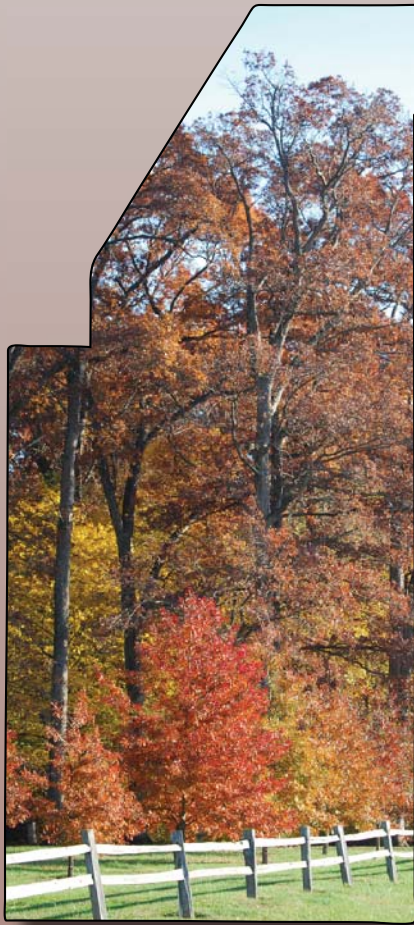


Piatt County Comprehensive Plan

2010

Piatt County Zoning
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Created for the Piatt County Board
in collaboration with the
Piatt County Regional Planning Commission

The Piatt County Comprehensive Plan is a guide that will be used to facilitate desirable development, growth management, and efficient delivery of public services. It provides direction, rationale, and specific tasks which can be used to guide decisions related to community assets and development.

Goals and objectives are used to construct a vision for the future, incorporating public input, steering committee input, and best planning practices. Future conditions and a series of actions provide a path towards achieving the defined goals.

The planning process was aided by the oversight of a 16 member steering committee, participation by residents of Piatt County, and through the review and adoption by the Piatt County Board. The Piatt County Comprehensive Plan provides an update to the 1970 Comprehensive Plan.

Public Input

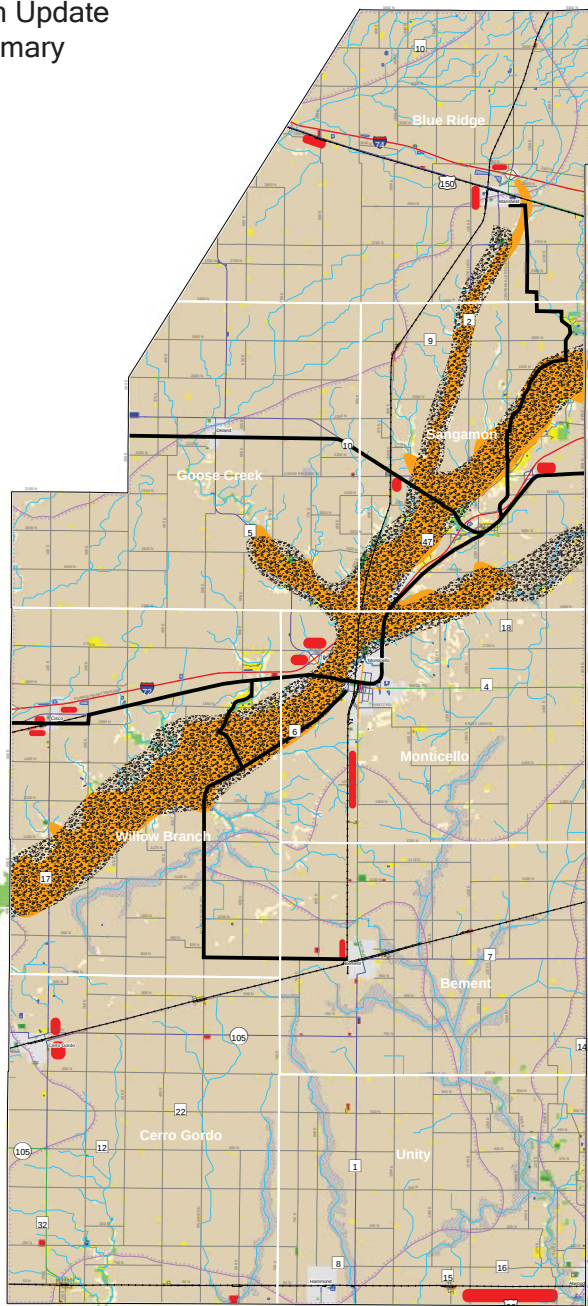
Ideas generated through conversations with the residents of Piatt County are a significant part of this plan. Input was garnered through a public workshop, phone survey, and at steering committee meetings. A SWOT analysis was used to guide the direction of goals and objectives while a mapping exercise provided input for the Future Land Use Map. The public input that was obtained is not statistically significant. However, the information did provide relevant and useful perspectives that may have otherwise been neglected. Local input, best practices in planning, and steering committee guidance were influential in developing the Piatt County Comprehensive Plan.

