

PLAN ELEMENT II: LAND USE

The development and use of land is the result of a complex process involving legal, social, economic and environmental aspects. This plan is just one component of the City's regulatory role in that process. As Rockford's official comprehensive land use plan, it provides a general framework to guide future long-term land development decisions and actions by both the public and private sectors. Other elements are the City's zoning, subdivision and building regulations, as well as incentives offered through various economic development and housing programs. Each of these plays a separate part in the process with each of the regulatory codes addressing a different level of development, going from the very general (land use plan) to the very specific (building code).

- ▶ **Land Use Plan** Provides a generalized map of the community showing where broad types of uses should be allowed, with more specific guidance in the accompanying text. Establishes corridors for the construction of new streets and roads.
- ▶ **Subdivision Ordinance** Governs the division of land and establishes minimum requirements for improvements such as streets, sidewalks and drainage detention areas; current ordinance adopted in 2002. Used for review of developments up to 1½ miles beyond the city limits.
- ▶ **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; current ordinance adopted in 1993, updated in 1997. 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.
- ▶ **Building Code** Governs construction and/or renovation of structures; the City adopts the most recent editions of BOCA and International Codes for Building, One and Two Family Dwellings, Electrical, Mechanical, Fire Prevention, and Property Maintenance with local amendments; and the Illinois Plumbing Code and Illinois Accessibility Code.

The efficient functioning of each of these regulations requires the cooperative efforts of several departments of city government. This is something the City has worked very hard to achieve and plans to improve in the years ahead, partly with the aid of technology. Development of a computerized geographic information system (GIS) will enable all departments to share information, thus minimizing the chances of their working at cross purposes because of conflicting information. This should not only improve staff efficiency, but also provide developers with a more direct path through the regulatory maze.



The following pages describe how the land use planning decisions were made in preparing this plan, as well as further steps that will need to be taken to implement the plan.

Basic Concepts

The land use section of the original Year 2000 Plan begins by alluding to the complexity of the development process, concluding with the statement that “. . .our land use pattern did not come about by accident; it is the result of public decisions — plans, laws and expenditures — coupled with private investment choices.”

Making land use decisions hasn't gotten any easier in the last 15-20 years; if anything, it's gotten even more complex. Now, in addition to all the standard land use issues planners have always faced, we also need to incorporate such things as brownfields, riverfront development, big box retailers and the need for affordable housing into our planning process. We also need to grow smarter. If we don't, unresolved problems such as abandoned housing and vacant storefronts will keep moving outward. The same forces affecting older parts of Rockford will affect what is now the fringe area a generation or two later. In other words, today's winners will become tomorrow's losers. We also need to consider plans that are being made by other jurisdictions near Rockford or that include Rockford, such as the Rock River Reclamation District (while they need to take our plans into consideration as well). This is done to a certain extent within the transportation planning process, but needs to be expanded to cover all land use issues. All of these things came into play in the creation of this plan and the map that goes with it.

Land Use Planning Principles

Specific principles that were considered in drawing up the map of the 2020 Plan include the following:

- ▶ **Compatibility between land uses** is the most basic concept used in this or virtually any other land use plan. Land use designations on this plan map generally reflect conventional wisdom as to what is and is not compatible in undeveloped areas. For example, whenever commercial or industrial uses are shown next to residential, they are generally office or light industrial, the types of uses considered to have the least amount of negative impact. Obviously, residences somewhere will have to have something other than other residences as neighbors. It is the job of this plan, combined with zoning and subdivision regulations, to make the impact of those adjoining uses as painless as possible.
- ▶ A second basic principle underlying this plan is the concept of requiring **full urban services** for any new development in the City or in the extraterritorial area in which it exercises subdivision control. The concept of service districts served as the cornerstone of the Year 2000 Plan. The idea behind this was for all new development within the urbanized area to use full urban services. The reasoning behind this is pretty simple. Public improvements such as water and sewer lines are expensive to install; like anyone else, the City wants to get the greatest return it can on its taxpayers' investment. One way to ensure that is not to allow any new development within the area likely to become a part of the City of Rockford to be built with private wells and septic systems. This minimizes the possibility of any new roadblocks to the efficient delivery of water and sanitary sewer services to new parts of the City.

An additional reason for requiring *full* urban services — City water; sanitary sewer; urban streets with curb, gutter, storm sewers and sidewalks; storm water detention; street layout standards for block length; and appropriate utility easements — rests with the fact that the areas in question will at some point in the future become part of the City. By having them develop to City standards from the start, we will avoid the problems inherent in trying to bring them up to standard at a later date after they're annexed. New development on the fringes has to be viewed as part of the total fabric of the City 15 or 20 years from now, not just as it exists today.

The reason for this position is evident through developments that occurred on well and septic before 1981 that have since become barriers to the orderly growth and development of the City of Rockford. Much of the City is surrounded by these areas, and the residents in time demand sanitary sewer and/or City water when their private systems fail. Retrofitting these areas is very costly, and the residents often oppose annexation because they have benefitted from their proximity to the City without having to pay City taxes.

Finally, development on private well and septic systems wastes land, an invaluable commodity, especially in this part of the country where some of the most productive farmland in the world exists. While Rockford certainly is no longer a community of farmers, it most certainly is still — and always will be — a community of consumers. It behooves us to afford this land as much protection as we possibly can.

The outer limits of planned urban development were drawn through a combination of the Ultimate Annexation Boundary adopted by Rockford City Council in 1984 and updated in 1993 as part of a comprehensive

package of annexation policies, and through growth management studies to determine which areas around the City are most likely to be able to be served by sanitary sewer by 2020. The latter was done in conjunction with information provided by the Rock River Water Reclamation District. In this way, we have ensured as much as possible that the public is aware of a desire by City decision makers to incorporate all of these areas into the City, and the physical ability to do so within reasonable cost constraints. Where these studies showed areas within the 1½ miles of the city limits where the City has planning jurisdiction and where it is highly unlikely that sanitary sewer would ever be available, the new plan map shows the designation “SRA.” This stands for “subdivision review area,” and is intended to ensure that the City retains review authority for new subdivisions proposed within these areas. This is important for several reasons — to ensure (a) the continuity of the transportation system through the subdivision process; (b) the adequacy of the infrastructure in emergency situations, since the City may be called upon to provide emergency services from time to time; (c) the adequacy of public improvements so that if these areas are annexed at some point in the future, the City will not be faced with demands to rebuild public improvements immediately upon annexation; and (d) if a major policy decision by the Rock River Water Reclamation District changes the Urban Service District, the City can take this into account and prevent premature development.

