

LAND USE PLANNING

Introduction & Background

Land use planning is the process of regulating the use of land by a governmental entity in an effort to promote more desirable social, environmental, and economic outcomes. The desired outcome results in a more efficient use of land resources. Land use planning aims to put similar land uses near one another to improve the overall continuity, efficiency, and safety of users. By grouping comparable land uses near each other, there are less conflicts of interests and the type of land use activity can be planned for accordingly.¹ Land use planning is an important function of a city's ability to grow in an equitable manner. With proper planning, prioritization and forward thinking, future development for both residential, commercial, and industrial services can occur in concert with one another. This results in compatible land uses working in unison with one another while causing the least disruption to different nearby land uses and land users.

Zoning and Land-Use Connection

Land use and zoning involves the regulation of the use, development of land, and the built structures or buildings that are present. The most common form of land use regulation is zoning. Zoning regulations are used by municipalities to control and direct the development of property within their borders or jurisdictions. Land use is the characterization of land based on what can be built on it or what the land is best suited for. Land use dictates what type of structures or uses are allowed on a given parcel of land. Ultimately, growth is regulated through zoning reg-

ulations that define, and limit the allowable land use for every parcel within incorporated Rockford.

Land use and zoning are a function of one another in that zoning defines in more detail what the function of that particular land use is. Zoning has two major functions: administration and enforcement of the zoning ordinance. Zoning administration includes the zoning application process for zoning map amendments, special use permits and variances requested by property owners or developers, and with providing background information and recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals on all requests for zoning changes. Zoning also includes review of all building permits for compliance with the zoning ordinance, and enforcement of the ordinance by responding to complaints and following up on previous zoning cases. Zoning also provides zoning clearances for building permits, permanent sign permits, fence permits, and parking lot permits. It also issues permits for home occupations, dumpster enclosures, temporary banners, and inflatable signs among other things. Zoning also verifies the municipal boundary for new water meter requests.

The following elements also play a crucial role in land-use planning:

Land Use Plan Map – Provides a generalized map of the region showing where broad types of uses should be allowed and not allowed based on the type of use. It establishes land uses along corridors, right-of-ways, and unin-

corporated areas for development of future streets, roads, and all other development. Additionally, there is a Future Land Use Map that outlines areas for future development and expansion of city services.

Subdivision Ordinance – Governs the division of land and establishes minimum requirements for improvements such as streets, sidewalks, public utilities, and stormwater drainage. The current ordinance was adopted in 2007 and amended in 2015. It is generally used for review of developments up to 1½ miles beyond the city limits.ⁱⁱ

Zoning Ordinance – Governs the site-specific designation of allowed uses on individual parcels of land, as well as parking and landscaping requirements, location of buildings, location and size of signs, traffic circulation, and access. The current ordinance was adopted in 2008, was amended in 2021, and is updated regularly as per state statute requirements. The ordinance is based on the concept of performance zoning, which allows maximum flexibility for the developer while at the same time resulting in the most specific designation of what is allowed on a particular parcel. In addition, incorporating performance requirements into the overall mix of zoning requirements can make seemingly incompatible uses compatible.ⁱⁱⁱ

Building Code – Governs construction and/or renovation of structures; the city adopts the most recent editions of ICC and NFPA codes governing commercial construction, one and two-family dwelling units, electrical, mechanical, and property maintenance with local amendments along with the Illinois Plumbing Code and the Illinois Accessibility Code. Code adoption is implemented on a five-year cycle.

History of Annexation

Annexation is the process by which a municipality brings property into the city limits that previously was unincorporated. It's one of the primary means by which a city is able to grow in size. Cities annex territory to provide areas with municipal services like city water, sanitary sewer/wastewater treatment, rubbish removal, recycling, composting services and public safety, especially fire protection services. Generally, unincorporated residential properties are on well water and have a septic system with a leach field which are often incompatible with urbanized areas due to the risks involved with contamination. Annexation is also a means of ensuring that current and future residents and businesses outside a city's corporate limits who benefits from access to the city's facilities and services share the tax burden associated with constructing

and maintaining those facilities and services. For example businesses and commercial/industrial developments require access to adequate water supplies, wastewater, electricity and the city's transportation network, which may not otherwise be provided to unincorporated areas. In fact it's common to annex property with the sole purpose of a specific development or planned project that is dependent on these city services to commit to investing in a new building site.

The city's planning division is responsible for implementing the annexation policies that are in place. The policies were first adopted in 1984, revised in 1993, and are currently being updated/revised. They are designed to promote the orderly growth and development of the city rather than inconsistent and irregular boundaries. Staff processes petitions for annexation for voluntary annexations, and water agreements for property owners connecting to the city water system. Staff is also responsible for working with developers and property owners who wish to annex large areas into the city. In these cases, staff must often address zoning questions; street layout on the property; land use issues where proposals differ from what is shown on the city's adopted plan map; access to and from the property; and availability of public utilities, i.e., sanitary sewer and city water. If these negotiations are successful, an annexation agreement between the city and the property owner is developed and approved by the city council, if the city is not currently contiguous to the property.

While these annexations are obviously important in terms of the tax dollars they generate, they are important for other reasons such as continuity and order as well.

Delivery of Secondary Titles

A major motivating factor in the annexation program is to create some degree of logic to the corporate limits of the city. Difficulties arise from both irregular outer boundaries and from islands of unincorporated land inside the city. These irregularities lead to confusion in determining who should respond to emergency calls; to duplication of services by both the city and Winnebago County in patrolling fringe areas and islands; and to gaps in what should ideally be continuous services, such as street maintenance, snow removal and garbage pickup. The cleaner we make our boundaries, and the fewer internal holes there are (islands), the more efficient both Rockford and Winnebago County can be in terms of ability to provide fast and efficient service to their citizens.