Essential Challenge

The major issue facing Piatt County today is balancing the rural agricultural character with development pressures of both high and low intensity land uses. The County has recently experienced and allowed an increase in rural residential development while pressure for commercial and industrial development has been met with opposition. The County Comprehensive Plan provides guidance regarding future development as well as the economy, community facilities, utilities, housing, historic and cultural resources, transportation, land use, natural resources, nature preserves, parks, and recreation.

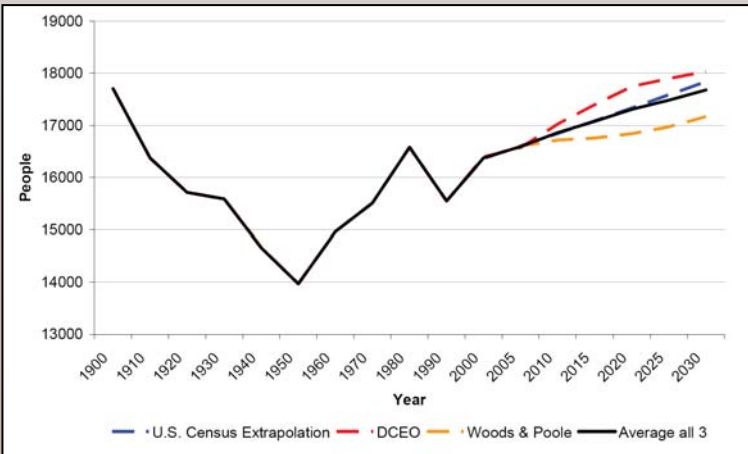
Comprehensive Plan Update Workshop Map Summary

Piatt County, Illinois



Existing Conditions and Trends

The Existing Conditions and Trends Analysis is another fundamental element in the Comprehensive Plan. Historic trends and current data provide perspectives on the future of Piatt County. In addition, existing policies and plans are evaluated to ensure that the Piatt County Comprehensive Plan maintains consistency with them. As part of this analysis, a variety of data was collected and, where applicable, mapped for Piatt County. Formulating population and employment projections is another critical part of this planning phase. Projections provide a basis for estimating potential land, transportation, services, and infrastructure needs for the future. Residents and local decision makers evaluate potential growth patterns that capture how Piatt County might look given the estimated population and employment forecasts.

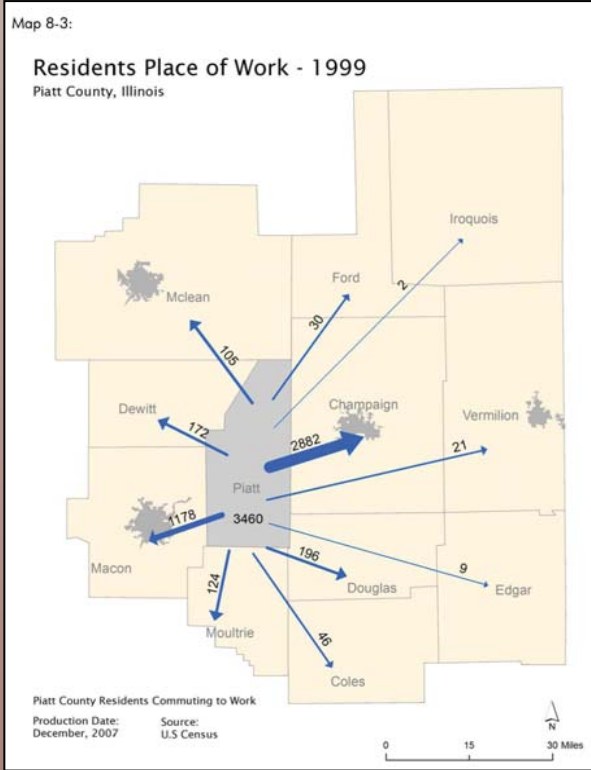


Implementation and Administration

The plan lists implementation steps that will achieve the goals and objectives identified through the planning process.