- ▶ Equally important is the aim of achieving **balanced growth patterns** citywide. While it may not be possible to overcome the imbalances of the past 20 to 30 years right away, we can make significant progress in this area. The West State Street Corridor Study begun by RATS in 2001 and completed in 2003 represents a key first step in this process. The resulting plan was not just a street improvement plan, but a comprehensive improvement plan for the West State corridor from downtown to Meridian Road. It includes landscaping and signage treatments, building façade enhancement and renovation proposals, enhanced roadway lighting standards, and a potential bike path alignment. Proposals from the West State Street Corridor Study have been incorporated into the 2020 Plan to ensure consistency between the two plans. Implementation of its proposals will help ensure not only a more balanced growth between the east and west sides, but also a greater diversity of retail, service and employment opportunities on Rockford’s west side than exists now. Other key components to this principal are the proposal to modify existing annexation policies so that development in rapidly growing areas will occur in a more logical pattern, as well as taking similar comprehensive looks at such major corridors as North and South Main Streets and Kishwaukee Street.



- ▶ A fourth element in generating the land use component of the plan map is including the impact of **proposed new streets and roads**. While new roadways do not always have an immediate major impact on neighboring land, the possibility certainly exists each time a new one is built, especially an arterial. The most dramatic examples of changes resulting from new roads built in the last 10 years are the rapid transformation of the North Perryville Road and East Riverside Boulevard corridors from farmland to a mixture of residential, commercial and office development. On the other hand, extension of Seminary Street to Harrison Avenue has not wrought significant land use changes, although it certainly has eased circulation within the area. Clearly location makes a difference in the degree and type of impact a street improvement has. Seminary is not in a major growth corridor, plus, near Harrison, it is encumbered by being a Brownfield in the Superfund Area, hence its limited impact. North Perryville and East Riverside, on the other hand, are both in the heart of the northeast growth area. These differences in potential impact had to be evaluated as the plan map was prepared.
- ▶ **Existing land use** and subdivision plats that have been recorded but are not developed yet also play a major role in drawing up a plan map. In developed areas, the plan map usually reflects what is there. However, some changes have been made in areas that are in transition now or may be within the next 10 to 15 years. A prime example of the latter is along the east bank of the Rock River downtown. Historically, industrial uses have been located there to take advantage of the Rock River and/or the rail line that goes up Madison Street. Neither of these resources is a factor now for the industries that remain. Consequently, the plan map envisions this area, especially north of State Street, evolving into one of mixed use buildings that

would house retail shops, restaurants and offices on their lower floors and residents above. This is not a new idea — the same approach was espoused in the 1986 Bullseye! plan for downtown and is a centerpiece of the 1997 “Neighborhood Concepts” plan prepared by River East. The factors used in mapping these transitional areas were (a) determining what would be a viable use in the area; (b) what would have the greatest positive impact on neighboring uses; and (c), in cases where older, possibly historical buildings are present, what types of things could make use of existing buildings.

- ▶ Getting ***maximum impact from the visibility achieved from heavily traveled roadways*** such as I-90 has a limited impact on the land use map in terms of geographic area, but can potentially have a huge impact in terms of putting the community’s best foot forward. In drawing up the proposed land use maps for this plan, roadways such as I-90, the new Springfield/Harrison connection, and Perryville Road were viewed as an asset to be tapped, both as a potential showcase for what Rockford has to offer, and as a significant tax base. For that reason, the plan map shows commercial, office, technology parks and industrial uses along these highways. The plan map generally avoids placing residential uses along these roadways, and recommends a policy of not allowing development of tax exempt uses in these areas.
- ▶ ***Other plans*** adopted by the City earlier that have a land use component were referred to as this plan map was prepared. Most of these are alluded to in the first section of this document on pages 4 and 5.
- ▶ Incorporating ***Smart Growth Principles*** in the land use plan map is essential to encouraging development and development patterns that will retain and attract businesses, industries and residents to the City. What is termed “Smart Growth” really only means making informed decisions about how and where to grow. By using Smart Growth, Rockford should be able to grow in ways that support economic development and jobs; create strong neighborhoods with a range of housing, commercial and transportation choices; and make the best use of existing public investments in streets, sewers and so forth.

There are ten major Smart Growth principles and literally hundreds of related policies identified in the ICMA “Getting to Smart Growth” publications. Many of these principles are already in place to a greater or lesser degree in the City of Rockford, but there is considerable opportunity to further incorporate these principles into the City’s decision-making process as we continue ask the questions” how and where should we grow” and “what do we need to do to strengthen the vitality of the City as it is today.” The following smart growth related policies and actions are recommended as part of the 2020 Plan:

- ▶ ***Promote mixed use development*** Use Zoning Ordinance revisions and enhanced zoning techniques to encourage mixed use developments and flexibility in land uses, both in new construction and in adaptive reuse; assist with the financing of mixed-use developments; incorporate planned mixed uses into subarea/neighborhood plans; and provide incentives for ground floor retail and upper level residential in new development and re-use of existing structures.
- ▶ ***Take advantage of compact building design*** Provide open space in compactly developed areas, such as the Mid Town District; manage existing on-street and surface parking lots effectively; redevelop vacant warehouse space into residential units; reduce minimum lot size requirements in appropriate areas; and take steps to provide a wide variety of housing types and housing densities in appropriate locations with appropriate transitions between different densities
- ▶ ***Create a range of housing opportunities and choices*** Promote employer-assisted housing programs; encourage housing downtown and in or near existing commercial areas; develop and implement a program to identify and dispose of vacant land and abandoned buildings as part of the neighborhood revitalization process; and investigate the adoption of special rehabilitation building codes to regulate the renovation of existing structures.
- ▶ ***Create a walkable community*** Use GOB and Federal (TEA-21) funding to retrofit existing arterial and collector streets with sidewalks in conformance with a pedestrian master plan/ sidewalk improvement plan; require building and site plan design which makes commercial areas more walkable; design streets to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings; consider traffic calming techniques where traffic speed through residential neighborhoods is excessive; connect walkways, parking lots, greenways and

developments so as not to create barriers to access; provide sidewalks for safe pedestrian access to schools, including the Community College; use trees and other green infrastructure to provide shelter and separation for pedestrians from automobile traffic; provide safe pedestrian routes to transit; and make places walkable for aging populations and those with disabilities

- ▶ *Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place* Establish matching grants or revolving loan funds for historic preservation; turn underused highways into boulevards; develop a comprehensive wayfinding system to and within downtown ; highlight cultural assets through public art and event nights; make retail centers attractive destinations; revitalize the entire waterfront, starting downtown; plant trees throughout the community and preserve existing trees during new construction; create active and secure open spaces; define neighborhoods with visual cues – signage, entryways, street lighting etc.; preserve scenic vistas through the appropriate location of telecommunications towers and improved control of billboards; and enact clear design guidelines so that streets, buildings, and public spaces work together to create a sense of place.



- ▶ *Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas* Create a network of trails and greenways; partner with non-governmental organizations to acquire and protect land, including the purchase of development rights; support tree preservation through public-private partnerships; and employ development strategies that better protect and preserve open space in edge areas by focusing development in areas where adequate infrastructure already exists. One simple step the City can take to help ensure that environmental factors are given due consideration in the development process is to make sure that groups such as the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club receive agendas for the Zoning Board of Appeals. This would give them notice of most development proposals before the City.