Planning Public Improvements

It's not only important to determine who receives city services at the present time but to also account for and plan for those areas that will most likely need services in 5, 10, or 15 years from now. For example, knowing our ultimate planning boundary enables us to plan where and how many fire stations we will need in the foreseeable future, where we will get the most return from investments in infrastructure such as roads and water mains, and where to invest public tax dollars in order to create economic growth, new jobs, and opportunities for all.

In pursuing its annexation policies during the late 1980's and 1990's, the city succeeded in bringing four islands into the city, including: the Ken-Rock area (with added help from the Superfund money spent to connect homes in the area to the Rockford water system), simplifying the boundary with Loves Park along Forest Hills Road and East Riverside Boulevard, bringing the Greater Rockford Airport into Rockford, and extending the corporate limits eastward to the Boone County line.

Boundary Agreements

In some ways, potentially the most important element of the annexation program is the agreements worked out between Rockford and five of its municipal neighbors including Cherry Valley, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Rockton, and Davis Junction. The city currently does not have boundary agreements with the City of Belvidere, Winnebago, and New Milford. By having long-term agreements defining a municipality's ability to annex, we can each concentrate on providing services within a specified area instead of spending vast sums of money to entice income-generating developments into our municipality. By working together as a region rather than against one another, we're all stronger and more resilient.

Unfortunately, while this has been the goal, the reality in practice has been that the city continues to heavily subsidize and offer incentives to greenfield development even after these boundary agreements have been put in place. This has been done primarily to entice specific retail sales tax generators to choose a Rockford site rather than one in another community. The end result has been that capital investment dollars that could be targeted for the rehabilitation or replacement of existing infrastructure is diverted to greenfield development. This is particularly true for water main, sanitary sewer, and transportation investment.

Over the past 20 years, the city annexed areas that are now occupied by Lowes Distribution Center, Walmart

(East State), Sandy Hollow Quarry, Bell School/Spring Creek/I-90, and the Mercyhealth Hospital on East Riverside Boulevard. Housing developments occurred as a result of the annexation of the Hope VI Housing Area (west side), Kelly Meadows (southwest side), Wesley Willows, Redington Chase, and Stevens Ridge (all on the northwest side). Also, the southwest corner of Bypass 20 and South Main Street and the area south of the airport at Edson Road-South Bend Road were annexed for future industrial development. The city also succeeded in bringing in five islands including Bradley Heights (Spring Creek & Bradley), Glenney View (City View & Rockton), Meadows of Spring Brook (Spring Brook & Springwheat), Country Oaks (Lyford & Cloverdale), and Larwinn (Bell School/Meander & Lyford/Conehill).

Policy Priorities

As previously stated, the city is currently in the process of updating its annexation policies. Focus should be working toward the following objectives:

- Establish priority annexation areas with a high priority on the elimination of unincorporated islands
- Bring in existing properties with pre-annexation agreements especially those that are sales tax producing properties
- Eliminating the Rock River Fire District through strategic annexations
- Financial incentives will only be provided to assist with development in the priority areas
- Evaluate the priority annexation areas and ultimate annexation boundary every 10 years

The city is working to pursue an aggressive annexation program along West State Street. Incentives should be considered to entice businesses on well water to hook-up to city water. The city should consider a mix of commercial and industrial development to help grow jobs and increase the tax base. Balanced growth and economic development is key to revitalizing this corridor as well as controlling the land use.

Continuing to work on priority areas listed in the annexation policies that are largely developed and where annexation will occur in small pieces. This includes the northeast islands, Charles Street, the southeast islands along 20th Street, and the unincorporated areas on the west and

southwest. Primary emphasis should be on areas where uneven boundaries act as barriers to balanced growth and areas where there is a lack of economic development activity.

Continue to work with the Four Rivers Sanitation Authority to create joint agreements for any new sewer projects in which the city participates in.

Develop an annexation agreement boundaries with the Villages of Winnebago and New Milford, and the City of Belvidere.

Prevent new development on private well and septic systems within the Ultimate Annexation Boundary.