Economic Development

Issues in economic development include job creation and retention within the County, maintaining the agricultural character, lack of existing facilities for business growth, and a desire for greater local shopping opportunities. The plan proposes that the County continue its efforts to cooperate with other agencies (state and local) and develop a County economic development strategy. There is a distinct desire for greater employment in Piatt County; however, this should not be at the cost of residents' quality of life. Regional coordination and marketing are noted as areas for improvement.



Community Facilities

The plan identifies some public services and facilities that are distinct separate entities from the County government. Schools, fire protection, ambulance service and senior services are examples where County government has little or no control, but does interact with these service providers (often through appointing representatives). Goal statements for this topic state that even without direct control of services, the County does have an interest in ensuring that services are available throughout the County. The County takes special notice of programs for senior services, low income families, victims of domestic violence, children, and continuing adult education. These are services that the County has direct control of, or interest in, and can actively encourage or participate in relevant programs.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Maintenance of existing utilities and infrastructure is a key component of the plan. Growth and community desire to maintain the rural character of the County pose challenges for infrastructure updates and expansion. A timely maintenance schedule and fiscal responsibility can allow the County to maximize existing infrastructure before expanding or replacing it. This applies not only to utilities and infrastructure operated by the County; consulting with managers of water systems, drainage systems, and sewers can result in more efficient use of these systems as well. Capital improvement planning can provide the structure and information necessary to implement a detailed management system of County operated infrastructure.

Housing

Housing in Piatt County is projected to continue to grow through the 2030 planning horizon. Residents are generally satisfied with housing options; however, it is noted that a small population is potentially underserved and could benefit from more alternatives in affordable housing. Recent rural residential development has impacted farmland and natural areas, and there is concern that quality of life may degrade from continued lack of industry that supports the tax base. Residents also expressed concern that higher intensity development may detract from the community and surrounding areas, especially in residential areas. The plan identifies the need for a diverse range of housing throughout Piatt County that considers income, efficiency, environment, and accessibility. Development should occur only with adequate infrastructure and public services, and consider impact on adjacent land uses including but not limited to visual, transportation and health.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

ADMINISTRATIVE

Goal 1: Piatt County residents will have early, continuing, and ample opportunities to voice their ideas and concerns in all county planning and plan implementation processes.

Objective 1.1: Create a public involvement policy for the county that includes a variety of public involvement techniques to reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible.

Goal 2: Have strong working relationships and a reputation for positive collaboration with other local, regional, state, and federal government agencies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Strive to achieve a stable economy that includes business diversity, provides high-paying primary employment opportunities, and is compatible with planned growth and quality of life objectives for the County.

Goal 2: Support workforce education to expand and diversify the County's labor pool through a variety of institutions and learning technologies.

Goal 3: Improve the county's capacity to effectively foster the expansion of existing business operations as well as the location of new industrial investments which generate better paying employment opportunities for local residents.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Goal 1: Piatt County will support a system of public safety, justice and law enforcement that provides equal and fair treatment to all.

Goal 2: Piatt County will be a place where residents have access to community services that foster healthier lives.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 1: In support of the land use and development goals, new urban and rural development should be supported with adequate water and wastewater facilities.

Goal 2: Support managing County solid waste in accordance with the following action hierarchy: prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle, waste to energy, incinerate, and landfill.

Goal 3: Ensure a supply of high-quality water, including conservation measures, to support the county's population, economy and natural systems.

Goal 4: Encourage efforts between public agencies (state and local) and technology providers.

Goal 5: Piatt County will endeavor to have a drainage system that withstands a minimum of a 10 year storm and reduces the amount of pollution that enters waterways.

Goal 6: Piatt County will seek to be fiscally responsible by optimizing use of existing infrastructure before replacing or expanding its infrastructure system.

HOUSING

Goal 1: Piatt County will have a mix of housing types that reflect income-based demand while ensuring that housing inventories remain appealing to the desires of the community.

Objective 1.1: Take maximum advantage of federal and state funding for housing rehabilitation of substandard structures.

