-1: City of Amboy

Map A-2: Village of Ashton

Map A-3: Village of Compton

Map A-4: Village of Franklin Grove

Map A-5: Village of Harmon

Map A-6: Village of Lee

Map A-7: Village of Nelson

Map A-8: Village of Paw Paw

Map A-9: Village of Sublette

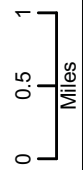
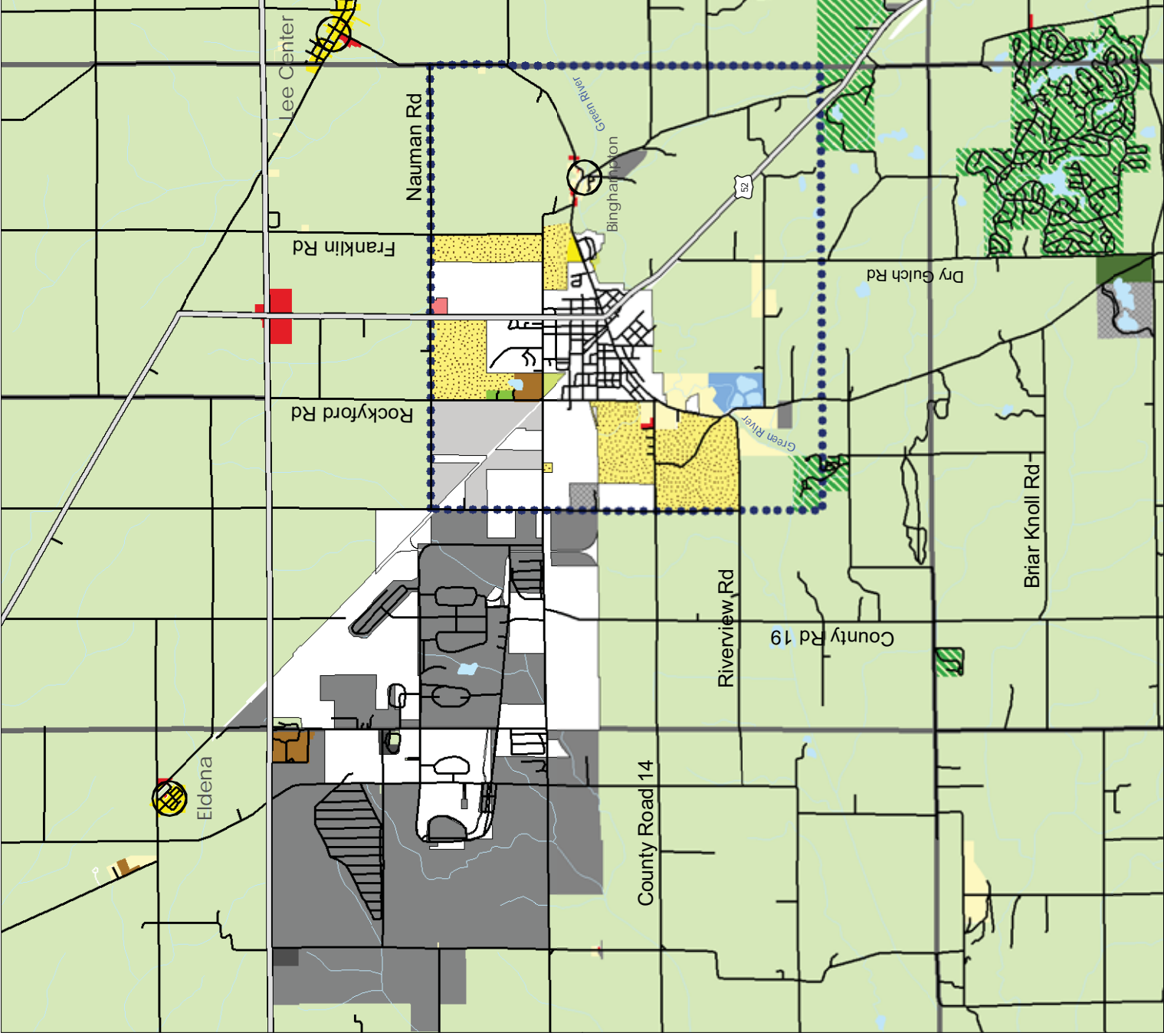
Map A-10: Village of West Brooklyn

Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - City of Amboy

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Hamlets
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- ### Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
 - Central Business
 - Planned Mixed Use
 - Rural Industrial
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
 - Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor

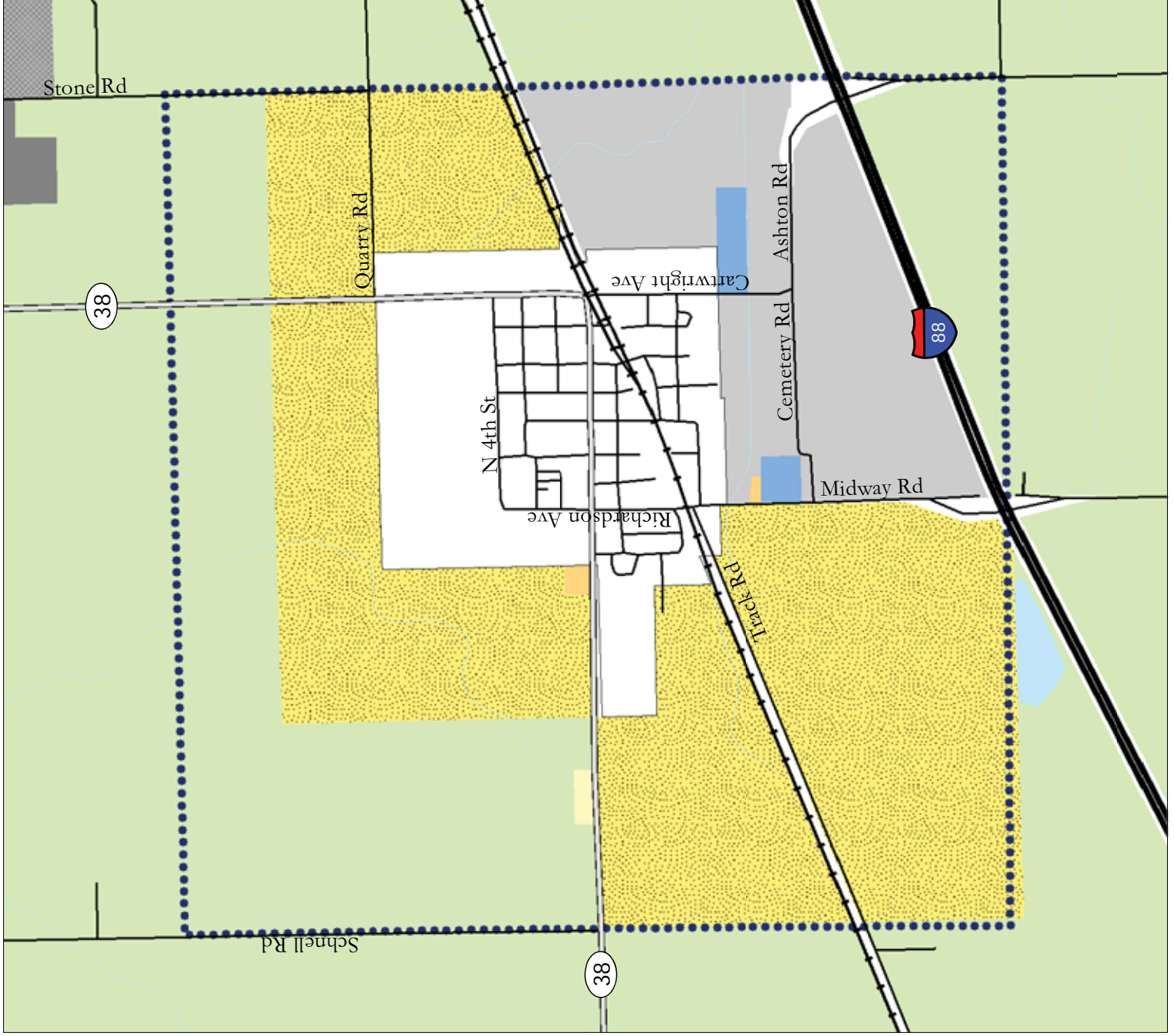


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Ashton

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Single-Family Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Planned Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Office/Business
- Planned Office
- Planned Business
- General Business
- Central Business
- Planned Mixed Use
- Rural Industrial
- Planned Industrial
- General Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Extraction
- Community Facilities
- Active Recreation
- Open Space
- Passive Recreation
- Special Recreation
- Environmental Corridor

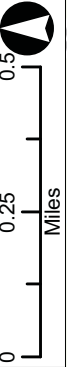
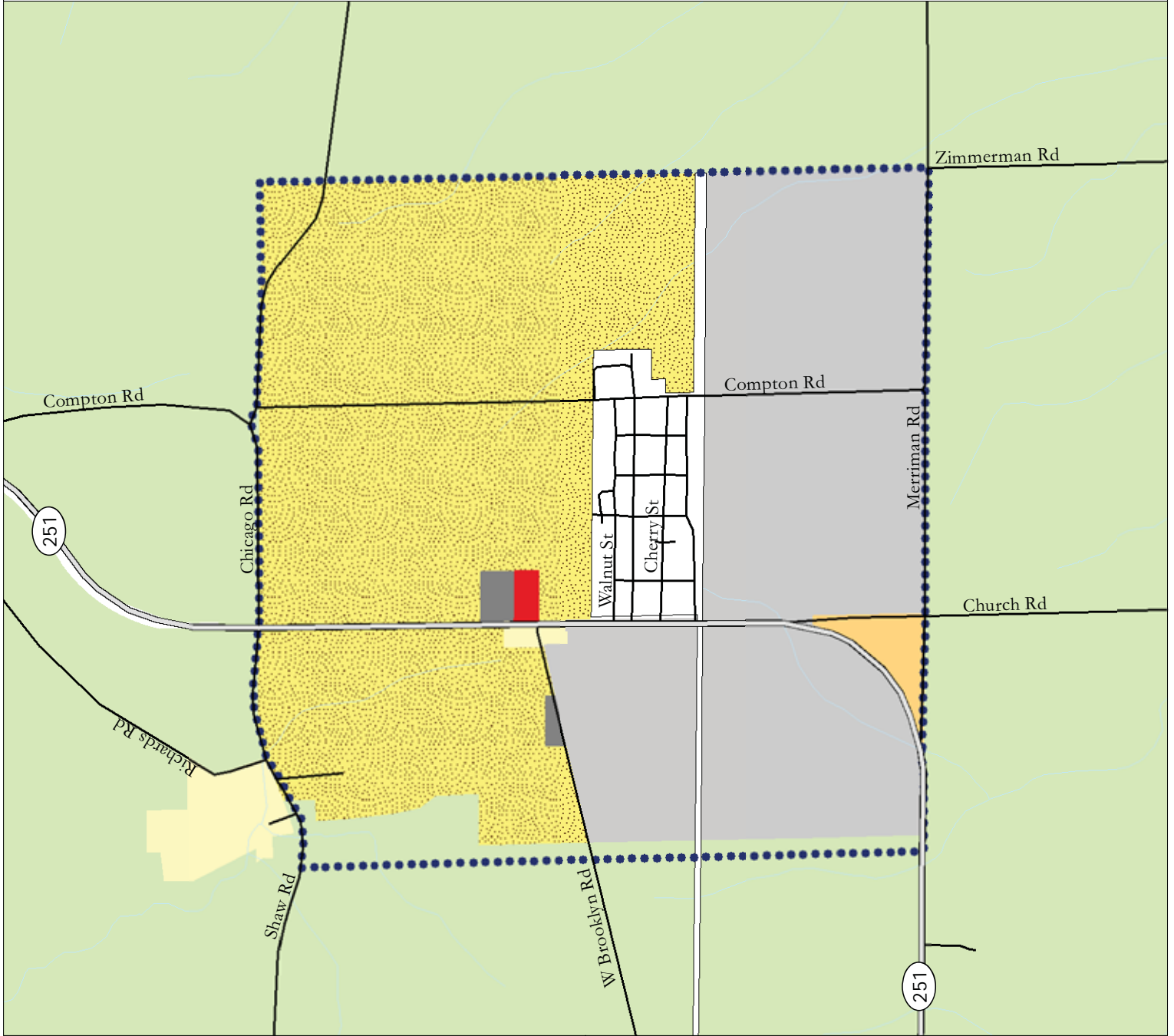


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Compton

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Planned Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
 - Central Business
 - Planned Mixed Use
 - Rural Industrial
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
 - Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor



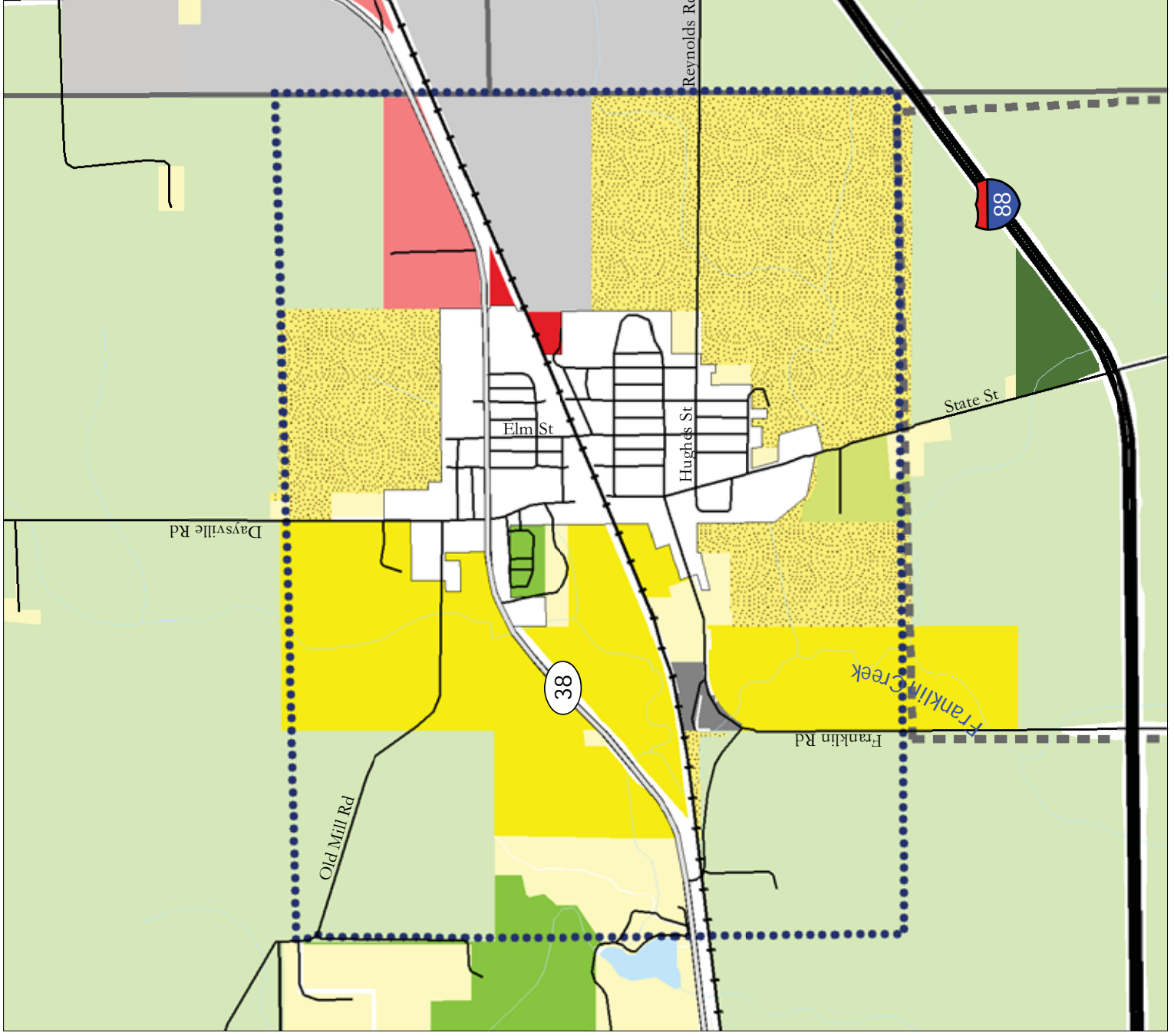
Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Map
A-4

Future Land Use - Village of Franklin Grove

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
 - Central Business
 - Planned Mixed Use
 - Rural Industrial
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
 - Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor

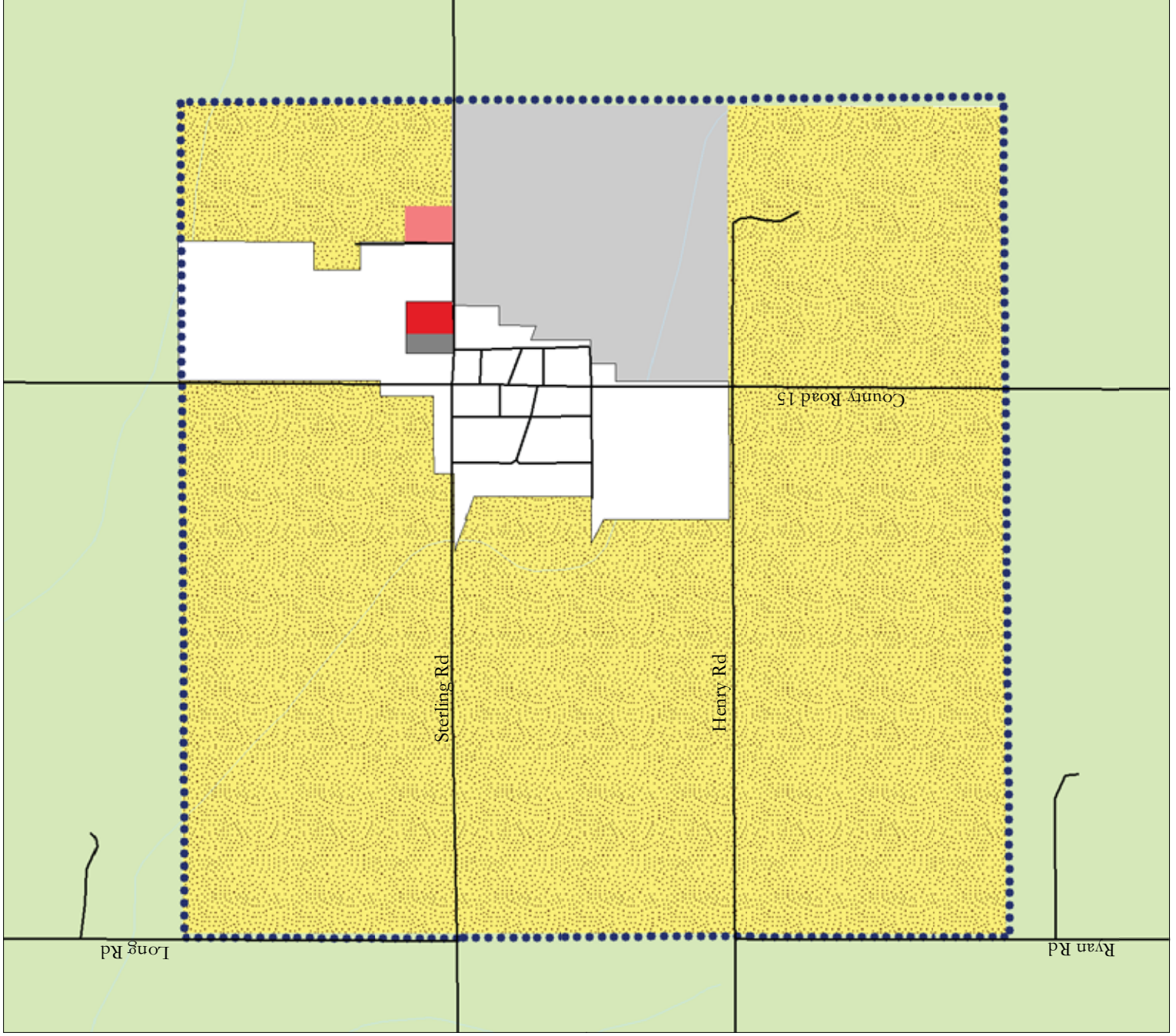


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Harmon

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Single-Family Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Planned Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Office/Business
- Planned Office
- Planned Business
- General Business
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- Planned Mixed Use
- Rural Industrial
- Planned Industrial
- General Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Extraction
- Community Facilities
- Active Recreation
- Open Space
- Passive Recreation
- Special Recreation
- Environmental Corridor

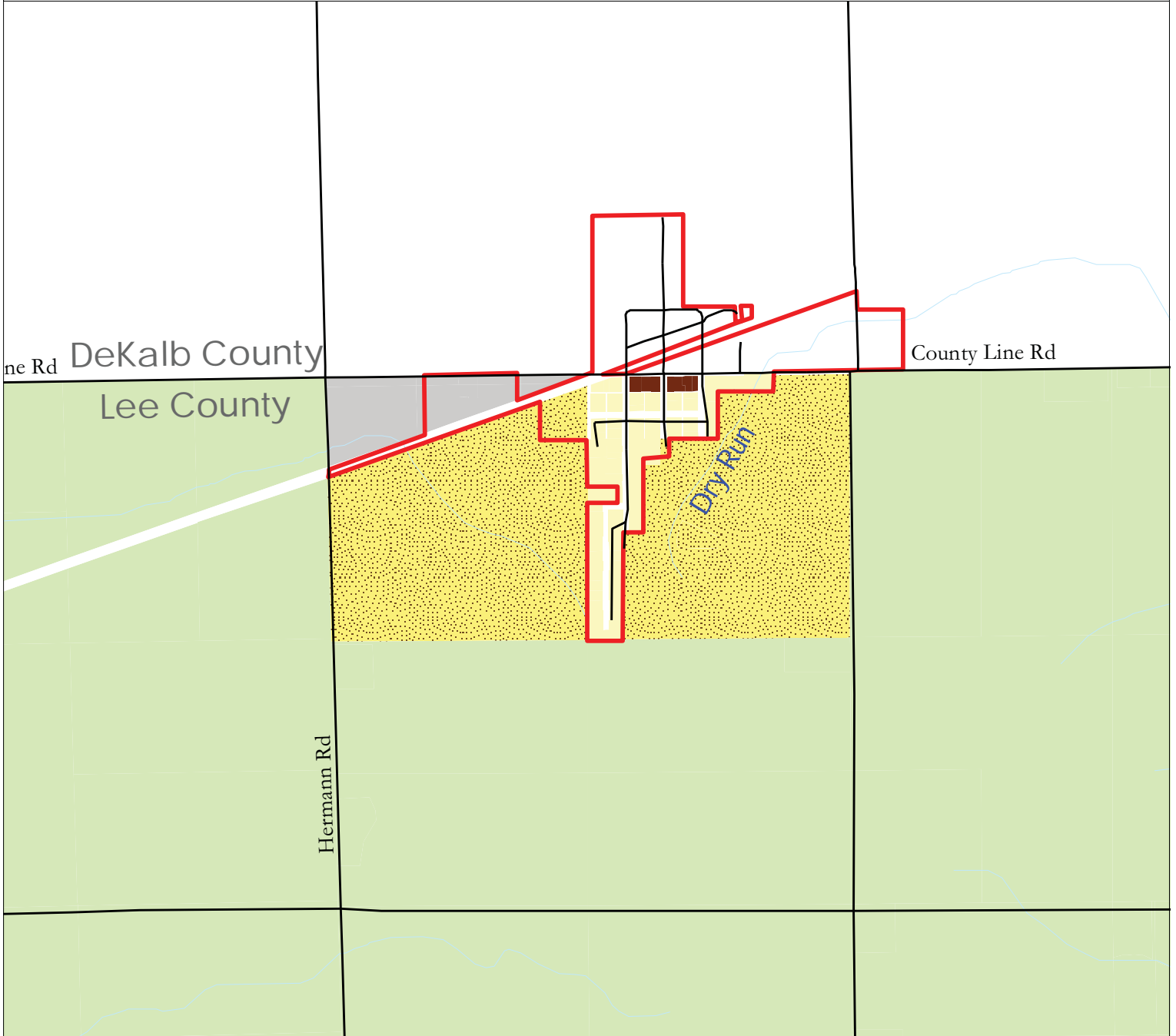


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Lee

- Future Land Use Categories
- Lee County
 - Township Boundary
 - Incorporated Municipal Boundary
 - Facility Planning Area
 - Interstate
 - State/U.S. Highway
 - Local Road
 - Railroad
 - Right of Way
 - Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
 - Central Business
 - Planned Mixed Use
 - Rural Industrial
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
 - Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor

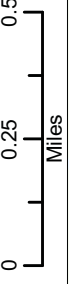
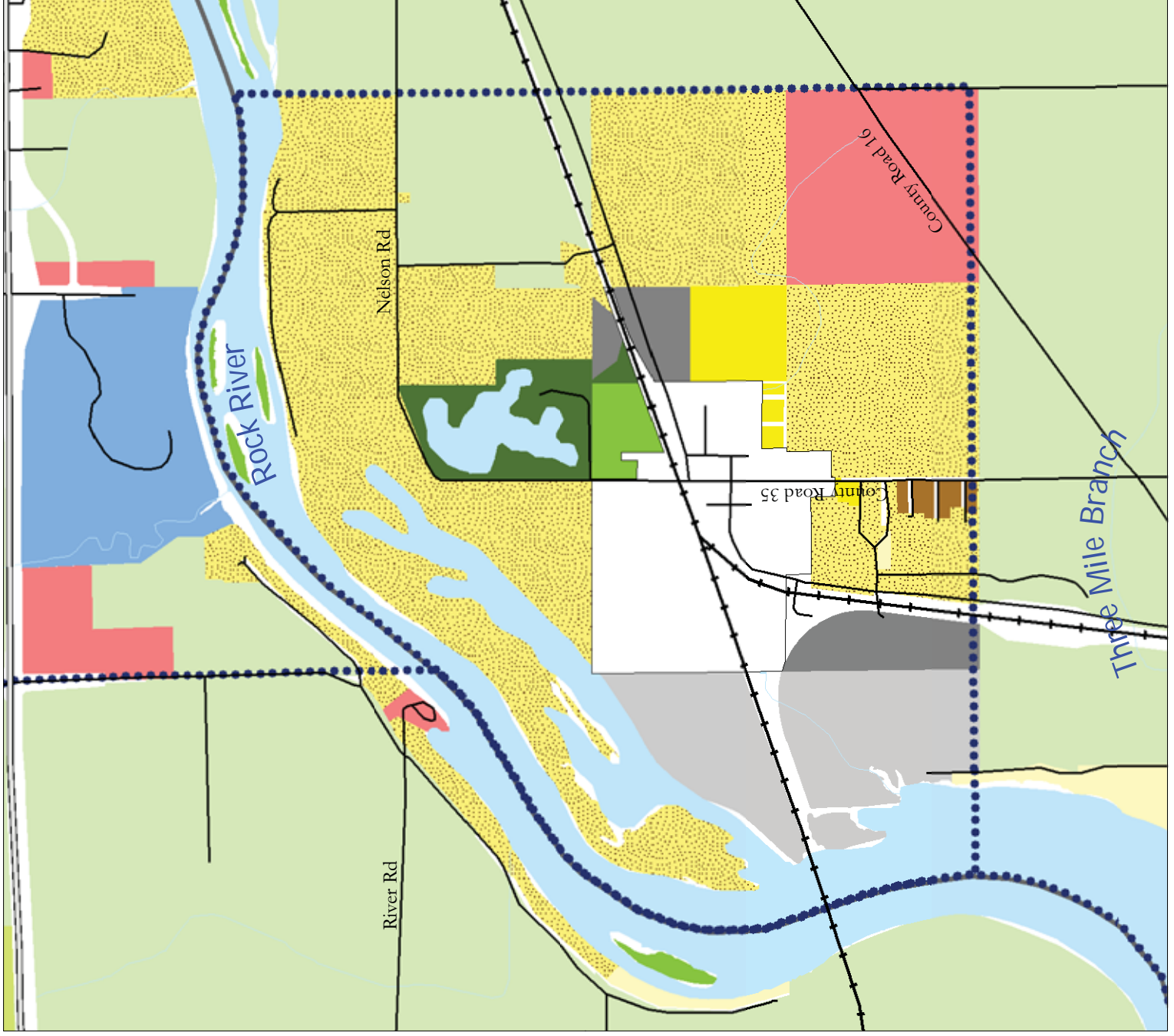


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Nelson

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
 - Central Business
 - Planned Mixed Use
 - Rural Industrial
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
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 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor

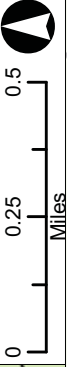
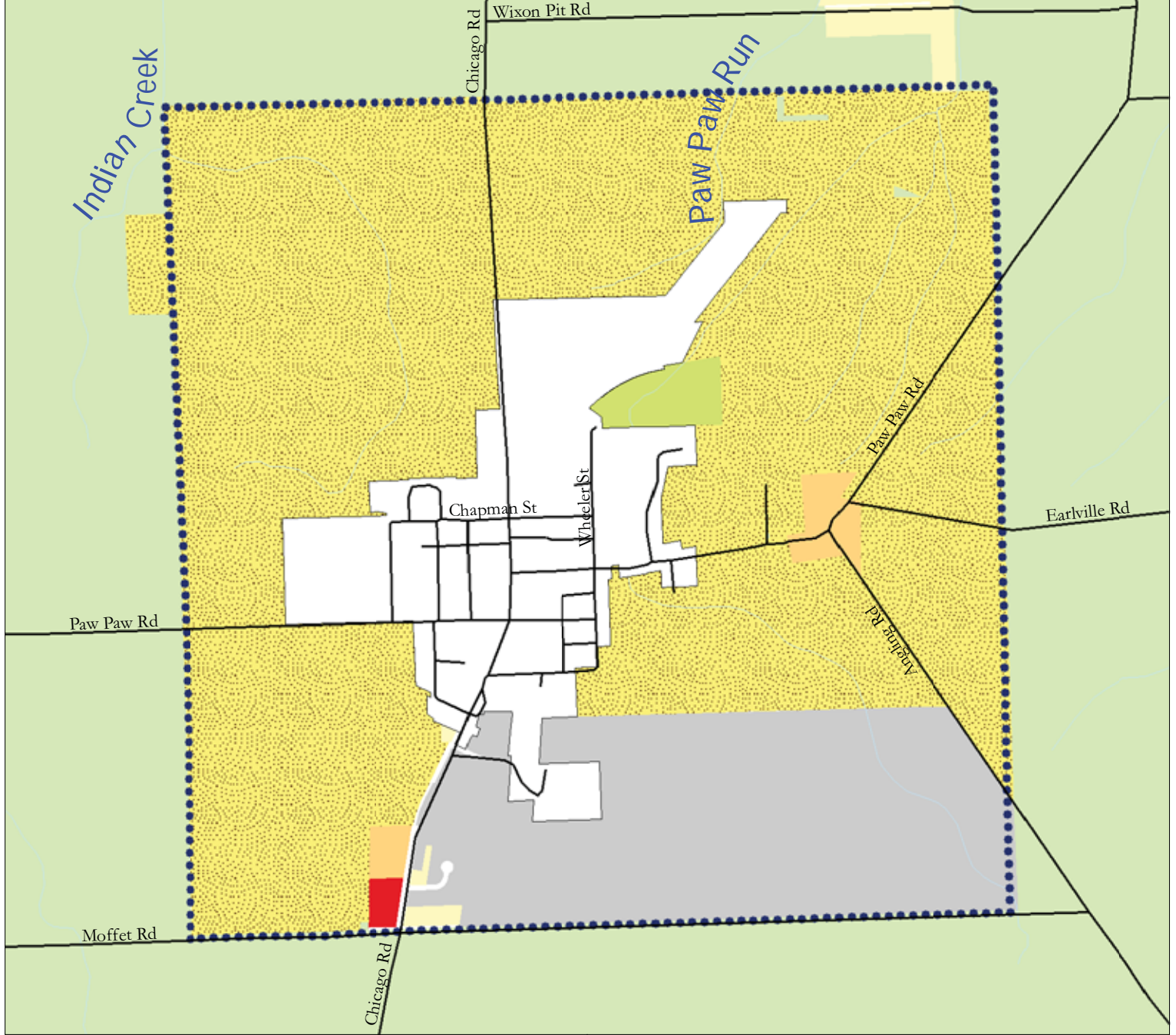


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Paw Paw

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
 - Central Business
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 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
 - Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor

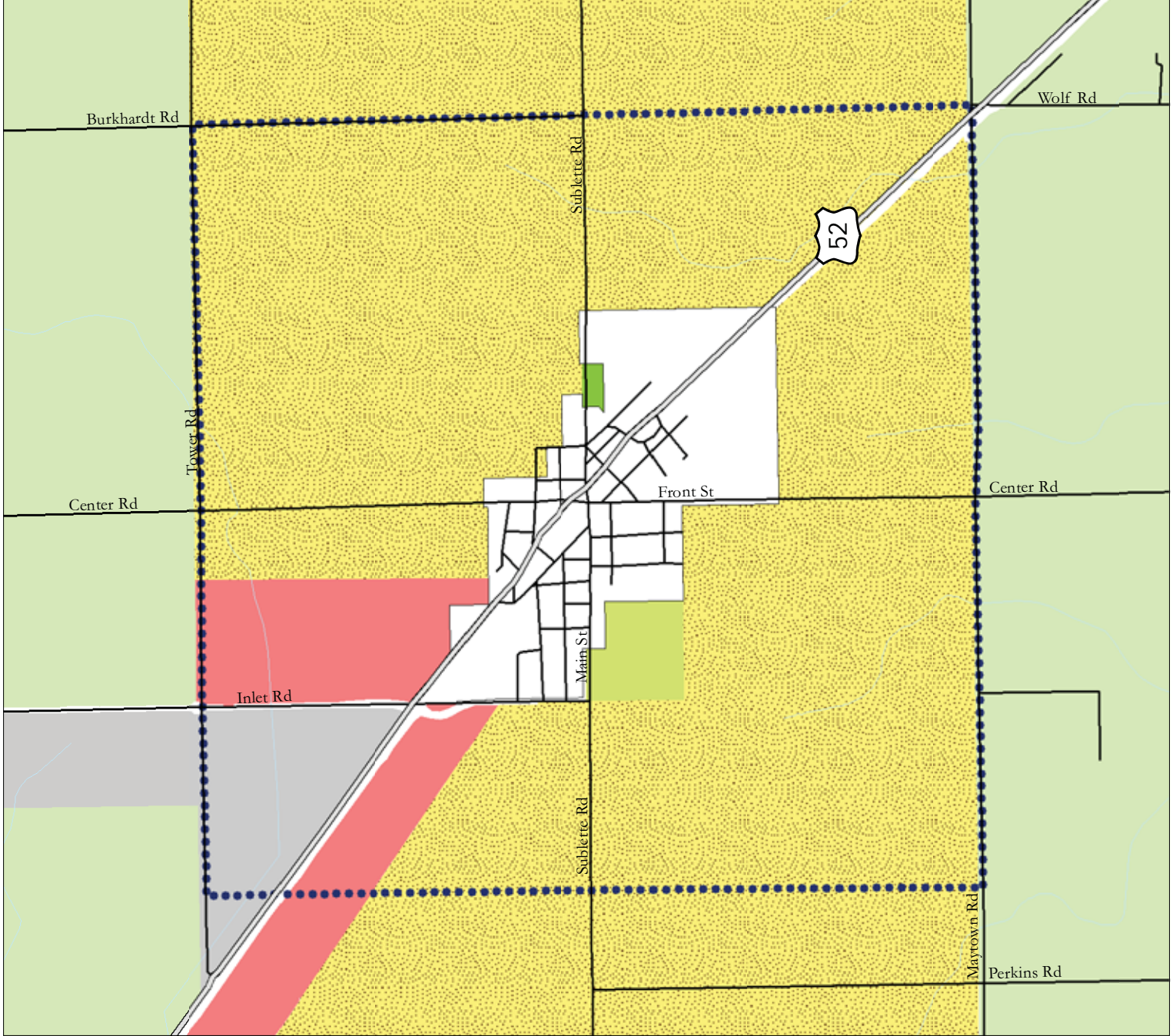


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of Sublette

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- ### Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Single-Family Residential
 - Mixed Residential
 - Planned Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Office/Business
 - Planned Office
 - Planned Business
 - General Business
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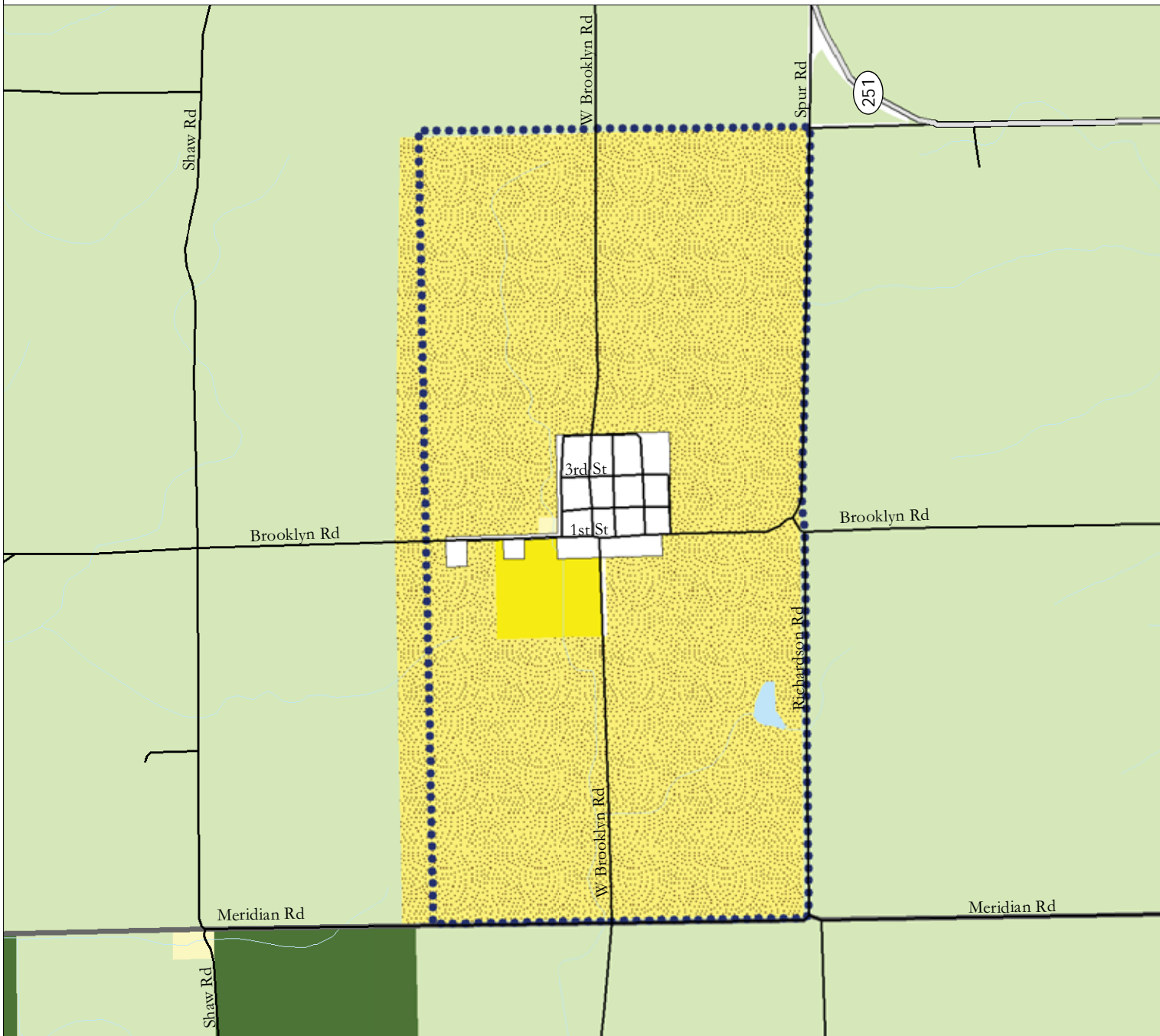


Lee County Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use - Village of West Brooklyn

- Lee County
- Township Boundary
- Incorporated Municipal Boundary
- Facility Planning Area
- Interstate
- State/U.S. Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Right of Way
- Surface Water

- ### Future Land Use Categories
- Rural/Agricultural
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 - Mixed Residential
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 - Planned Business
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 - Rural Industrial
 - Planned Industrial
 - General Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Extraction
 - Community Facilities
 - Active Recreation
 - Open Space
 - Passive Recreation
 - Special Recreation
 - Environmental Corridor



May 18, 2010
Source: Lee County IL
ESRI (2008), USGS



0 0.25 0.5
Miles

VANDERWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.
Shaping places, shaping change

APPENDIX B: LEE COUNTY GREENWAYS & TRAILS PLAN

Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan

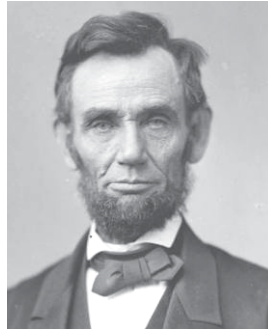


Revised Edition 2010

Lee County, Illinois USA

*If we first know where we are
and wither we are tending,
we could better judge what we do
and how to do it.....*

Abraham Lincoln



Prepared by:

2010 Lee County Greenways and Trails Revision Committee

Keith Aurand, Dixon Park District

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The original 2002 plan was prepared by Sheaffer Landscape Architects
for the Lee County Greenways and Trails Work Group

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Objectives and Uses of the Plan.....	1
The History of Greenways & Trails Planning	2
Dixon's Historic Greenway	2
How the Original 2002 Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan Developed	3
The Need for Action	4
Revision 2010	5
Greenways and Trails.....	6
Types of Greenways	6
Types of Recreational Trails	7
Benefits and Uses.....	7
Other Greenway Plans Reviewed	8
Plan Development	10
Greenways and Trails Resources & Opportunities	10
Lee County's Unique History & Geography	11
The Plan Vision.....	12
Plan Implementation	15
Greenway Priorities	15
Trail Possibilities	15
Action Recommendations	17
Strategies and Funding.....	18
Appendix A: Inventory of Lands and Resources.....	23
Appendix B: Participants in 2002 Lee County Greenways and Trails Planning.....	25
Appendix C: Conservation Easements and Nature Preserves.....	27
Appendix D: Potential Public Funding Sources.....	29
Appendix E: Potential Private Funding Sources	31
Appendix F: Economic Benefits of Greenways	33
Appendix G: Bibliography and Suggested Readings.....	34
Appendix H: Lee County Greenways and Trails Maps	35
Franklin Creek State Natural Area (including Gerald Miller Memorial Trail)	36
Grand Illinois Trail	37
Green Wing Environmental Laboratory	38
Historic Kellogg-Boles (Galena) Trail.....	39
Lowell Park	40
Lowell Parkway City-Wide Trail (City of Dixon).....	41
The Meadows Park	42
Nachusa Grasslands	44
Plum Creek.....	45
Snowmobile Routes	46
Stengel Trail.....	48

Introduction

Objectives and Uses of the Plan

The *Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan* presents a vision of systems of greenspace and of both shared-use on-road and dedicated off-road trails, linking communities and individuals with one another and with natural and cultural resource sites. The plan respects and emphasizes the unique history and geography of the region. This initiative by citizens of Lee County has taken as its premise the concept that development over time of an open space "infrastructure" and improved recreational access will provide lasting and increasingly important benefits to residents and visitors alike.

Specifically, this plan serves to:

- Provide a framework for coordinated greenway and trail conservation and development.
- Assist implementing and funding agencies to allocate resources in support of plan priorities.
- Initiate a forum for discussion and resolution of greenway issues among government jurisdictions and private sector interests.
- Provide a basis for coordinating transportation, recreation, water quality, storm and flood water, wildlife, and related programs to advance conservation or restoration of greenways and reduce conflict with other development activities.
- Increase the understanding and appreciation of Lee County's natural and cultural resources and encourage stewardship.



Portion of historic Galena Trail through Lowell Park, Dixon, Illinois

The History of Greenways & Trails Planning

Although the greenways can trace their roots to the shaded and scenic "pleasure drives" of the late 19th century, and the birth of recreational trails linking natural areas and population centers dates back to the inception of the Appalachian Trail in the 1920s, the present Greenways & Trails movement bears a striking resemblance to "Better Roads." The Better Roads movement swept Illinois with the advent of automobiles in the 1910s and 20s and precipitated the statewide network of improved highways as well as planning and improvement at the county level. It can be said that both movements arose out of the desire by the public for improved routes for the purpose of recreation and transportation. Both were initiated everywhere by local leadership, not by centralized state leadership. Both started with pressure to improve routes of local interest and grew to envision a network linking routes one to another, providing access across county and state lines.

The term "greenway" was first used by planner Benton MacKaye in his 1921 proposal for the Appalachian Trail, probably the longest and best known of its kind. In the same year, The Friends of the Native Landscape published the results of their survey of the unique ecological and geological resources of Illinois, proposing a state park system. Among the recommended sites was an extensive linear park encompassing the Rock River Valley from Dixon to the bluffs north of Oregon. In *Proposed Park Areas in the State of Illinois*, FONL chairman Jens Jensen of Highland Park advocated preserving land from development on several biologically significant Illinois river valleys.

After the state had acquired land for a number of the proposed parks, in 1938 the Illinois State Plan Commission published the *Illinois Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Plan*. The report noted that the intention of the state law in establishing the park system was to connect the state parks with one another by a system of scenic parkways. Such a linkage would be similar to the boulevards linking the great parks of Chicago or the Forest Preserve system of Cook County. Recognizing that such an extensive parkway system throughout the state was not feasible, the report went on to name a limited number that it thought would be highly feasible. Among them were the Illinois & Michigan Canal corridor, including the Hennepin Feeder to Rock Falls, and the Rock River. Parkway was defined as "extended strips of land, developed in a natural manner and devoted principally to recreational use. . . They may lie along a water course or canal, and may feature trails, roadways, and boating."

Dixon's Historic Greenway

The system of continuous parks, pathways, scenic drives, and fishing sites on both sides of the Rock River is one of the oldest and best examples of an urban greenway in Illinois—or anywhere in the entire nation. The farsighted development converted old mill properties, eroded riverbanks, sloughs, and ash dumps to linear parks. The riverfront beautification was conceived by landscape planner O. C. Simonds and the Dixon Park Board in 1915. Improvements were designed and built over the following quarter century and have survived floods, ice, and automobile encroachments. The following historic photograph is from a 1930s picture postcard.



Howell Trail

In 1993, with a growing number of greenways and trails in existence or in the planning stages, citizen representatives attending the first Conservation Congress in Springfield gave broad support to a resolution proposing a greenways and trails planning process to be carried out at each county or metropolitan level. The role of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources would be only to facilitate active, self-sustaining local programs. The intention was that cumulative local planning would result in a grassroots master plan for the entire state. The resolution recognized that it would never be feasible for the state to undertake acquisition and management of such an extensive network, but that local efforts could carry such plans through to fruition by organizing various partnerships between public agencies, private organizations, and landowners. Governor Edgar and IDNR launched the planning process at a Governor's Workshop on Greenways and Trails in 1995. Presently in northwestern Illinois, regional plans have been completed in the Quad Cities area, Lee County, Whiteside County, Freeport/Stephenson County, metro Rockford/Boone-Winnebago counties, Ogle County, Jo Daviess County, and Carroll County.

How the Original 2002 Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan Developed

At an organizational meeting October 29, 1999 in Dixon, hosted by Mayor James Burke, at which a representative of IDNR explained the state support for greenways and trails planning, Blackhawk Hills RC&D offered to provide organizational and administrative services for the proposed Lee County plan. There followed a series of meetings attended by mayors, county, and park district officials, representatives of conservation, recreation and trail user groups, and other

interested residents forming a "work group." This group met on 12/14/99; 1/3/00; 3/2/00; and 4/13/00 at the Amboy Community Building. Dan O'Connell of Amboy was elected chairman. The meetings resulted in general consensus to proceed with developing a greenways and trails plan for Lee County and to apply to IDNR for financial assistance, with additional funds and in-kind services to be provided by 10 local agencies and groups.

On July 7, 2000, Blackhawk Hills filed an application for IDNR program assistance of \$20,000. Following confirmation that IDNR would provide the requested funds, the Greenways and Trails Work Group met again, and in September selected the consultant. The project was launched in May, 2001. The projected budget, including the costs of consultant fees, production and printing of the plan, totaled \$29,170. Throughout the planning process, the consultant met periodically with Dave Dornbusch of Blackhawk Hills and with a steering committee comprised of individuals who had participated in the organizational and public meetings. The process included an inventory of resources, preparation of a base map, establishment of greenways and trails criteria, development of trail alternatives, hosting of public open houses, prioritizing of proposed trail routes, and approval of the final plan. Open house presentations of the preliminary planning were held at public facilities in four locations throughout the county: Amboy on 9/13/01; Paw Paw on 9/19/01; Ashton on 9/27/01; and Dixon on 10/11/01.

The Need for Action

For several decades there has been growing public interest in linear forms of recreation and the desire to protect our natural heritage. At the same time, there are increasing development pressures. Without planning and recognition of the importance of habitat protection, stormwater management, water quality, and recreational opportunities, development may inadvertently lead to further fragmentation and degradation of ecosystems.

The *2000 Lee County Comprehensive Plan* underscored the intention of residents to "preserve the rural character" of the county and provided general objectives to achieve this goal:

- Preserve environmental corridor features including waterways, flood plains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, wildlife habitats, and scenic vistas through the adoption and implementation of environmental protection zoning and subdivision ordinance standards.
- Ensure that all residents of the County, of all ages and abilities, have adequate access to a diverse range of park and recreational facilities.
- Promote recreational and cultural opportunities (for tourists) in the County.
- Provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians, bicyclists and autos between neighborhoods, park and recreational facilities, schools, service centers, and employment centers.
- Encourage the development of multi-use trails within the County and connecting to other trails in the region.