- ▶ *Strengthen and direct development towards the existing urban area* Strengthen state and local brownfields programs; consider the use of split-rate property taxes to encourage development on vacant or blighted pieces of land in existing communities; conduct an “infill checkup” to evaluate and prioritize infill and brownfield sites for development; facilitate programs and support community-based organizations for neighborhood revitalization; create economic incentives for businesses and homeowners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure; and identify priority areas for receipt of infrastructure funding based on cost/benefit analysis.



- ▶ *Provide a variety of transportation choices* Require sidewalks in all developments; evaluate parking needs, parking requirements and their impacts on pedestrian movement and transit service; cluster freight facilities near the airport and rail terminals; consult with emergency responders when developing smart growth plans; use cleared brownfields for freight distribution and consolidation centers; provide transit users with customized transit information; and create a comprehensive bicycling program.

- ▶ *Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective* Educate elected leaders and public officials about smart growth; direct development along corridors to create stronger districts ; simplify the Zoning Ordinance and other land development regulations; implement geographic information system-based planning into the development process; provide financial incentives to aid the development of smart growth projects; conduct smart growth audits of development regulations; encourage demand for smart growth through consumer incentives and display zoning regulations and design goals in pictorial fashion to better illustrate development goals.

- ▶ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions Conduct community visioning exercises to determine how and where Rockford should grow; cultivate relationships with schools, colleges, and universities; bring developers and the development community into the visioning process; conduct place audits to determine barriers and opportunities for smart growth; develop community indicators to make sure that development is meeting community goals; illustrate complex concepts with photographs, videos and other imagery.

All of these concepts were taken into consideration as the map for this plan was prepared. With these providing the basic framework, land use decisions were made based on whether an area was (a) developed and stable, (b) developed and either in transition or facing transition in the foreseeable future, (c) undeveloped and facing strong development pressure, or (d) undeveloped and facing challenges for development to occur.

It should be borne in mind that, except for the proposed targeted infill areas, the 2020 Plan map shows generalized land use. As a follow up to this Plan, the City should begin the process of preparing more specific subarea plans for those areas that are largely undeveloped at this stage, and for those that are in transition. Such plans would include the following information:

- ▶ Existing and planned major water and sanitary sewer trunk lines;
- ▶ Existing and planned collector and arterial roadways;
- ▶ Planned macro stormwater management facilities;
- ▶ Sensitive environmental features that need to be preserved;
- ▶ Existing and planned land use; and
- ▶ Properties that may qualify for designation as landmarks or historic districts by the City of Rockford.
- ▶ Cost/benefit analysis of providing infrastructure for development

The first such plan was completed in 2003 with the Mid Town North Neighborhood Plan.

Planning Rockford's Geographic Boundaries

In 1984, the City adopted a comprehensive set of annexation policies for the first time. These were designed to address several concerns — irregular boundaries and unincorporated islands, both of which led to inefficiencies in the delivery of City services; inconsistency in how annexations were handled; lack of a defined limit for City expansion; and the need for a comprehensive annexation program in order to protect the City's economic base. Over the past 20 years, Rockford has annexed roughly 20 square miles and brought in properties with assessed valuations today of over \$210 million, which translates into approximately \$5 million in property tax dollars annually.



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

- ▶ **Delivery of service** A major motivating factor in the annexation program is to create some degree of logic to the City's corporate limits. 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 straighter we can make our boundaries, and the fewer internal holes there are, the better both Rockford and Winnebago County will be able to provide fast, efficient service to their citizens.

- ▶ **Planning public improvements** Just as important as determining who serves what areas now is trying to plan for who will most likely serve what areas 5, 10 or 15 years from now. For example, knowing our ultimate limits 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 the latter should be looped and where they should be “straight” so they can be further extended in the future.

In pursuing its annexation policies, the City succeeded in bringing four islands in the Ken-Rock area into the City (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.

In some ways, potentially the most important element of the annexation program is the agreements worked out between Rockford and three of its municipal neighbors — Cherry Valley, Loves Park and Machesney Park. By having long-term agreements saying who can annex where, 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. 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 next 20 years, Rockford should work to achieve the following:

- ▶ Carrying out a complete reevaluation of the City’s annexation policies and practices, with special attention being paid to the following issues:
 - ▶ How and when incentives and subsidies will be made available;
 - ▶ Balance the demands for growth with the need to provide public improvements in older areas that have been in the City for years;
 - ▶ Acceptable timing for preannexation agreements in areas where there is no threat to annex to another municipality and where development is premature; and
 - ▶ Revision of the priority annexation areas and the Ultimate Annexation Boundary. This should be completed as soon as possible and then revised every 10 years.
- ▶ Pursue the same sort of aggressive annexation program along West State Street that the City did for East State Street during the 1980s and ‘90s. Such a program should be based on the findings of the West State Corridor Study conducted under the auspices of RATS. As part of this, the Department of Public Works recommends waiving connection fees and offering free water hookups as incentives to annex properties that act as major barriers to balanced growth and economic development in low- and moderate-income areas. For example, because of the increasing growth of the Village of Winnebago, in addition to new housing on the West side, the West State and Meridian intersection could have the potential for larger commercial development. However, there are several unincorporated properties that keep this property from being served by public utilities and being annexed into the City. Developing and implementing a program similar to the one the City used to get to the Tollway should lead to more services for this part of the community.
- ▶ Continue to annex along East State Street to fill in the few gaps remaining east of Perryville Road, and to expand into Boone County when development pressures warrant such expansion. The latter should occur in concert with property owners, with Rockford annexing only into those areas where it has excess sewer capacity. This is a fairly limited area extending less than a mile into Boone County, including roughly a half mile on either side of State Street. (See Plan Maps 43 and 44.) As annexation occurs, the City should make every effort to protect and take advantage of the distinctive natural character of this area, possibly through design guidelines incorporated into an overlay district in the Zoning Ordinance.

- ▶ Continue to work on priority areas listed in the annexation policies that are largely developed and where annexation will occur in small pieces. This includes West State Street, the northeast islands around Edgebrook and Highcrest, Charles Street, and unincorporated areas in the southwest and southeast, including properties south of US 20 that are east of 20th Street and north of Samuelson Road. Primary emphasis should be on areas where uneven boundaries or islands act as barriers to balanced growth, and areas where there is a lack of economic development activity.
- ▶ Work with the Rock River Water Reclamation District to create the same type of joint agreements that the City had with the Spring Creek Basin for any new projects in which the City participates.
- ▶ Develop long-term annexation agreements with the Villages of Winnebago and New Millford, and the City of Belvidere.
- ▶ Prevent new development on private well and septic systems within the Ultimate Annexation Boundary.

Promoting Targeted Infill Development

Many areas of the City of Rockford contain potentially valuable land that is underused, primarily because of land ownership patterns detrimental to land assembly for orderly development. Developments of large, single-ownership “greenfield” tracts have been the norm in the Rockford area for decades, simply because they are the easiest to develop. Greenfield development, however, often requires extension of utilities, highway and street construction, often at considerable cost to the City. In the meantime, many potentially valuable areas located along arterial streets have been left behind in the process.