Founders Landing - Building Demolition for Redesign and Makeover of Davis Park

Annexation History for the City of Rockford



BOONE COUNTY

OGLE COUNTY

Legend

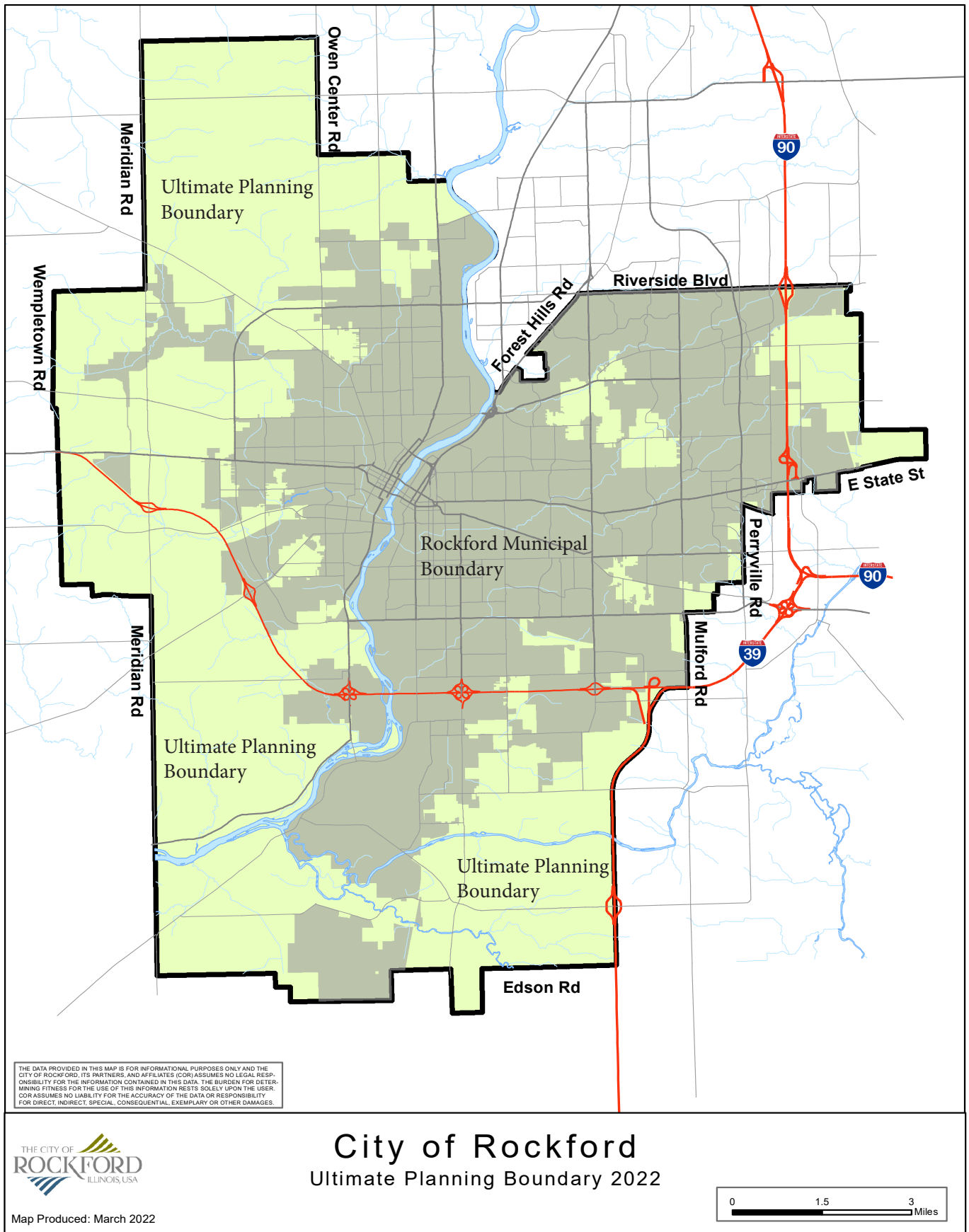
Rockford Annexations AnnexYear

- Prior to 1925
- 1925-1929
- 1930-1939
- 1940-1949
- 1950-1959
- 1960-1969
- 1970-1979
- 1980-1989
- 1990-1999
- 2000-2009
- 2010-2019
- 2020-2022

1 inch = 1,960 feet

Map Prepared By:
City of Rockford
Construction and Development Services
Community Development Department
Darius Morrow
Last Update: May 2022





Current Zoning

Map Designations

The current zoning map provides several categories for residential, commercial, and industrial areas for a total of 12 zoning districts. To aid in the proper use and interpretation of the map, the following definitions for each district are provided.

Residential Districts

Rockford's residential "R" zoning districts are intended to create, maintain, and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households. It has been established to maintain the desired physical character of existing neighborhoods and develop areas consistent with the city's official comprehensive plan. These regulations are intended to ensure that permitted and special uses are compatible within each district. Additionally, these zones are intended to maintain and protect residential property values and promote peace, quiet, and enjoyment in the city's residential areas by requiring setbacks and open spaces on the same lot as the residential development.

While these districts primarily accommodate residential use types, some non-residential uses may be allowed within residentially designated zones. For instance you may find small home businesses such as daycare, small engine repair and services, and tax professionals. However, these uses must not disrupt a neighborhood with excess traffic, noise or smell, and must apply for and acquire the special use permit for operation of a non-housing use in order to operate within a residential zone.

- R-E Rural Estate
- R-1 Single-Family
- R-2 Two-Family
- R-3 Multifamily Residential
- R-4 Multifamily Residential



Single-Family Residential Home



Two-Family Residential Home



Multi-family Residential Home

Commercial Districts

Commercial (C) districts are intended to accommodate retail, service, and commercial uses and to ensure that business and commercially zoned areas are compatible with the character of existing neighborhoods.

- (C-1) - Limited Office District: The Limited Office (C-1) district is intended to accommodate low-intensity office development in close proximity to residential uses and to serve as a buffer between established commercial uses and residential neighborhoods. The C-1 district is also intended to allow the conversion of structures built for residential purposes to be converted to limited office use as a means to preserve these structures as well as permits limited business service uses in addition to offices provided, such services are low traffic generators. The C-1 district does not permit outdoor storage, outdoor sales, or outdoor displays.

- (C-2) - Limited Commercial: The purpose of the Limited Commercial (C-2) district is to provide a wide range of development options for the retail sale of goods and for professional and commercial services. This district limits certain commercial uses that may cause undue traffic congestion or uses that may have detrimental impacts on neighboring properties. Like C-1, the C-2 district does

not permit outdoor storage and outdoor sales. Displays are allowed but limited to private sidewalks that abut the principal structure and areas adjacent to the main customer entrance.

- (C-3) - General Commercial: The primary purpose of the General Commercial (C-3) district is to accommodate a very broad range of business, service, and commercial uses. In terms of allowed uses, C-3 represents the highest intensity business or commercial zoning district. It allows nearly any type of business, service, or commercial use, including those involving outdoor operations and storage. Like the C-2 district, the C-3 district, development will generally be destination-oriented; a very large percentage of customers will arrive by automobile. The C-3 district is distinguished from C-2 district by the range of use types allowed, such as permitting more intensive, more auto-oriented commercial use types than does C-2. The C-3 district is intended to be applied to large sites that have primary access to major thoroughfares.