Without a vision of what residents want—and of what might be—and without a concrete plan defining the priorities and possible courses of action, opportunities may be missed to incorporate greenways and trails into future public and private development plans. The Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan is intended to be the critical tool to first define and then preserve the County's natural resources and recreational opportunities and integrate them into future economic development and transportation planning. This plan will be useful to greenspace,

environmental, and recreational agencies and jurisdictions at all levels, from local communities to county, regional, and state. It will assist in linking Lee County to planned greenways and trails in neighboring counties. It is also expected to be used by conservation and recreational groups and by planning officials to promote and secure funding for local plans and projects that provide better environment, ensure access to recreation for residents and visitors, and preserve a high quality of life throughout our region.

Revision 2010

In 2009, Debra Carey, Dixon Park District, requested permisison from the Lee County Board to review and revise the 2002 plan. The Lee County Comprehensive Plan was in the process of revision, and it was discussed that the revised Greenways and Trails Plan could be included in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

Outdoor, family-oriented recreation and exercise create a healthy mind and body but also a healthy economy. Citizens and visitors alike in Lee County are fortunate to be able to enjoy miles of trails for hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, bicycling and wildife watching. The existing public trails in Lee County are free of charge and will introduce you to some of the most scenic, historic, and high quality natural areas in the Midwest.

A Revision Committee was formed; eight meetings were held at the Dixon Park District Administrative Office, 804 Palmyra Street, Dixon, Illinois. The revised version was presented to the Lee County Board in January 2010.



Green River State Wildife Area

Greenways and Trails

Types of Greenways

As defined by Charles Little in the influential work, *Greenways for America*, a greenway is a linear open space established along either a natural corridor such as a stream valley or overland along a man-made corridor such as a converted railroad right-of-way, canal, scenic road, or parkway. Like arteries linking vital organs, greenways connect parks, nature preserves, wetlands, streams, cultural and historic sites with each other and with populated areas. Some—though not all—greenways are trails that allow human passage into and through the natural world. However, any natural or landscaped course for bicycle or pedestrian passage is a greenway.

Greenways may be as wide as a watershed or as narrow as a trail. Some are publicly owned. Some are established on private land by easements or other methods that protect valuable natural areas and cultural/historic sites or allow public access along trails. Some are managed to preserve ecological diversity, while others are purely recreational. Following are the five general types described by Little, with examples from Lee County:

- Urban riverside (or lakeside) greenways, usually created as part of a redevelopment program along neglected and run-down waterfronts.
Examples: Dixon's riverfronts (a series of strip or linear parks)
- Recreational greenways, featuring paths and trails of various kinds, sometimes of long distance.
Examples: Lowell Parkway and Joe Stengel Trails on the former ICRR right-of-way; the Rock River Canoe Trail above Grand Detour
- Ecologically significant natural corridors, usually along rivers and streams and sometimes ridgelines, to provide for wildlife migration and species interchange, nature study, and hiking.
Examples: Franklin Creek State Natural Area; the system of sandy or wet lands lying atop the moraine in the south part of Lee County
- Scenic and historic routes, usually along a road, highway or stream, preferably with some pedestrian access along the route or places to alight from the car.
Examples: Lincoln Highway National Scenic Highway; Blackhawk Trail (IL Scenic Rt#2); Rockyford Road
- Comprehensive greenway systems or networks, usually based on natural land forms such as valleys and ridges but sometimes simply an opportunistic assemblage of greenways and open spaces creating an alternative municipal or regional green infrastructure.
Example: Green River with associated lowlands, moraine and forest lands

Types of Recreational Trails

All the existing and potential trails in the Plan fall into one of the following two broad categories:

Dedicated Trails:

are designed and built off-road for the exclusive use of pedestrians, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, skaters, people in wheelchairs, equestrians, or motorized use such as snowmobilers. Surface treatment and width may vary, depending on the uses allowed on any specific trail or segment. Uses allowed on each dedicated trail are established by the organizations and public agencies involved in the acquisition, development, and maintenance of the trail. Although more than one type of non-motorized use is allowed on most trails, typical uses by motorized recreational vehicles is segregated by location and/or by season.

Shared-Use Trails:

are low-volume streets or rural roads designated to be shared by existing vehicular traffic with proposed pedestrian and bicycle use for recreation or transportation. Generally they require at least some signage and perhaps paint striping to identify the routes and to alert motorists. Where the right-of-way is of sufficient width and suitable configuration, some shared-use roadways may accommodate other uses such as equestrians or snowmobiling within portions of the right-of-way, although not on the pavement. State law and local ordinances govern which uses will be allowed on roads and streets.

Portions of routes that originate as shared-use roadway trails could in the future be replaced by construction of a dedicated off-road trail, either within the public right-of-way or on easements. Conversions from shared-use to dedicated trail routes would be limited by existing development and land uses, by drainage ditches and stream crossings, and by vehicular traffic patterns.

Benefits and Uses

Greenways can provide many opportunities in Lee County. They may:

- Preserve sensitive land resources, with multiple resulting benefits.
- Preserve or restore natural ecosystems, expanding habitat for plants and animals.
- Provide corridors or "bridges" between natural areas for movement of animals and plants.
- Provide buffer zones between incompatible development patterns, reducing noise, visual and environmental impacts.
- Act as filter zones to stop sediments and pollutants that degrade water quality.
- Enable waterways, wetlands, and flood plains to collect excess storm water caused by new development, protecting private property from flooding.
- Allow access to archaeological and historic sites, including land and water routes, abandoned rail lines, Native American and early settlement villages.
- Serve as outdoor classrooms for education in the fields of natural and environmental sciences and management.
- Offer non-discriminatory access to open space—especially for the elderly, the disabled, and the socially disadvantaged.

- Increase nearby property values.
- Enhance quality of life values and community image, and support commercial recreation enterprises and tourist activities.
- Reduce costs of land maintenance by utilizing sustainable natural means.
- Impart an understanding of the regional landscape and respect for the environment; build a sense of place and regional identity by emphasizing the inter-relatedness of all parts of the region and de-emphasizing the importance of man-made boundaries.

In addition, trails and trail systems will:

- Provide low cost and convenient recreation while increasing spending for recreation locally.
- Establish energy-efficient and safe means of connecting people and places— home, school, work, shopping, parks and recreational facilities.

Other Greenway Plans Reviewed

Regional plans have been completed recently in several neighboring counties with funding support from the same IDNR Greenways & Trails program. These plans were reviewed to determine their purpose and for opportunities to align Lee County's proposed trails and greenways across their common borders.

The *Whiteside County Greenway and Trail Plan* (1999) began "the process of looking at areas that should be considered for preservation as the cities and villages continue to grow, as well as laying out a plan for creating trail systems within the communities and attempting to link the towns together via shared use roadway trails." An important connection to Lee County is at 23rd Street east of Sterling, which meets Mound Hill Road. This route is a likely link to the Hennepin Feeder Canal via the Riverfront Trail in Sterling between the upper dam and Oppold Marina. Equally important is the proposed, dedicated trail on IL Rt. 2 east of Sterling, which could also serve as a primary link in the Rock River Trail loop. In southeast Whiteside, a third connection is Hahnman Road, which joins Tampico Road in Lee County. This route is significant for linking Tampico with Dixon—two Ronald Reagan sites—as well as with other communities in Lee County .

The *Greenways and Trails Plan for Stephenson County and City of Freeport* (2000) established "a framework for continued public policy making." The intention was to have the plan adopted as an amendment to the comprehensive plans of both jurisdictions. The plan proposes a regional trail from Freeport to Baileyville, continuing on the old ICRR bed through Ogle County to Dixon. It also features a Kellogg (Galena) Historic Trail Corridor.

The *Boone & Winnebago Regional Greenway Plan* (1997) "serves to . . . create a vision of a regional greenway network and provide a framework for coordinated greenway and trail preservation and development." It delineates proposed recreation paths on two sides of the Rock River, both Kishwaukee Road and IL Rt. 2, from Rockford to the Ogle County line. Either route could serve as the primary connection for the Rock River loop of the Grand Illinois Trail through Ogle to Dixon and the Hennepin Feeder Canal at Rock Falls.

As a result of the preceding planning, Lee County now has three opportunities to connect to the Grand Illinois Trail: 1) west following the Rock River from Dixon to Sterling-Rock Falls, 2) north and east from Dixon along the Rock River corridor through Ogle to Oregon, Byron, and Rockford, and 3) north on the Joe Stengel Trail through Ogle to Polo, Forreston, and Freeport. It will be up to Ogle County to complete the planning for two of these important links.

Plan Development

Greenways and Trails Resources & Opportunities

An inventory of Lee County's natural and cultural resources, including existing and planned trails and recreational sites accessible to the public, identified the places named in *Appendix A* as well as numerous unnamed sites and sensitive areas located on private property, many of which are shown on the plan only.

A large number of sites with significant public value are to be found on the major streams of the county or within their corridors: Rock River, Green River, Franklin Creek, and Bureau Creek. This is a pattern that is characteristic of the prairie states, where diverse habitats for wildlife, natural woodlands, flood plains, recreational opportunities associated with wetlands and streams and with varied topography, and preferred residential and population centers are typically found in stream corridors, while intensive crop farming is located on the deeper soils, flatter and more open lands between stream corridors. The linear nature of stream corridors, the attractive biological diversity, scenic qualities, limits to development imposed by steep slopes and flood plains, and the proximity to many residents combine to make these corridors the obvious locations for greenspace. In some cases they may also be the logical route for trails linking sites and communities.

A second pattern is the result of the development of railroads in the 19th century, which favored some early settlements and created many more towns and villages at regular intervals along their routes. In Lee County, communities that owe their existence largely to railroads include Harmon, Nelson, Amboy, Walton, Nachusa, West Brooklyn, Compton, Steward, and Lee. The rail right-of-ways themselves functioned as conservatories of native prairie vegetation. As a result, railways are natural greenways, and when abandoned with their roadbeds and bridges intact they become logical trail routes continuing to link the historic railroad towns. Although there have been and still are numerous opportunities in Lee County to recycle abandoned railroads as greenways and trails, only the Illinois Central route from Dixon north to Lowell Park and the county line have been preserved as dedicated trails. Elsewhere in the county, several stretches of historic rail corridor are managed as greenway prairie remnants.

A third pattern is the grid of roads and streets that has evolved since settlement. The hard surfacing in the past century, first of state roads and then county roads along the most frequently used travel routes between communities, has created numerous routes favorable to shared use by bicyclists for both recreation and transportation. Many of the roads offer excellent access to the enjoyment of mile after mile of pristine "rural character" with little vehicular traffic. Signing and maintaining selected roads as bicycle routes would be a service to both the cyclists and the drivers sharing the roads. But it is unlikely that any roadways will be marked as bicycle routes by the county highway department until the state alters its stance that liability may be inferred by signing of roads for any use other than motorized transportation.

Lee County's Unique History & Geography

The location of Lee County on the most important transportation routes at the time of settlement in the 1830s and '40s—many were ancient Indian trails—figures prominently in the development of the Greenways and Trails Plan. An analysis of the pattern of rudimentary roads marked on the original federal survey in the early 1840s indicates that many of the old routes are reflected in present roads across the open prairie between towns and river crossings, near and distant. Geography in the form of river fords, extensive impassable swamps, and an intervening glacial moraine dissected by seasonal drainage ways ensured that many of the original roads remained in spite of the efforts to impose the grid of the survey on later development.

Further inspection of the roads that align with the original routes through Lee County indicates that a disproportionate number of historic buildings and cultural sites occur along these roads linking the earliest settlements. As a result, it is recommended that wherever possible the major shared-use trails coincide with historic trails, as being of greater interest for residents and visitors alike. Foremost among these are the Galena Trail between Peoria and Galena, crossing the Rock River at Dixon; the Chicago to Galena route through Paw Paw and Inlet to the ferry at Dixon; the route between the shallows of the Illinois River at Peru across the Rocky Ford on the Green River to Dixon; and the Green Wing route from LaMoille to Inlet crossing, through Lee Center and Franklin Grove north toward Daysville and Rockford.

Analysis of greenway resources likewise indicated, as expected, that most greenspace opportunities lie on the distinct, parallel patterns of the original geography of river corridors, swamp lands, and high, rolling moraine with its glacial features and sand deposits. The unique qualities of the recommended combined Greenways and Trails Plan are that 1) historic patterns are preserved and exploited, and 2) trails do not conform solely to east-west greenspace corridors and abandoned railways but travel primarily across the geographic grain—between communities, public sites, and scenic destinations located in successive natural corridors.



Lahmans Bluff rock outcropping at Franklin Creek State Natural Area

The Plan Vision

In what manner does the plan propose to help prevent fragmentation and degradation of environmental corridors and to enhance trail systems, access to recreation, and tourism opportunities?

Greenway systems:

Natural areas identified in the inventory are for the most part entirely separate areas. At Nachusa Grasslands, which is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, and the adjacent Franklin Creek State Natural Area, preserved by local citizens with the assistance of the Natural Land Institute, and at Green River Greenway, there are ongoing efforts to create continuous and compact greenspace. The proposed county greenway plan seeks to unite most of the natural sites under the umbrellas of several extensive greenspace systems. Each is an area that contains a significant number of environmentally sensitive sites, natural area restorations and conservation areas, degraded remnants of the pre-settlement savanna woodlands that occurred on well-drained uplands adjacent to major streams, and the floodways and 100-year flood plain of the Rock and Green Rivers, Franklin and Bureau Creeks, and several other smaller streams. The majority of this greenway system is now and should remain in private ownership and management.

G.I.T. bike/ped links:

A principal component of the county trail system is the Rock River Loop of the Grand Illinois Trail. This primary route is a segment of the loop trail between the Hennepin Canal State Park terminating at Rock Falls with the Rock River Crossing to the Sterling area trails and the Rockford area trail system on the north leg of the Grand Illinois Trail. Possibilities include: 1) development of an off-road trail along State Rt. 2 from the Whiteside County line to Sauk Valley Community College and the Dixon trail system at Page Drive; 2) linking to the Lowell Parkway Trail and the Joe Stengel Trail north to Polo in Ogle County, continuing from there to Forreston and Baileyville at the Stephenson County Line; 3) development of a trail across the Rock River to the riverfront park, continuing on the bed of an abandoned Union Pacific spur along River Road; and 4) following roads north and east on existing roads to the Ogle County line.

Centers of population:

The other shared-use trails have been chosen with an eye to linking communities in Lee County with one another and with communities in neighboring counties, wherever possible on historic road routes. Along the trail routes are community parks where trail users can find shelter, water, and public toilets. The shared-use routes are classified by level of priority, to be described in the next section of this report. Other important components of the plan are the snowmobile routes, equestrian trails, proposed canoe trails, and an interpretive trail.

Snowmobile routes:

Existing snowmobile routes utilizing private lands and public right-of-way are listed in Appendix H. Snowmobile trails are offered at Franklin Creek State Natural Area. Four of the 6 miles of equestrian trails serve as snowmobile trails after the hunting season closes and a 4-inch snow base exists. Snowmobile trails are available through the Dixon Park District's Meadows Park

system, which links the Lowell Pathway Trail and the Joe Stengel Trail that travels from Dixon to Polo using the IC Railroad corridor.

Equestrian use:

The equestrian area at Franklin Creek State Natural Area contains twelve miles of trails. The Rock River Trail and Horseman's Association have been instrumental in developing and maintaining this area. Equestrian facilities include a picnic shelter, drinking water, restrooms, and an outdoor show area. Equestrian trails, with mounting blocks, water, outhouse and hitching posts are available at Dixon Park District's 400-acre Meadows Park. Meadows Park equestrian trails link with the Joe Stengel Trail. Green River State Wildlife Area offers equestrian trails from April 15 - October 31. This 2400-acre site is the best of the extant portions of the historic Winnebago Swamp in the Green River Lowlands, and hosts a diversity of rare native prairie and wetland vegetation and wildlife.

ATV programs:

The City of Amboy has signaled support for limited access of motorized, recreational vehicles by designating certain streets for ATV (four-wheeler) use. In July 2002 the city council approved an ordinance allowing travel of ATVs under certain restraints on several city streets, the only such ordinance in Lee County. The intent is "to regulate and promote the safety for persons and property in and connected with the use, operation, and equipment of all-terrain vehicles" and to provide one or more ingress and egress points, from the city. The signed ATV routes include perimeter streets as well as Main Street, which links City Park and the central business district. However, ATVs are not permitted to operate in the CBD nor are allowed in public playground or recreation areas without permission. Main Street and Josiah Avenue on the west side of town are also prioritized, shared-use routes for non-motorized use on the Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan map. By state law, motorized recreational vehicles such as ATVs and snowmobiles, which are not equipped for road travel, are not permitted to use public roads beyond city limits. Bicycles are allowed to use roads unless expressly prohibited; however, under current interpretation of state law, public roads are unlikely to be signed or designated as shared-use bike routes due to the possible burden of liability for the local jurisdiction.