Goal 2: Piatt County will continue to be an attractive place to live for residents.

Objective 2.1: Promote single lot and neighborhood design, which include features that improve residents' quality of life including trails and parks.

Goal 3: Adequate infrastructure and public services to support existing and new developments will be provided in a fiscally responsible manner.

Objective 3.1: Promote growth contiguous to urban areas in order to optimize infrastructure costs and prevent leapfrog development.

Objective 3.2: Developers will pay an equitable amount for infrastructure improvements related to their new developments.

Goal 4: Land uses in Piatt County will be planned in consideration of adjacent land uses and residents.

Goal 5: Encourage the construction of energy efficient and water conserving housing through public education programs and regulations that promote innovative and environmentally sensitive building technologies.

Objective 5.1: Provide information about state and federal incentives for using environmentally friendly practices.

Goal 6: Encourage ADA accessible housing in new developments and renovation projects.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal 1: Identify, record, and evaluate resources and sites.

Objective 1.1: Encourage the use of professionally developed historic surveys to determine historic and cultural resources.

Objective 1.2: Encourage the coordination of ordinances and plans to develop sound preservation programs.

Goal 2: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources.

Objective 2.1: Support preservation efforts for its contribution to quality of life and cultural vitality.

Goal 3: Increase awareness of Historic and Cultural Resources.



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Objective 3.1: Provide information to residents and visitors about the historic and cultural resources in Piatt County.

Goal 4: Work with the private sector, independent organizations, and citizens to be aware of and enhance and protect historic and cultural resources.

Goal 5: Integrate historical and cultural resource management into local development policies.

Objective 5.1: Preservation is used for inclusion, protection and encouragement of housing options and infill projects, not their prohibition.

Goal 6: Preserve the importance and functioning of the existing Central Business Districts.

Objective 6.1: Central Business Districts are vibrant areas in the County.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal 1: Piatt County will have a safe, efficient, and economical transportation system that makes the best use of existing infrastructure, optimizes mobility, promotes environmental sensitivity, accessibility, and economic development, and enhances quality of life for all users.

Objective 1.1: Optimize the movement of people and goods within the county and between the county and other areas.

Objective 1.2: Improve access for safe, convenient, and economical movements of people and goods through access management practices and consideration of land use design in transportation system improvements.

Objective 1.3: Where feasible and practical, all transportation system users will have convenient, multi-modal access to all parts of the county.

Objective 1.4: Improve safety for all users by considering crash reduction strategies such as improvements to roadway geometry, signage and markings, and educational opportunities for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Objective 1.5: Interagency coordination will be emphasized in all phases of transportation planning, implementation, and construction.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Use land for the affordance of employment, residence, and recreation while ensuring the capacity of that land to be used in such ways indefinitely while recognizing individual landowners' rights.

Objective 1.1: Develop land in densities and patterns that are consistent with the long-term continuation of agriculture as a primary land use.

Objective 1.2: Allocate adequate commercial, industrial, and residential acreage to meet future needs while minimizing conflicts between these and other land uses.

Objective 1.3: Concentrate growth and development within the County's municipalities rather than rural parts of the county to use existing infrastructure, provide appropriate service, and reduce negative impacts and costs associated with development.

Objective 1.4: Preserve areas that are environmentally sensitive or provide natural services.

Objective 1.5: In planning for future community growth areas, seek to avoid unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land-uses.

Objective 1.6: Approve development projects subject to existing or planned public facilities and utilities.

Objective 1.7: Encourage all developments to have pre-annexation agreements and/or annexation to municipalities when within the one and one-half mile extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJs).

Objective 1.8: Encourage planned development through pre-annexation agreements and/or annexation to municipalities with input from surrounding landowners and all surrounding jurisdictions.

Objective 1.9: Coordinate land use designations with soil and topographic characteristics, the protection of historical and natural resources, existing land uses, and the availability of public facilities.

Objective 1.10: Low Impact Development techniques will be used to protect the land and building construction waste management will ensure proper use and disposal of building materials.

Objective 1.11: Continue to update the subdivision ordinance to incorporate desirable controls.

NATURAL AREAS AND ENVIRONMENT

Goal 1: Preserve the integrity of the Sangamon River, other natural waterways, and wetlands as sustainable sources of water and as an environmental, recreational and economic resource.

