

## Principle 1.

### Organize the Corridor as Contiguous Industrial, Commercial and Residential “Nodes” of Development

A number of different land uses currently exist within the Kishwaukee Street Corridor, including industrial, commercial, residential, mixed-use, and open space. This variety of uses is an asset, but the current physical organization of these uses does not sufficiently leverage this asset. Commercial and residential retail uses are intermingled, and have encroached on areas that have traditionally been almost exclusively industrial, resulting in some single-family homes being bordered by incompatible land uses. Incompatible uses could be buffered from one another more effectively to encourage greater consistency of character while eliminating the existing “piece-meal” appearance of some portions of the corridor.

A more “sustainable” neighborhood strategy would support the creation of a series of development “nodes” to more efficiently mix primary and supporting land uses. A variety of uses would still exist within the Corridor, but their combination and proportion would be modified in order to better complement the dominant land use and eliminate incompatible land use arrangements over time. This nodal pattern of development also encourages greater efficiency by concentrating the primary land uses within geographic clusters. This nodal or “clustering” pattern facilitates synergy among land uses. Clustered uses reduce the need for driving to multiple destinations, improve opportunities for social interaction through increased neighborhood vitality, and can encourage pedestrian-scaled activity centers.

Establishing land use nodes would also support the creation of a jobs / housing balance within the Corridor, including the construction or rehabilitation of workforce housing within walking distance of employment opportunities. This pattern would encourage residential reinvestment within the Corridor and reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles, which would in turn facilitate a rejuvenated streetscape and promote interaction between neighbors.

Figure 2: Future Land Use Framework depicts a future land use arrangement that builds on and clarifies existing development patterns while supporting this more nodal land use organization. A number of opportunities exist to implement nodal development patterns, including:

**Residential:** Existing half-block deep single-family residential parcels along Kishwaukee Street (in particular those that are affected by the IDOT reconstruction) could be transitioned to higher-density single-family or multi-family residential uses. These residential infill concepts are described more fully in subsequent sections of the Plan. Existing residential neighborhoods on the blocks surrounding Kishwaukee Street could be strengthened and stabilized through ongoing targeted public infrastructure investment combined with private sector redevelopment projects.

**Industrial:** Harrison Avenue runs through the heart of Rockford’s industrial core, a land use pattern that should be preserved and encouraged well into the future. Changes within the manufacturing industries have left a number of under-utilized industrial structures which can be considered for adaptive re-use or replacement in the central portion of the Corridor. In addition to transitioning and updating older structures, the City can assist existing industries through infrastructure improvements that specifically support modern industrial needs and assembling land to facilitate redevelopment for modern facilities. The larger-scale and more modern business park development pattern north of and surrounding the airport should also be maintained and enhanced over time.

**Commercial:** Broadway has traditionally been a commercial thoroughfare in Rockford, a pattern which is still evident today in the thriving Mid Town District that stretches east from Kishwaukee Street along Broadway. The intersection of Broadway and Kishwaukee Street is a comparatively lower intensity mix of weaker commercial uses



Examples of Successful Adaptive Re-Use  
(Lake-Kinzie Corridor, Chicago)



## Principle 1. {Continued}

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and vacant commercial sites. These parcels could be redeveloped to create a continuous commercial street front and links to the established Mid Town District. Additionally, several smaller nodes of commercial activity should be supported along the corridor, in a contiguous arrangement where businesses are mutually supportive of one another, with shared access and parking areas where feasible.

**Downtown Mixed Use:** The Downtown area is currently a successful mix of office, retail, commercial, and residential uses. While some of these uses, specifically the comparatively small residential sector, could be strengthened in the future, the Downtown remains a key destination. The northern edge of the Corridor serves as an important link to the Downtown area, a linkage which could be reinforced and improved through key traffic circulation alterations. The one-way street pairs along 2nd and 3rd Streets could be reconfigured to allow bi-directional traffic, a change which would support commercial uses along 3rd Street while preserving the residential character of 2nd Street. The potential future reconfiguration of the Whitman Street Interchange would make available approximately 8.5 acres of highly visible land for redevelopment. In addition to this potential redevelopment opportunity, the existing Midway Theater and Shumway Market (East State and 3rd Street Intersection) are strategically located as a major node within the Corridor.

**Open Space:** The ongoing Keith Creek Greenway reconstruction and expansion project will increase both the quantity and quality of open space within the Corridor. An expanded and improved 10th Avenue Park will be linked on the west to improved access to the Rock River waterfront through a redeveloped Nelson Park, while a golf center and soccer field will be just two of the recreational opportunities available along the banks of the Keith Creek as it stretches northeast from the park. A new administrative building at the Rock River Water Reclamation District’s site at the southern end of the Corridor may also present an opportunity for public access to redeveloped open space and recreational opportunities.