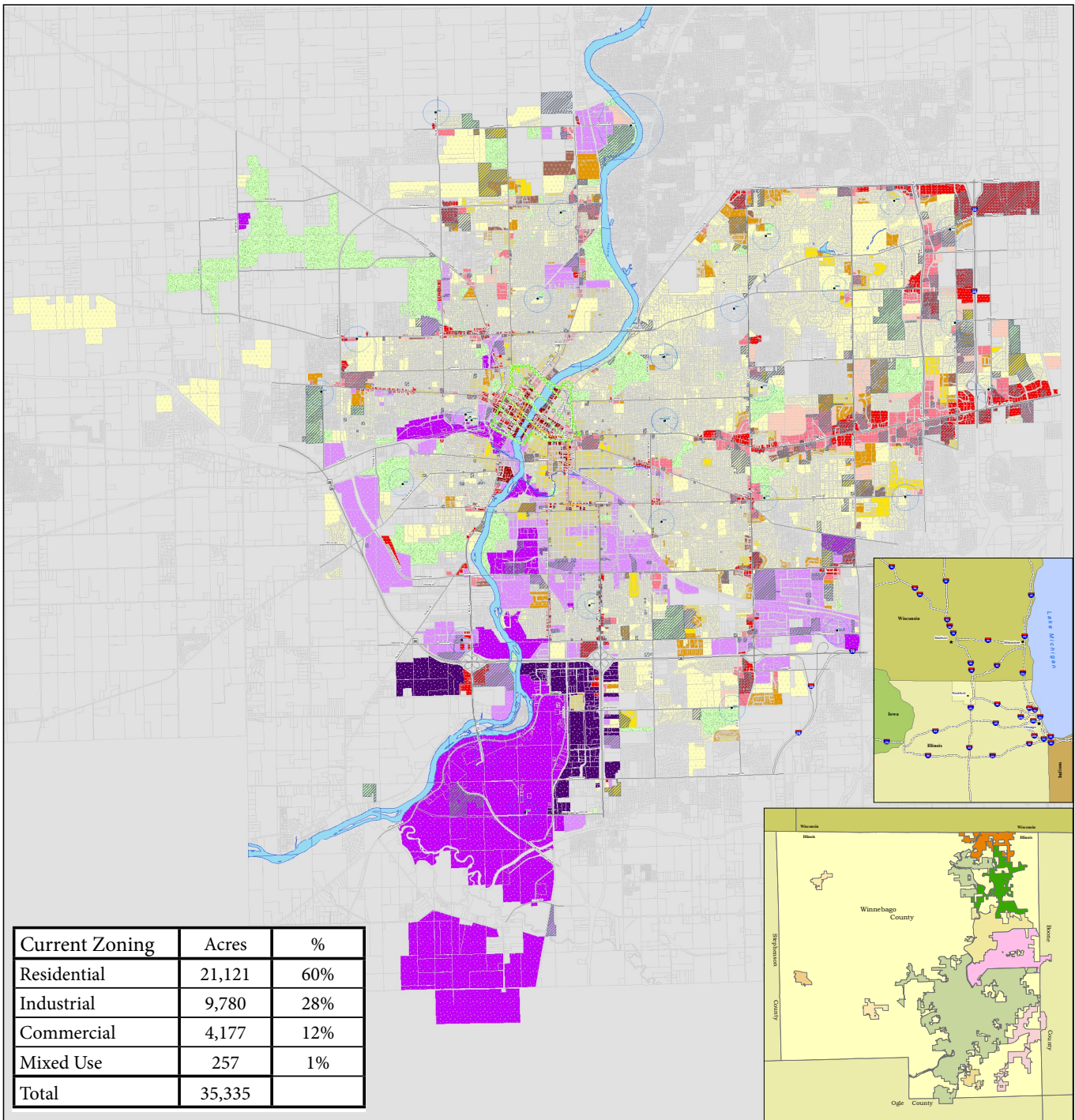
- (C-4) - Urban Mixed-Use District: The primary purpose of the Urban Mixed Use (C-4) district is to maintain and promote a compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district with a diverse mix of residential, office, business, government, cultural, and entertainment uses; promote a walkable environment by protecting those streets with “intact” street walls; encourage residential living environments that provide a broad range of housing types such as lofts, town homes, and condominiums; promote these districts as viable and vital residential areas by permitting residential uses in a wide variety of densities and locations; and promote the continued use and/or redevelopment of historically significant buildings and older buildings that contribute to the character of these districts. In terms of allowed uses, C-4 allows nearly any type of business, service, or commercial use, including those involving outdoor operations and storage.



Industrial Districts

Industrial districts (I) are intended to accommodate manufacturing, shipping and warehousing, distribution, wholesale, and other industrial uses within the City of Rockford. The district regulations are intended to: promote the economic viability of manufacturing and industrial uses, encourage employment growth, promote the development of high-technology centers, and encourage the expansion of shipping, handling, and air cargo facilities in the vicinity of the Rockford Airport.

- (I-1) - Light Industrial: The primary purpose of the Light Industrial/Business Park (I-1) district is to accommodate low impact manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, and distribution activities that occur within enclosed buildings. The district is intended to promote new industrial development within a “park like” environment.
- (I-2) - General Industrial: The primary purpose of the General Industrial (I-2) district is to accommodate moderate-impact manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution uses, including storage and work-related activities that occur outside of enclosed buildings. The I-2 district is intended to accommodate more land-intensive industrial activities than the I-1 district.
- (I-3) - Airport Industrial: The primary purpose of the Airport Industrial (I-3) district is to accommodate businesses and industry that benefit from locations in close proximity to the Chicago/Rockford International Airport (RFD). This includes shipping and distribution facilities, warehousing, cargo handling facilities, and car and truck rental businesses.



Zoning Map - Rockford, Illinois

Legend

C1	I1	R1U	Preannexation Agreements
C2	I2	R2	Special Use Permit
C3	I3	R3	Arts and Creativity Overlay District
C4	R1	R4	Designated Pedestrian Streets
	RE		City Wells
			Well Setback Areas

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Map Prepared By:
City of Rockford
Community and Economic Development Dept.
Construction and Development Services
Darius Morrow
Last Update: March 2022



Current Land-Use

While it is difficult to estimate exact trends in land use development, it is expected that a slightly larger percentage of industrial land will be needed to provide the industrial sites of the future, many of which are land consumptive. Historically, prior to the dominance of the automobile for personal transportation, industrial land was probably a higher percentage than it is today, and public/quasi-public a much lower percentage.