Objective 1.1: Educate residents about the role that natural resources and wildlife play in maintaining a high quality of life in the County, and residents' roles in protection and restoration efforts.

Objective 1.2: Natural areas will be protected to benefit all county residents by protecting against floods, cleaning surface waters, carbon sequestration, and preventing erosion.

Objective 1.3: Promote recreation and ecotourism opportunities within the County.

Goal 2: Piatt County's environmental features and natural resources will be safeguarded as distinguishing features of the community.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Preservation has a rich history in Piatt County. Additional interpretive information can provide residents with knowledge of the history of Piatt County and identify the variety of recreational opportunities and resources that exist in the County. The plan highlights standard methods of establishing and enhancing historic and cultural resource preservation. Public and private entities alike can develop a culture of preservation. The plan designates central business districts as vibrant resources that provide an important function to communities and residents of Piatt County.



Land Use

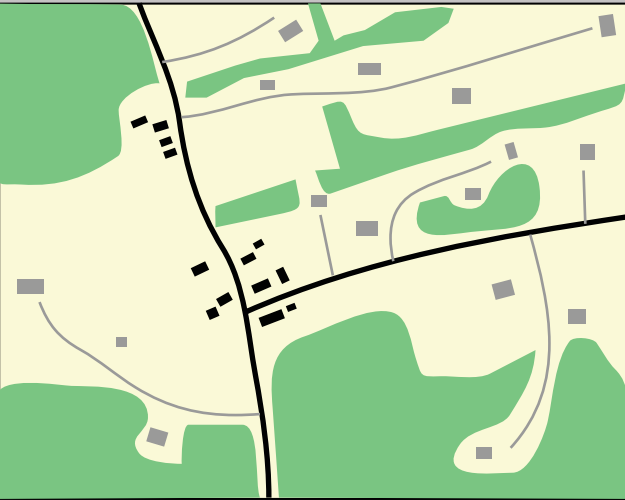
The land use portion of the plan provides an updated foundation for the County Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide a blueprint for the future land use pattern. This identifies land uses that are desired or expected. Residential development has steadily increased in Piatt County and is expected to continue.

The plan recommends that this development primarily occur in municipalities where development is connected to municipal facilities with access to public services. Some residential development will occur in rural areas of the County. In these areas, two development types are suggested: Low density residential and conservation residential. Both of these development patterns focus on maintaining the rural character and natural environment. High density and medium density residential development are defined in the plan as examples of development that are desirable for incorporated areas in the County rather than rural areas.

Land uses identified in the plan include commercial, industrial, institutional, and agricultural, among others. Great concern was expressed regarding the siting of higher intensity land uses which are unsuitable or undesirable in some areas. The Future Land Use Map identifies areas where development is preferred; site quality and feasibility were only generally assessed. More details and site analysis are required prior to development. The development of guidelines that assess the impact on infrastructure, the environment, mobility, preservation, and landscape character will help ensure that specific criteria are considered.

The plan states that land should be used for employment, residence, and recreation, not 'consumed'. To accomplish this, the plan suggests development density and patterns that are compatible with agricultural land uses, and protecting the environment using a combination of regulatory and educational approaches.

Conventional Development



Conservation Design Development



Natural Resources

A variety of natural resources exist in Piatt County. Residents showed concern for land use priorities and conflicts between natural resource areas and farmland. They were also concerned with negative impacts from development. The plan identifies methods for protection, preservation, conservation, and restoration of natural resources. These methods of response depend on the resource and its relationship to people living in the community. The qualities of some natural resources are directly connected to public health and should be heavily controlled. Other natural resources have complicated trade-offs where conservation, restoration and unregulated management are desirable methods.

Nature Preserves, Parks and Recreation

Piatt County residents indicated a variety of issues related to parks, preserves, and recreation during the public input opportunities afforded by the planning process. The plan recommends designing and implementing a series of tools by which these amenities can be improved to help strengthen the positive image in the County.



Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is an image that represents both natural and man-made features of the County. Analysis and public input were used to classify uses of land in Piatt County that are desirable and appropriate. Appropriate uses are defined by carrying capacity of the land, current supply, and projected demand for land use types. Six land use categories described with both words and images create an image of future land use in Piatt County.

