

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of any general plan — whether it be something prepared as long ago as Rockford's 1918 Roper Plan, or something as recent as the Blueprint Plan for Rockford prepared in 1994 — is to lay the groundwork for creating a community that is a good place to live, work, raise a family, and basically enjoy life. The specifics vary, the means of accomplishing the goal vary, but the goal remains the same.

The reason for continually redoing such plans is to take into account those things that do change. For example, transportation systems were vastly different in 1918 than they are now. Rockford's last truly comprehensive plan — the Year 2000 Plan — was adopted in 1981. While things have not changed as drastically since then as they have since adoption of the Roper Plan, they have nonetheless changed in some significant ways. For example, the Year 2000 Plan did not foresee the virtual economic depression that was to overtake the Rockford area just a year or two later, nor did it foresee Rockford's city limits being as far east as the Boone County line as early as they were (1990). The specifics of how we have changed in the last 20 years are outlined in the pages that follow.

As we enter a new century and a new millennium, the time is ripe for us to review where we've been, looking at it in light of where we want to go. As we do this, we need to bear in mind the fact that things will continue to change, sometimes in unanticipated ways, as we try to implement this plan. For example, suburban development is a phenomenon of the last 50-55 years. While this plan assumes that this type of development will continue to predominate over the next 20 years, there's always the chance that something will come along to change that. If and when that happens, we need to be prepared to deal with it.