“Infill” is development of vacant land that is surrounded by developed land. The term means literally to fill in the land. The City has put together development proposals for the underused areas which seem to have the most potential for infill development but which require land assembly and the construction of public streets before development can take place. Several of these areas have had development proposals which have failed due to the difficulties in assembling the land to enable orderly development.

It is likely that these areas would develop if the City were to provide financial assistance for street construction costs, similar to what it provides in its Industrial Incentives Program. [See Appendix C: Implementation of the Targeted Infill Development Program (TIDA).] This financial assistance would encourage development by offsetting the excessive land assembly costs inherent in the obsolete “farmette” type of land ownership along these arterial streets. Many of the land owners assume a high value for their property because of frontage on an arterial, for example, even though their individual parcel may have only 100 feet of frontage and 600 feet of depth. Control of zoning has prevented strip commercial development with multiple access drives, but these areas have been left underused. As a result, the tax base is also underdeveloped, and there are major gaps in the local and collector street system as new development has bypassed these areas in favor of larger tracts requiring no land assembly.

Area Selection Several areas have been identified throughout Rockford that are in need of some type of infill development. Nine are identified in this Plan as the ones most in need of infill development. The areas were selected based on their overall importance as they relate to development and maintenance of the City, using the following criteria:

- ▶ The area contains underused or partially developed land.
- ▶ It is in or adjacent to the City, including some areas that were forcibly annexed by the City at some point in the past.
- ▶ It needs a catalyst for development to occur, such as City participation in construction of a collector level road, water mains, or sanitary sewer.
- ▶ Current land ownership patterns are detrimental to land assembly and orderly development.

The purpose for establishing these infill areas is not just to promote development of currently vacant land, but also to establish land use designations that will promote the best use of each area while trying to protect and preserve existing uses. Standards for infill development are straightforward. The development should provide transitioning and adequate buffering from new commercial and higher density uses to currently existing low density and residential uses. Any new development should be harmonious in both use and design to its existing surroundings and uses. New streets will be designed to promote better access and use of infill areas. Ideally, new development in these areas will set the standard for private development in all parts of the City.

The nine infill areas are discussed in more detail in Appendix C. Three maps are included for each area – one to identify the current status of public utilities, one the zoning and land use, and one the proposed land use and street system plan for each area.

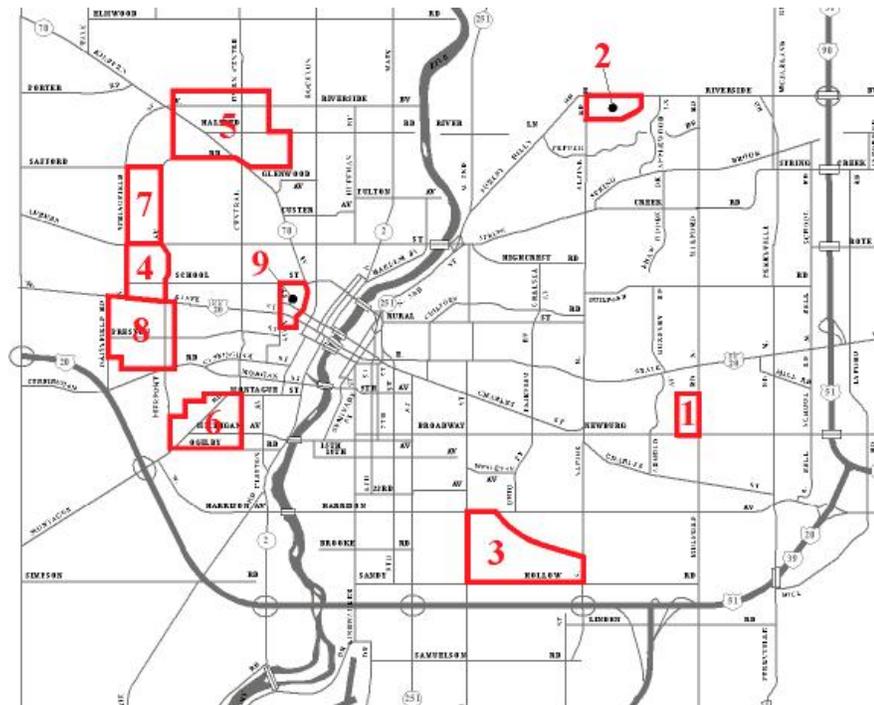
The nine infill areas are as follows:

- ▶ **Area 1:** Newburg Road to Alma Drive, between Phelps Avenue and South Mulford Road (87 acres)
- ▶ **Area 2:** Southeast quadrant of North Alpine Road and East Riverside Boulevard (76 acres)
- ▶ **Area 3:** Sandy Hollow Road to the railroad to the north, between 20th Street and South Alpine Road (717 acres)
- ▶ **Area 4:** West State Street to Auburn Street, between North Springfield and North Pierpont Avenues (225 acres)
- ▶ **Area 5:** Safford Road/Kilburn Avenue to West Riverside Boulevard, between North Springfield Avenue/West Riverside Boulevard and Fleetwood Drive/Idlewood Terrace (1,153 acres)
- ▶ **Area 6:** Ogilby Road to Montague Street, between South Pierpont and South Central Avenues (434 acres)
- ▶ **Area 7:** Auburn Street to Safford Road, between North Springfield and North Pierpont Avenues (310 acres)
- ▶ **Area 8:** Liberty Street to West State Street, between Daisyfield Road and Lexington Avenue (325 acres)
- ▶ **Area 9:** Elm Street to School Street, between North Avon Street and Fairgrounds Park and Kilburn Avenue to the east (88 acres)

These nine Targeted Infill Development Areas present similar needs and solutions, although each has unique features and challenges. All areas require extension of public utility services and roads, but how far those services will need to be extended, and how many roads, are just a few of the differences these areas possess. All met the criteria established for selection in the TIDA Program, each to its own degree, providing separate challenges unique to each area.

Rockford Targeted Infill Areas

 Infill Boundary



Planning in Context to the Surrounding Area

Context-sensitive design has recently become a catchphrase in transportation planning. What it involves is taking land use, environmental and other factors into consideration when designing a new roadway or improving an old one. In reality, this concept needs to be applied to everything the City does, not just streets. Nothing that any of us does occurs in a vacuum. Whether it is land use, historic preservation, housing, economic development, public works, finance, police or fire — virtually every decision made by the City should be sensitive to the context or environment which that decision impacts. In preparing this plan, we have tried to take into consideration the variety of factors that impact an area in determining what would be the most appropriate land use, and what would be acceptable transportation improvements. Infill development, for example, must be sensitive to its surroundings if it is to succeed.