Canoe trails:

While the map denotes numerous canoe access points on both the Rock and Green Rivers, some of which offer public parking, the only proposed canoe trails are two stretches of the Green River that provide convenient launch and takeout locations. The total length of canoe trails would be about 17 miles. Low water may limit passage or force portages. It is important to note that nearly the full length of the Green River between access points on county roads and an Amboy park is in private ownership. Navigation of navigable streams allows passage only and does not permit trespassing on the adjacent lands. Use of waterways for canoe, kayak, raft, and inner tube float trips is contingent upon the continuing good will of land owners. Protocol requires that canoeists and kayakers respect property and not litter or degrade the stream corridor. Especially, do not cut any fences, which are meant to keep cattle in, not canoeists out. The canoe trail on the Rock River is generally thought to end at Grand Detour on the Lee County line; however, canoes may put in there or at White Oaks and continue downstream to Lowell Park and to Dixon. On this stretch of the Rock River they are likely to encounter the wakes and chop caused by power boats and jet skis throughout the summer. An information system with signs, route maps, and

hazard warnings, covering all put-in and take-out points on the Rock River, will be needed. U.S. Coast Guard standard sign markings and colors may be adapted for canoe trail signing.

Interpretive trails:

Interpretive trails exist at Franklin Creek State Natural Area in the vicinity of the grist mill and at Nachusa Grasslands. The latter offers interpretation of the restored prairie at that location. The trail at Franklin Creek, on the other hand, provides a more general interpretation of the transition from farm cropland to old field, of natural succession, as well as of wetlands and a typical tallgrass prairie restoration. An interpretive trail guides visitors through Lowell Forest Illinois Nature Preserve and offers an in-depth view of a high quality forested bluff ecosystem.

After first priority greenways and trails have been protected and developed and are accommodating public use, it will be time to develop and implement an interpretive plan. The role of interpretation should be to help explain the significance of the resource to others. An accurate and engaging interpretation of the landscape and history of the county and the contemporary lifestyles and economic activities of Lee County residents will improve public acceptance of conservation and trails strategies. Interpretive tools may include kiosks, self-guided tours, signage, and brochures. Interpretive themes will tie in the Historic Galena Trail Corridor, Lincoln Highway Natural Scenic Byway, Ronald Reagan Trail, and other locally significant trails. Among the potential themes are agriculture, immigration and innovation, early settlement, archaeology, natural sciences (botany, geology, zoology, geography), and energy (water, wind, and other power generation facilities). These give trail and greenway users of all ages a choice of topics from which to choose in a variety of formats.

Plan Implementation

Prioritizing is essential to provide a solid foundation for development of a long-range Greenways and Trails Plan. Time and money are always in limited supply. Decisions must be made in advance as to what the relative importance of projects will be at each stage of development. This helps consolidate regional support for each project in its logical sequence and avoids competition between local projects for the limited resources. Some local projects, while very important in the overall plan, may have less regional significance and little chance of attracting public funding if they are approached piecemeal before the major links have been put in place.

As with any visionary, long-range plan, new components and projects may be added over time; priorities must be reviewed and updated periodically.

Greenway Priorities

- Franklin Creek Greenway - from the village of Franklin Grove using the Gerald Miller Memorial Trail to Franklin Creek State Natural Area through Nachusa Grasslands to Rock River
- Plum Creek Greenway - from Lowell Park through Plum Creek Natural Area to Rock River
- Green River Greenway - from Harmon to Green River State Wildlife Area to Whiteside County
- Palestine Grove Area south of Green River and Amboy

Trail Possibilities

Components of the Rock River Trail Loop of the Grand Illinois Trail:

- Plum Creek - Sauk Valley Trail segment - shared use via Plum Creek Natural Area, Plum Creek bridge, local streets and Reynoldswood Rd. or from Page Park to State Rt. 2; off-road via Rt. 2 corridor to SVCC and Mound Hill Rd.; shared use via Mound Hill Rd to Whiteside County line, there meeting 23rd St. leading to Sterling's Riverfront Trail
- South Riverfront Trail via Union Pacific rail bed from 7th St. in Dixon to White Oak Lane
- Rock River Trail - shared use via Stony Point, Maples, Lost Nation and Flagg Roads from South Riverfront Trail to Ogle County line, leading to Oregon, Byron, Rockford and Grand Illinois Trail
- Lowell Parkway City-wide trail – shared use via city streets from Washington Avenue to the dedicated path along the north bank of Rock River to Ill. Rte. 2; and crossing Rock River on the dedicated bicycle lane on the Peoria Avenue Bridge; and shared use on city streets linking various parks, schools, businesses, and points of interest south of the river

Primary Trail Links Between Communities and Sites:

- Gerald Miller Memorial Trail from the village of Franklin Grove to Franklin Creek State Natural Area's Black Bass Trail
- Floral Trail greenway plantings within the public right-of-way on the county Lowell Park Road north of Dixon and on Ill. Rt. 2 Black Hawk Trail east of Dixon, as well as similar beautification initiatives along township, county, or state roads that may exist or be implemented in the future.
- Old Mill Trail—shared use via Naylor, Twist, and Old Mill Roads from Rock River Trail to Franklin Creek State Natural Area and Franklin Grove on Lincoln Highway N.S.B.
- Whitney Trail—shared use via Whitney and Inlet Roads to Lee Center
- Lee Center Trail—shared use via Lee Center Road and city streets from Lee Center to Binghampton and Amboy (bicycles only)
- Pump Factory Trail—shared use via Dixon streets, Pump Factory and Sterling Roads from Dixon to Amboy and Harmon to Green River State Wildlife Area and to the Whiteside County line
- Chicago Trail—shared use via Shaw and Chicago Roads from Binghampton to Paw Paw
- Brooklyn Leg—shared-use via Brooklyn Rd. from West Brooklyn to Shaw Rd.
- Compton Leg—shared-use via Compton Rd. from Compton to Shaw Rd.
- Sublette Trail—shared use via Searls, LaMoille, and Sublette Roads from Shaw Rd. to Woodhaven Lakes and Sublette

Secondary Trail Links Between Communities and Sites:

- Lincoln Highway National Scenic Byway—shared use via Palmyra Rd. from Sauk Valley Trail at Dixon to Prairieville and Emerald Hill Golf Center at Whiteside County line, leading to Sterling
- Rock Island Trail—shared use via Bloody Gulch and Rock Island Roads from Chicago Ave./Rt. 52 to Whiteside County line, and via Nelson Rd. to Woodland Shores and Nelson
- Grand Detour Trail—shared use via White Oak Lane, Mile and Grand Detour Roads from the north end of South Riverfront Trail to the Rock River Bridge at Grand Detour and to Lost Nation Rd. (The smaller loop on Bend Rd to White Oaks may be added at the same time or later.)
- Pump Factory Trail extension—shared use via Pump Factory, Easy and Peoria Roads, along the Galena Trail Corridor to Bureau County Line and Ohio
- Rocky Ford Trail—shared use via Rocky Ford Rd. from Amboy to Maytown Rd.
- Maytown Trail—shared use via Maytown and Green Wing Roads from Sublette Rd. to Pump Factory Rd. at Green River Wildlife Area
- Ashton Trail—shared use via Track Road from Ashton to Franklin Grove
- Ashton-Steward Trail—shared use via Quarry, Brooklyn, and Perry Roads from Ashton to Steward
- Lee Trail—shared use via Lee and Steward Roads from Lee to Steward
- Paw Paw Trail—shared use via Paw Paw and Perry Roads from Paw Paw to Steward

Spurs & Links to Sites / Proposed Links to Outside Communities

- Sugar Grove Trail—shared use via Sugar Grove and Timber Creek Roads from Lincoln Highway N.S.B. to Sugar Grove site returning to N. Brinton St.
- Indian Head Trail—shared use via Harmon, Van Petten and Indian Head Roads from Harmon to the Bureau County line, leading to Walnut
- Tampico Trail—shared use via Tampico Rd. from Indian Head Rd. to the Whiteside Co. line, joining the shared use route to Tampico
- Eldena Trail—shared use via Rt. 52, Eldena, Brick, and Peru Roads from Dixon to Sterling Road, passing through Green River Industrial Park.
- Green Wing Trail—shared use on Green Wing Rd. from Inlet Rd. to Sublette Rd.
- Lowden Trail—shared use via Naylor and Lowden Roads from Old Mill Trail to Nachusa Grasslands and Ogle County line, leading to Rock River Trail
- Paw Paw Trail—shared use via Paw Paw Rd. from Perry Rd. to Gurler Rd. at the Ogle County line, leading to Rochelle-Creston
- Brooklyn Trail—shared use via Brooklyn Rd. from Shaw Rd. to Ogle County line, leading to Flagg
- Earlville Trail—shared use on Earlville Rd. from Paw Paw to LaSalle County line, leading to Earlville and Ottawa
- Chana Trail—shared use via Lincoln Highway N.S.B. from Ashton to Ogle County Line, leading to Chana
- Center Trail—shared use via Center Rd. from Sublette to Bureau County Line, leading to LaMoille
- Shabbona Grove Trail—shared use via Howlett Rd. from Paw Paw Rd. east to County Line Rd., leading to Shabbona Lakes State Recreation Area in DeKalb County

Action Recommendations

Implementation of a visionary plan requires the development of strategies that will continue to involve agencies, private and non-profit organizations, and trail user groups. A summary of preliminary steps includes the following actions:

- Inclusion of the principles of greenway and trail planning and of specific priorities into local comprehensive and land use plans by communities, park districts, and townships.
 - Review zoning to ensure that ordinances support local and county-wide efforts to prepare and implement greenway conservation plans.
 - Review subdivision ordinances to ensure that they:
 - allow and encourage "Conservation" or "Open Space" design, employment of conservation easements, filtration and infiltration of storm water by use of shallow stormwater wetlands, grassed swales and filter strips, infiltration basins and trenches, rain gardens, reduction of impervious surfaces, and similar Best Management practices;

- promote preservation of natural resources, encourage restoration and appropriate management of native vegetation for rural character, habitat, water quality, and erosion control; and
 - promote development of dedicated trails and trail links within new subdivisions.
- Formation of partnerships between private landowners, public agencies, appointed commissions, volunteer service clubs, and user groups to initiate and execute priority projects.
 - Complete all top priority segments of the Rock River Trail linking Lee County with the Grand Illinois Trail, both up river to Ogle County and down river to Whiteside County.
 - Further development of the Franklin Creek Greenway completing the link between Franklin Creek State Natural Area, Nachusa Grasslands, and the Rock River.
 - Definition and development of the Plum Creek Greenway with connection to the Rock River.
 - Definition and development of a conservation plan for the Palestine Grove area south of the Green River and Amboy.
 - Maintenance of the existing "Floral Trail" greenway plantings within the public right-of-way on the county Lowell Park Road north of Dixon and on IL Rt. 2 Black Hawk Trail east of Dixon, as well as similar beautification initiatives along township, county, or state roads that may exist or be implemented in the future.
- Cooperate with the Lee County engineer and the Road and Bridge Committee to develop the top priority shared-use roadway trails linking communities and prepare a signage plan for eventual implementation on these routes and other shared-use trails that follow.
- Within 3 to 5 years, schedule a review and update of the plan. Bring together all participants in the county to evaluate successes and failures. Modify the plan and develop new strategies as necessary.

Strategies and Funding

Outright acquisition by a public agency or private entity is only one of many options for preservation of greenways—with or without trails. An individual property may be protected by a conservation easement, lease, management agreement, or by dedication as an Illinois Nature Preserve, to name several techniques. Public and private funding approaches for greenways, their advantages and disadvantages, are summarized in the Tables below. More detailed descriptions of Nature Preserves and conservation easements, how they work and how they may benefit the landowner and the environment, appear in *Appendix C*.

In some instances, stewardship by the owner of the property may be the only option for the short run.

Restoration of native vegetation—diverse wetland, prairie, forest and savanna seeding and plantings—on sensitive lands and to create natural areas for conservation, research, USDA programs, buffers, and residential appeal has mushroomed in Lee County in the past decade. As the total remaining natural areas that can be preserved continues to shrink, ecological restoration of open lands by private and non-profit landowners is becoming the major conservation method

for future greenways. One innovative technique known as "conservation development" is resulting in the preservation of additional green space in many parts of the U.S. Northern Illinois has been a leader in adopting conservation development. It requires a modified subdivision ordinance allowing more units on smaller lots; a type of "clustering" that sets aside 50% or more of the subdivision as dedicated conservation space. Allowance of greater density is an incentive and an economic necessity to fund the restoration of native vegetation, as well as trails, on the green space. The greenway is to be permanently maintained under covenant by the residents of the subdivision for their recreational use and for natural on-site stormwater management. A county-wide conservation development ordinance would benefit both economic and greenway development in Lee, as it will in neighboring counties.

Unless property is already owned and managed by a public agency, utility company, or non-profit organization, the funding strategy for an off-road trail involves both the acquisition of the land or an easement on the land *and* the development of the facility. In addition to IDOT and IDNR funding programs, that support acquisition or development of bike paths, boat access, snowmobile and equestrian trails by local agencies, both public agencies and private organizations have various techniques available to them to fund trail development. Public and private funding sources are listed in *Appendices D and E*.

A successful strategy will require both initial preservation and ongoing management or maintenance. Greenway preservation often involves partnerships between government, private owners, and non-profit land trusts organized specifically to assist in acquiring or preserving natural areas for their ecological, educational, recreational, and aesthetic values. Similarly, trail development may involve both public and private initiative, but long-term maintenance of a public trail typically will require the commitment of local public funding.

Acquisition Strategies for Greenways			
	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Management agreements	Agreements between agency and landowner for a specific purpose.	Avoid purchase & other options, gain desired rights w/minimal hassle.	Only applicable with current landowner, and could be revoked at any time.
Land leases	Short- and/or long-term rental of land.	Low cost use of land. Landowner receives income and retains property control	Lease doesn't provide equity and affords limited control. Does not assure protection.
Permits and licenses	For fee agreements that specify specific uses - tied to a time frame.	An equitable arrangement that is specific to uses.	Is time and resource-base limited, not a long term method of protection.
Right of public access easements	Provides the public with the right to access and use a parcel of land for a specified purpose, limited to defined land area.	Can avoid need to purchase land from owner, provides right of public access and use. Excellent for greenways.	Can be time limited, usually restricts other uses, doesn't prevent owner from exercising other property rights.
Conservation easements	A partial interest in property generally for expressed purpose of protecting natural resources. Public access not always a component.	Inexpensive method for protecting natural resources. Landowner retains all other property rights, land remains on tax rolls.	Public access is usually restricted. Easement must be enforced. Easement may lower resale value.
Preservation easements	Same as conservation easement, most useful for historic landscapes.	Defines protection of historic elements of landscape.	Can restrict public access. Must be enforced.
Joint use easements	Accommodates multiple uses within one easement type: for example, sanitary sewer routing and public access. Should be one of the preferred methods for many greenways.	Provides opportunity to combine several public interests within one agreement. Easier for landowner to understand complete request - rather than several different requests.	Can be difficult for all landowners to agree to multiple uses along an entire greenway corridor. If one objects, the entire multiple use potential can be jeopardized.
Fee simple purchase	Outright purchase of full title to land and all rights associated with its use.	New landowner has full control of land. Allows for permanent protection and public access.	Cost of purchase may be outside local ability. Removes land from tax rolls.
Donations and gifts	A donation by landowner of all or partial interest in the property.	Provides permanent protection without public expenditures. Tax benefits to seller - charitable gift.	Receiving agency must be able to accept donation and capable of managing land.
Purchase and lease back	Purchase of full title, then lease back to previous owner. Subject to restrictions.	Essentially land banking. Income derived from lease payments. Owner is not displaced.	Lease may restrict public access. Land must be leased for appropriate uses.