#### Long-Term Opportunity Areas:

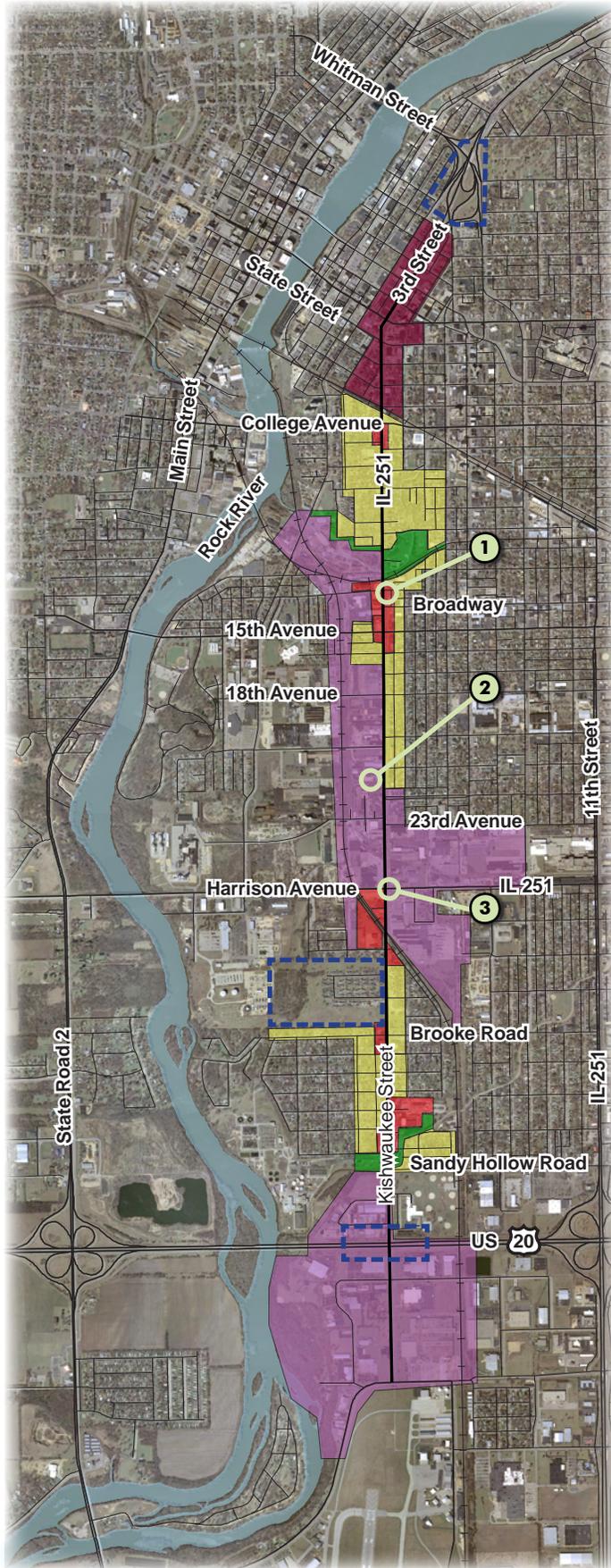
**Whitman Street Interchange:** As discussed above, it is estimated that up to approximately 8.5 acres of land could be redeveloped to reconnect existing residential neighborhoods on the eastern side of the Interchange with the Downtown area to the west of the Interchange.

**Orton Keyes RHA Development:** This Rockford Housing Authority development is in comparatively good physical condition, although crime and security concerns are issues for residents and neighbors. In order to stabilize the development for existing residents and re-knit them into the broader Corridor community, this housing site could potentially be expanded on the existing site and redeveloped as mixed-income housing. This transition could further the overall Vision of creating a favorable housing / jobs balance within the Corridor through the provision of additional affordable workforce housing opportunities.

**U.S. 20 Interchange:** A potential interchange location at US 20 at Kishwaukee Street interchange would provide additional access from Kishwaukee Street to the Greater Rockford Airport and the Corridor. Currently, access into the airport is provided by the US 20 / IL Rte. 2 interchange. The existing roadway infrastructure allows for adequate vehicle and heavy vehicle access to and from the Kishwaukee corridor, given current traffic volumes. The City should work with IDOT to examine whether the construction of a new interchange at this location would support future circulation and development patterns.



February 2009



Legend

- Residential
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Rail Road
- Long-term Opportunity Area

Key Opportunity Areas

- 1 Broadway / Buckbee Commercial Node
- 2 Blackhawk Park / Peoples Industrial Stabilization
- 3 Harrison / Kishwaukee Gateway Node

*Note: Land use categories shown here are general.*

Figure 2



February 2009