Finding and Using New Tools for Redevelopment

The City of Rockford will need to investigate the development of new tools to use in addressing the various challenges it faces. While use of conventional tools, such as federal CDBG funds and creation of TIF districts, has led to significant improvements in some of Rockford's distressed and transitional neighborhoods, both residential and commercial, they will only go so far. The City makes every effort to ensure that it gets the greatest impact possible from expenditure of those dollars. In the immediate future, we will review how all the currently available resources have been used in a comprehensive manner, evaluate their overall effectiveness and, if needed, propose changes for their future use. For example, the suggestion was made during public input meetings on this Plan that the City be "more creative" in how it uses TIF funds, including setting up a revolving loan fund that could benefit a lot of people, not just one or two new projects each year. To take the next step up, the City should investigate the feasibility of such things as:

- ▶ Creation of a locally funded Housing Trust Fund that would be free of federal and state requirements. This could be used for a variety of things, ranging from helping people meet zoning requirements by paving their driveways to providing assistance to homeowners in historic districts. A similar approach has been used in Des Moines, resulting in the investment of \$115,750,000 in loans and grants to assist over 2,500 housing units since 1991 by the Neighborhood Finance Corporation..
- ▶ Adoption of a Housing Occupancy Permit requirement to help ensure that the community’s rental housing is decent, safe and sanitary.
- ▶ Amortization of certain types of undesirable businesses and/or land uses.
- ▶ Creation of a locally funded Business Development Fund to provide assistance to businesses that would be less restrictive than federally or state-funded programs.
- ▶ Creation of a Problem Property Resolution Team within City Hall to deal with vacant and abandoned properties that drag down the surrounding area. This Team could concern itself with residential and non-residential properties as well.

For those new programs requiring a local source of funding, the City should investigate the following possibilities. Unfortunately, virtually all of them would require passage of special legislation at the state level; all, however, are worth at least looking at.

- ▶ Adding a fee to real estate transactions within the City;
- ▶ Adding another ¼% to the sales tax for business development;
- ▶ Establishing a citywide Special Service Area to create a funding base;
- ▶ Establishing a business registration fee; and/or
- ▶ Establishing a system of development impact fees for new capital improvements in new developments. with first priority of such fees going to park and open space. This would involve creation of a special fund at the Rockford Park District where cash-in-lieu funds could be kept for use in areas where the funds were generated. (See page 70 for further discussion of this.)

Land Use Areas : Current and Future

We cannot yet determine how many acres we have proposed for each use on the 2020 Plan map. However, we should be able to do this within a year using WinGIS geographic data. In the meantime, we have been able to estimate acreages for current land uses within Rockford, as shown in Table 8 below.

While it is difficult to estimate exact trends in land use areas, 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. Residential and commercial uses were more likely to be mixed together, consuming less land than today when homes are built on larger lots and commercial areas are surrounded by extensive parking areas. In the future, although some industrial land will either be adapted to new uses or remain vacant because it is no longer suitable for industrial use, this trend will be more than offset by new industrial developments involved in transportation, distribution, packaging and other related industries that are attracted to the area by the Greater Rockford Airport, Global III in Rochelle, and facilities like UPS.

Table 8 Estimated Current Area by Use, 2003				
Land Use Area	Acres	Parcels	Square Miles	% of Total Area
Residential	12,967	48,109	20.3	34%
Industrial	5,500	2,335	8.6	14%

Commercial	2,986	3,259	4.7	8%
Public/Quasi-Public	5,736	1,228	9.0	15%
Vacant	2,430	2,215	3.8	6%
Streets, waterways and drainage (approximate)	8,750	N/A	13.7	23%
Total	38,369	57,146	60	100%

In preparing the Plan maps, we left substantial areas of older industrial development in industrial categories despite their limited usefulness as industrial sites. This includes some significant brownfield areas along Harrison Avenue, Kishwaukee Street and 11th Street. Limitations imposed by their brownfield status are compounded by the fact that virtually all of the industrial structures are obsolescent by today's standards. However, because of the huge area involved, the limited funds for remediation, and the unknown capacity for reclaiming these properties as viable uses within the next 15-20 years, the map has been left to reflect past and existing uses in most areas. As the City's expertise and capacity in this area evolves, the Plan will be modified to reflect that.

Plan Map Designations

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

- ▶ **Multiple designation** All sites included in this category are considered appropriate for more than one use. To determine which uses are included, match the letters shown on the site with letters in the map legend. For example, a site marked RM-IL would be considered suitable for medium-density residential and/or light industrial development. However, initial development will impact the subsequent land use pattern within each multiple designation area.
- ▶ **Future Urban Development (FUD):** Areas that are unlikely to have access to sanitary sewer by 2020, but which will 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.
- ▶ **Residential Categories:** In addition to strictly residential uses, allow other nonresidential 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.
 - ▷ **Subdivision Review Area (SRA):** Areas within the City's planning jurisdiction (within 1½ miles of the City limits) that are unlikely to receive sanitary sewer service. The City retains review authority over any new subdivisions in these areas to ensure such things as continuity of the transportation system, and adequate infrastructure to allow entrance of all forms of emergency services into the subdivision.
 - ▷ **Low-Density Residential (RL):** A range of 2-7 dwelling units per acre; could include single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes or any combination of these.
 - ▷ **Medium-Density Residential (RM):** A range of 5-15 dwelling units per acre; could include single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, apartments, or any combination of these.
 - ▷ **High-Density Residential (RH):** More than 15 dwelling units per acre; could include townhouses, garden apartments, multistory apartments, or any combination of these.
- ▶ **Commercial Categories**

- ▷ *Retail (C)*: Stores selling merchandise; no outside storage. Example: Clothing store.
 - ▷ *Office Overlay (CO/O)*: 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.
 - ▷ *Recreation/Entertainment/Tourist (CR)*: Establishments catering to tourist, convention and local markets. Examples: Motels and restaurants.
 - ▷ *Office (CO)*: Concentrations of office space. Examples: real estate office, medical office.
 - ▷ *Heavy Commercial (CH)*: Activities requiring a large land area but with low traffic volume; may include substantial outdoor storage. Examples: car dealer, lumber yard.
 - ▷ *Commercial Mixed Use (CD)*: 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.
 - ▷ *Central Business District (CBD)*: Rockford's downtown, also known as the River District; includes a broad range of commercial and residential uses.
- ▶ **Industrial Categories**
- ▷ *Light Industry (IL)*: Office/research parks; small, clean manufacturing plants; and other industrial-type uses that would not negatively impact adjacent residential areas.
 - ▷ *Tech Industry (T)*: Technology-based employment centers; environmentally clean operations; no outdoor storage.
 - ▷ *General Industry (IG)*: Most manufacturing and processing operations, including large plants and warehouses; and uses generating large amounts of truck, rail or auto traffic.
 - ▷ *Heavy Industry (IH)*: Potentially hazardous or noxious uses that should be kept separate from non-industrial activities.
- ▶ **Public/Quasi-Public Categories**
- ▷ *Existing Facility (PE)*: 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).
 - ▷ *Priority Acquisition Area (PA)*: 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. This designation was also used for the new federal courthouse site and the Winnebago County Justice Center, both in downtown.
 - ▷ *Area Not Suitable for Development (U)*: Major wetlands, floodways and/or forested areas generally not suitable for development but may be suitable for long-term open space use or agriculture. During the public comment period for this Plan, it was pointed out that flood zones are included in two different categories, PA and U. The suggestion was made that any flood zones be shown as a combination of these two (i.e., as PA-U) on the maps to distinguish them from forested areas that need to be protected. During the next two years, the City will work closely with the Winnebago County Forest Preserve and the Rockford Park District to determine what the most appropriate designation for these areas should be.