Currently Rockford's land use is made up of primarily residential, industrial, and commercial uses. Residential land use makes up the largest percentage of land (47 percent), ranging from single-family to multi-family residential units. Industrial and commercial land uses follow behind residential in percent of total land, as shown below. Historically, residential and commercial uses were more likely mixed, ultimately consuming less land. Today, new residential developments are often built with more spacing between them, and on larger lots. While commercial areas are surrounded by extensive parking areas that are now necessary due the dependence on automobiles to travel for day-to-day activities. Mixed-use land use accounts for just 1 percent of total land use. The current zoning map has 12 categories that have been combined into four general land use categories. As current trends in redevelopment occur, we expect to see the percentage of mixed-use development increase, especially in downtown Rockford and along other main corridors into the city.

2020 Land-Use Category	Acres	%
Residential	19,228	47%
Industrial	8,973	22%
Quasi-Public Facility	6,311	15%
Commercial	3,921	10%
Priority Park Acquisition	1,715	4%
Mixed Use	366	1%
Recreation-Entertainment-Tourism	310	1%
Area Unsuitable for Development	82	0%
Future Urban Development	12	0%
Total	40,918	

City of Rockford - GIS Analysis

Future Land-Use

While it is difficult to estimate exact trends in land use, Rockford is expected to see an increase in industrial, commercial and mixed-use land uses, and a decrease in residential-only land uses. As there is an increase in industrial parks in the area, the need for more industrial land uses

will increase due to the fact that industrial sites are often land consumptive. In the future, some existing industrial land will either be adapted to new uses or remain vacant, while new industrial developments involved in transportation, distribution, packaging and other related industries will be attracted to the area by the Chicago Rockford International Airport, UPS, Amazon Prime, and other similar facilities. The opportunity for brownfield redevelopment becomes more attractive as this occurs.

As Rockford continues to grow in size and land is developed, there will also be a shift towards mixed-use developments to meet future needs of the area. Once cities have built out horizontally, they shift to building vertically to create the best use of the land while also maximizing the tax-base. For example, there may be developments that have ground-floor commercial with residential above, allowing the parcel to reach its maximum potential. Additionally, as older buildings continue to be rehabbed and returned to the market opportunities to recapture abandoned buildings diminishes.

Map Designations

The 2020 Plan map provides for a full spectrum of land uses and of transportation facilities with a total of 43 categories. To aid in proper use and interpretation of these maps, the following definitions for each category are provided.

Residential Categories

In addition to strictly residential uses, there are other non-residential uses that are customarily found in neighborhoods and which are allowed in these areas as permitted uses or with a special use permit in Rockford's Zoning Ordinance. Examples of these could include day care facilities and public schools.

- (RL) - Low-Density Residential: A range of 2-7 dwelling units per acre; could include single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes or any combination of these.
 - (RL-C) - Light Residential/Retail
 - (RL-CO/O) - Light Residential/Office Overlay
- (RM) - Medium-Density Residential: A range of 5-15 dwelling units per acre; could include single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, apartments, or any combination of these.
 - (RM-CO) - Medium Residential/Office
 - (RM-CO/O) - Medium Residential/Office Overlay
 - (RM-C) - Medium Residential/Retail
- (RH) - High-Density Residential: More than 15 dwell-

ing units per acre; could include townhouses, garden apartments, multistory apartments, or any combination of these.

- Heavy Residential/Office

Commercial Categories

Commercial land use categories are intended to accommodate retail, office, mixed-use, and other commercial uses.

- (C) - Commercial: Stores selling merchandise; no outside storage. Example: Clothing store.
- (CO/O) - Office Overlay: Office development in existing buildings, including those built as single-family homes, where those buildings have historic value. Office use would only be allowed if placed in the existing building.
 - (C-CO) - Commercial/Office
 - (C-CR) - Commercial/Recreation-Office-Tourism
- (CR) - Recreation/Entertainment/Tourist: Establishments catering to tourist, convention, and local markets. Examples: Motels and restaurants.
- (CO) - Office: Concentrations of office space. Examples: real estate office, medical office.
 - (CO-CR) - Office/Recreation-Entertainment-Tourism
 - (CH) - Heavy Commercial: Activities requiring a large land area but with low traffic volume; may include substantial outdoor storage. Examples: car dealer, lumber yard.
 - (CH-IL) - Heavy Commercial/Light Industry
 - (CH-RL) Heavy Commercial/Light Residential
 - (CD) - Commercial Mixed Use: Allows a mixture of retail and office commercial with residential uses; roughly equivalent to the C-4 District in the Zoning Ordinance. Example: Mixed use buildings on Broadway and on 7th Street.
- (CBD) - Central Business District: Rockford's downtown, also known as the River District; includes a broad range of commercial and residential uses.

Industrial Categories

Industrial land use categories are intended to accommodate various degrees of industrial uses ranging from light to heavy as well as technology-based employment centers.

- (IL) - Light Industry: Office/research parks; small, clean manufacturing plants; and other industrial-type uses that would not negatively impact adjacent residential areas.
 - (IL-CO) - Light Industry/Office

- (IL-C) - Light Industry/Retail
- (T-C-IL) - Tech Industry/Retail/Light Industry

- (T) - Tech Industry: Technology-based employment centers; environmentally clean operations; no outdoor storage.
 - (T-IL) - Tech Industry/Light Industry
 - (T-CO) - Tech Industry/Office
 - (T-C-CO) Tech Industry/Retail/Office
- (IG) - General Industry: Most manufacturing and processing operations, including large plants and warehouses; and uses generating large amounts of truck, rail, or auto traffic.
 - (IG-C) - General Industry/Retail
 - (IG-CD) - General Industry/Mixed-Use
- (IH) - Heavy Industry: Potentially hazardous or noxious uses that should be kept separate from nonindustrial activities.

Public/Quasi-Public Categories

Public/Quasi-Public land use categories are used to accommodate existing and future public spaces as well as areas that are not suitable for development at this time.