Piatt County Comprehensive Plan
Future Land Use Map

Future Land Uses and Development

- Agricultural
- Low Density Residential
- Conservation Residential
- Commercial / Industrial
- Commercial
- Trails
- Proposed Mobility Hub (Park and Ride)

Low Density residential provides for rural development, but minimizes physical and visual impacts on a case by case basis.

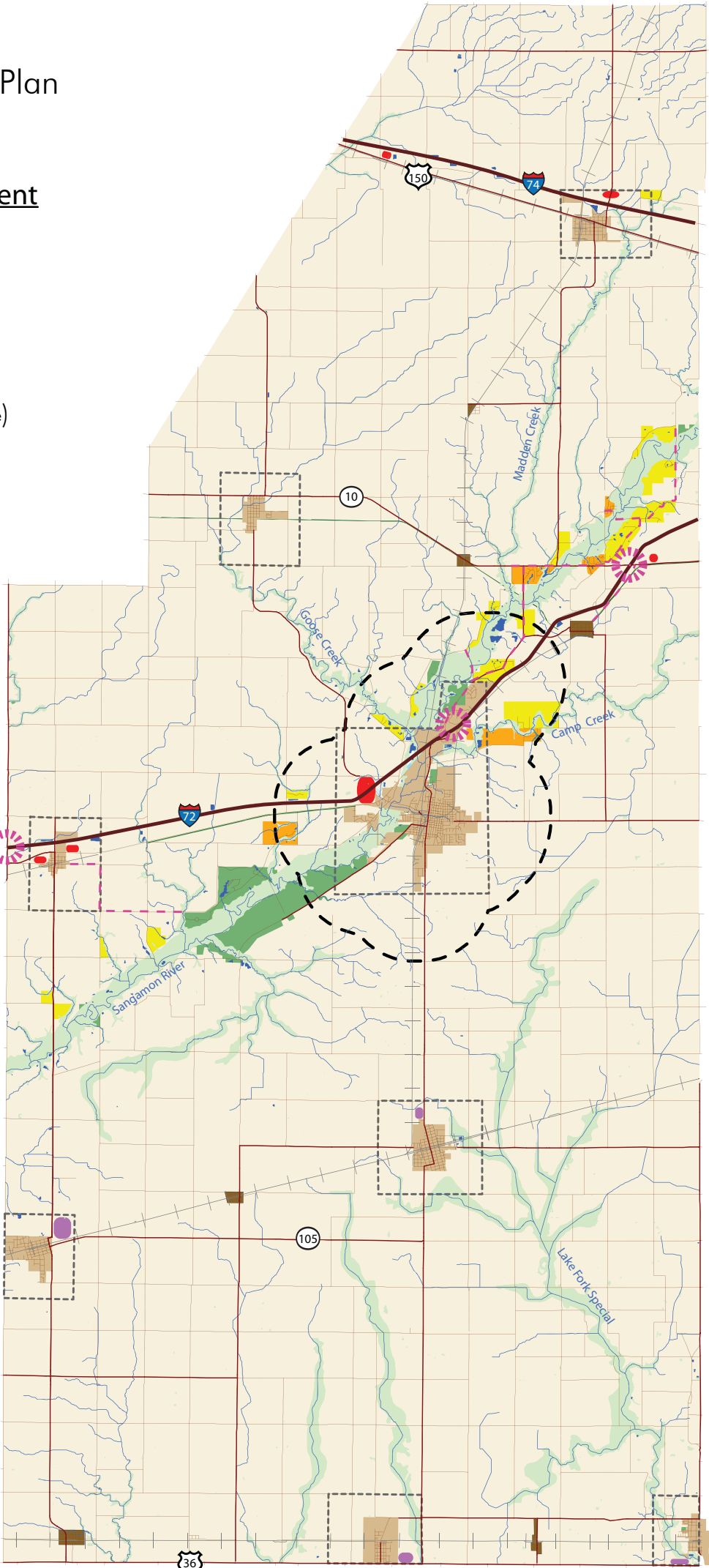
Conservation residential provides for rural development, but emphasizes mitigation of environmental impacts, shared cost for sewer, water and transportation, and maintains farming as the primary rural land use

Existing Land Uses

- Interstate
- Highway
- Road
- Railroad
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Existing Park or Natural Area
- Stream or Major Drainage
- Lake
- Municipal Boundary
- Unincorporated Settlement
- Sewer Facility Planning Area
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Environmentally Sensitive Areas include flood plains, wetlands, soils subject to flooding, and state designated environmental areas.