Adapted from *Tools and Strategies: Protecting the Landscape and Shaping Growth*, Regional Plan Association, New York, 1990

Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages	
Part donation/part sale, property is sold at less than fair market value.	Tax benefits to seller, difference in sale price is considered charitable gift.	Seller must be agreeable to terms of sale. Bargain price may be inflated.	Bargain sale
Owner agrees to provide first right of purchase to designated individual/agency.	Secures future right of purchase, provides time frame to negotiate terms with seller.	Does not ensure that owner will sell, or sell for a reasonable price.	Option or first right of refusal
Local or state government purchases the rights of more intensive land use from current landowner.	Landowner derives financial benefit from selling rights. Lower property value reduces taxes.	Can be costly to purchase development rights.	Purchase of development rights
The right of government to take private property for public purpose upon payment of just compensation. Can be exercised for recreational purposes in some states.	Provides tool for acquiring essential or endangered properties, if other techniques not acceptable.	Costly. Also creates a negative attitude about government and potentially the greenway concept. Only recommended as a last resort.	Condemnation/ eminent domain
Allows buyer to pay for property over time.	If seller-financed, can lower taxes for seller. Buyer can negotiate better sale terms.	Long term financial commitment (30 years). Mortgage lien.	Installment sale
Swapping of developable land for property with high conservation value.	Relatively cost-free if trade parcel is donated. Reduces capital gains tax for original owner.	Owners must be willing to swap. Property must be of comparable value. Can be time consuming.	Land exchange
As a condition of obtaining subdivision approval, local government requires developers to pay a fee or dedicate land to a municipal trust for open space.	New construction and development pays for its impact on open space. Good method during high growth periods.	Acquisition funds dependent on specific development. Difficult to calculate fair costs. Not effective during recessionary periods.	Exaction
Under legally established program, owner can transfer development rights from one property to another property designated to support increased density.	Cost of preservation absorbed by property owner who purchases rights. Allows local government to direct density and growth away from sensitive landscapes.	Difficult to implement. Very controversial. Often hard to identify areas where increased density is desirable. Must be established by legislation.	Transfer of development rights
Permits high density development in parts of subdivision to protect sensitive lands.	Flexible and negotiable with landowner/developer. Can reduce construction and infrastructure costs.	Open space may not be linked. Processing time for development may be increased.	Cluster development
A zone defined by permitted impacts as opposed to permitted uses.	Development occurs based on comprehensive, environmentally based strategy.	Criteria are hard to establish. Development plans more expensive to prepare.	Performance zoning

Comparative Ownership Strategies			
	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Individual landowners	Adjacent landowners retain full title to land and provide for greenway through easements.	Property owners retain title to land. Large funds for land purchase not needed. Land remains on the tax rolls.	Easements can restrict certain types of greenway activities, depending on the will of the landowner.
Land trusts and nonprofit organizations	A national or regional nonprofit organization can acquire and hold land until a local land trust has been established or is able to finance acquisition.	A nonprofit organization can finance an immediate acquisition and hold property until a land trust has been established or has acquired funds.	If a land trust does not exist, a community must establish one. A land trust needs solid support, funding, and the ability to manage land.
Corporate landowners	Corporation provides for greenway as part of the development process.	Greenway is provided at no expense to local tax payer. Managed by corporation.	Corporation may restrict use of greenway to the public or may choose to deny access.
Local governments	Acquisition by county or municipality.	Local government can be more flexible about the type of open space it acquires.	Limited local funds and expertise limit the number of acquisitions.
State governments	Acquisition by state agencies such as Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation, Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources.	Statewide bond acts can provide significant funding resources for important open space acquisitions throughout a state. Provides revolving loan funds to leverage nonprofit activity.	Government may miss acquisition opportunities due to long time frame for acquisition approvals.
Federal governments	Acquisition by National Park Service, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or Bureau of Land Management.	Acquisition is at federal level, eliminating financial obligation for locality.	Acquisitions are limited due to agencies' specific criteria for acquisition. Needs congressional authorization.
Public-private ownership	A private nonprofit organization can help to implement government programs by acquiring and holding land until a public agency is able to purchase.	A nonprofit organization can enter the real estate market more easily than government and can often sell to government at less than fair market value if property was acquired through bargain sale.	Must have public agency willing and able to buy within reasonable time frame.
Public-public ownership	Multi-jurisdictional partnership between local, state and federal agencies. Inter-agency projects.	Combining strengths of agencies enables greenway development to occur.	Development and management structure can be cumbersome. Partnership may not be equal.
Private-private ownership	Government works with private sector to implement greenway.	Private sector can realize tax benefits from participation. Cost share good for public.	Cost equity and management could be cumbersome.

Appendix A: Inventory of Lands and Resources

Most of the following sites are indicated on the *Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan* map. Many of them are identified by map Legend only, not by name.

Private Preservation and Educational Areas

Green Wing Environmental Laboratory - Augustana College

Richardson Wildlife Foundation – The Richardson Family

Nachusa Grasslands – The Nature Conservancy

Franklin Creek Headwaters – Franklin Creek Preservation Area Committee

Lee County Natural Area Guardians Natural Areas

Chaplin Creek

Pike Creek

Bartlett Woods

Ryan Wetland and Sand Prairie

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Natural Areas

Franklin Creek State Natural Area

Green River State Wildlife Area

Maytown Pheasant Habitat Area

Sand Prairie Habitat Area

Foley Sand Prairie

Steward Habitat Area

Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites (privately owned unless noted)

Amboy Central Railroad Prairie

Amboy North Railroad Prairie

Amboy South Railroad Prairie

Ashton East Geological Area

Ashton Geological Area

Bartlett Woods – Lee County Natural Area Guardians

Broderick Prairie

Compton Geological Area

Dickenson Site

Dixon Southwest Geological

East Grove

Five-Points Bog

Foley Sand Prairie – Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Franklin Creek – Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Grand Detour Botanical Area

Green River Lowlands

Green River Prairie and Wetlands

L & M Prairie

Longanecker Farm

Lowell Park – Dixon Park District
Nachusa Grasslands – The Nature Conservancy
Rock River Botanical Area
Rockyford Road Site
Ryan Wetland and Sand Prairie – Lee County Natural Area Guardians
Sand Prairie Habitat Area
Sandy Hill Slough
Temperance Hill Cemetery Prairie

Dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves

Franklin Creek – Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Temperance Hill Cemetery Prairie – Lee County School District
Foley Sand Prairie – Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Bartlett Woods – Lee County Natural Area Guardians
Lowell Forest – Dixon Park District
Hazelwood Forest – The Walgreen Family

Community Parks

Dixon:

The Meadows, Lowell Park, Plum Creek Natural Area, Willow and Van Arnam's Islands, Howell Park, Triangle Park, John Dixon Park, John C. Roe Park, Page Park, President's Park, Chula Vista, E.C. Smith Park, Haymarket Square, Vaile Park, Ballou Park, Dement Park, Reynolds Field, Grace Johnston Park, Bluff View, Penrose Prairie, Gee's Grove Prairie, Stengel Trail

Amboy:

City Park, Shapiro Park, Conway Park, and Sports Park

Franklin Grove:

Atlasta Park

Sublette:

Centennial Park

Ashton:

Griffith Park

PawPaw:

Center Park

Appendix B: Participants in 2002 Lee County Greenways and Trails Planning

The Greenways and Trails Committee gratefully acknowledges the interest and direct involvement of many organizations and individuals in the planning process.

Black Hawk Hills RC&D / EDD
Dixon Park District

Robert D. Arne, Mayor of Steward
Ellen Baker, Franklin Grove
Bill Bontz, Amboy
Jim Burke, Mayor of Dixon
Barry and Dixie Doughty, Sublette
B. J. Fenwick, Amboy
Ray J. Forney, Mayor of Ashton
Richard Frye, Dixon
John Gehant, Mayor of West Brooklyn
Hank Gerdes, Amboy
Steve Hefel, Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs
Gregory Hodges, Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs
Jim Jones, Lee County Board Chairman
Ray Jones, Ashton
Sue Kleiman, Nachusa Grasslands
Valery Leffelman, Mayor of Sublette
Jed Lilja, Amboy
Brenda Merriman, Lee County Resource Conservationist
Jeffrey Moorehead, President of Harmon
Jared Nicholson, Mayor of Paw Paw
Diane Nicholson, Lee County Tourism Council
David Nuttall, Mayor of Nelson
Dan O'Connell, Jr., Amboy
Russ Renner, Lee County Highway Engineer
Ambrose Reuter, Green River Coalition
Hazel Reuter, Green River Coalition
Linda Russell, Mills & Petrie Gymnasium, Ashton
Sandy Schlorff, Paw Paw Community Building
Don Snodgrass, U. of I. Extension

The Greenways and Trails Committee gratefully acknowledges the interest and direct involvement of many organizations and individuals in the planning process.

Keith Aurand, Dixon Park District
Ellen Baker, Franklin Creek Preservation Area Committee
Debra Carey, Dixon Park District
Dave Dornbusch, Blackhawk Hills RC&D
B. J. Fenwick
Rich & Dianne Frye
John Keller, Franklin Creek Preservation Area Committee
Peter Oliver, Dixon Park District
Elmer Stauffer, Franklin Creek State Natural Area

Appendix C: Conservation Easements and Nature Preserves

A **conservation easement** is a legal agreement a property owner makes to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on his or her property.

To understand the concept, think of owning land as holding a bundle of rights. A landowner may sell or give away the whole bundle or just one or two of those rights. These may include, for example, the right to construct buildings on the land, to subdivide, to restrict access, or to harvest timber. To give away certain rights while retaining others, a property owner grants an easement to an appropriate third party.

Conservation easements are one of the primary tools in the creation of a greenway because public funding for land acquisition is scarce. Easements work because they provide potential benefits to both the land owner and the public, because they are negotiated with the land owner, because the easement does not entail a management expense to the State, and the easement property remains on the tax rolls. However, the real estate taxes may be reduced if the property is encumbered and provides a public benefit. Public benefit certification is determined by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in accordance with criteria established by law.

Any property with significant conservation or historic preservation values can be protected by an easement. This includes trails, forests, wetlands, farms, endangered species habitat, beaches, scenic areas, historic sites and more.

Landowners who grant conservation easements make their own choice about whether to open their property to the public. Some convey certain public access rights, such as allowing fishing or hiking in specified locations or permitting guided tours. Others do not.

An easement can be written so that it lasts forever (a perpetual easement) or for a specified number of years (a term easement). Only gifts of perpetual easements can qualify a donor for income and estate tax benefits. An easement runs with the land; that is, the original owner and all subsequent owners are bound by the restrictions that the easement spells out. The donation of a perpetual conservation easement is a tax-deductible charitable gift, provided it is donated to a qualified organization or public agency exclusively for conservation purposes and remains undeveloped. The amount of the deduction is based upon the appraised fair market value of the easement.

In recent years there has been a dramatic growth in **land trusts**, not-for-profit organizations set up specifically to acquire and maintain environmentally important lands. Easements are an important method of "acquisition" for land trusts.

Very high-quality natural land in private, corporate, or public ownership may qualify to become a dedicated **Illinois Nature Preserve**. This is a legal process whereby the landowner voluntarily restricts future uses of the land in perpetuity for the purpose of preserving the land in its natural

state and to perpetuate natural conditions. The owner retains custody but gives up the right to develop the land or make changes that negatively affect the natural qualities. It does not require the owner to take any measures to protect the dedicated property against the action of nature or third parties. Dedication is the strongest protection that can be given to land in Illinois. The permanent protection continues through conveyances of the land; the process is administered by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Springfield.

Appendix D: Potential Public Funding Sources

Local Funding

- *Park District or City Parks.* Direct funding; technical support; future maintenance
- *City Council or County Commissioners.* Direct funding; local matching dollars for a state or federal grant; regulatory measures such as greenway setback or requirement to provide open space and trail easements
- *Mayor's Office.* Direct funding; political support
- *Public Works Department or Flood Control Agency.* Direct funding of planning, land acquisition, and built improvements where there is a flood control benefit; technical advice
- *Wastewater Agency.* Trail right-of-way along sewer easement; improvements and acquisition of wetland where water quality benefit is possible; technical advice
- *Economic Development / Tourism Office.* Funding of plans and brochures; technical data on users and economic benefits
- *School District.* Direct funding of land if joint use for schools

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Grant Programs (dnr.state.il.us)

- *Bicycle Path.* Direct funding for bike or multi-use trails and amenities on trails, such as shelters and restrooms
- *Boat Access Area Development.* Direct funding of boat and canoe access facilities
- *Open Space Lands Acquisition & Development (OSLAD).* Federal funds administered by the state for acquisition of public space for parks or natural areas or for development of park amenities in public use areas
- *Snowmobile Trail Establishment (STEP).* Direct funding from registration fees for trail development and corridor acquisition projects.
- *Local Government Snowmobile.* Reimbursement for trail development and linear right-of-way acquisition costs of counties, municipalities, park districts, conservation and forest preserve districts
- *Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Trails.* Direct aid to local agencies, nonprofits or individuals to develop, operate, and acquire land for OHV parks and trails open to the public and to restore areas damaged by unauthorized OHV use
- *Land and Water Conservation Fund.* Matching federal dollars for acquisition, development, or rehabilitation of neighborhood, community, or regional parks and facilities for outdoor recreation

Other State Funding & Cost-Share Programs

- *Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).* 80% federal funding administered by IDOT for a range of transportation-related projects including:
 - provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
 - acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
 - scenic or historic highway programs
 - landscaping and other scenic beautification

- historic preservation
- rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities including historic railroad facilities and canals
- preservation of abandoned railway corridors including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian and bicycle trails
- control and removal of outdoor advertising

Appendix E: Potential Private Funding Sources

Foundation Grant Programs

- An example: *World Wildlife Fund's Innovation Grant Program* provides grants of \$5,000 to \$7,500 to local and regional nonprofit organizations or their public agency partners to help communities solve problems caused by unmanaged growth, including wildlife, wetlands, and habitat protection solutions.

Company Grant Programs

- *American Greenways DuPont Awards Program*, administered by the Conservation Fund, provides \$500 to \$2,500 to local projects that serve as a catalyst for greenway planning and development.
- *Recreational Equipment Inc.* Through the National Rivers Coalition, American Rivers, Inc., REI awards seed grants of \$200 to \$2,000 to state and local conservation groups for projects that enhance river protection.

Individual Donors and Memberships

- Funding derived from individual fund-raising campaigns or through membership drives originated by nonprofit organizations that solicit members is a sound way to raise money and support for projects because membership building may also help build grass-roots support and political clout. Because of time demands in cultivating and managing membership rosters, this may not be appropriate for smaller efforts.
- Large gifts of \$500 or more from individual donors may be essential to the success of some projects. The key to convincing large donors to contribute is to have a board members who themselves are donors and are committed to seeking large gifts.
- Memberships and small donations can be pursued through direct mail appeals and local media campaigns. Another approach is to offer potential donors the opportunity to "buy" specific items in the greenway, such as trail footage or trees, for set amounts.

Planned Giving, Life-Income Gifts, and Bequests

- These take various forms ranging from a simple bequest of money in a will to complex life-estates in land and securities. Planned giving refers to a strategy for giving that addresses gifts while the donor is alive and after he or she dies. For mutual benefit, it usually takes into account tax and investment considerations. One approach is the use of such techniques to protect important private land. For example, a property owner grants a future interest in his or her property to a greenway nonprofit or land trust. The donor keeps a life estate (life tenancy), the right to use and occupy the land during his or her lifetime, subject to agreements to not further develop the property or otherwise compromise its open-space values. For this there will be tax benefits. After the donor dies, the property passes to the grantee.

Service Clubs

- One of the most powerful techniques is to enlist an established local service club to adopt the project before fundraising kicks off. Later, club members may support the project by helping to build structures, maintain a trail, and raise operating funds with annual pancake breakfasts.

Special Events and Fundraisers

- Auctions, benefit dinners, and other special events can raise significant sums in larger communities or within special interest communities. *Ducks Unlimited* is a good example of an organization that has had success with such dinners. Typically, benefits require a long period of planning, dedicated volunteer workers, and sometimes several annual repetitions before they begin to turn a profit.

Appendix F: Economic Benefits of Greenways

Real-property values	Many studies demonstrate that parks, greenways, and trails increase nearby residential and business property values. In turn, increased property values can increase tax revenues and offset loss of property tax base on greenway lands.
Consumer spending	Spending by local residents on greenway-related activities helps support recreation-oriented businesses and employment, as well as other businesses that are patronized by greenway and trail users.
Commercial uses	Greenways often provide business opportunities, location, and resources for commercial activities such as recreation equipment rentals and sales, lessons, and other related businesses.
Tourism	Greenways are often major tourist attractions, which generate expenditures on lodging, food, and recreation-oriented services. Greenways also help improve the overall appeal of a community to prospective tourists and new residents.
Agency expenditures	The agency responsible for managing a river, trail, or greenway can help support local businesses by purchasing supplies and services. Jobs created by the managing agency may also help increase the local employment base by an amount equivalent to other uses of the lands.
Corporate relocation	Evidence shows that the quality of life of a community is an increasingly important factor in corporate relocation decisions. Greenways are often cited as important contributors to quality of life. (In fact, from the earliest days of settlement the natural charm of the Rock River corridor has been cited as a reason for business people and businesses to locate here.)
Public cost reduction	The conservation of rivers, trails, and greenways can help local governments and other public agencies avoid costs resulting from flooding and other natural hazards to more intensive development of the same lands.
Intrinsic values	While greenways have many economic benefits, it is important to remember the intrinsic environmental and recreational value of preserving rivers, trails, and other open space corridors.

Adapted from *Economic Impact of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*, National Park Service, 1990.