- (PE) - Existing (Quasi) Public Facility: All existing parks, forest preserves, public schools, colleges, country clubs, public buildings, and country clubs; other properties open to the public, such as churches, that are on large lots (minimum of 5 acres).
 - (PE-CD) - Existing Public Facility Overlay Mixed Use

Other Land-Use Categories

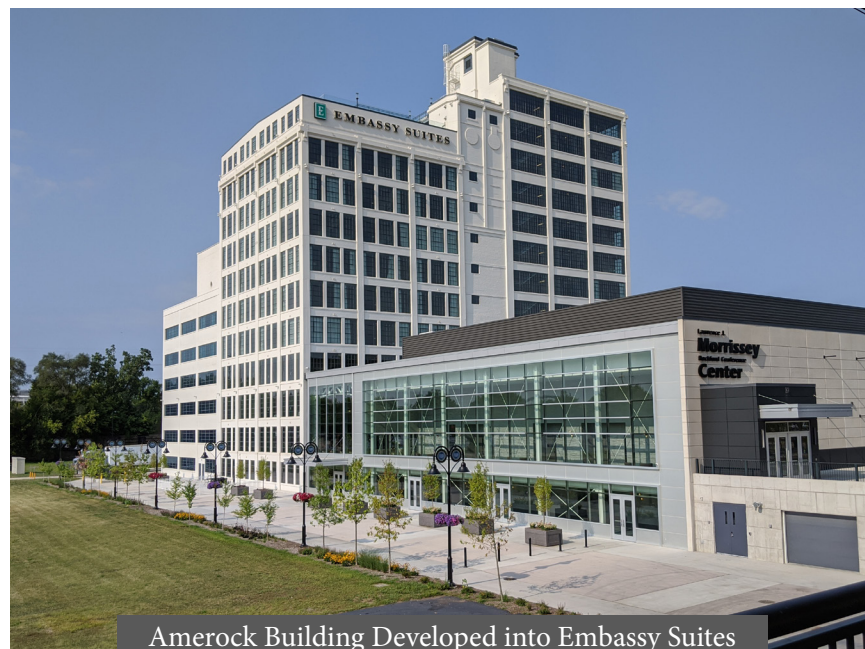
- (CD) - Mixed Use: The primary purpose of the Urban Mixed Use district is to maintain and promote a compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district with a diverse mix of residential, office, business, government, cultural, and entertainment uses; promote a walkable environment by protecting those streets with "intact" street walls; encourage residential living environments that provide a broad range of housing types such as lofts, town homes, and condominiums; promote these districts as viable and vital residential areas by permitting residential uses in a wide variety of densities and locations; and promote the continued use and/or redevelopment of historically significant buildings and older buildings that contribute to the character of these districts.
 - (IG-CD) - General Industry/Mixed-Use
 - (CR) - Recreation-Entertainment-Tourism

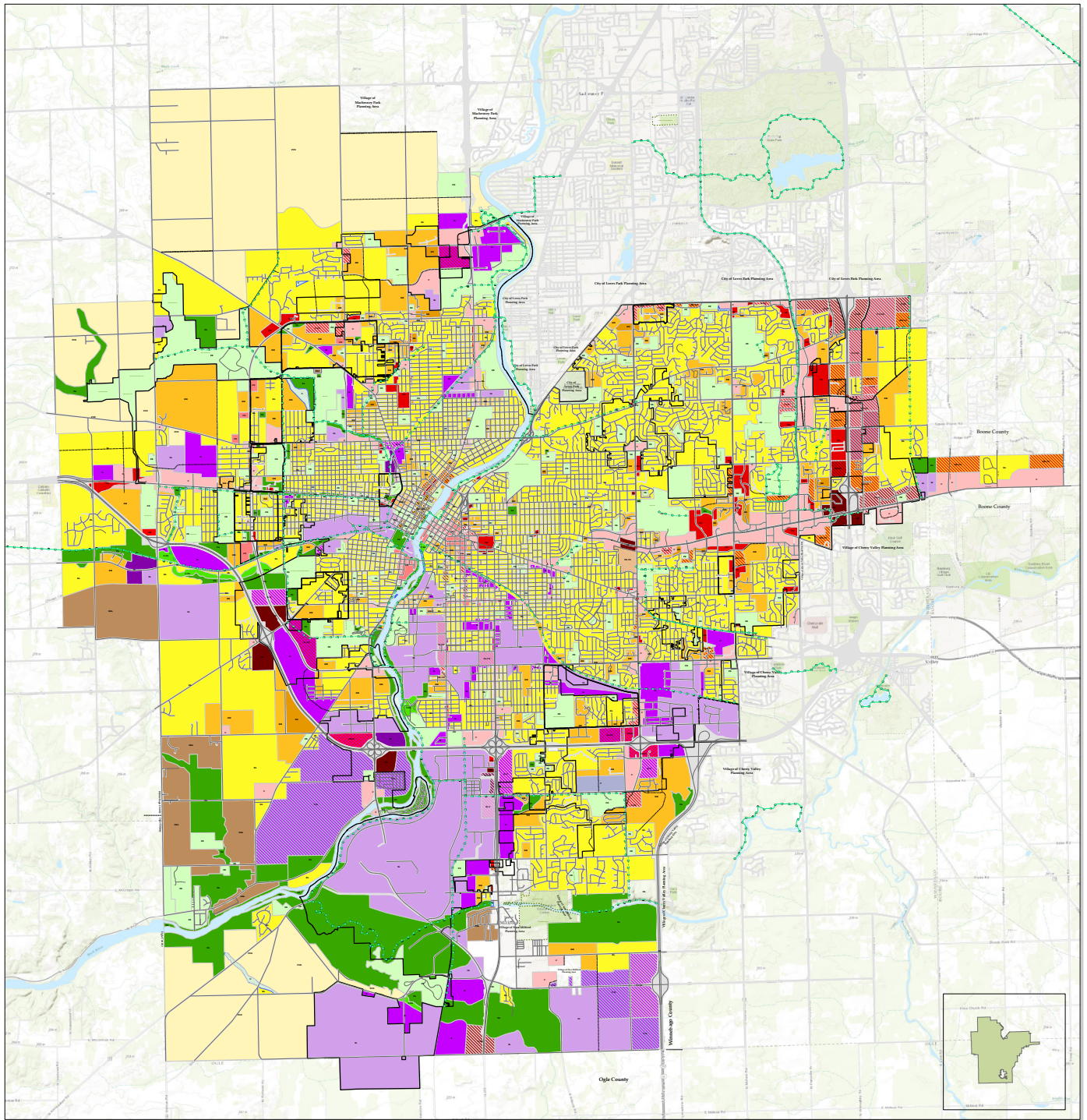
- (PA) - Priority Park Acquisition Area: Sites suitable for parks or public open space which have a high priority for acquisition by the year 2020 by the Rockford Park District or the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District; environmental elements such as existing tree lines in rural or undeveloped areas that should be protected when development does occur.