► **Transportation Categories**

- ▷ *Freeway*: Controlled-access, divided highway with at least four lanes. There are no traffic stops and no cross traffic. Examples: I-90, I-39 and US 20 By-Pass.
- ▷ *Arterial*: Major street or road providing through-traffic movement between areas across the City. Examples: Springfield/Harrison.
- ▷ *Collector*: Major interior street providing circulation within and between neighborhoods and connecting them to arterials. Examples: Arnold Avenue, Halsted Road.
- ▷ *Local street*: Provides internal circulation within a neighborhood.
- ▷ *Railroad*: All existing rail lines are shown.
- ▷ *Pathway*: Paths for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Plan map only shows what are termed Class I facilities, i.e., pathways that are constructed completely separate from roadways. Examples: Perryville Pathway, Mel Anderson Pathway.

Plan Map Changes

The original Year 2000 Plan map was adopted by City Council in 1981, followed by several sets of amendments over the years, the last one being in 1994. These were usually based on a combination of things — major zoning amendments; requests from property owners; the sale of public buildings, usually schools; construction of new transportation projects not anticipated in the Year 2000 Plan, such as the I-90/Riverside Boulevard interchange; or incorporation of elements from other plans, such as adoption of the bikeway plan in 1982.

What sets the 2020 Plan apart from these earlier amendments is that it represents the first time that both the map and the text have been reviewed and modified on a comprehensive basis. While this has resulted in very little change in some parts of the map, it has completely altered its complexion in other areas. Significant changes from the 2010 Plan map include

- Reduction of several areas from medium-density to low-density residential, including a large area west of Springfield Avenue between Safford and Auburn Roads (Map 15); several large sections in the area bounded by Rural, 9th and Kishwaukee Streets and 23rd Avenue (Maps 18 and 24); and smaller areas near Pine Manor Park (Map 23), south of Aldeen Park (Map 19), northwest of the intersection of Newburg and Perryville Roads (Map 20), south and west of the intersection of Perryville and Weaver Roads (Map 8), the northwest corner of 35th Street and Blackhawk Road (Map 30), and south and west of Blackhawk Road and I-39 (Map 32). This is simply a recognition of the fact that these areas either are low-density or are platted and zoned for low-density development.
- Reduction of residential densities in the Bluffside Heights area from high- and medium-density to low-density residential (Map 29). Again, this is in recognition of existing and platted development patterns.
- Massive changes in the downtown area resulting from a general lowering of densities and from addition of a new category (CD) designed to correspond to the new C-4 district in the Zoning Ordinance. The most significant changes downtown involved changing from multiple designations that included high-density residential to either the new CD designation on the east side (discussed in the next paragraph), or to a lower residential density on the west side. The latter recognizes the importance of maintaining near-downtown residential neighborhoods and their historic housing stock as just that, residential neighborhoods. In earlier plans, these older homes had been viewed as having more value as potential offices or demolition sites than as homes. The one area where the RH-CBD designation has been retained is in the core of west downtown and the area immediately south of it, going as far south as the railroad tracks. Similar changes were made in two of Rockford's other older commercial areas, Broadway and 7th Street.

While the Year 2000 Plan did include guidelines for Rockford's downtown and older retail streets, these

focused solely on the commercial aspects of these areas. Even the CBD category on the plan map makes reference only to commercial uses. The reality in these areas is that uses are frequently mixed between commercial, office, residential and public/quasi-public development. It is this mixture of uses that gives each of these areas — primarily, downtown, 7th Street and Broadway — its distinctive character. To limit any of them just to commercial use would be to alter their historic character and to limit their chances of future health and growth. Consequently, this plan recognizes these areas for what they are and proposes that they retain that same character. The actual mixture of uses will undoubtedly change over time, but the basic notion of stirring all types of commercial and residential uses together remains the same.

- ▶ Related to these changes in the maps for downtown and other older commercial streets is another new category, that of the office overlay, which shows up on the maps as CO/O. The intent here is to allow office development if it occurs in existing buildings where those buildings have historic value. In most cases, these are large Victorian-era homes similar to those that have already been converted to office use on North Court Street. The determination of whether or not something has historic value will be based on historic resource surveys by the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission.
- ▶ Changes resulting from construction of the new I-90 interchange at Riverside Boulevard instead of at Illinois Route 173 as shown on the earlier plan, although most of these changes were recognized in the 2010 Plan. The combined impact of building the interchange and changing Riverside Boulevard from a two-lane rural road to the current four-lane arterial led to a change from planned residential to planned (and, in many cases, developed) commercial and office development.
- ▶ Significant changes in designated uses south of the Greater Rockford Airport. The 2010 Plan shows a fairly large area north of the Kishwaukee River as undevelopable. In this plan, we have left open the option of developing a portion of that area along New Belt Line Road as light industrial, always assuming that sufficient fill is brought in to raise the area out of the floodway and that any required wetlands mitigation is carried out. However, substantial areas are also designated for public acquisition south of the river going as far east as South Bend Road, with a smaller strip along the north bank of the Kishwaukee similarly designated in order to protect river access and trees along the river. The final change around the Airport was to change the area east of this “PA” area from a multiple designation of RS/IG to one of simply IG. This is to allow ample area for expansion for industrial uses that may want to locate near the Airport.
- ▶ Change from industrial designations to low-density residential. This occurred in two places — the west side of 35th Street at Linden Road and in a large part of the southwest quadrant of US 20 and Montague Road. The former is to correspond with approved development; the latter reflects the belief that a sufficient amount of land is planned for industrial use just inside the Bypass at this location, and that this area and its street system are more suitable for residential use.
- ▶ Change from industrial uses to either straight office or a multiple designation of office and light industry in the northeast quadrant of West Harrison Avenue and Montague Road. This change was made because, while both the original Year 2000 Plan and the 2010 Plan made plentiful allowance for industrial development in this part of southwest Rockford, it made no provision for office development. For southwest Rockford to develop on a par with other parts of the City, it needs office space as well as industry.
- ▶ Complete change of the West State Street corridor to match what is proposed in the RATS Corridor Study described above on page 56.
- ▶ Lower the intensity of planned industrial areas between Sandy Hollow Road and US 20 east of Alpine Road from heavy to general industrial. The lower intensity was considered more appropriate in view of how the Linden Road area in general is developing.
- ▶ Change the multiple designation of the area north of Spring Brook Road and west of Paulson Road from IL/CO to RM/CO. Additional residential development was considered more in keeping with the residential uses south of Spring Brook Road than the industrial proposed before.
- ▶ Add new public acquisition areas around Page Park (Maps 4 and 15). In the 2010 Plan, these areas were

either not planned for or were designated “U” for undevelopable.