Appendix G: Bibliography and Suggested Readings

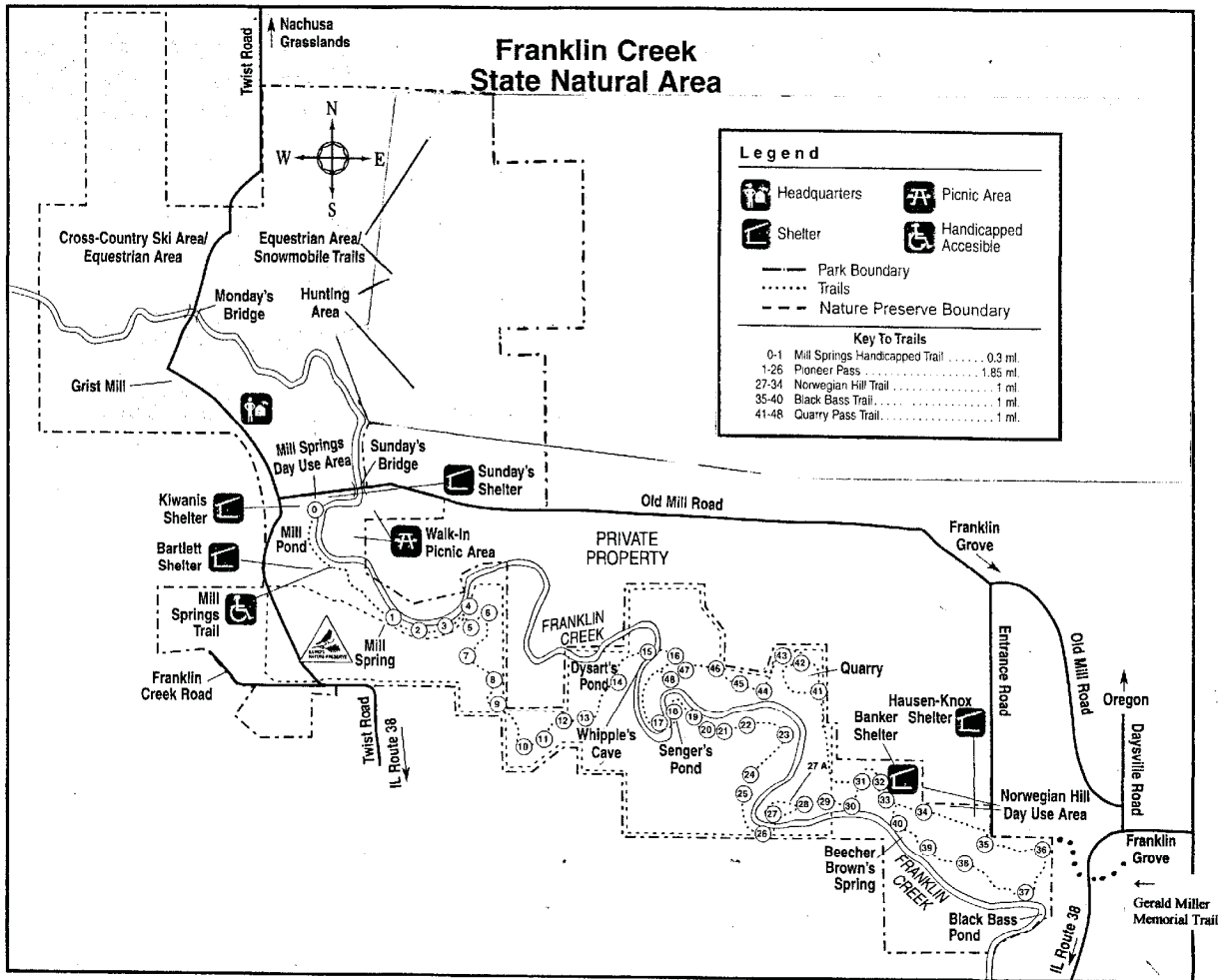
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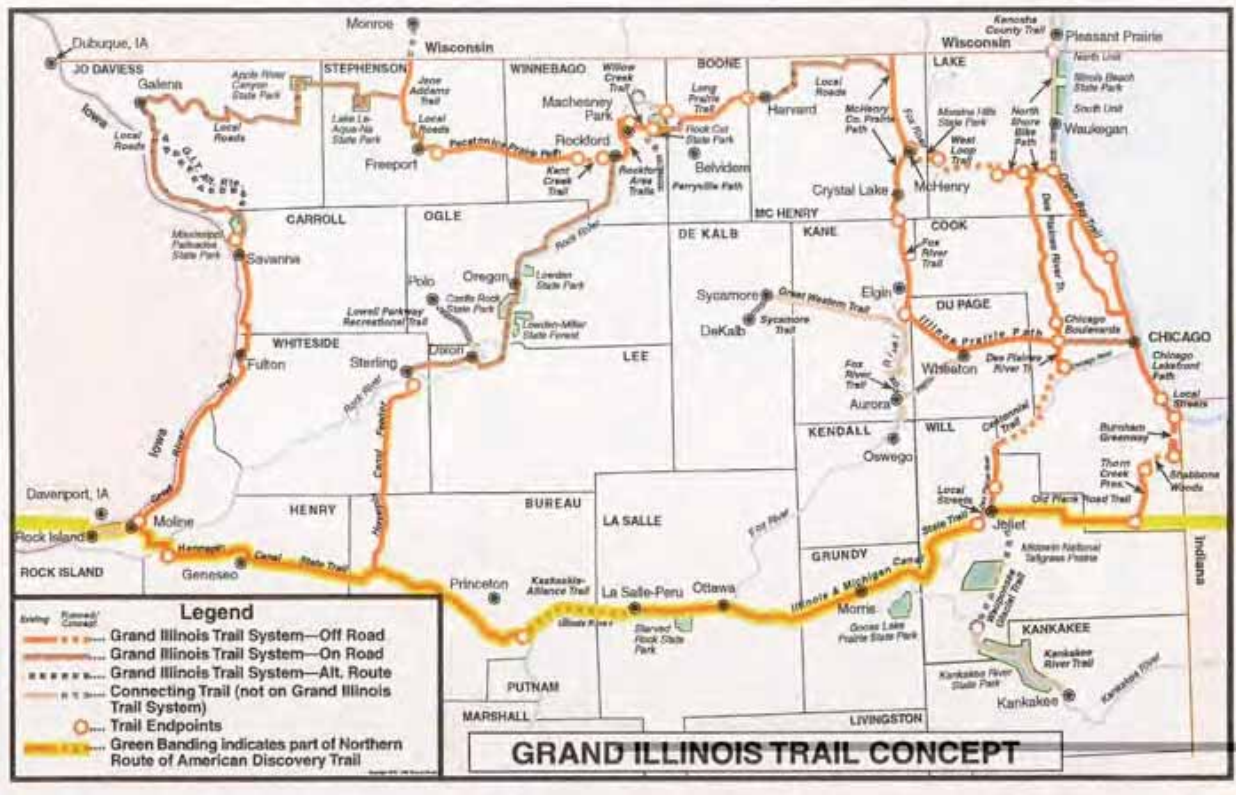
Appendix H: Lee County Greenways and Trails Maps

- Franklin Creek State Natural Area including the Gerald Miller Memorial Trail
- Grand Illinois Trail
- Green Wing Environmental Laboratory
- Green River State Wildlife Area
- Historic Kellogg-Boles (Galena) Trail
- Lowell Park
- Lowell Parkway City-Wide Trail (City of Dixon)
- The Meadows Park
- Nachusa Grasslands
- Plum Creek
- Snowmobile Routes
- Stengel Trail

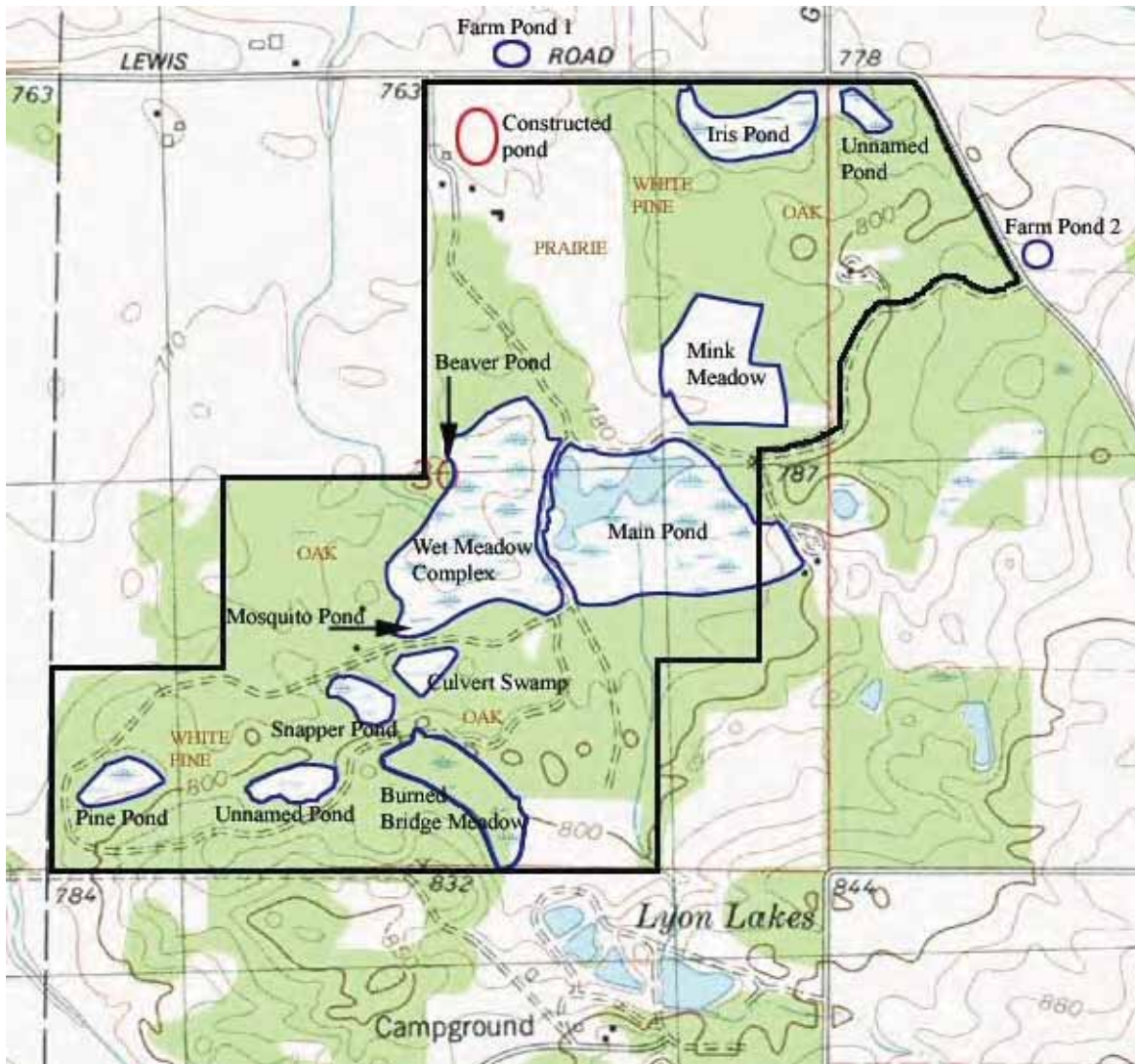
Franklin Creek State Natural Area (including Gerald Miller Memorial Trail)