- (U) - Area Not Suitable for Development: Major wetlands, floodways and/or forested areas generally not suitable for development but may be suitable for long-term open space use or agriculture.

- (U-PA) Unsuitable Area/Priority Park Acquisition

- (FUD) - Future Urban Development: Areas that are unlikely to have access to sanitary sewer by 2020, but would be suitable for urban development at some point in the future, are designated as Future Urban Development areas. The intent is to not allow non-urban development, i.e., development on private wells and/or septic systems, to occur before sewers can be installed.





2020 Comprehensive Plan - Rockford, Illinois

Legend

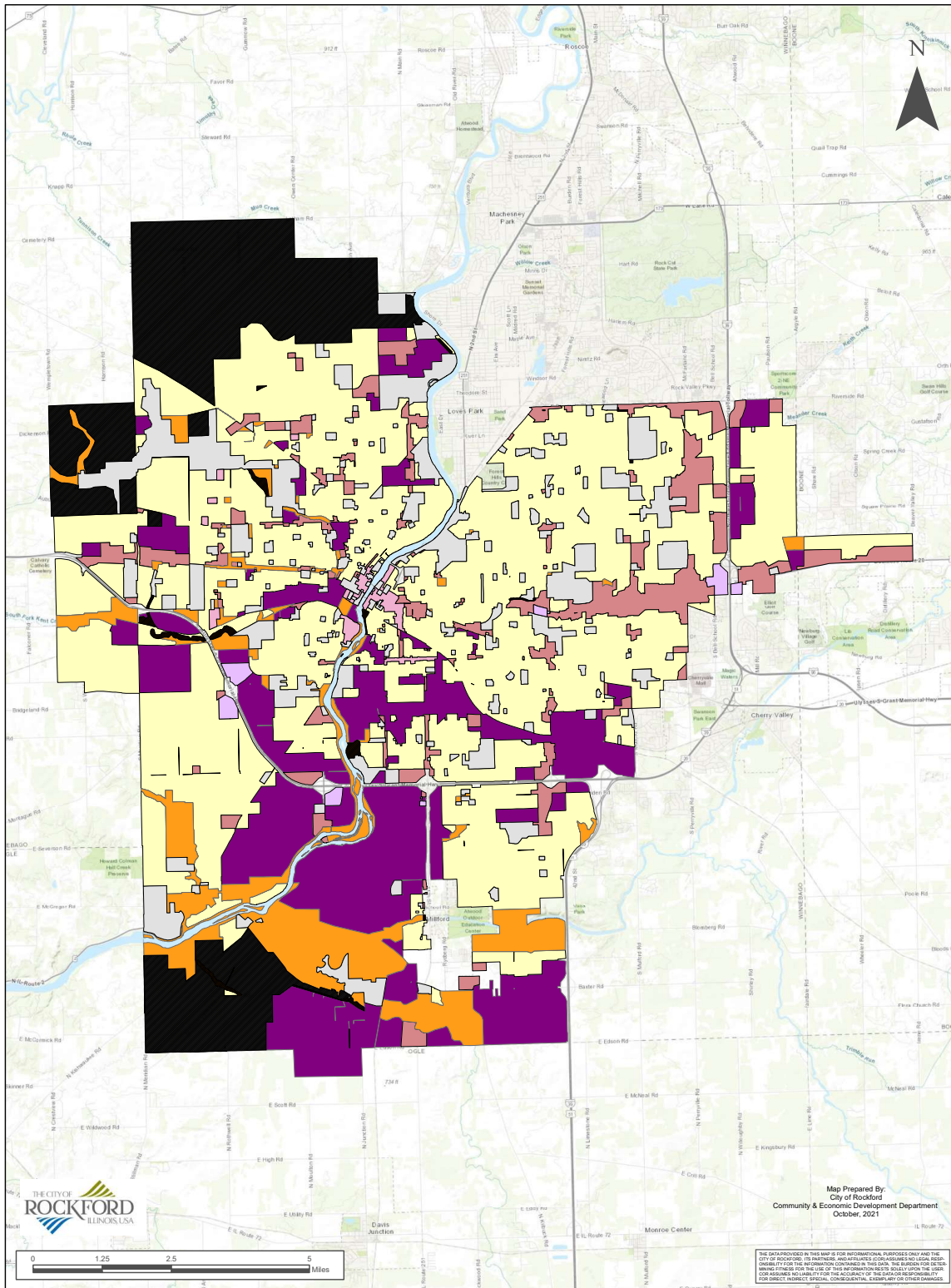
C- Retail	IG- General Industry	RH-CBD- Central Business District Overlay	IG-C	T-C-IL	LandUse2020Streets
CD- Mixed Use	IL- Light Industry	Multiple Designation Areas	IG-CD	T-C-CO	Proposed Interchanges
CH- Heavy Commercial	IH- Heavy Industry		IG-CR	RL-C	Proposed Roundabout
CO- Office	T- Tech Industry		PE-CD	RM-C	Rockford City Limits
CO/O- Office Overlay	RL- Light Residential		IL-C	RM-CO	Infill Areas
CR- Recreation/Entertainment/Tourism	RM- Medium Residential		IL-CO	RH-CO	Existing Parks
PA- Priority Park Acquisition	RH- Heavy Residential		T-IG	RL-CO/O	Right Of Ways
PE- Existing (Quasi-) Public Facility	FUD- Future Urban Development		T-IL	RM-CO/O	
U- Area Unsuitable for Development	SRA- Subdivision Review Area		T-CO	RH-CO/O	