- ▶ Addition of several new areas to the plan, including a portion of Boone County. This was done for two primary reasons — the expanding corporate limits of the City of Rockford (20 square miles in the last 20 years), and the results of the growth management studies alluded to above which show the limits of feasible sanitary sewer expansion.
- ▶ Maps included in the 2020 Plan that are not in the 2010 Plan are 1, 27, 35-37, and 40-44.
- ▶ Finally, the areas proposed for inclusion in the Targeted Infill Development Program described on pages 32-34 are outlined on the primary plan maps. Detailed information about each of the nine infill areas is included in Appendix C.

Detailed Review of Major Plan Map Changes

More specifically, we compared the new 2020 Plan map with the current zoning map. This showed us several areas that are either in transition or which have changed altogether. Several areas have land uses that are now obsolete due to transportation changes, changes in floodway and floodplain management, increased emphasis on the reuse of riverfront for public uses and gathering places that benefit from the river location for its aesthetic value, and the need to strengthen downtown areas. In these areas with obsolete land uses (and, usually, zoning that permits these uses), the 2020 Plan points us in a new direction. In some cases, the 2020 Plan recognizes and responds to other plans for major changes that preceded this planning process. In other cases, the recommended changes reflect a new recognition of the need for change. In each major area, the 2020 Plan map and the current zoning map are presented and the need for change identified in the paragraphs below.

▶ **Map 17A/18A**

- ▷ (North Madison Street from Prairie to Whitman Streets, both sides) Most of this area is currently zoned I-1, Light Industrial. The 2020 Plan calls for a transition to CD, Commercial Mixed Use, to complement the strategic location on the Rock River across from Indian Terrace and the museum complexes. The existing industry in this area originally dates back to the location of the railroad in the center of Madison Street. None of these industries are able to use the rail line because there are no longer any rail sidings to service them. Because of this and the shortage of room for these industries to expand, this area is recommended for study for a possible zoning overlay district to encourage its transition to mixed commercial uses. Some of the existing structures could be converted to commercial and/or residential uses, especially if those uses were established and zoning did not allow new industrial uses. This conversion process has already begun with the rezoning of the old brewery on Prairie Street to C-4 for redevelopment as a mixed use building with a variety of commercial uses (retail, restaurants and offices) and residential.
- ▷ (Bounded by Court, Church, Cedar and Chestnut Streets) This two-block area is zoned industrial. The vacant Metz Bakery building will be reused for office and other uses. The block bounded by Church, Court, Cedar and Green Streets will be closed for the new Federal Courthouse. The Plan map reflects these changes.

▶ **Map 18**

(West side of 7th Street between 8th and 10th Avenues, and east side of 7th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues) This area includes three block faces of 7th Street, all of which are currently zoned R-2 but which lie between two substantial areas zoned commercial or industrial. Conversion of existing homes to offices, beauty shops or other commercial uses would be appropriate in this area in the future, so the area is shown on the Plan map as RL-CO/O.

▶ **Map 23**

- ▷ (West side of Alpine Road, 16th Avenue to just north of Cleveland Avenue) This area is zoned R-3, C-1 and R-1, reflecting a mixture of offices and multifamily and single-family homes. The 2020 Plan calls for RM/CO (medium-density residential/commercial office), recognizing that these uses are more compatible with the Alpine Road location than single-family residential. For orderly redevelopment, the existing single-family homes could be converted to office (as has already taken place) with access to Alpine Road consolidated to existing points of access.
- ▷ (American Road intersection with Alpine Road) This area is currently zoned R-1. To facilitate the construction of American Road to the west and the provision of a new collector to link with Reed Avenue, several of the homes on O'Connell Street must be assembled and O'Connell closed at Alpine Road for safety reasons. The 2020 Plan calls for future commercial development in conjunction with the changes in the road configuration.

▶ **Map 24**

- ▷ (West side of 11th Street between 18th and 23rd Avenues) The section of this area from 18th Avenue to 21st Avenue is currently zoned I-1, Light Industrial. The 2020 Plan, however, recognizes the existing commercial uses and calls for C (Retail Commercial) in this area to encourage additional commercial development on this arterial street. Between 21st and 23rd Avenues, there are residences, offices and one industrial use according to present zoning. The 2020 Plan proposes Light Industrial and Office uses in this area. Some of the existing residential structures could be converted to offices, according to this plan.
- ▷ (South side of Harrison Avenue between 17th and 20th Streets, south to Alton Avenue) This area is currently zoned R-1 along most of 18th and 19th Streets with industrial (I-1) along 17th Street, Harrison Avenue and on the west side of 19th Street. Commercial zoning exists on 20th Street from Alton Avenue north, though no development has taken place. The 2020 Plan calls for possible expansion of the commercial and industrial land uses, with residential remaining if this expansion does not occur. The area is designated RL/C/IL to allow these possible alternatives.
- ▷ (New Milford Avenue from Kishwaukee Street to the BNSF Railroad) This small area is surrounded by industrially zoned land. There are six homes in this isolated area. In time, one or more of the surrounding industries may need to expand into this area. The Plan allows for this expansion with a designation of IG, General Industrial.

▶ **Maps 24 and 25**

(Area bounded by Chapman Road, the Reclamation District property line to the south, the Rock River to the west and Brooke Road to the north) This is an area of floodplain and floodway which was developed before the delineation of the floodplain and floodway area in Winnebago County. A portion of this area was flooded during 1996, and most of this area has unimproved streets. In 1991, the Illinois EPA funded a water project to provide City water to the area because of concern for the water quality in the private wells. This area is currently zoned R-1 because of the floodplain location; however, the 2020 Plan recommends the acquisition of this property for park land due to the flood hazards in this area. In addition, the Rock River Water Reclamation District has been acquiring property in this area for expansion of its facilities.

▶ **Map 29**

- ▷ (Ross Lane and Mobile Home Avenue) This area is zoned R-1, R-3 and C-2. The Plan calls for IL/C (Light Industrial/Retail Commercial) because of the proximity to the Greater Rockford Airport and to other commercial and industrial uses along 11th Street.
- ▷ (Area bounded by 39th Avenue, Samuelson Road, Easy Street and 9th Street) This area is zoned R-2. The Plan calls for IG, General Industrial. As the housing stock (which dates back to the Camp Grant era) ages, it is anticipated that this area will be converted to industrial uses, thereby matching all the surrounding uses.

Land Use Implementation Matrix

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Throughout the cooperative efforts of all City Departments, guide the City's development through the land use plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and building code	Implement the 2020 Plan	Ensure compatibility between land uses	All City Departments	Ongoing
		Require full urban services	All City Departments	Ongoing
		Balanced growth patterns citywide	All City Departments, City Council	Ongoing
		Evaluate the impact of new streets and roads	Public Works	Ongoing
		Take other plans adopted by the City into account	All City Departments	Ongoing
		Begin the process of preparing more specific subarea plans for those areas that are largely underdeveloped and for those areas that are in transition	Community Development	July 2004 and Ongoing
	Geographic Boundaries	Carry out a complete reevaluation of the City's annexation policies	Community Development	Sept.- Nov.,04
		Pursue an aggressive annexation program along West State Street	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
		Annex along East State Street to fill in the remaining gaps	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
		Work on priority areas listed in the annexation policies that are largely developed and where annexation will occur in small pieces	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
		Work with RRWRD to create joint agreements for any new projects which with the City participates	All City Departments	2004 and Ongoing
		Determine long-term annexation agreements with the Villages of Winnebago and New Millford and the City of Belvidere	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
		Prevent new development on private well and septic systems within the Ultimate Annexation Boundary	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
	Promote Targeted Infill Development		All City Departments	Ongoing
	Plan in context to the surrounding area		All City Departments	Ongoing

Land Use Implementation Matrix cont.