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Production Date:
September, 2009



Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Piatt County Comprehensive Plan includes a series of long-term projects including an Economic Development Strategy. Potential funding sources for all implementation items have been identified ranging from federal to local sources. Successful plan implementation involves monitoring the plan to update priorities, seek new funding sources, complete benchmarks, and update the plan. The success of this Comprehensive Plan will be revealed through regulatory changes, increased public awareness and involvement, further planning and study, and interagency cooperation. This plan contains information that can be referenced on a regular basis by community members, officials and potential funding agencies.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Objective 2.1: Prepare a county-wide inventory and program to preserve and manage existing and potential natural resources and habitats that emphasizes larger, connected areas rather than small, isolated pockets.

Objective 2.2: Make available to the public the state of Illinois Department of Natural Resources Inventory that identifies natural resources and habitats that are unique to Piatt County.

Goal 3: Piatt County will provide wildlife with habitats that are minimally affected and fragmented by development.

Objective 3.1: Support the use of cluster housing and conservation design techniques to preserve open space and environmentally sensitive areas.

Objective 3.2: Consider environmentally sensitive areas when constructing new roadway alignments.

Goal 4: Piatt County residents and agencies will work collaboratively to protect the county's natural resources.

Objective 4.1: Encourage County residents to be good stewards of natural resources.

Objective 4.2: Encourage efforts of local governments and their programs that strive to protect and improve the quality and productivity of soils in the County.

Objective 4.3: Participate in developing a regional approach to preserving and managing natural resources including ground and surface water resources.

Objective 4.4: Identify strategies to reduce pollution levels within the County, including air, night sky, noise, water, and land pollutants.

Goal 5: Protect groundwater resources, including the Mahomet Aquifer, from over-extraction.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Goal 1: Piatt County will have sufficient open space and related amenities for all residents that can be accessed by multiple travel modes.

Objective 1.1: Undertake a needs assessment that identifies park space, amenities, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Objective 1.2: Acquire amenities in accordance with an amenities plan that is based on the desires and needs of a majority of Piatt County residents.

Objective 1.3: Acquire adequate sites in advance of need and in accordance with an overall parks acquisition plan.

Objective 1.4: Create and implement an ordinance that requires an established amount of open space in all new developments.

Objective 1.5: Withdraw from normal urban use and retain as permanent open space those areas which because of topography, flooding steep slopes, or other similar conditions are not suitable for development.

Objective 1.6: Encourage Federal Rails-to-Trails initiatives, especially those that have linkages to parks and other recreational activity centers.

Objective 1.7: Encourage safe and logical connections between parks, residential areas, and other activity centers for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Goal 2: The Piatt County parks system will be a regional tourist attraction and draw for area residents.

Objective 2.1: Develop a marketing plan for Piatt County parks, including an inventory of attractions, potential funding sources for marketing and tourism, and responsible parties.

Objective 2.2: Market parks in Piatt County as an amenity for home seekers.

Objective 2.3: Use trails and routes to connect Piatt County to other regional attractions.

Goal 3: Piatt County parks will be maintained and upgraded as needed given available funding.

Objective 3.1: Maintain facilities so that they remain safe, viable, and handicap accessible recreation and tourist areas.

Objective 3.2: Seek funds for maintenance, upgrading, and expansion of parks and their facilities.

Objective 3.3: Make best use of volunteers for maintenance.

Objective 3.4: Ensure that all facilities meet or exceed accessibility standards for disabled persons.

Objective 3.5: Support creative funding mechanisms in order to achieve and implement park, open space, and recreation objectives at every level of Piatt County government.

Goal 4: Piatt County parks will remain important activity centers in the community.

Objective 4.1: Protect and enhance the extensive open space areas that are essential to the overall image and character of Piatt County and its municipalities.

Objective 4.2: Identify opportunities to network multi-use trails and pathways to provide connections between subdivisions, schools, parks, and commercial areas.

Goal 5: Support a public and private parks and recreation system that promotes healthy lifestyles by offering active and passive recreational opportunities.

Objective 5.1: Create a County Greenways and Trails Plan and provide support for any interrelated municipal open space plans.

Objective 5.2: Continue to enhance access and utilization of the Sangamon River for recreational purposes.