City Overview

Date Approved/Amended
September 13, 2004
May 13, 2008
June 1, 2009
November 7, 2011

Map Prepared By:
City of Rockford
Community & Economic Development Department





2020 Comprehensive Plan - Land-Use (SIMPLIFIED) Rockford, Illinois

Residential	Commercial	Recreation-Entertainment-Tourism
Industrial	Priority Park Acquisition	Area Unsuitable for Development
Quasi Public Facility	Mixed Use	Future Urban Development

Goals Objectives and Implementation Strategies

LAND USE PLANNING

Reduce surplus of city-owned parcels and structures and return publicly owned vacant parcels to taxable status

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue web-based public database for all vacant land and structures available for purchase - Land Bank (R1PC), and Trustee Program	\$	Short	High
Assemble and consolidate parcels for more desirable redevelopment opportunities	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Partner with residents, businesses, and non-profits to expand vacant land management strategies	\$	Long	Low
Create List- ID parcels that will never be able to be used for reuse. Lots of what the city owns slivers, triangles, corners. Many are unwanted. Turn over to adjacent land owners	\$	Short	Low

Promote targeted infill development

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Identify current barriers associated with each Infill Area identified in the existing Comprehensive Plan	\$\$	Short	High
Market incentive packages to reduce the cost burden and encourage development in the identified Infill Areas	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Include market residential tax incentives and housing rehabilitation programs in improved outreach efforts to existing and new employers	\$\$	Medium	Low
Encourage compact and sustainable development to maximize walkability and access within neighborhood centers and commercial	\$	Long	High
Continue to encourage development in existing TIF District, Enterprise Zones, and Rivers Edge areas	\$\$	Medium	Medium
Attract new residential developments through incentives and tax abatement programs	\$\$	Medium	High
Reduction to sewer/water/building hook-up and permit fees. (Reduce costs to build through local incentives)	\$\$	Medium	Low
Replace or rehab aging housing stock	\$	Long	Medium
Strategies to address aging shopping plazas before they become blighted through lack of use	\$\$	Medium	High

Preserve and enhance natural and environmentally sensitive areas

Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Update codes and regulations to regulate development and encourage development outside of environmentally sensitive areas	\$	Medium	Medium
Use topography to direct land development taking into account slopes before new development occurs through the strategic review team	\$	Short	Medium

Establish a “green infrastructure” program to link, manage, and expand existing parks, preserves, and greenways	\$\$	Medium	Low
Establish and plan for utility corridors for future development, otherwise the potential to slow development down when water, sewer, and electric utilities are needed through private/public open space remains	\$\$\$\$	Short	High
Continue utilizing the Regional Greenways Plan for priority acquisition of critical environmentally sensitive areas	\$	Short	Low
Identify high risk areas for mitigation			
Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Continue to identify natural-hazard areas and track location	\$	Medium	High
Prepare and Implement Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for the City of Rockford	\$\$\$	Medium	High
Support regulations to improve on site stormwater management and reduce flooding damage			
Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Encourage Low Impact Development designs	\$	Short	Low
Promote integration of green infrastructure and related sustainable building elements to reduce stormwater runoff such as bioswales, rain gardens, buffers	\$	Short	Medium
Conduct regular inspections of the drainage system for proper maintenance	\$	Short	Medium
Develop an open space acquisition reuse and preservation plan targeting hazard areas	\$\$	Medium	Low
Reduce residential issues with stormwater intakes being cleaned of debris. Develop a short public service announcement through water department on the importance of clearing debris	\$	Short	High
Improve street sweeper schedule through increased routes and additional funding	\$\$	Medium	Low
Municipal boundary expansion and annexation agreements			
Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Carryout a complete reevaluation of the City’s annexation policies	\$\$	Short	High
Continue to pursue an aggressive annexation program along West State Street and other west side islands/pockets	\$\$	Short	High
Work on annexing priority areas listed in the updated annexation policies that are largely developed and where annexation will occur in small pieces	\$	Medium	Medium
Work with RRWRD to create joint agreements for any new projects which the City participates in	\$\$	Short	High
Determine long-term annexation agreements with the Villages of Winnebago, New Milford, and City of Belvidere	\$	Short	High
Prevent any new development to take place that would be on private well and septic systems within the Ultimate Annexation Boundary	\$	Short	Medium

Continue to promote targeted infill development	\$	Short	High
Opportunity exists to develop west towards Winnebago (village) due to lack of boundary agreement, this should take priority	\$	Short	High
Continue being aggressive with annexation of key development areas	\$	Short	High
Continue with strategic annexation of key properties and work to enclose all areas	\$	Short	High
Find new tools for development of Residential, Commercial, and Industrial properties			
Implementation Strategy	Cost	Timeframe	Priority
Create a locally funded Historic Trust Fund	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
Adopt a Housing Occupancy Permit requirement	\$	Medium	Medium
Amortize certain types of undesirable businesses and/or land uses	\$	Medium	Low
Create a locally funded Business Development Fund	\$\$\$	Medium	High
Create a Problem Property Resolution Team within City Hall to deal with vacant and abandoned properties that drag down the surrounding areas	\$	Medium	Medium
Utilize new City of Rockford Vacant Housing Registry program data	\$	Short	Low

Chapter Endnotes

- i https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land-use_planning
- ii <https://rockfordil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Subdivision-Ordinance-2016.pdf>
- iii <https://rockfordil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Zoning-Ordinance-Amendments-Approved-03312021.pdf>