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Throughout the cooperative efforts of all City Departments, guide the City's development through the land use plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and building code cont.	Find new tools for redevelopment	Create a locally funded Historic Trust Fund	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
		Adopt a Housing Occupancy Permit requirement	Community Development	2004
		Amortize certain types of undesirable businesses and/or land uses	Community Development	2004 and Ongoing
		Create a locally funded Business Development Fund	Community Development	Ongoing
		Create a Problem Property Resolution Team within City Hall to deal with vacant and abandoned properties that drag down the surrounding areas	All City Departments	2004 and Ongoing

Smart Growth Implementation Matrix

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Work to integrate Smart Growth Principles into the City of Rockford	Mixed Use Development	Revise Zoning Ordinance	Community Development	Short term
		Assist with financing of mixed-use developments	Community Development	Ongoing
		Incorporate planned mixed-use into neighborhood/subarea plans	Community Development	Ongoing
		Provide incentives for mixed-use in new development and redevelopment	Community Development and Public Works	Ongoing
	Compact building design	Provide open space in compactly developed areas	Community Development/Park District	Ongoing
		Manage existing on-street and surface parking lots effectively	Public Works	Ongoing
		Encourage TND with neighborhood centers	Community Development	Ongoing
		Redevelop vacant warehouses into housing	Private Sector/Community Development	Ongoing
		Reduce minimum lot size requirements in appropriate areas	Community Development	Short term
		Provide a wide variety of housing types and housing densities	Community Development	Ongoing
	Create a range of housing opportunities and choices	Promote employer-assisted housing programs	Community Development	Short term
		Encourage downtown housing	Community Development	Ongoing
		Require at least 3 different builders on every block within any new subdivision.	Community Development	Short term
		Develop and implement a program to identify and dispose of vacant land and buildings	Community Development	Short term
		Adopt special rehabilitation building codes.	Building Department	Short term
	Create walkable communities	Retrofit existing arterials and collector streets with sidewalks	Public Works	Ongoing
		Require site plan design that makes commercial areas more walkable	Community Development	Ongoing
		Design streets to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings	Public Works	Ongoing
		Require traffic calming in residential areas that have excessive traffic speeds	Public Works	Ongoing
		Connect walkways, parking lots, greenways and developments. Don't leave barriers to access	Public Works	Ongoing
		Provide sidewalks	CD/Public Works	Ongoing

Smart Growth Implementation Matrix cont.

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When	
Work to integrate Smart Growth Principles into the City of Rockford cont.	Create walkable communities cont.	Provide shelter and separation from automobile traffic	Public Works	Ongoing	
		Provide safe pedestrian routes to transit	Public Works	Ongoing	
		Make places walkable for aging populations and those with disabilities	Public Works	Ongoing	
	Distinctive, Attractive Community with a strong	Establish matching grants or revolving loan funds for historic preservation	Turn underused highways into boulevards	Public Works	Ongoing
			Develop a comprehensive wayfinding system to and within downtown	Public Works	Short-term, Ongoing
			Highlight cultural assets through public art and event nights	Community Development/River District	Short term
			Make retail centers attractive destinations	Community Development	Ongoing
			Revitalize the entire waterfront	Community Development	Ongoing
			Plant trees throughout the community and preserve existing trees during new construction	Community Development	Ongoing
			Create active and secure open spaces	Park District	Ongoing
			Define neighborhoods with visual cues	Community Development	Ongoing
			Preserve scenic vistas	Community Development/Park	Ongoing
			Enact clear design guidelines	Community Development	Short Term
			Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas	Create a network of trails and greenways	Partner with non-governmental organizations to acquire and protect land
	Support tree preservation through public-private partnerships	Community Development			Ongoing
	Employ development strategies that better protect and preserve open space in edge areas	Community Development			Ongoing

Smart Growth Implementation Matrix cont.

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Work to integrate Smart Growth Principles into the City of Rockford cont.	Strengthen and direct development towards the existing urban areas	Strengthen the state and local brownfields program	Community Development	Ongoing
		Consider use of split-rate property tax to encourage development on vacant or blighted pieces of land in existing communities	Legal/Community Development	Ongoing
		Conduct an "infill checkup"	Community Development	Ongoing
		Facilitate programs and support community based organizations for neighborhood revitalization	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Create economic incentives for businesses and homeowners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Identify priority areas for receipt of infrastructure funding based on cost/benefit analysis	Community Development	Ongoing
		Establish a land bank authority	Community Development	Ongoing
		Designate a vacant-properties coordinator to use code enforcement, provide incentives, and develop partnerships to minimize and abate problem properties	Community Development	Short term
	Provide a variety of transportation choices	Zone for concentrated activity centers around transit service	Community Development	Ongoing
		Require sidewalks in all developments	Community Development	Ongoing
		Evaluate parking needs, requirements and their impacts on pedestrian movement and transit service	Community Development	Ongoing
		Cluster freight facilities near airports and rail terminals	Community Development	Ongoing
		Consult with emergency responders when developing smart growth plans	Community Development	Ongoing
		Use cleared brownfields for freight distribution and consolidation centers	Community Development	Ongoing
		Provide transit users with customized transit information	RMTD	Ongoing
Create a comprehensive bicycling program	Park District	Ongoing		

Smart Growth Implementation Matrix cont.

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Work to integrate Smart Growth Principles into the City of Rockford cont.	Make development decisions predictable, fair	Educate elected leaders and public officials about smart growth	Community Development	Ongoing
		Direct development along corridors to create stronger districts	Community Development	Ongoing
		Simplify zoning codes and other land development regulations	Community Development	Ongoing
		Implement GIS based planning into the development process	Community Development	Ongoing
		Provide financial incentives to aid the development of smart growth projects	Community Development	Ongoing
		Conduct smart growth audits of development regulations	Community Development	Ongoing
		Encourage demand for smart growth through consumer incentives	Community Development	Ongoing
		Display zoning regulations and design goals in pictorial fashion to better illustrate development goals	Community Development	Short term
	Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in	Conduct community visioning exercises to determine how and where a community will grown	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Cultivate relationships with schools, colleges and universities	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Bring developers and the development community into the visioning process	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Conduct place audits to determine barriers and opportunities for smart growth	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Develop community indicators to make sure that development is meeting community goals	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing
		Illustrate complex concepts with photographs, videos and other imagery	Community Development, Human Services	Ongoing