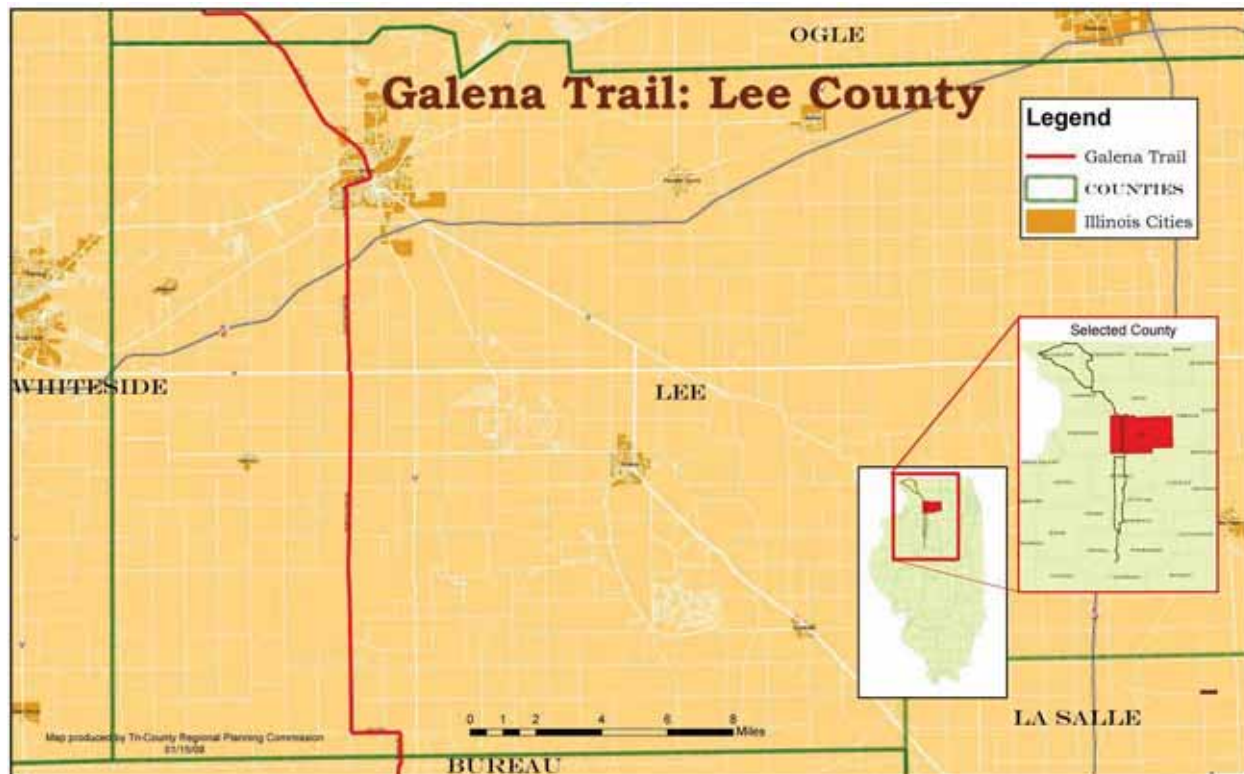
Grand Illinois Trail



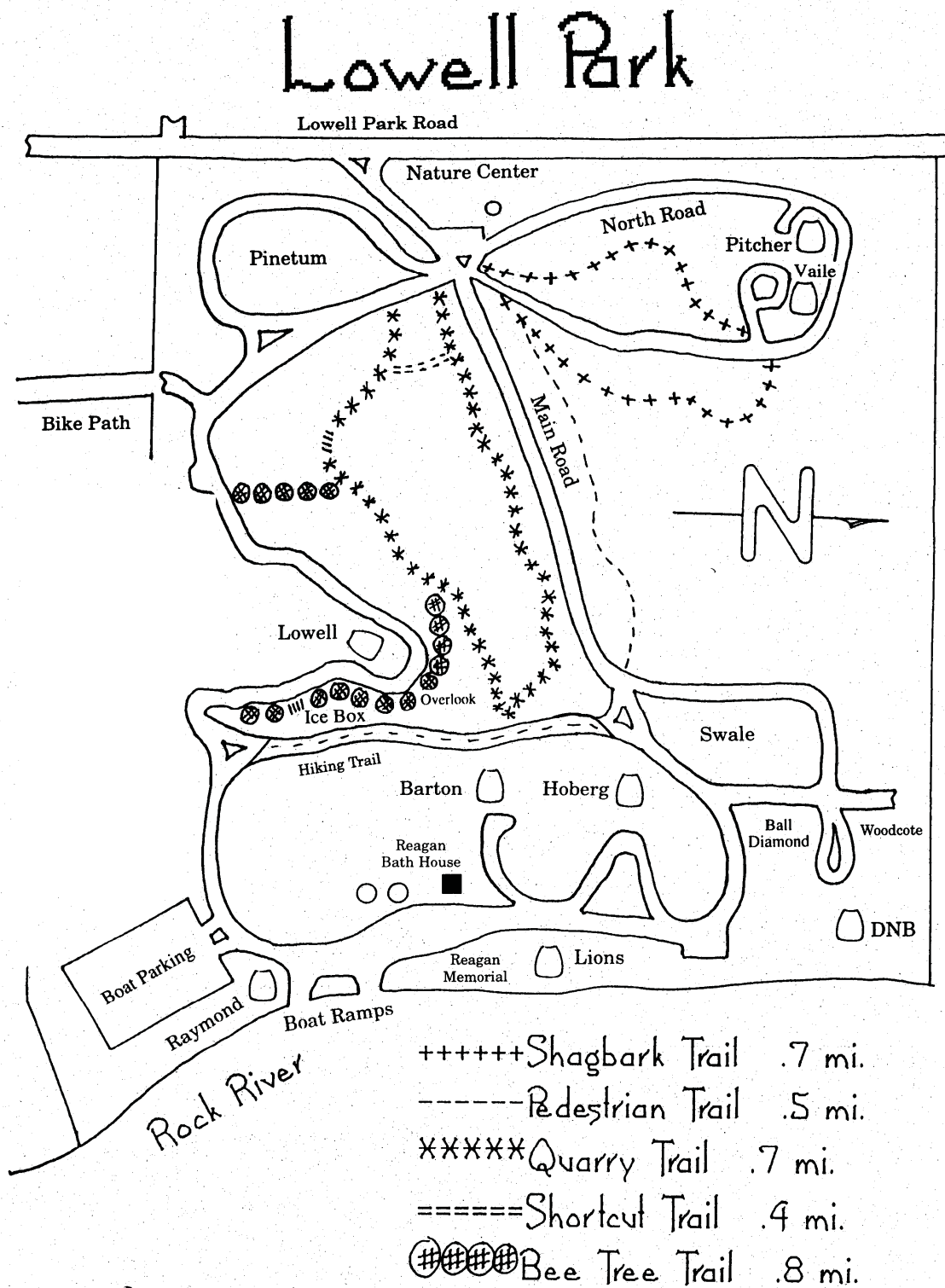
Green Wing Environmental Laboratory



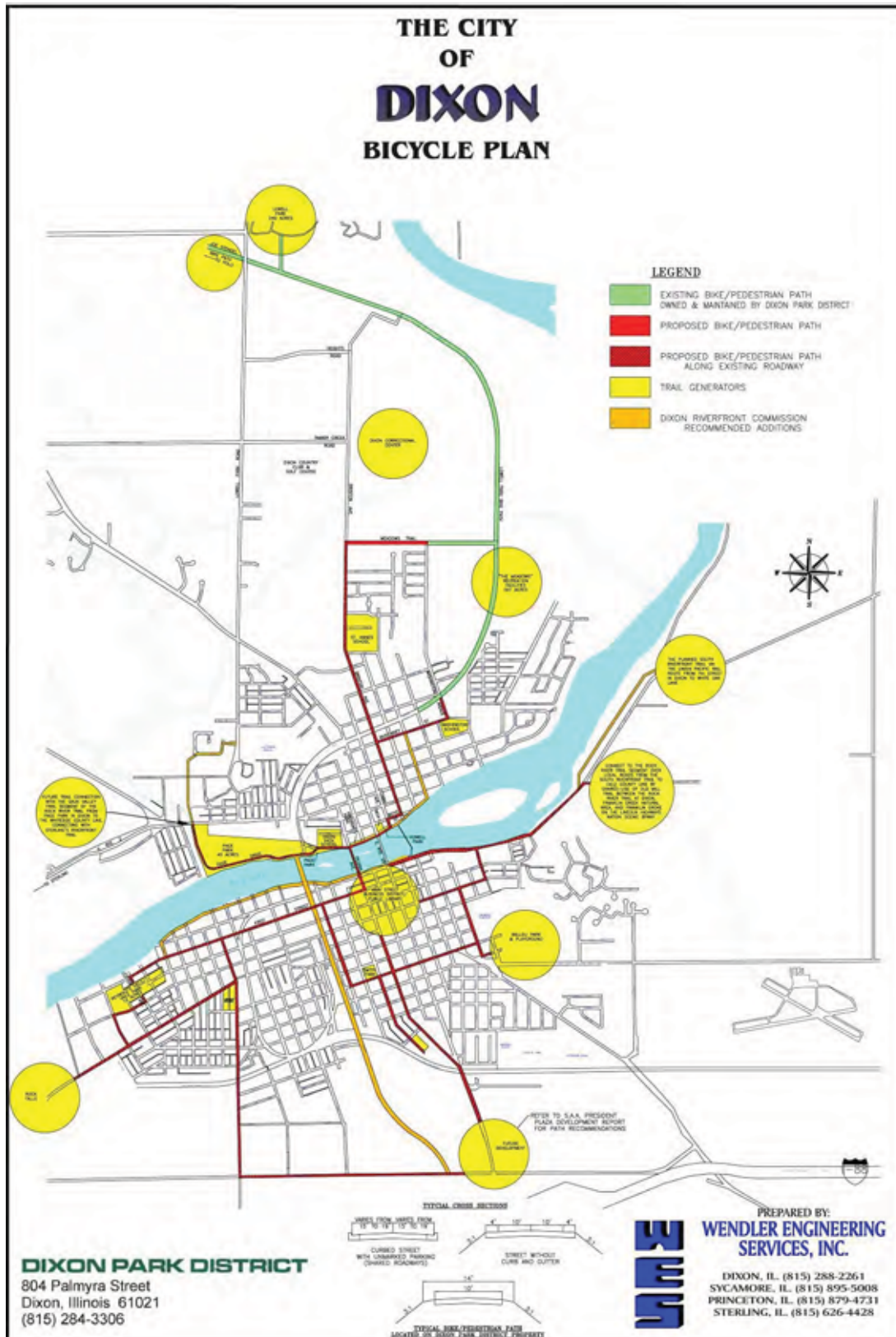
Historic Kellogg-Boles (Galena) Trail



Lowell Park



Lowell Parkway City-Wide Trail (City of Dixon)



The Meadows Park

LEGEND

PARK BOUNDARY

 PICNIC / REST AREA

 PARKING

 OUTHOUSE

 WATER AVAILABLE

 HIKING IS PERMITTED
EVERYWHERE WITHIN
PARK BOUNDARY

YELLOW TRAIL IS GRAVEL AND IS SHARED USE WITH
BICYCLISTS, HORSE RIDERS, HIKERS AND SNOWMOBILES.
LOWELL PARKWAY TRAIL IS PAVED AND CLOSED TO HORSE
RIDERS.
ALL OTHER TRAILS ARE SHARED USE WITH HORSE RIDERS AND
HIKERS.
TRAILS ARE COLOR CODED.

GOOD TRAIL MANNERS KEEP YOU SAFE!

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

SNOWMOBILES YIELD TO EVERYONE

BICYCLISTS YIELD TO WALKERS, HORSE RIDERS AND SKIERS

WALKERS YIELD TO HORSE RIDERS

PLEASE STAY ON MARKED TRAILS FOR YOUR SAFETY AND FOR

THE PROTECTION OF FARM FIELDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY. 811-811 24 HOURS

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL 911 ON YOUR CELL PHONE AND REPORT YOUR LOCATION ON THE MAP

DOGS MUST BE ON A LEASH AT ALL TIMES.

ABSOLUTELY NO ATVS OR MOTORBIKES ALLOWED ON PARK PROPERTY.

PLEASE ENJOY THE TRAILS. IF YOU FIND A PROBLEM, PLEASE REPORT IT TO THE DIXON PARK OFFICE AT (815) 294-3306

The Meadows Park

DIXON PARK DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE 804 PALMYRA STREET, DIXON, IL 61021

815.284.3306

WWW.DIXONIL.COM/PARK

33 PARK SITES TOTALING OVER 1100 ACRES





Nachusa Grasslands

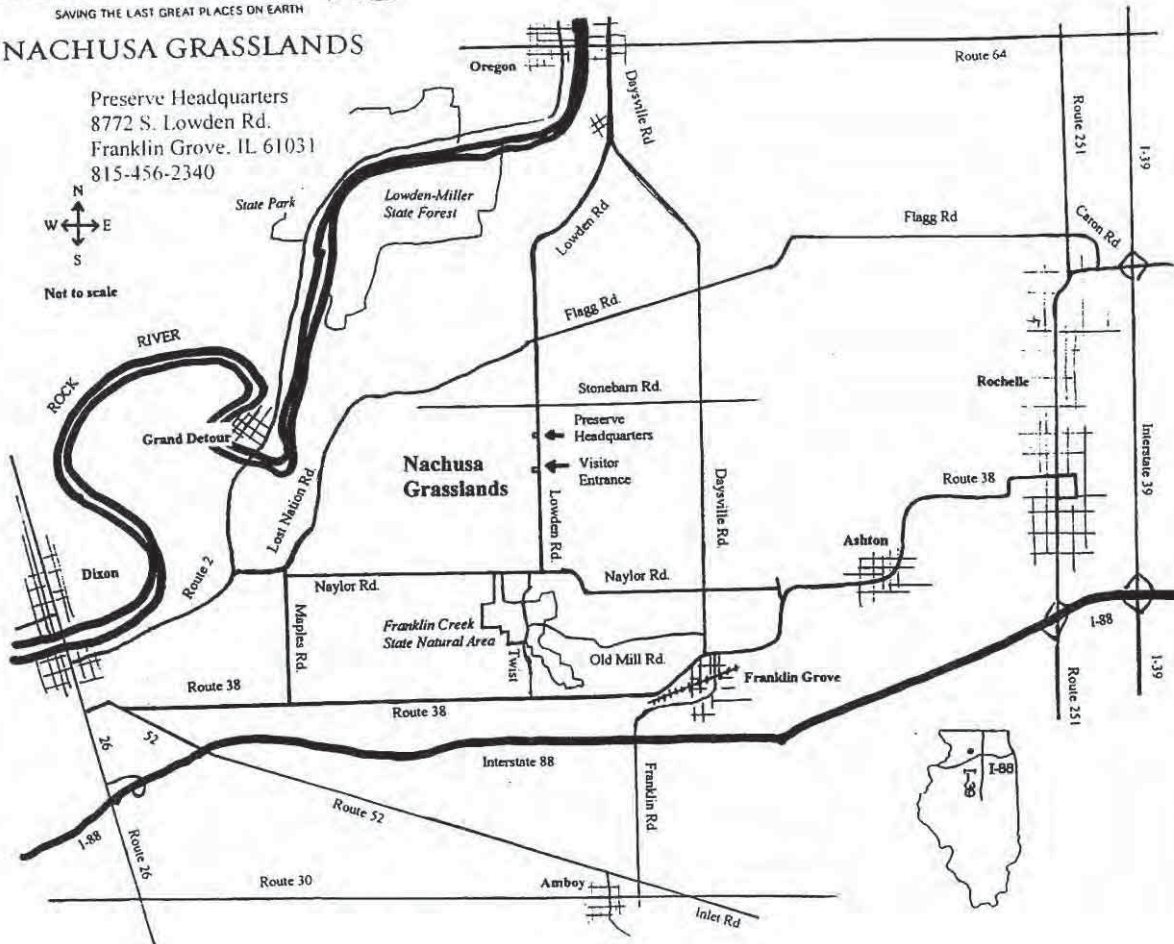


NACHUSA GRASSLANDS

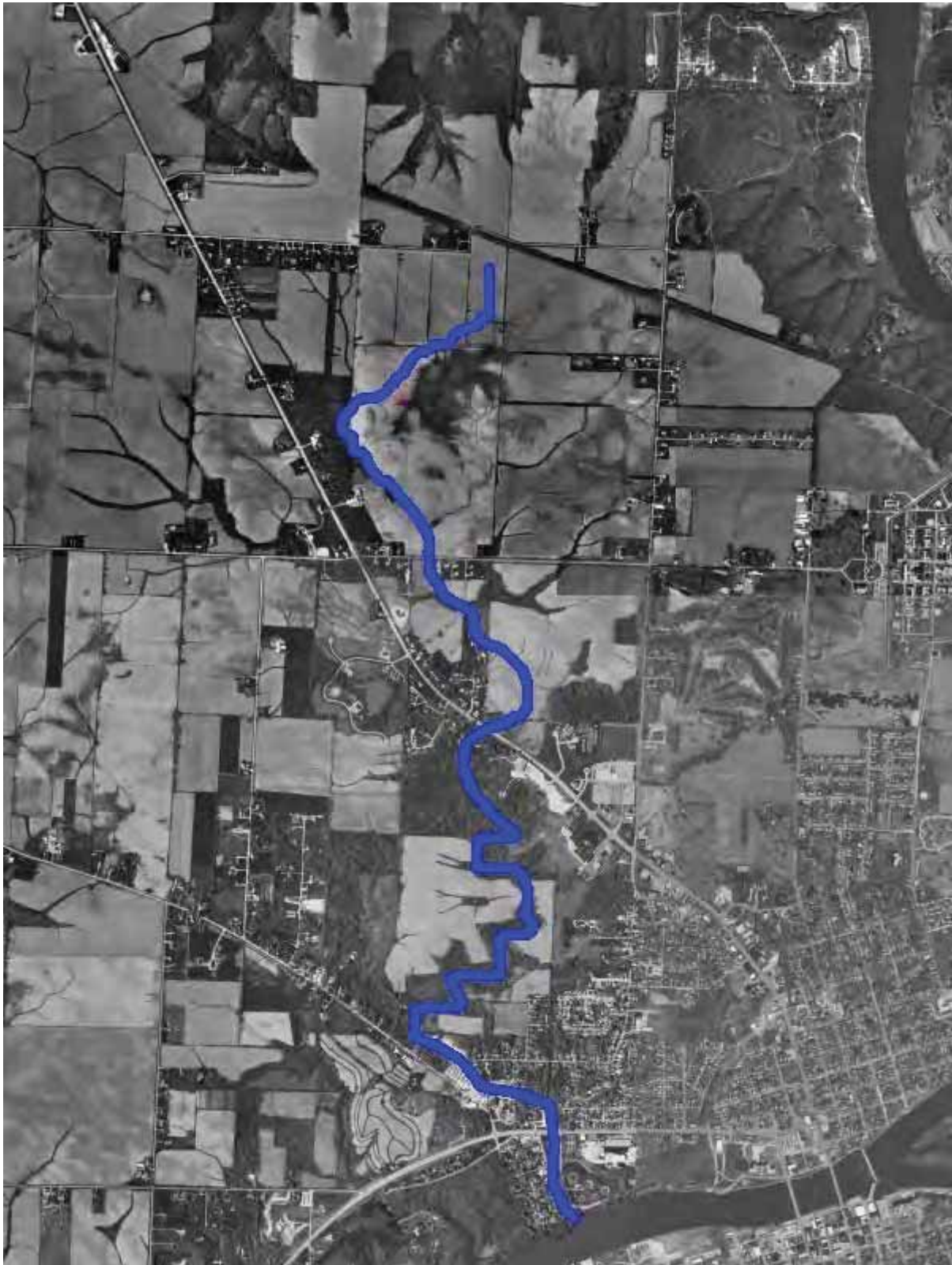
Preserve Headquarters
8772 S. Lowden Rd.
Franklin Grove, IL 61031
815-456-2340



Not to scale



Plum Creek



DOUGLAS & FRYE
SPECIALTY SNOWMOBILE PARTS
1000 S. W. 10th St.
Rockton, IL 61071
(815) 398-1111

ROCK RIVER MARINE
SPECIALTY SNOWMOBILE PARTS
1000 S. W. 10th St.
Rockton, IL 61071
(815) 398-1111

TRIPLE POINT CAMBINE
Buy Direct
BENSONTHOM SKIS, INC.
1100 Route 66
Rockton, IL 61071
(815) 398-1111

SONCO
CONSTRUCTION
POOLE, SING &
ASSOCIATES
1000 S. W. 10th St.
Rockton, IL 61071
(815) 398-1111

Derby H.O.P.s
Hobby - Hobbies - Hobbies
1000 S. W. 10th St.
Rockton, IL 61071
(815) 398-1111

CONGRESSMAN MONZIEU
is proud to represent the
Snowmobilers in
Northern Illinois and
encourages them to vote
on future Election Day!

NOTICE
This map is intended for informational purposes only. The Tri-County Snowmobile Club is not responsible for any accidents or injuries that may occur while using the trails. The map is not a guarantee of the accuracy of the information. The map is not a guarantee of the accuracy of the information. The map is not a guarantee of the accuracy of the information.

**TRAILS OPEN December 15th
thru March 15th**
TRI-COUNTY ALLIANCE
TRAIL MAP LEGEND

★ Fuel Station ● Aid on back of Map

— State Funded Public Trail
--- Illinois/Wisconsin State Line
▲ Trail Intersection

SPONSORS:
DOUGLAS & FRYE
ROCK RIVER MARINE
BENSONTHOM SKIS, INC.
SONCO
Derby H.O.P.s

TRAIL NAMES:
1. The Great Escape
2. The Snowmobile Trail
3. The Snowmobile Trail
4. The Snowmobile Trail
5. The Snowmobile Trail
6. The Snowmobile Trail
7. The Snowmobile Trail
8. The Snowmobile Trail
9. The Snowmobile Trail
10. The Snowmobile Trail

Stengel Trail

